

# Refuting Resurrection Errors

*By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- July 28, 2013*

## INTRODUCTION:

A. Thanks for joining me here on Then and Now where we study the Bible and **history** to help us understand the **present** and shape a better **future**.

B. Let's pray --

Our Father in the Heavens above, Holy, Holy, Holy is Your Name. We ask for your presence with us, and your guidance, as we look at some difficult issues in this session. Give us humility to remember that we have all been guilty of believing and teaching error in the past. Help us to understand your truth so that we can back away from error. Help me as I deliver this lesson to say only what needs to be said, and to say it in a way that helps all of us understand You better and follow You more faithfully. We pray this in the Name of Your Glorious Son Jesus. Amen.

There are a couple of issues that we need to look at here in this session:

- (1) On Facebook this last week, there was a post which mentioned my name and attacked our **Individual Body** resurrection view, which teaches that we Christians living after AD 70 will receive our new immortal bodies immediately after death and go right to heaven. The skeptic who challenged the Individual Body View denies that Christians today (after AD 70) still get immortality and go to heaven when we die. That is one of the issues we will examine here.
- (2) The second is a similar misrepresentation of the Individual Body view by some fellow full preterists, who are advocates of the **Collective Body** view of the resurrection, who are saying that I am a futurist because I believe that Christians today (after AD 70) receive something new, different, or better after we die and go to heaven.

The connection between these two ideas may not be obvious to all of us right now, but I trust that it will be by the time we are finished with this lesson. That is why we are looking at both these issues in this session, because there is a definite similarity between them in the way they teach the resurrection as a "**fully fulfilled**" event at AD 70. The skeptic uses this "fully fulfilled" idea to deny our salvation and afterlife, while the Collective Body advocates use it to deny that we receive anything new, different, or better after physical death. Both of these denials are coming from the same "fully fulfilled" concept.

We need to note up front that we are not attacking the person, the motives, or the character of the individuals involved in this dispute, but rather simply defending our view from their attack. We certainly have the right to defend ourselves. Let's look at the skeptical attack first:

## No Immortality or Heavenly Afterlife after AD 70

The skeptic on Facebook rightly showed that 2 Cor. 5:1-10 ("absent from the body and at home with the Lord") was referring to what would happen to the first century saints at the Parousia, not to what would happen to saints after AD 70. But then he goes further to claim that the heavenly afterlife was no longer available to anyone after AD 70, and that Christianity did not and could not continue past the Parousia in AD 70, because all the benefits were given out then, with no more available afterwards. This is a radical cessationist view, which suggests that the church ceased to exist on earth after AD 70, and that believers today have no hope for an immortal body or heavenly afterlife after death. Here is the way **the skeptic** (Rivers of Eden, a.k.a. Chris Camillo) expressed his denial of our heavenly afterlife:

"... 2 Corinthians 5:8 was referring to the time of the Parousia (and not physical death). We know this because 2 Corinthians 5:4 refers to "mortality being swallowed up by life" which Paul was still anticipating would occur with the resurrection at the Parousia (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Isaiah 25:8). Thus, if Paul died before the Parousia, he would be among "the dead" who would not actually go up to be "with the Lord" until the Parousia (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). This is a critical problem for full preterists like Ed Stevens who claim that he's going to receive an "immortal body at death," because the only thing the apostles taught was "immortal body at the Parousia" (1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Corinthians 15). **Thus, people like Stevens who say that the Parousia is in the past, cannot make any biblical (exegetical) argument for "immortality" beyond that point.**" [Source Reference: This statement was made by Rivers Of Eden (Chris Camillo) on Facebook (Full Preterism) this week (July 18-25, 2013)].

I have to say that it is utterly flabbergasting to me how anyone could take such an argument seriously. If Hades was emptied and thrown into the Lake of Fire at the Parousia, like Revelation 20 teaches, then Christians can no longer go to Hades at death. Nor do we cease to exist, like the skeptic thinks. Apostle Paul resolved this issue for us, when he said that Jesus' death on **the Cross** covered all our sins **once-for-all**. Jesus does not need to come back into the flesh again multiple times AFTER AD 70 and die over and over again for our sins today. *Once was enough, "once-for-all."* The **benefits** of the Cross apply to all saints from the Cross onwards throughout all generations of the eternal kingdom. Likewise, this phrase "once-for-all" is used in reference to the Parousia, and the completion of the NT scriptures (Heb. 9:26-28; Jude 3). Both the Parousia and the writing down of New Testament Scriptures (like the Cross) were **once-for-all events** with **eternal on-going benefits** for all believers. This is why Paul said in Ephesians 3:21 that there would be "glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations of the age of the ages." It was not going to stop at AD 70 like this foolish skeptic has suggested. The **Cross** and the **Parousia** are both once-for-all events, and the **benefits** of those once-for-all events are available to "all generations of the church forever and ever." So, I am afraid that this skeptic on FaceBook has not read the Bible very carefully, nor realized the logical and biblical fallacy that he is making. His skepticism is totally out of sync with the scriptural principle of once-for-all atonement at the Cross, and once-for-all salvation at the Parousia. The benefits of the Cross and the

Parousia are ongoing and eternal after AD 70. I have listed below all the texts which use this "once-for-all" idea so that the reader can have the references to study. There is no need for us to go through them here. The principle of "once-for-all" is so easy to grasp, that even a caveman can understand it. We Christians today still have the same hope for an immortal body and a heavenly afterlife that the first century saints had. It was the Cross which guaranteed that hope, and the Parousia which fulfilled that hope and made all the benefits of the resurrection available to us, so that after the Parousia we have those benefits immediately after our physical death. The resurrection and its benefits were still future to those saints before the Parousia. The Cross guaranteed the resurrection and its benefits, but those benefits were not available to them until the Parousia and the resurrection event. And now, after the Parousia, we have those benefits available to us. They are reserved in heaven for us, and we receive them immediately after our physical death. That is what this skeptic on FaceBook just doesn't understand.

Those two events (Cross and Parousia) guaranteed the hope and made it available to us. The Cross purchased that salvation for us, and the Parousia delivered that salvation to us once-for-all, and made it available to us, so that when we die we can receive it immediately after death. Those two events do not ever need to be repeated. They were once-for-all events, but their benefits are available now and forever "to all generations" of those who are in the church and in Christ Jesus, just as it says in:

**Eph. 3:21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Those benefits did not cease at AD 70 like this skeptic wants us to think. Here is the list of all those New Testament texts which use this "once-for-all" language.

### "Once For All" Texts:

**Rom. 6:10** For the death that He died, He died to sin **once for all**; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. *[It is very clear here that Paul is affirming a continuing life of Christ after He was raised from the dead, and after AD 70 as well, forever and ever.]*

**Heb. 7:27** [Christ] does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did **once for all** when He offered up Himself.

**Heb. 9:12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place **once for all**, having obtained eternal redemption. *[Question: If this principle of "once-for-all" is valid, and it certainly is, then it proves that there could not be a cessation of the benefits at AD 70. Here is why I say that: If the benefits of the resurrection ceased at AD 70, then the benefits of the Cross, which was also a "once-for-all" event, ceased after the Cross. If this skeptic is going to insist that the benefits of the resurrection ceased after AD 70, then that means that the benefits of the Cross ceased after the Cross in AD 30! That means that we should not have any New*

*Testament books being written by any saved people after AD 30, talking about any benefits of the Cross that they were enjoying in Christ during that generation after the Cross and before AD 70. If those benefits ceased at the Cross, then they could not have been enjoying those benefits after the Cross during that transition period from AD 30 to AD 70. And so that helps us understand that the Cross and the Parousia are both "once-for-all" events, to be sure, but the benefits from those past events continue forever. The benefits of the Cross continued not only for a generation, but forever to all those who are in Christ. And the benefits of the resurrection at AD 70 continue forever afterwards as well, for all those who are in Christ.]*

**Heb. 9:26** Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now **once** at the **consummation of the ages** He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

**Heb. 9:27** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die **once** and after this comes judgment,

**Heb. 9:28** so Christ also, having been offered **once** to bear the sins of many, will **appear a second time for salvation** without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. *[Here again we see the Cross and Parousia mentioned as "once-for-all" events with continuing benefits forever. Both the Cross and the Parousia here are linked with the "consummation of the ages" when Christ appeared twice: once to bear the sins of many, and a second time to bring salvation to those who were eagerly waiting for it. If the benefits of the Cross continued on beyond AD 30, we would expect the benefits of the resurrection to continue on beyond AD 70.]*

**Heb. 10:10** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**.

**1 Pet. 3:18** For Christ also died for sins **once for all**, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; *[Notice Peter mentions that Jesus was made alive in the spirit, and does not talk about any cessation of that life, which is what would have to take place, if in fact this skeptic is correct in his idea that "once-for-all" events have a cessation of all benefits afterwards.]*

**Jude 3** Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all** handed down to the saints.

**Jude 5** Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things **once for all**, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

So, the arguments of this skeptic simply vaporize in light of these **once-for-all** scriptures. There is no logical or biblical substance to his mere assertions that all the benefits of the resurrection ceased at AD 70.

However, the **second issue** that we are going to look at here, that has been raised by some of our fellow full preterists who are advocates of the **Collective Body** view of the

resurrection, is a little more difficult to understand. And their basic argument is that when we say that we get our new immortal bodies at physical death and go to heaven, that this is another resurrection after AD 70, and that makes us futurists, because we are getting another resurrection after the complete fulfillment of the final resurrection at AD 70. They rightly assert that there cannot be any more resurrections after the complete fulfillment of the final resurrection in AD 70. However, they are assuming that getting immortality and going to heaven is another resurrection, when in fact IT IS NOT. So, I am going to contend here that getting immortality, or getting our new immortal bodies, and going to heaven after AD 70, is NOT another resurrection, and is therefore NOT futurist.

Therefore, we will spend the balance of our time here in this session looking at their attack on the **Individual Body** view of the resurrection.

## Getting Immortality after AD 70 is NOT Futurist!

Some of our fellow full preterists, dear brothers in Christ who teach the **Collective Body** View of the resurrection, on their discussion lists and their podcasts have repeatedly stated that any view of the resurrection which gives any of the benefits to saints AFTER AD 70 is *futurist*. In other words, they believe that AD 70 was the full and final giving of all the benefits of our salvation, so that we saints today do not receive or experience anything new, different, or better at our physical death, than what we already have now while here on earth in this life.

They say that those benefits (immortality and eternal life in God's presence) were already given to us at the Parousia in AD 70, and that we have them NOW already while we are in this life on earth (i.e., "Heaven Now" and "Immortal Body Now"). In a sense that is somewhat true, since they WERE made available for us (or reserved in heaven for us), but we did not receive all of those benefits at our conversion, nor do we experience all of those benefits during our life here on earth. The full receipt and experience of the rest of those benefits and blessings (immortal bodies and afterlife in heaven) does not come until we die and go to heaven.

But the **Collective Body** guys do not make that distinction between the making-available of those benefits (reserved in heaven) and the full and final receipt of those benefits at physical death. The Collective Body view teaches that there is nothing new, different, or better for us to receive or experience after physical death, than what we already have now in Christ in this life on earth. Therefore, they think that anyone who says that we will get a new immortal body and go to heaven at physical death is a *futurist*, because they see that as getting some kind of *resurrection benefits* long after the *resurrection event* has occurred. In their view, that is making the resurrection extend beyond AD 70 into the future, so that the resurrection is really not a past event after all.

They will not allow for the resurrection to be a **once-for-all event with ongoing benefits** forever afterwards to those who are in Christ and in the Church. They want to lock down all the benefits to AD 70, and say that all the benefits were given then, with

no more to be given afterwards (i.e., cessation of all the benefits at AD 70). That is similar to what the skeptic (hyper-cessationist) is saying, and plays right into the hands of the hyper-cessationist view. But I do not think the Collective Body guys see the similarity between their "heaven now" and "immortal body now" view and what the hyper-cessationists are saying. If they ever do see it, I think they will back away from it.

Now you see why I spent all that time at the beginning dealing with that skeptic's arguments, showing how he is easily refuted by this biblical concept of a **once-for-all event with ongoing benefits**. That same principle applies here in this discussion about the Collective Body view of the resurrection. *This concept of a once-for-all event with ongoing benefits refutes both of those errors: the Hyper-Cessationist error, as well as the "Heaven Now" and "Immortal Body Now" error.*

We describe the Collective Body view as a "heaven now" or "body now" view of the resurrection, because they teach that we are already dwelling in "heaven now" in some sense, and already have our immortal body NOW in some sense. That is the implication of their "fully fulfilled at AD 70" view of the resurrection event.

But it is not *futurist* to believe that we get something new, different, and better after physical death. That is merely receiving the ongoing benefits of the once-for-all Cross, Parousia, and Resurrection events. All the prophecies were indeed "fully fulfilled" once-for-all in AD 70. All full preterists agree on that. It is not another fulfillment of the resurrection prophecies today when we receive the **benefits** of that **once-for-all** resurrection in the first century. *We are merely receiving the benefits that were reserved in heaven for us at the once-for-all fulfillment of the resurrection in AD 70.* The **once-for-all** fulfillment principle easily explains this problem. So it is NOT FUTURIST at all for us Individual Body folks to suggest that we saints today receive those benefits at our physical death.

The only reason these Collective Body advocates have raised this issue, is for the purpose of ridicule and poisoning the well. It is nothing more than a scare tactic to frighten fellow preterists away from looking at the Individual Body View and the Literal Rapture View. In other words, they are trying to knock the opposing view down, in order to build their own view up. But they are forced to misrepresent our view in order to do that. They are setting up a strawman argument which does not fairly represent what we are actually teaching, and we will see that more clearly as we go through the rest of this lesson.

For instance, they accuse us of believing that the Resurrection is an ongoing process that is fulfilled over and over again after AD 70 every time someone dies and gets his new immortal body and goes to heaven. But that is a false accusation. We believe no such thing! We are not futurists!

The Resurrection was a once-for-all event that was "fully fulfilled" at the Parousia in AD 66-70. But just because the event occurred then, does not at all mean that the benefits of that resurrection cannot be given to saints later after AD 70 when those saints die.

That is the nature of **once-for-all** events like the Cross and the Parousia. Those two events are never-to-be-repeated. Yet they have **ongoing** implications, applications, and **benefits** to all saints throughout all generations of the eternal kingdom after AD 70. So it is NOT futurist at all to suggest that we saints today receive those benefits at our physical death. When we receive our immortal bodies and go to heaven at physical death, it is not a new resurrection event. It is merely receiving the **benefits** of the once-for-all resurrection event at AD 70.

Therefore, we are not fulfilling any resurrection prophecies when we die and receive our new immortal bodies and go to heaven. We are simply receiving the benefits that were reserved in heaven for us at the once-for-all fulfillment in AD 70. At the resurrection event in AD 70, immortality and heaven were made available once-for-all to all saints who die after AD 70. They do not have to be raised out of Hades to get those benefits, because saints after AD 70 no longer go to Hades at physical death. Therefore they cannot be raised out of Hades. So there is no resurrection for saints after AD 70, because we don't go to Hades, and consequently do not need to be raised back out of there. You can't be raised out of something that you never went into in the first place!

So, resurrection no longer applies to Christians after AD 70. When we die, there is no resurrection out of Hades, but instead we simply receive our new immortal bodies and go immediately into heaven. That is not a resurrection. It is merely receiving the benefits of the once-for-all resurrection event in AD 70.

Now that is an important point, that we need to constantly emphasize. It is not very well understood, not even by all of us Individual Body advocates. There is a big difference between what the Collective Body guys are accusing us of believing, versus what we actually believe. Yet they persist in constructing their strawman arguments, and then knocking them down, and pretending like they have refuted the Individual Body View. But in reality, they have only knocked down a "strawman" misrepresentation of our view, and not the view itself.

Furthermore, they have proved too much against their own view while trying to knock down ours. For instance, they have admitted to me, in private conversations and on the Internet, that they believe there was a resurrection of dead saints out of Hades in AD 70, with Hades then being emptied and done away with, and that saints now after AD 70 no longer go to Hades at physical death, but instead go into the **presence of God** for eternity. Now notice that they do not call it "**heaven**." They will say "the presence of God," but they will not say we go to heaven. They will simply say that we go into the presence of God for eternity, because they believe we are already in "**heaven now**."

**This raises a very interesting question for our Collective Body brothers:** Do we saints today, who are living after AD 70, receive anything or experience anything after physical death which is new, different, or better than what we already have here and now in this life on earth?

When I have posed this question to some of the Collective Body guys, they immediately deny that we receive anything at physical death which we do not already have now in this life on earth. They know where I am going with this question, and they know that if we saints do get something new, different, or better at death, then their Collective Body view is negated. They have to maintain their "heaven now" and "immortal body now" position in order to be consistent.

Yet, I have their own words in print where they admit that we DO experience something new, different, or better after physical death. And they have to admit this, or else face the accusation that they are denying our hope in an immortal heavenly afterlife, which they admit is definitely different and better than this physical life on earth. You would not believe the amount of semantic word games, shell games, bait and switch games, and obfuscation that they engage in to hide this admission. They know they are inconsistent on this, and so they set up a strawman argument against us, in order to deflect our attention away from their own inconsistency. But those kind of dodging tactics only work for so long, until the smoke clears and the dust settles, and people finally see the implications of what they are actually saying.

They allow their own Collective Body view to grant those benefits after physical death without attaching the futurist label to it, but they will not allow the Individual Body view to grant those same benefits after physical death without accusing us of being futurists! Do you see the **inconsistency** here?

I need to share with you some of the recent email interactions that I have had with the Collective Body advocates. After looking at their actual words, I think we will see their inconsistency and cover-up tactics very clearly.

I need to make the point here that I once took the Collective Body View, for about 15 years until 1993 when I finally abandoned it. So I understand their view. I once took their view, but I backed away from it, and I am explaining here why I backed away.

Here are some of the questions that I asked those guys, and their answers to these questions really made me have second thoughts about the Collective Body view.

For instance, I have had this conversation with numerous guys who take the Collective Body view, over and over throughout the last twenty or so years:

### **Conversations with Collective Body advocates:**

1. When I asked one of the CBV advocates what we will get and where we will go after we die, he said, "**I am never going to die!**" (based on John 11:26). I said, "You mean you are never going to die *physically*?" He said, "I wasn't talking about *physical* death." But I was! And I still am! Please tell me what you believe we will get and where we will go after we die *physically*.



2. When he realized he would now have to explain what happens to us after *physical* death, he changed his response to, "**I don't know what happens to us after physical death.**"
3. When I chided him for claiming to have a comprehensive view of the resurrection and the afterlife, but yet had no real explanation for what the afterlife would be like, he morphed again. He said, "**I will be in glory.**" So I asked: Are you saying that at physical death you are going to go **somewhere else** and get **something different or better** than what you already have now? That is when he morphed again (chameleon-style) and went back to his former assertion that we are already in "**heaven now**" and already have our "**immortal body now**," and that at physical death we will not get anything new, different, or better than what we already have.
4. So I asked, "If we are already in "heaven now" and already have our new "immortal bodies now," then what is there to hope for after physical death? And what did you mean when you said that after physical death you will be in glory? Are we in glory now already, or do we have to wait until after physical death to go there? And if we have to wait until physical death to go there, how is that **glory** different or better than the "heaven" that you say we are already in now? Is "glory then" any different or better than "heaven now"? If not, then according to your view we are already in glory. If glory IS something different or better than "heaven now," then you are admitting that we do not yet have everything while we are still in this earthly body, and that we do get something new, different, or better after physical death. So, which is it? You cannot have it both ways.
5. The Collective Body advocate clammed up at that point and refused to continue the conversation, since he could see where it was headed, and he did not want to go there. He did not want to admit that there are greater experiential blessings waiting for us in heaven after we die physically. That would contradict his "heaven now" and "immortal body now" (IBN) view, and his belief that "everything has been fulfilled with nothing else to be added after AD 70" (i.e., the "completely fulfilled" view).
6. The Collective Body advocates consider those of us who believe that we get something new, different, and better after we die physically, as being futurists. They do not think that we CAN get anything more at physical death than what we already have now in this life on earth, because that would mean that the prophecies about our afterlife are not yet fulfilled until we die physically. That would put some fulfillments of prophecy after AD 70, and make us futurists. But we have already shown above that the resurrection was a **once-for-all** event, just like the Cross, and that it has ongoing benefits to be received at physical death, just like the Cross does. *If they are going to deny the ongoing benefits of the Resurrection after AD 70, then they have to deny the ongoing benefits of the Cross after AD 70 as well, because they are both once-for-all events with ongoing benefits afterwards.*
7. Do you see the problem with their view that we already have our immortal bodies now, and that we are already in heaven now? It robs us of our **afterlife hope**, and it deceives us into thinking that we are already in "heaven now" and already have our "immortal bodies now." But it is not *futurist* to believe that we get something better after physical death. All the resurrection prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70 when the heavenly afterlife was made available **once-for-all** to all saints, including those who die after AD 70. We are not fulfilling any new resurrection prophecies today when we

go to heaven and get our new immortal bodies, we are simply receiving and enjoying the **benefits** that were reserved in heaven for us at the **once-for-all** fulfillment of the Resurrection event in AD 70.

8. When I asked another one of the collective body advocates [William Bell] what kind of existence we will have in the afterlife after physical death, whether it will be in an individual body or in a disembodied pure spirit form. He said it will be in a pure spirit form without an individual body, but merged into the one big collective body. We might note here that the Greeks believed in a pure spirit disembodied afterlife, but the Jews did not. The Collective Body guys are always emphasizing how Jewish their resurrection view is, but in this case they are not even close. They are taking the Greek view of a disembodied pure spirit afterlife. However, I am still glad to see that our Collective Body brothers believe in some kind of conscious afterlife for individual saints, even if it is in a disembodied pure spirit form. In contrast, the skeptic that we mentioned above, denies our hope for a conscious afterlife in heaven with God for eternity.
9. When I asked him what happened to the individual dead saints at the AD 70 resurrection event, he refused to deal with that question from an individual body perspective, but instantly jumped over into his collective body paradigm to say that those dead saints were raised into the one big collective body where they will remain forever. And he says that we saints today are in that same collective **body now**, where we will remain forever. Do you see bait and switch game that he is playing?
10. These Collective Body guys refuse to answer my questions about the individual body, and they play word games (semantics) to redefine all the resurrection terms and concepts to fit their Collective Body View. They will not answer my questions about the individual body, other than to say that we have our immortal body now, and that we are in heaven now, and that we do not receive anything new, different, or better at our physical death.
11. And they HAVE to redefine all these terms in order to make the resurrection texts fit their paradigm. They think every resurrection text in the New Testament is only talking about a collective body resurrection, and has nothing at all to do with our individual bodies or our individual afterlife.
12. The Collective Body guys do not want to discuss any of the biblical resurrection texts from an Individual Body perspective. They immediately jump over into their Collective Body framework and redefine all the terms and concepts in order to make those texts fit their Collective Body view. They engage in what I call "gold medal exegetical gymnastics" (better known as waving their magic hyper-spiritualizing wand over a biblical text) in order to avoid dealing with the individual body implications, so that they can redirect the discussion into their collective body paradigm.

I have included some more of this kind of dialog and interaction with the Collective Body guys down at the bottom of this lesson outline, so that you can see more examples of how they respond to questions about their Collective Body view.

## IN CONCLUSION:

We have looked at a couple of issues that are currently floating around within the Preterist movement:

1. The radical hyper-preterist and skeptical view, the **hyper-cessationist** view of Chris Camillo (Rivers of Eden) that believes in NO afterlife for Christians after AD 70, and bases it on this idea that the Resurrection occurred in AD 70 and was "fully fulfilled" then, and therefore there are no benefits at all for any Christians after AD 70.
2. The Collective Body view which accuses us of being **futurists** for saying that we saints today (after AD 70) get to experience the full benefits of the once-for-all "fully fulfilled" Resurrection when we get our new immortal bodies and go to heaven at our physical death.

We noticed that these two views have something in common: i.e., the idea that everything was fully fulfilled in AD 70, especially in regard to the resurrection, so that there can be no additional resurrections or benefits given to any saint after AD 70.

We noticed the inconsistency of the Collective Body view when they admit that we saints today (after AD 70) DO RECEIVE the redemptive benefits of the Cross. When we are converted and become Christians and are born again and regenerated, we are receiving the benefits of that **once-for-all** event called the **Cross**. And when we die physically, we receive the **benefits** of that once-for-all **Resurrection** event in AD 70. Do you catch the power of that?

Our Collective Body brothers just simply do not get that point. They do not understand this **once-for-all** principle with **ongoing benefits** afterwards. They are inconsistent on that. They will admit that we DO RECEIVE the redemptive benefits of the Cross at our conversion and regeneration, but they do not like to hear the idea that we receive any benefits of the Resurrection at our physical death. But both the Cross and the Resurrection are first century events that were "fully fulfilled" by AD 70. It is not consistent to allow the benefits of the once-for-all Cross event to be received and experienced today, but not allow the benefits of the once-for-all Resurrection event to be received and experienced today as well.

Since this is receiving and enjoying something different and better than what we already have while here on earth, it seems to me that they are guilty of the charge of **futurism** also, unless they want to agree with us that we are only receiving the **benefits** of a once-for-all resurrection, and not experiencing **another resurrection** after AD 70.

Since they believe that we get the benefits of the Cross after AD 70, without having Christ die on the Cross again, and since some of them believe that we get to go into the presence of God and enjoy Him forever after physical death (which is "far better" than anything we are experiencing here on earth) without another resurrection having to take place, why is it somehow FUTURIST for us to believe that we get those same benefits of the once-for-all events of the Cross and the Parousia? They need to realize their inconsistency here. If it is FUTURIST for us to receive those benefits after AD 70, then it is FUTURIST for them as well.

Otherwise, if they continue teaching that the resurrection event was fully fulfilled in AD 70, and that all its benefits were fully dispensed at AD 70 with nothing else to be

received or enjoyed after AD 70, then they are playing right into the hands of the skeptical hyper-cessationist like Rivers of Eden (a.k.a. Chris Camillo). He just loves to hear the Collective Body guys say that the resurrection was fully fulfilled in AD 70, with nothing else to be received or experienced afterwards, and that we are already in heaven now, and that we already have our immortal bodies now. That really makes his hyper-cessationist argument complete, and utterly destroys our afterlife hope of receiving a new immortal body and going to heaven to live forever.

*Are the Collective Body guys so desperate to maintain their "heaven now" and "immortal body now" paradigm, that they would rather be seen as agreeing with a hyper-cessationist skeptic like Chris Camillo, than to admit that we Individual Body folks are just as much Full Preterists as they are? Do you see their inconsistency here?*

In closing, here is a question and answer that I want us to consider. I asked this question to a group of Collective Body guys on the PretCosmos discussion list. Below is my own answer to the question, so that you can better understand how the Individual Body View explains the concept of **once-for-all** event with ongoing **benefits** afterwards.

**[MY QUESTION]** Am I a futurist for believing that the **benefits** of the **once-for-all** event of the Resurrection of the dead out of Hades in AD 70 are applied to me at my regeneration, and given to me to enjoy and experience at the time of my individual physical death?

**[MY ANSWER]** Absolutely NOT! The resurrection of the dead ones (individual disembodied souls of individual saints) out of Hades was a once-for-all event (just like the Cross) which was "fully fulfilled" in AD 70 when ALL the dead saints who were in Hades were raised out of there, never to return. Hades was forever once-for-all cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20). After AD 70, we saints do not go into Hades when we die, so we do not need to be raised out of Hades after we die. There are no more resurrections out of Hades, because no saints go there now after AD 70. We saints now go to heaven and get our new immortal bodies immediately after physical death. That is a **benefit** of the **once-for-all** fully fulfilled resurrection of the dead out of Hades in AD 70. It is NOT another resurrection out of Hades! Futurists do not believe that the once-for-all resurrection of the dead out of Hades has occurred yet. But full preterists believe it occurred in AD 70. It was a **once-for-all event** at AD 70, and not an ongoing process of going to Hades and rising back out of Hades after AD 70.

Resurrection (out of Hades) no longer applies to us, because no saint after AD 70 goes to Hades. We can't be raised out of Hades if we never go there in the first place. So there is no such thing as a "**resurrection at death**" for the individual Christian today after AD 70. And I have heard the Collective Body guys say that "Ed Stevens believes in a resurrection at death." I do not believe that. And here is why:

My afterlife view ("immortal body at death" - IBD) does not describe the reception of the immortal body at death as being a "**resurrection at death**" (like the Collective Body guys have falsely accused). That phrase ("resurrection at death") is a strawman misrepresentation of my view. The resurrection out of Hades was a once-for-all event at AD 70 which has now been fully fulfilled. No saints go to Hades any more after AD 70,

so there is **no more resurrections** of saints out of Hades. *We are not raised at death.* We simply put on our new immortal bodies and go to heaven to dwell with Christ and all the saints. That “putting on” of our new individual immortal bodies at death is **NOT a resurrection**. The resurrection of the dead out of Hades was a once-for-all (never to be repeated) **fully fulfilled event** at the Parousia in AD 70.

It is also an incorrect use of terminology to say “**resurrection body**.” The futurists invented that phrase, but the bible does not use it. Nor does it use the phrases “resurrection of the flesh” or “resurrection of the body.” All of those phrases are unbiblical. Instead, the Bible uses the phrase “**resurrection of the dead ones**” (out of Hades). Big difference. The resurrection of the dead at AD 70 was not a resurrection of bodies out of the ground, but rather a resurrection of **disembodied souls out of Hades**. Big difference.

And that resurrection of the dead ones (out of Hades) is a past event. It was a **once-for-all event** (just like the Cross) at the Parousia in AD 70. However, there are **benefits** of that once-for-all event which we can enjoy now after AD 70 when we die and go to heaven and receive our new immortal bodies. Futurists do not believe we have those benefits yet, but FULL PRETERISTS DO BELIEVE we have those benefits reserved in heaven for us, and given to us immediately after our physical death. So it does not make us **futurists** to believe that those benefits are given to us at our physical death, because it is not a resurrection out of Hades.

Thus, the claim by the Collective Body folks, that the Individual Body view is “futurist,” is a false accusation and a strawman misrepresentation of what we actually believe. Furthermore, it is especially inconsistent for them to call us “futurists” when they themselves believe that they are getting those same benefits of the Cross and the Resurrection today after AD 70, just like we are. **If we are “futurists” for believing that, then they are too!**

I would encourage those dear brothers to withdraw that accusation, and set their own house in order. They have some inconsistency problems of their own that they need to get worked out first, before they start labeling others as “futurists.” See the “Interactions” down below for more explanation of this.

That will wrap it up for this time. If this study has raised any questions or comments for you, please email me and give me some feedback. I would love to hear from you.

Thanks so much for listening.

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## Interactions with Collective Body Advocates

**My response** to Mike Sullivan's post on the PretCosmos BLOG on Dec. 10, 2012.

**[SULLIVAN]** The context is clear in that the immortal/incorruptible body as described in 1 Cor. 15 was a corporate body raised up at Christ's parousia or at "the end" of the OC age in AD 70. The dead ones (plural and comprised of individual souls) were raised into the corporate body. Abraham's Bosom or Hades was emptied and the dead were raised into the corporate immortal/incorruptible body at this time.

**[STEVENS]** But did they change locations in the unseen realm and get new individual immortal bodies at that time? Or was it just a status change? Did they get anything that we living saints do not have yet (such as new bodies and life in heaven)?

**[SULLIVAN]** The living were likewise changed and raised into this immortal/incorruptible body at this time.

**[STEVENS]** Does that mean that the only kind of immortal body that saints after AD 70 will ever get is their share in the one collective body that we already have now? Are you saying that we are in heaven now and that we already have our immortal bodies now, with nothing else to receive at physical death?

**[SULLIVAN]** Like Christ's work on the cross, His parousia in time positionally perfected and saved all those God will draw throughout all ages world without end.

**[STEVENS]** Does this mean that His Parousia (like the Cross) was a once-for-all event that has ongoing benefits for each new person who becomes a Christian after AD 70? Therefore, when we saints after AD 70 receive those benefits of the Cross and Parousia, it does not mean that the Cross and Parousia events have to be repeated in our day in order to get the benefits! Same thing goes for the Resurrection event. We can get the benefits of the once-for-all resurrection event without having another resurrection event in our day. So those who believe we get the benefits of the resurrection after AD 70 are not futurists.

**[SULLIVAN]** As far as how this positional and historical work (in the cross and parousia) is then realized for those in the new covenant age Post AD 70 -- when one walks through the gates of the city (through faith and repentance - which are free and sovereign gifts of God) he/she is converted and united into that glorified immortal/incorruptible body upon faith. Thus positional and eternal salvation already perfected through Christ's High Priestly redemptive work on the cross and His appearing a second time to complete salvation **now become realized in time for the believer post AD 70.**

**[STEVENS]** That is exactly what I am doing with the realization of those benefits after AD 70. The only difference is that you place the full realization at conversion, while I place the realization of it positionally at conversion, and fully experientially after we die

and go to heaven. But the point we must not miss here is that both of us are placing the realization of the benefits AFTER AD 70. If that makes me a futurist, then it makes you a futurist also.

**[SULLIVAN]** Upon faith in Christ post AD 70 a believer has inherited eternal life and "will never die" nor will they ever go outside the city because they actually have become a part of it (John 11:25-26; Rev. 3:12). They have become fully regenerated/raised and thus how much more will God's seed forever remain in them - thus they "cannot" nor "will" they "sin" (1 John 3:9).

**[STEVENS]** You are teaching the impossibility of sin or apostasy while on earth, and the perfection of saints on earth (pietism). This was the same idea that John Humphrey Noyes used to build his Oneida commune. That is indeed a logical implication of the "heaven now" and "immortal body now" error, which caused some Collective Body advocates (Tim King) to embrace Antinomianism and Comprehensive Grace (Universalism). It is anti-biblical to teach the idea that we "cannot" and "will" not sin any more while we are still in this life on earth.

**[SULLIVAN]** As was the case for the remnant/survivors (per Isaiah) of the Day of the Lord in the last days leading to the events of AD 66-70, a believer today can embrace the truths of Full Preterism and know and understand his/her position in Christ and that Christ has already returned by studying the Scriptures and examining the historical record of the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem/old covenant world in AD 70 (Mark 9:1; John 14:29). Upon faith in Christ post AD 70, a believer **fully sees** God's face and the curse of the [spiritual] death which came through Adam is **fully removed** (Rev. 21-22:3-4).

**[STEVENS]** In other words, you are saying that there is nothing more, different, or better for us to receive or experience after physical death than what we already have now as Christians in this fleshly life on earth? It seems to me that you are saying that we already have our immortal bodies NOW and are already in heaven NOW while still on earth in our fleshly bodies. If we "fully see God's face" now while in this life, then there is nothing more to see when we get to heaven. According to you, we have already "seen it all" while we were on earth! If the curse is "fully removed" then why is there still pain, suffering, tears, crying, tribulation, disease, sin, and evil in the world? Those things are certainly NOT a part of our heavenly afterlife, but they ARE STILL a part of our life here on earth. That implies that the full benefits of the curse being "fully removed" will not be received and experienced by us until we go to heaven after physical death. We certainly are not experiencing all of those benefits here on earth.

**[SULLIVAN]** As far as **what happens to a believer at the point of death** post AD 70 --  
- The bible teaches that the silver chord or spirit/soul continues to be cut/separated from the body ... and continues to go back to God who made it - except there is **no waiting place** and his/her **soul goes directly into God's presence** with his/her works following.

**[STEVENS]** In other words, you believe the soul of a believer is permanently separated from his/her individual body at physical death, and goes directly into God's presence without any kind of individual immortal body? Is that heaven, where "God's presence" is? Is their disembodied experience in God's presence "different" and "far better" than their fleshly life on earth? If so, how can you say that we already have heaven and immortality now, if we do not really go there and get that immortal existence with God until after physical death? Are we in heaven now with our new immortal bodies now, or NOT? If so, then there is nothing different or better to be received or experienced after physical death. We have it all right now. But if you say that there is a "far better" afterlife in God's presence after physical death, then you are just as much a futurist as I am, because you are placing the "far better" benefits in the afterlife, just like I am.

**[SULLIVAN]** A person's soul/spirit is not bodiless, because it remains in the immortal/incorruptible [Collective] Body - which was raised up and glorified at the parousia -- of which his/her soul had already been united to in faith and conversion (in time and history).

**[STEVENS]** That is a good example of redefining the terms to fit your paradigm, and redirecting the conversation away from talking about the individual body. In other words, those individual disembodied souls do not get a new individual body when they go into the presence of God at death. The only sense in which they have a body in the afterlife is their continued inclusion in the one big collective body of saints called the Church or Kingdom. In other words, they shed their physical bodies at death and live forever in the presence of God without an individual body. Do you realize that the Greeks taught the idea of a disembodied afterlife, while the Jews definitely believed in a bodily afterlife.

**[SULLIVAN]** As far as their **experiences in God's presence** and how it may differ from ours now on earth -- that is not something that we get a lot of details on (I do see them **worshipping and enjoying God**) and I prefer not to go beyond what is written - let alone build doctrines on speculations.

**[STEVENS]** You are not willing to speculate or look for any biblical teaching about our experience in God's presence after death, but you are very willing to speculate and provide all kinds of details about the collective body view of the resurrection! And what scripture do you cite to support your "speculation" that the believer who goes directly into the presence of God after death will be "worshipping and enjoying God"? Is that speculation on your part, or do you have scripture to back that up? And will that "worship and enjoyment of God" be any better than it was here in this life on earth, or will it merely be more of the same that we already have in our "heaven now"? And if it will be better than it is now, then you are admitting that we saints DO receive something new, different, or better after physical death. If believing that makes me a futurist, then it makes you a futurist also.

**[SULLIVAN]** Conclusion: There is continuity in regard to the nature of fulfillment within the real Full Preterist view (but not Ed's view) between the living saints at Christ's parousia and those alive today - which Ed denies.



[STEVENS] That is a false accusation and a misrepresentation of my Individual Body View. I do NOT "deny the continuity between the living saints today and those who were alive at the parousia." I clearly teach the same kind of heavenly reward and immortal bodies for all saints, regardless of whether they lived before the Parousia or afterwards. The nature of fulfillment (immortal bodies and afterlife in heaven) is the same (continuity) for both groups of saints (before and after AD 70). You need to retract this false accusation and misrepresentation.

[SULLIVAN] Because of their faith (which was kept by the power of God) at the parousia both the living and dead were raised/changed together into the immortal/incorruptible body. Peter calls this inheritance the OT prophets predicted to be "the salvation of the soul" not the transformation/change of ones biological fleshly body.

[STEVENS] Like I said above, the nature of fulfillment (immortal bodies and afterlife in heaven) is the same (continuity), not only for the living saints today and the living saints at the Parousia, but also for the dead saints who were raised at the Parousia. Those resurrected dead saints got the SAME (continuity) kind of reward (nature of fulfillment) that the living saints received (immortal bodies and afterlife in heaven). The Individual Body View teaches a strict continuity here. Furthermore, your mere assertion about what Peter meant regarding the "salvation of the soul" is only one possible meaning of that phrase. You have not proven that it can ONLY mean that. Nor would you even want to prove that, since it would prove too much against your other belief that there WAS a transformation/change of some kind of [collective] body at the Parousia. By asserting here that the resurrection/change was merely "salvation of the soul" (and not the body), you have refuted your own "bodily change" idea.

[SULLIVAN] The Bible depicts how the "salvation of the soul" through faith continues post AD 70 into the new covenant age in Revelation 21-22:17. Again, no transformation of physical bodies needed nor mention of biological death needed, in order to have **full access to the inheritance of the new creation** - just faith in the message that the Spirit and Bride bring.

[STEVENS] What do you mean by "access"? How is "full access" different from the "full realization and full experience" of all the benefits of that inheritance? It seems to me that you are playing semantic word games here. We have limited access to some of those benefits while we are in this life on earth. However, the full benefits are reserved in heaven for us, and will not be "fully accessed" and fully experienced until after we die physically and receive our new immortal bodies and go to heaven. The full benefits are reserved in heaven for us, and we gain "full access" to them immediately after death, at which time we get to fully experience all those benefits.

[SULLIVAN] The "**benefits,**" "**application,**" or "**ongoing**" fulfillment of Christ's work on the cross and parousia for **believers today** in the new covenant age is not a "hope deferred" but a "hope [fully] realized."

**[STEVENS]** Look closely at what you just admitted here. You mention the application of the benefits of the Cross and the Parousia to believers today (after AD 70)! I thought you said that all the benefits were "fully fulfilled" and given completely at AD 70, with no new, different, or better things left for us to get after AD 70. Which is it? You cannot have it both ways! Are we fully experiencing all the "benefits" right now while we are still on earth in our physical bodies, or will we have a "far better" experience of those benefits after physical death when we go directly into the presence of God? Furthermore, if I am supposedly a futurist for teaching that "believers today" (after AD 70) are still getting benefits of the Cross and Parousia, then so are you! You mentioned "ongoing fulfillments for believers today." That is the same idea that the Individual Body View teaches, which you have labeled as "futurist." If it is futurist for me to have ongoing benefits and applications of the Cross and the Parousia after AD 70, why isn't it futurist for you to have it? This looks like inconsistency to me. If you can have "ongoing benefits, applications, and fulfillment of the Cross and Parousia for believers today" after AD 70, then so can I. If that makes me a futurist, then it makes you a futurist also!

**[SULLIVAN]** Ed, similar to Frost, "sold-out" on the "nature of fulfillment" (long before Sam did), in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 and this compromise on the nature of fulfillment has created an error on the time of fulfillment (which becomes a future "hope deferred") for the believer today post AD 70 when it comes to the resurrection and new creation promises.

**[STEVENS]** See my response immediately above. In view of your admission in the previous statement above, that there are "ongoing benefits, applications, and fulfillment of the Cross and Parousia for believers today," it is totally inconsistent for you to make these false accusations against me. If I have "sold out" to futurism by believing in "ongoing benefits for believers today" (your words), then SO HAVE YOU! I could easily reverse the charges and accuse you of "selling out" to Max King's and Ward Fenley's "heaven now" and "immortal body now" views, which have misled so many people astray into Universalism, Antinomianism, skepticism, and hyper-cessationism. If my belief in "ongoing benefits for believers today" is a "hope deferred" and "an error on the time of fulfillment" (your words), then SO IS YOURS! You are guilty of the same "error". You are just as much a "futurist" as you accuse me of being! You believe in a post-70 realization of the full benefits of salvation, at least at the point of conversion, if not also at physical death. Both of these occasions (conversion and death) occur after AD 70. If I am a futurist simply because I believe we experience some of those benefits after physical death, then you are a futurist for believing that we get those "full benefits" at conversion (which occurs after AD 70)!

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## Interaction with William Bell (Dec. 11, 2012)

The blue text down below is William's reply to my questions. The red text is my interaction with his replies.

**[QUESTION]** What happens at physical death to the individual body and the individual soul/spirit of the individual saint?

**[WILLIAM BELL]** It returns to the dust as it always has and will, per Gen. 3:19.

**[ED STEVENS]** The physical body indeed returns to dust, while the conscious soul/spirit receives its new individual immortal body to dwell in heaven forever afterwards.

**[QUESTION]** Where does the individual soul/spirit of the individual saint go after his/her individual physical death?

**[BELL]** Wherever the corporate body of Christ goes/is. John 14:1-3, Rev. 7:17.

**[STEVENS]** Notice the obfuscation here. Bell does not want to deal with the question in regard to the individual disembodied soul, without immediately jumping over into his Collective Body paradigm, where he redefines the word "body" as pertaining to the collective body only. He does not want to talk about what happens to the individual physical body and the individual disembodied soul without framing within the collective body paradigm. He does not want to admit that the individual soul/spirit of the individual saint goes to heaven at physical death, because he believes we are already in "heaven now" while still alive on earth. Thus, he cannot say that the souls of saints go to heaven, because that would not fit his collective body view.

**[QUESTION]** Does the individual soul/spirit of the individual saint get a new individual body?

**[BELL]** No, the individual soul/spirit "has" an immortal body, i.e. the body of Christ, no need for another one, 2 Cor. 5:1-5.

**[STEVENS]** Note the obfuscation again. He will not deal with the question straight on. He does not want to talk about the individual soul/spirit of the individual saint. It does not fit anywhere in his Collective Body system, so he immediately jumps over into the Collective Body paradigm and evasively answers it from a collective body perspective. Notice his admission that the soul/spirit of the saint does not get a new individual body, because it already has a body (i.e., its share in the collective body). This means that the soul/spirit of the individual saint has a disembodied afterlife.

**[QUESTION]** Describe the nature of existence for the individual saint after physical death. Does his soul/spirit have conscious life in an individual immortal body, or is it individual consciousness in a disembodied form (pure spirit existence without a body of any kind), or is the individual merged into some kind of collective consciousness (collective body) like some Eastern religions suggest, or what?

**[BELL]** The Bible does not say what "form" we have. Judging from our status in Christ today, we do not lose our individual identity even though we are "merged" into the one body of Christ "in this life" and we are not like Eastern religions suggest, i.e. a "collective consciousness" so why would it be any different. Eastern religions should be left at that, in the East where they belong in the "collective consciousness" of uninspired speculations.

**[STEVENS]** More obfuscation again. He denies that there are any biblical texts that talk about the bodily form we will have in the afterlife. All he can admit about the nature of the afterlife for individual saints is to say that it "does not lose its individual identity" as it is "merged into the one [collective] body of Christ." But part of that individual identity is associated with our individual bodies. Without a bodily "form" in the afterlife, that identity would be diminished. We need to note again that the Greeks believed in a pure disembodied spirit existence like this, while the Jews (especially the Pharisees with whom Apostle Paul agreed) believed in an immortal bodily afterlife.

**[QUESTION]** How is the afterlife of the individual saint different than his life on earth, after his individual physical death?

**[BELL]** No more taxes, physical death, attending long funerals, working like a Hebrew slave, arguments on the nature of the resurrection, sex, [this one contributed by a single person who says they're not getting any anyway] labor pains, bad marriages, divorce, high gasoline prices, republicans or democrats, racism, breathing oxygen, using the toilet, running out of toilet paper, hungry children, paying mortgages, insurance, raking leaves, cleaning the garage, taking out the garbage, ice storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, house fires,...should I continue? That should be enough for anyone to want to go to heaven.

**[STEVENS]** Bell gave a pretty good description of what our afterlife will NOT be like, but he did not say what it WILL be like. Notice he steers clear of saying anything about whether that afterlife will be bodily or disembodied. He does not want to bring any other kind of body into the picture here, except the collective body. His collective body view will not allow him to say something like the following: The individual soul/spirit of the saint at physical death gets a new individual immortal body and dwells forever consciously in the unseen realm of heaven where Christ and all the individual saints are dwelling. Bell simply does not like to deal with the afterlife from the individual perspective. For him, it is all about the collective body.

**[QUESTION]** Am I a futurist for believing that the benefits of the once-for-all event of the Resurrection of the dead out of Hades at AD 70 are applied to me at my regeneration, and given to me to fully enjoy and fully experience at the time of my individual physical death?

**[BELL]** It depends. If you understand that whatever you received at your entrance into the corporate body is a "complete-comprehensive benefits package that covers you in life and death, rather than a partial package of which you get one type of benefit now and another benefit as explained above as a separate individual, not like anything received before by Pre-Post AD70 saints, and thus a new hope, salvation, resurrection, yes, for such would never have happened. Until you can prove that it belongs to the one gospel before the parousia and was the one hope, it is unsubstantiated and unsupported and currently the prospects do not look very good. My opinion.

**[STEVENS]** I appreciate the "no vote of confidence" here, brother! Not very encouraging! But I am absolutely NOT a futurist, and here is why: The resurrection of the dead ones (individual disembodied souls of individual saints) out of Hades was a once-for-all event (like the Cross) which was fully fulfilled in AD 70 when ALL the dead saints who were in Hades were raised out of there, never to return. Hades was forever once-for-all cast into the lake of fire. After AD 70, no saints ever go to Hades when they die physically. We saints after AD 70 now go to heaven and get our new immortal bodies after physical death. That is a benefit of the once-for-all fully fulfilled resurrection of the dead out of Hades in AD 70. Futurists do not believe that the once-for-all resurrection of the dead has occurred yet. But full preterists believe occurred in AD 70. It was a once-for-all event, and not an ongoing process of going to Hades and rising back out of Hades. Resurrection (out of Hades) **no longer applies to us**, because no saint after AD 70 goes to Hades. We can't be raised out of Hades if we never go there in the first place. So there is no such thing as a "resurrection at death" for the individual Christian today after AD 70. Therefore, my afterlife view ("immortal body at death" - IBD) does not describe the reception of the immortal body at death as being a "**resurrection at death.**" That phrase ("resurrection at death") is a strawman misrepresentation of my view. The resurrection out of Hades was a once-for-all event at AD 70 which has now been **fully fulfilled**. No saints today go to Hades, so there is **no more resurrections** out of Hades. We are not raised at death. We simply put on our new immortal bodies and dwell in heaven with Christ and all the saints. That "putting on" of our new individual immortal bodies at death is **NOT a resurrection**. The resurrection of the dead out of Hades was a once-for-all (never to be repeated) fully fulfilled event at the Parousia in AD 70. Resurrection (out of Hades) no longer applies to us, since we no longer go to Hades at death. It is also an incorrect use of terminology to say "**resurrection body.**" The futurists invented that phrase, but the bible does not use it. Nor does it use the phrases "resurrection of the flesh" or "resurrection of the body." All of those phrases are unbiblical. The Bible instead uses the phrase "resurrection of the dead ones" (out of Hades). Big difference. The Bible is not talking about a resurrection of bodies out of the ground, but rather a resurrection of disembodied souls out of Hades. And that resurrection of the dead ones (out of Hades) is a past event. It was a once-for-all event (like the Cross) at the Parousia in AD 70. However, there are benefits of that once-for-

all event which we can enjoy now after AD 70 (immortal bodies at death). Futurists do not believe we have those benefits yet, but FULL PRETERISTS like me DO BELIEVE we have those benefits available for us immediately after our physical death.

## COLLECTIVE BODY RESURRECTION

**[QUESTION]** Was there a resurrection of a collective body (the church) at AD 70?

**[BELL]** Yes. "Together with my death body they shall rise, Isa. 26:19f; Dan. 12:2-3.

**[STEVENS]** The Individual Body View agrees that the Bible talks about a collective body being raised in the Last Days. The only quibble that we would have with the Collective Body View is over which biblical texts are talking about the collective body resurrection versus which ones are talking about the resurrection of disembodied souls out of Hades. For instance, Jesus and the apostles talk about the bride of Christ (the collective body, the Church) being taken by the Groom to His Father's House where He had prepared a place for her to dwell with Him and live happily ever after (Matt 25:1-10; John 14:3). That bride (the collective body, the church) was composed of both the dead saints (who were RAISED out of Hades - 1 Cor 15:52) and the living saints (who were CHANGED from mortal to immortal - 1 Cor 15:51-52; 2 Cor 5:1-4). Both groups, the resurrected dead and the changed living, were caught up TOGETHER (as one collective body) to be with the Lord at His Parousia, where they would remain with Him forever afterwards (1 Thess 4:17). That was a once-for-all resurrection of the dead out of Hades and a bodily change of the living saints. It has been fully fulfilled, never to be repeated again. But there are ongoing implications and benefits that come to the children who are born out of that marriage relationship between Christ and His Church in heaven. All those who become Christians after AD 70 are the children of that marriage, and reap the benefits of being a part of the Family of Christ and His Church. Futurists do not believe that marriage has been consummated yet, so they do not believe we have the full benefits available to us yet. They think we are still waiting for the dead to be raised out of Hades. But we Full Preterists DO believe the marriage of the Lamb has occurred, and that it was a once-for-all event (not an ongoing process) that was fully fulfilled at AD 70 — with ongoing implications and benefits for those who become Christians after AD 70.

**[QUESTION]** Was that resurrection of a collective body a once-for-all event which was fully fulfilled at AD 70, or is it an ongoing process that has not been fully fulfilled yet?

**[BELL]** Was the death of Christ, i.e. the salvation of the "body" Eph. 5:26, a once-for-all event fully fulfilled in AD 70, or is it a process that has not been fully fulfilled yet. Did they received the "end (telos) of their faith or not? Did Christ die a once for all/all time death or not. Do we need another individual death of Christ to supplement and append to the one corporate death of Christ for us to experience the salvation brought about in the corporate death of Christ?

**[STEVENS]** I totally agree that the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living was definitely a once-for-all event that occurred at the Parousia in AD 70. It has been fully fulfilled. It is NOT an ongoing process resurrection.

**[QUESTION]** If the resurrection of the collective body was a once-for-all event which was fully fulfilled at AD 70, does it have any **ongoing or future benefits** that each individual saint gets to enjoy either while he/she is alive on earth or after his/her individual body physically dies?

**[BELL]** Already explained. If the death of the Christ as the "corporate body" of Israel was a "once-for-all" event which was fulfilled in (at the cross historically but redemptively/soteriologically in AD70, does it have any ongoing or future benefits that each individual saint gets to enjoy either while he/she is alive on earth or after his/her individual body physically dies? "If you do not believe that I am he you shall die in your sins and where I am you cannot come. If a man keeps my saying he shall never see death. He who believes in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? John 8:24, 51, 11:25-26.

It is not totally accurate to speak about "future" benefits per se, because the benefits of Christ's death are ETERNAL and thus ever present, unending and thus always present without end. So we are not getting a "future blessing" we have an eternal blessing. Christ IS ETERNAL LIFE,(1 John 5:20) he is not a future blessing but one whom we have now and forever without end. Is this the Christ who should come, or do we look for another?

**[STEVENS]** Why does Bell engage in so much beating around the bush here? Why doesn't he just come right out and say: "Yes, there are ongoing benefits of the Cross and Parousia which are not all received at conversion, nor fully experienced by saints in this life until after their physical death"? The reason he does not want to spell that out very clearly, is because he knows it paints him as being just as much of a futurist as he says I am. He has to obfuscate it, so that he is not seen as being inconsistent. He does not want us to know that he has saints after AD 70 receiving and experiencing some of the benefits of the Cross and Parousia. That is putting something into the future after AD 70, which his "fully fulfilled" paradigm does not allow. But the point here is that if Bell can have the saints after AD 70 receiving benefits of the Cross and Parousia, then it is not futurist for me to suggest the same thing. Both the Cross and the Parousia were once-for-all events which definitely have ongoing implications and benefits that each individual saint gets to enjoy not only while he/she is alive on earth, but even more so after his/her individual body physically dies. The futurist cannot say that about the Parousia, but we Full Preterists can, including both Collective Body and Individual Body views. So, there is no excuse for Bell and Sullivan to accuse me of being a futurist, especially when they believe the same thing I do about the ongoing benefits of the once-for-all "fully fulfilled" Cross and Parousia events.

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**[FROM ED TO A FORMER COLLECTIVE BODY ADHERENT]** You noted that we should not **"totally discount the spiritual changes that occurred"** at the Parousia. I totally agree, and that is why I describe the Individual Body View (IBV) of the resurrection as a combo view. It doesn't deny the covenantal and spiritual aspects at all, but includes them in the list of benefits that the saints received at the Parousia. I take a BOTH/AND **inclusive** approach to that. However, it is the Collective Body View (CBV) which takes the EITHER/OR **exclusive** approach on this. They only allow the "spiritual changes" to occur at the Parousia, which they admit were NOT **"discernible with the senses"** (i.e., **NOT experiential**). Do you see who is doing the **"discounting"** here? It is not me! It is the CBV advocates. They are the ones who believe we already have all the benefits of that completed salvation (i.e., "BODY now" and "HEAVEN now"), and that there is nothing more to be gained at physical death than what we already have right now (not even experientially)! This is what the Collective Body guys are saying. When I asked William Bell what his existence after physical death will be like, and whether it would be in an individual immortal body or not, he explained that it will NOT be in an individual body. It will be in a pure disembodied spirit form, as a part of the one big collective body. That answer may not bother you, but it does bother me. It robs me of my hope for a new immortal body and a full experience of all the benefits of Christ's salvation in the afterlife. William Bell's afterlife view is similar to the Greek Platonic afterlife concept (disembodied pure spirit existence), along with the Hindu idea of being merged into the one big "ALL" collective consciousness. Apostle Paul argued strenuously against the Greeks in Athens, defending the individual bodily afterlife concept. And he agreed with the Pharisees, who also had an individual body afterlife concept. Paul clearly taught an individual bodily afterlife, which was **experiential**, and which was **"far better"** in every way than his physical bodily life on earth. William Bell is simply out of sync with Apostle Paul on this.