

Life after death and eschatology

Life after death

Further existence after death

Human beings live on after physical death. While the body is transitory, the soul will continue to live forever. It is immortal. (Catechism of the New Apostolic Church [CNC] 9.1)

The afterlife of the soul is attested in the Old and New Testaments. A human being retains his personality after physical death. (CNC 9.3)

The term "beyond" refers to all realms, events, and conditions that lie outside of the material world. Often the beyond is equated with the realm of the dead. (CNC 9.4)

The condition of the souls in the beyond is an expression of their proximity to God, or remoteness from Him, and is the same there as it was during their lifetime. Those who are reborn and who followed the Lord will find themselves in a state of righteousness before God. Souls who have never heard of the gospel, never had their sins forgiven, and never received a sacrament, find themselves in a condition of remoteness from God. This can only be overcome by believing in Jesus Christ, accepting His merit, and receiving the sacraments. (CNC 9.5)

Salvation in Jesus Christ

Christ, the "firstfruits" in the resurrection, has conquered death and thereby made it possible for the souls in the beyond to enter into the proximity of God. (CNC 9.4)

Since the sacrifice of Christ, salvation can still be attained even after physical death. (CNC 9.5)

Intercession for the departed

New Apostolic Christians intercede in prayer for the departed: they ask the Lord to help the souls who have entered into the beyond in an unredeemed state. (CNC 9.6.1)

Together, both the living and the dead in Christ belong to the "Lord's work of redemption"*. Both here and in the beyond, they will intercede with God on behalf of the unredeemed. (CNC 9.6.2)

** The term "Lord's work of redemption" is generally understood to mean Jesus' act of salvation, which is already concluded. When this term is used here, it refers to that part of the church in which the Apostles are active to impart those gifts of salvation which serve for the preparation of the firstlings, the bride of Christ.*

God's universal will to save all mankind

God's will to save is universal. Jesus' commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and dispense the sacraments is fulfilled by the Apostles of today upon both the living and the dead. (CNC 9.6.3)

The effect of the sacraments is the same for both the living and the dead. The dead who have received the rebirth out of water and the Spirit have the same status as the dead in Christ. (CNC 9.6.3)



The doctrine of the future things - eschatology

Foundation

God's actions are aimed at making salvation accessible to mankind. His will to save applies to all people in the past, the present, and the future. The history of salvation progresses according to the wise plan of God (see [CNC 4.4](#)). The knowledge that God is faithful enables us to confidently wait for the fulfilment of further divine promises (Hebrews 10: 23). ([CNC 10](#))

The doctrine of future things (eschatology) is based on Holy Scripture. Many references to events in the future of salvation history are contained in the gospels and the letters of the Apostles. ([CNC 10](#))

Jesus Christ promised his return to the Apostles. This was reinforced by angels. No human being or angel—but only God alone—knows when Jesus Christ will return. Every believer is called upon to conduct his life in view of the return of Christ. ([CNC 10.1](#))

Some key statements are recorded in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which speaks of future things in figurative terms. In this important source of hope for the future, the Lord repeatedly reinforces the promise of His return, reveals the progress of the history of salvation, and thereby grants insights into His future actions. ([CNC 10](#))

The goal of faith of new apostolic Christians

To be accepted by Him on this occasion is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians. The Apostles have the commission to prepare the bridal congregation for the return of Jesus Christ. ([CNC 10.1.2](#))

Those who are numbered to the bride of the Lord—the group of those who will be caught up to God—will only be revealed at Jesus' return. They are also known as "firstlings". Another image for the bridal congregation is the "male child", and a numerical symbol for them is the "hundred forty-four thousand". ([CNC 10.1.3](#))

Events associated with the return of Jesus Christ

At the return of Christ, the dead who have died in Him will be the first to resurrect. The living who have allowed themselves to be prepared for His coming will receive a body that is like the glorious body of Christ. Together, all of these souls will be caught up and led into eternal fellowship with God. ([CNC 10.1.2](#))

The rapture of the bridal congregation is followed by the marriage of the Lamb. This image for the eschatological marriage feast is a reference to the everlasting fellowship of the firstlings with the Lord. ([CNC 10.2](#))

After the return of Christ, a time in which both human beings and the creation will be exposed to the power of Satan will begin: the great tribulation. The image of the woman clothed with the sun—after she has given birth to the male child—refers to those Christians who were not caught up to Jesus Christ. They continue to experience divine support and spiritual nourishment. ([CNC 10.3](#))

After the marriage in heaven the Son of God will return to the earth with the firstlings and put an end to the time of the great tribulation. Satan's followers will then be judged. ([CNC 10.4](#))

All those who were caught up in the rapture at the return of Christ, as well as the martyrs from the great tribulation, will share in the first resurrection. They will not have to partake in the Last Judgement. ([CNC 10.5](#))

After the conclusion of the first resurrection, Christ will establish His kingdom of peace on earth. At the end of the kingdom of peace all human beings of all time periods will have received the gospel of Christ. After Satan has been given one last opportunity to tempt mankind, he will be permanently defeated and judged. Evil in all forms will from then on be rendered powerless forever. ([CNC 10.6](#))

This is followed by the resurrection of the dead for judgement. Those who find grace in the Last Judgement will become inhabitants of God's new creation and have eternal fellowship with Him. ([CNC 10.6](#))

