

# The Promise of Heaven, the Threat of Hell . . . Are They Optional?

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from St. Thomas Aquinas's sermon notes on the Apostles' Creed, §11 and §12:

faith and hope in the resurrection of the body helps us in four ways:

- 1) they remove the sadness occasioned by the death of others (or our own) *I Thes 4:12*
- 2) they remove fear of death *Heb 2:14-15*
- 3) they inspire us with the motive to do good works *I Cor 15:9*
- 4) they draw us away from evil *John 5:29*

the four conditions applicable to all who rise from the dead:

- 1) identity of body *I Cor 15:53 and Job 19:26*
- 2) different quality of body *I Cor 15:53 and Matthew 22:30*
- 3) integrity of body *I Cor 15:52*
- 4) perfect age *Eph 4:13*

the good will receive four gifts:

- 1) clarity *Mt 13:43*
- 2) impassibility *I Cor 15:43 and Rev 21:4*
- 3) agility *Wis 3:7*
- 4) subtlety *I Cor 15:44*

(the damned will experience four evils:)

- 1) opacity *Is 13:8*
- 2) passible but never destroyed *Is 66:24*
- 3) weighed down *Ps 149:8*
- 4) carnal *Joel 1:17*

eternal life means perfect union with God: sight, praise, fulfillment, delight, honor, knowledge, security, companionship (no jealousy)

everlasting death means pain of loss and aversion from God and all good things, remorse of conscience, pain of sense, despair of salvation

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Novels to read:

*Chariot of Fire*, E.E.Y. Hales (Doubleday)  
*Descent into Hell*, Charles Williams (Eerdmans)  
*The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis (HarperCollins)  
*The Last Battle*, C. S. Lewis (HarperCollins)

Movies to see:

"Stairway to Heaven," David Niven, 1946 (re-released by Martin Scorsese through Columbia)  
"Babette's Feast," 1987  
"Places in the Heart"

Books to read:

*Faith / Hope / Love*, Josef Pieper (Ignatius Press)  
*Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Heaven*, Peter Kreeft (Harper & Row)  
*Love Is Stronger Than Death*, Peter Kreeft (Harper & Row)  
*The Weight of Glory* and "Learning in War-time," C. S. Lewis (HarperCollins)  
*The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis (Simon & Schuster; HarperCollins)  
*Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?* Hans Urs Von Balthasar (Ignatius)

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On eschatology and the new creation, see the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences  
<http://www.ctns.org/>