

Expository Essay: Doctrine of **Last Things** by Tina A. Coddington, Edited by Mel W. Coddington

The doctrine of the last things consists of the intermediate state, the resurrection, the final judgment, the eternal state, and the millennium (Gore CD 12).

INTERMEDIATE STATE

The intermediate state is what happens to a person immediately after death (Gore *Outline* 341). Every person is "destined to die once" (Hebrews 9:27; Milne 327). Death is a transition to a different mode of existence (Erickson 1169). Death does not come natural to man but it is foreign (Erickson 1171). Death was not God's intended purpose for man (Erickson 1171). After the physical death of a person, his soul continues to live and he is aware of his existence (Hebrews 12:23). The two places a person goes after death are either heaven or hell. In the intermediate state, the wicked persons, who do not properly believe in Christ, go to 'hell' and are tormented. According to Luke 16:23-24, in 'hell' 'the wicked' are thirsty and are in torment. 'The wicked' are being reserved for the Day of Judgment (2 Peter 2:9). Jude 7 describes the intermediate state as suffering eternal fire (Milne 343).

'The elect' (those chosen by God to be 'true believers' in Jesus Christ, that He 'redeemed' or paid the penalty for their sins on the cross), however, go to 'heaven' and meet God (Milne 342). In the intermediate state, 'the elect' (or 'the redeemed', or 'the righteous') are freed from sin, feel no misery, and have communion with Christ. Yet, this intermediate state is not entirely perfect for 'the elect'. It is undesirable in the long term (Psalm 6:5; 115:17; Isaiah 38:18,19; Luke 16; Revelation 6; 7:13-17). 'The elect' know they are incomplete and desire to be clothed, in other words reunited with their corporal body in perfection thereafter (2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Milne 342). The intermediate state will last until the final judgment (Milne 343).

RESURRECTION

The resurrection will be a bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Romans 8:11; Philippians 3:20-21; Gore *Outline* 344; Boice 708). All dead persons will be reunited with their bodies (Gore *Outline* 344). Their soul and body will be reunited (Unger 1075). Persons, who are alive at the time of the resurrection and properly believe in Christ, will not die but will have their bodies transformed and glorified (Gore *Outline* 344). The natures of the bodies of 'the wicked' are that they are raised to dishonor. Their bodies will have physical substance and will exist eternally. The bodies of 'the wicked' will not be glorious but will be proper for 'the wicked' (Gore *Outline* 344).

However, the bodies of 'the righteous' will have honor, power, and be spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:35-54; Gore *Outline* 345). Their glorified body will be transformed to fit into its new surroundings for future life (Unger 1075). Their glorified body will have physical substance, and be able to eat and feel (Gore *Outline* 345). In addition, their glorified body will be able to transport without physical barriers. Their glorified body is incorruptible (Gore *Outline* 345).

FINAL JUDGMENT

The final judgment will be a judgment of all created persons (Matthew 25:32; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27; Gore *Outline* 346; House 711). This judgment includes 'the redeemed', 'the wicked', and the apostate (evil) angels (Gore *Outline* 346). There will be no exception from this judgment (Matthew *Final*). The judgment will be an effectual divine summons (Matthew *Final*). Christ will bring about God's judgment and will not show favoritism. The judgment will be complete and just (John 5:27; 1 Peter 1:17; Milne 331; Matthew *Final*). God will make right all of the injustices of life in the present age (Milne 331). Judgment occurs based according to the light of revelation that has been given to each man (Matthew *Final*). Every person is accountable to have lived in accordance with the revelation that he had received (Matthew *Final*). The final judgment determines the rewards or punishments that each person will receive (Gore *Outline* 346).

For 'the redeemed', judgment will be based on their works completed for God's kingdom (Gore *Outline* 346). Each 'true believer' will receive a reward that is proportionate to their good deeds done in the body (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Chadwick). This judgment will be in respect to how each person was a steward of the spiritual gifts, talents, resources, opportunities and responsibilities given in this life (Milne 334). The work of each 'true believer' will be tested by fire (1 Corinthians 3:14). The 'true believer' will be rewarded for whatever stands that test of fire (Milne 334). In addition, each 'true believer' will be judged to determine his level of authority in the kingdom (Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 25:14-30; Gore *Outline* 346).

'The wicked' will be judged according to their works and the standard of the law (Romans 2:12-16; Gore *Outline* 346). Each wicked person will be found guilty and receive a degree of punishment in direct correlation to his sinful actions on earth (Matthew 11:22; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 2:5-6; 3:19; Gore *Outline* 346; Matthew *Final*). In addition to the wicked persons, the 'evil angels' will also be judged for their actions (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Gore *Outline* 346).

ETERNAL STATE

The eternal state of 'the wicked' and 'the redeemed' is extremely different (Gore *Outline* 347). The eternal state of 'the wicked' will be one of eternal torment (Gore *Outline* 347). The torment will take place in the Lake of Fire (Jude 7; Revelation 19:20; Matthew 13:42,50; *Eternal*). No person that is thrown into the Lake of Fire will ever escape its torment (*Eternal*). They face everlasting destruction, being cast out of the presence of God, suffering unspeakable torment, and remaining there forever, along with 'the Devil' and his 'evil angels' (Gore *Outline* 347). 'The wicked' will face total darkness, fire, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Gore *Outline* 347).

The eternal state of 'the redeemed' is one of everlasting life (Gore *Outline* 348). This state will be one in which the 'true believer' is self-conscious and embodied (Milne 339). The 'true believer' will have a social life that will fulfill all of God's desires for His believing humans (Hebrews 13:14; Revelation 19:7). Perfection will be attained by them in the eternal state (Milne 339). Every 'true believer' will be free from the limitation that sin placed on them during their life on earth (Milne 331). They will have joy, freedom from sin and misery, dwell with the saints, and enjoy the presence of God (Gore *Outline* 348). The crowning experience in the eternal state will be the "endless exploration of that unutterable beauty, majesty, love, holiness, power, joy, and grace which is God Himself" (Gore *Outline* 340).

MILLENNIUM

The millennium is a 1,000-year period of continuing human existence on the Earth, during which Christ will reign and all people will dwell in prosperity (*Millennialism*; Boice 704). The millennium is a “hotly debated issue in the field of eschatology” (Milne 322). From this debate, three main interpretations of the millennium have developed, two of which are absurd and lack a basic comprehension of what has been occurring in the world morally, spiritually, religiously, and in fulfillment of prophecies, especially since the year 1948 when Israel became a nation (*Gore Outline* 322).

The only credible interpretation is 'Premillennialism', which is the view that Christ will physically return to earth right at the end of the 7-year 'Tribulation' and will inaugurate His reign and rule over it for 1,000 years (*Premillennialism*). 'Premillennialism' is based on a literal interpretation of the Book of Revelations and the accounts from Jesus in the Books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Erickson 1209). There are five basic tenets of 'Premillennialism' (*Gore Outline* 351). The first basic tenet of 'Premillennialism' is that there will be a glorious future kingdom of Christ physically on the earth for 1,000 years, which will continue in the future age (*Gore Outline* 351). Second, the kingdom will follow the visible personal return of Christ to the earth (Matthew 24:29-31). Third, the resurrection will be divided into parts or occurrences. Fourth, the kingdom will be both political and spiritual. Jesus and His saints will rule over the nations by force. Fifth, in the kingdom, the Jewish nation will be preeminent and the New Testament church will be grafted into Israel (*Gore Outline* 351).

Within the view of 'Premillennialism' there are several views regarding the time of the rapture of the church, wherein all 'true believers', both alive and deceased, will be physically raised up alive from the earth to be caught up with Jesus in the sky (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; *Gore Outline* 351). The first variation of 'Premillennialism' is the 'pre-tribulation' view (*Gore CD* 12B). This view states that the church, those who are true believers in Jesus Christ, will be raptured at the beginning of the 7-year tribulation period. The second variety is the 'post-tribulation' view. This view states that there will be no rapture during the 'tribulation' and the church with God's protection will endure the 7-year tribulation period. The third variety is the 'mid-tribulation' view (*Gore CD* 12B). This view states that the rapture of the church will take place during the mid-point of the 'tribulation', thus sparing the church from the greatest wrath of the 'tribulation' (House 131; *Gore CD* 12B).

Even though there is no direct declaration in the Scriptures of when the 'rapture' will occur, there are subtle possible indicators in the Scriptures that seem to indirectly support all three times for the 'rapture'. Therefore, another possibility is that there will be three raptures during the 7-year tribulation period: the first rapture will be at the very beginning (Revelation 3:22-4:1) and will abruptly and technically start the tribulation period, resulting in the people, governments, and armies of the earth being instigated to unite and prepare to defend against outer space aliens or whomever they think has snatched away all of those humans; the second rapture will be near the end of the tribulation period (Revelation 16:14-16), especially designed by God to instigate the assembling of all of the armies of the earth in one location (Armageddon) in order to be outright slaughtered by Jesus Christ as He returns to the earth; and the third rapture will occur

as Jesus Christ is visibly "coming on the clouds of the sky" (Matthew 24:29-31) to start His 1,000 year reign on the earth.

[NOTE: For more information on the topics in this document, see the sections "Article 11: ESCHATOLOGY" and "Article 12: RESURRECTION" in the document entitled "**Doctrinal Statement Of Faith**", and see the document entitled "**Eschatology**", which both of these documents are listed on the "Doctrines" webpage of this website, www.BelieverAssist.com.]

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