



The Difference Between Incorruption and Immortal

Celestial and Terrestrial Bodies

The Difference Between Incorruptible and Immortal States in the Bible

The Bible teaches that humans are composed of three distinct parts: spirit, soul and body.

While all three are integral to our current existence, the Scriptures also point to different future states that the body can undergo after death or at the return of Jesus Christ. These states are distinct and often referred to as celestial (spiritual / incorruptible) and terrestrial (physical / immortal).

Celestial Bodies: Soul Salvation and the Incorruptible Body

The celestial body is a spiritual body that believers can receive after death through faith in Jesus Christ. It is referred to as incorruptible, meaning it is no longer subject to decay or death.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 describes this transformation: 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.'

This passage highlights the resurrection of believers into a celestial body that is glorified, incorruptible and spiritual. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 22:30:

'For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.'

Believers who have placed their faith in Christ will receive soul salvation at the resurrection of the dead, when their soul is united with their spirit. This celestial body will be free from the corruption of the flesh, incorruptible, and glorified through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-4 supports this by stating:

*'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...
To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that
fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.'*

This passage reinforces the eternal nature of the celestial body, which believers receive as part of their heavenly inheritance.



Terrestrial Bodies

Immortal - the Redemption of the Physical Body

The Bible also teaches that the physical body can be transformed and preserved as immortal, meaning it will no longer be subject to death, yet remains physical in nature. This is referred to in the Bible as a terrestrial body.

Romans 8:11 emphasises this future transformation:

'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

This verse shows that the mortal body can be 'quicken' or made alive through the Holy Ghost, transforming it into an immortal state like that of Jesus Christ after His resurrection.

The Bible provides examples of individuals who were transformed and taken from earth with terrestrial bodies, without experiencing death. Enoch and Elijah are prominent examples, as both were translated directly into heaven (Genesis 5:24, 2 Kings 2:11).

Hebrews 12:23 refers to them as 'just men made perfect', showing that these individuals were perfected and taken into heaven in their immortal terrestrial bodies. Their translation reflects the possibility of physical bodies being transformed, without death, before the first resurrection.

Christ's Return

Celestial vs. Immortal Beings

The Bible speaks of two distinct groups that will be transformed at Christ's return: those who receive **celestial bodies**; and those who receive **immortal, terrestrial bodies**. This distinction is crucial in understanding the final transformation of humanity. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 describes the two groups:

'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.'

Those who have died in Christ are raised with celestial bodies, whilst others who are alive at Christ's return will be transformed, receiving immortal terrestrial bodies without experiencing physical death.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53 also confirms this:

'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump... the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.'

This passage clarifies that incorruptible bodies (celestial) are for the dead in Christ, while those still alive at His return will receive immortal terrestrial bodies.

The Future Redemption of the Body, Soul and Spirit

The Bible distinguishes between celestial and terrestrial bodies, each reflecting different aspects of God's plan for the future redemption of His people. As Romans 8:23 reminds us:

'we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.'

This speaks to the transformation of the physical body, which will be made immortal at Christ's return, ensuring that it is no longer subject to decay or death.

Additionally, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 highlights God's desire for the complete sanctification of believers:

'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

This verse refers to the holistic preservation of the spirit, soul and body, acknowledging that each aspect of the person will experience redemption in its proper order.

The **celestial body**, also called **incorruptible**, is received after death by those who have faith in Christ, representing the transformation of the soul and spirit.

The **terrestrial body**, also called **immortal**, will be transformed at Christ's return, ensuring that those still alive will experience a change, preserving the physical body for eternity without experiencing death.

If you'd like to understand more about these teachings, contact us or join us for a discussion on this important topic.



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