

## 1) THE DOCTRINE OF THE AFTERLIFE

### a) Introduction

- i) Christians are called to be compassionate to those who cannot believe in anything beyond death.
- ii) Death frightens most people, especially those for whom life is good.
- iii) Death however is a blessing to the dying.
- iv) Christ's resurrection is a preview of ours.
- v) We move not only to "endless-everlasting" life but to a completely fulfilled life. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57
- vi) Our hope is in God's power over death, not our own.

### b) The idea of the immortality of the soul

- i) An idea found in Greek philosophy
- ii) Not a biblical idea...death is total
- iii) Our hope is not in some immortal part of us

### c) The idea of the resurrection of the person

- i) God created us in the first place and gave us a body adapted to the earth on which we live
- ii) God will recreate us in order to live in the New Creation, the New Earth and will give us a body suited for that New Creation
  - (1) No disease or corruption
  - (2) No death
  - (3) In some way foreshadowed by the resurrected body of Jesus
    - (a) Continuity
    - (b) Newness

iii) Our hope is thus in God's power and not our own.

### d) We must not want to know too much

- i) "It is unwise for Christians to claim knowledge either of the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell, or to be too certain about the Kingdom of God in which history is consummated. Reinhold Niebuhr.

- ii) "What we will know has not yet been revealed (1 John 3:2).
  - iii) The New Testament is very chaste and modest in its talk about the afterlife.
- e) When will all this happen?
- i) On the one hand the New Testament gives us hope that when we die we will be with Christ in paradise.
  - ii) On the other hand it speaks of death as a sleep from which we are awakened at the end of time.
- f) Implications for history
- i) Our hope is not just in eternal life for individual humans.
  - ii) Our hope is that all creation will be redeemed
  - iii) Our hope is the history will end where God wants it to end.