



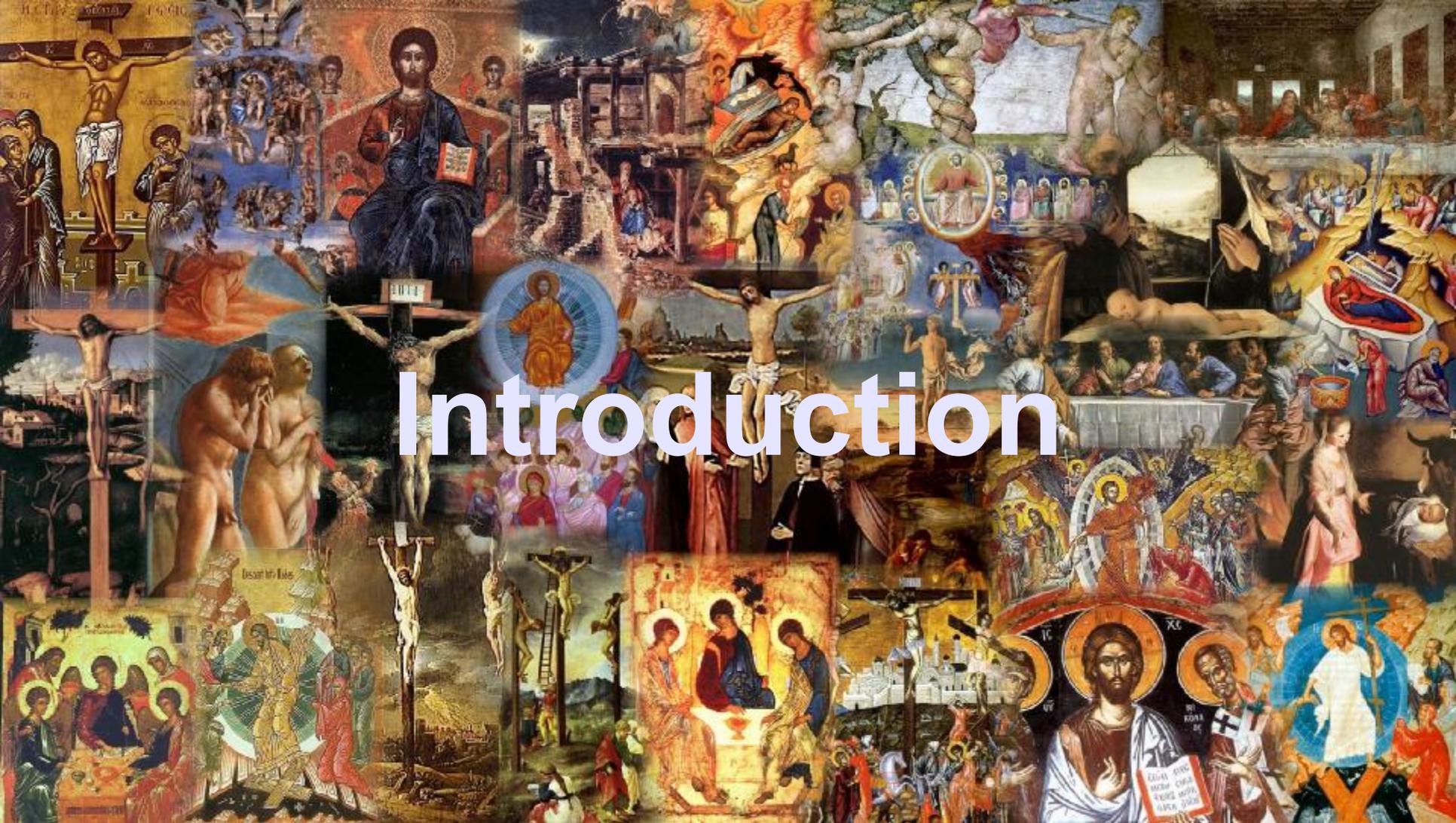
How Are We Saved?

7. Salvation: East and West

St. John in the Wilderness

I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed
gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him . . .
Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like thee, majestic in holiness,
terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Exodus 15: 1-2, 11



Introduction

Introduction

- The life we live now is not the life God intended for us.
- God made us in the image and likeness of God.
- God intended for us:
 - to live a life luminous with the presence of God,
 - for life abundant,
 - for life filled with all that is loving, good and beautiful.
- For God is Love, The Good, the principle of Beauty itself. ■

Introduction

- But we do not currently live the life intended by God.
- God took a chance and gave the first humans the free will to love or to not love God, their creator, the source of their being.
- In prehistory, the first humans, Adam and Eve, exercised their free will and chose to reject God, to sin.
- The choice to sin:
 - corrupted human nature,
 - tarnished or nearly destroyed the image and likeness of God within us. ■

Introduction

- Human beings:
 - became incapable of not sinning, and
 - lost the ability to live eternally with God, each person destined to lose their life through death.
- All of Adam and Eve's descendants:
 - suffer from this corrupted human nature, and
 - they are born, grow up, and die within a human society shaped and formed by sinful, mortal human beings. ■

Introduction

- How has this situation been fixed, repaired?
- *In other words:* how have we been saved? ■

Introduction

- God's response:
 - to repair and fix the consequence of sin entering the world,
 - to repair and fix the corruption of human nature, the tarnishing or even destruction of the image and likeness of God within us,
 - to save us,
- was this:
 - God himself, the second person of the Trinity of God, came to live among us as a human being.
 - God himself became a human being to save and redeem the world, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. ■

Introduction

- The questions we have been asking in this series are these:
 - 1. How exactly does the life, death and resurrection fix up or repair the corruption of human nature and the ongoing consequences of that corruption, human sin and death?
 - How exactly does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus save and redeem us? ■

Introduction

- The questions we have been asking in this series are these:
 - 2a. What do we then have to do?
 - How should we respond to what God has done to fix up and repair what has happened to us?
 - How should we respond to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, to God's saving and redeeming work? ■

Introduction

- The questions we have been asking in this series are these:
 - 2b. What happens to us after we respond?
 - What should our lives look like once we have responded to God?
 - What is the purpose of our life on earth once we have responded to God?
 - What should we be doing during the journey of our lives once we have responded to God? ■

Introduction

- The questions we have been asking in this series are these:
 - 3. What exactly will we face in the world to come?
What ultimately are we being saved *for*?
 - How might the vision of what we are being saved for influence what we are doing during the journey of our lives? ■

Introduction

- There are differing answers to these questions.
- Often several of these answers could all be true, but a particular Christian tradition or denomination emphasizes one possible answer over the others.
- At other times the answers are mutually exclusive. If one is true, the other cannot be true.
 - One particular Christian tradition or denomination will say the first answer is correct. Another tradition will say no, that answer is incorrect. The second answer is the right answer. ■



God's Fixes

God's Fixes

- 1. How exactly does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus fix up or repair the corruption of human nature and the ongoing consequences of that corruption, human sin and death?
 - How exactly does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus save and redeem us? ■

God's Fixes

- Western Christians have tended to say the image and likeness of God within us is nearly destroyed.
- The only thing we can freely do is sin.
- Our **sinfulness** is the big problem.
- Death is a secondary problem, the "wages" of sin.
- God looks upon us and sees only an ugly sinner.
- The sight of us arouses the wrath of God. ■

God's Fixes

- For God to fix and repair this corruption of human nature and the consequence of that corruption, the abundance of human sin, Western Christians worry that:
 - Because our sins are an offense against God, and
 - Because God is an infinite being,
 - Our sins constitute an infinite offense against God.
 - And God's sense of justice demands payment of an infinite satisfaction or punishment for an infinite offense. ■

God's Fixes

- The big problem:
 - Because human beings are finite, we *cannot* pay an infinite satisfaction or punishment.
 - Yet because the offense is caused by a human being, *only a human being* can pay it.
- The only solution was for God to become human.
- Jesus, both infinite God and finite human being, was able to pay the infinite satisfaction or punishment our sins demanded by suffering and dying on the cross. ■

God's Fixes

- Protestant Christians believe Jesus' death on the cross paid back *all* the satisfaction or punishment due to *all* sins committed by humans beings for *all* time.
- Roman Catholic Christians believe Jesus' death on the cross paid back the infinite satisfaction due to our sins being an offense against God, but ...
 - *we* still have to pay back a finite "temporal" satisfaction due to our sins being an offense against ourselves and other people.
 - If we die before we have paid back this finite, "temporal" satisfaction due to our sins, then we must pay it back in "purgatory" before we can enter heaven. ■

God's Fixes

- Eastern Christians have tended to say the image and likeness of God within us is merely *tarnished*.
- We can still choose to do good.
- God still looks upon us with love and not with wrath.
- Eastern Christians deny God's sense of justice demands payment of an infinite satisfaction or punishment for the infinite offense of our sins.
- God simply forgives us. God *does not* require any satisfaction. ■

God's Fixes

- For God to fix and repair this corruption of human nature and the consequence of that corruption: human sin and death, Eastern Christian suggest that:
 - By becoming human, and by living *every* facet of human life: birth, the joys and the sufferings of life, and death, by "recapitulating" or "assuming" all of human life, Jesus healed the damage to human nature done by Adams and Eve's sin.
 - "What is not assumed is not healed."
 - By rising from the death, Jesus added the capacity to rise from the dead and share in the divine life of God to human nature.
 - "Jesus became human that we might become divine." ■



Our Response

Our Response

- 2a. How should we respond to what God has done to fix up and repair what has happened to us?
- 2b. What happens to us after we respond? What should our lives look like once we have responded to God? ■

Our Response

- There are three major paradigms, three major stories in answer to these questions.
- The answers of:
 - 1. Protestant Christians (part of Western Christianity)
 - 2. Roman Catholic Christians (part of Western Christianity)
 - 3. Eastern Christians. ■



Our Response: Protestant Christians

Our Response: Protestants

- In Western Christianity, the problem is:
 - the image and likeness of God within us is nearly destroyed.
 - The only thing we can freely do is sin.
 - God looks upon us and sees only an ugly sinner.
 - The sight of us arouses the wrath of God. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- Protestant Churches (Lutheranism, Reformed, Baptist, Methodist), teach:
- We must first establish a relationship with God through an event called **justification**.
- In **justification**, God grants us the "status" of being *up "right"* and *"just,"* even though inside we are *anything but* up "right" and "just" inside; inside we are still corrupt, filled with the decay and stink of sin.
- God "justifies" us by "cloaking" us, "clothing" us with Jesus and his righteousness and justice.
 - In other words: The righteousness and justice of Jesus is "imputed" to us.
- To be "justified" thus means we live "within" Jesus, cloaked, clothed, covered by the radiance of Jesus's righteousness and justice. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- *All* we need to be clothed, to be covered by Jesus and his righteousness and justice is to have **faith** (*sola fides*).
- Then, over our lives as justified people, with God's help (= God's grace), our corrupt inner selves will change, becoming holier, become more "sanctified."
 - One might say the radiance of Jesus' righteous and justice surrounding us slowly "bleaches" us over the course of our lives, "lightening" the darkness of our sinful inner selves.
- Our **sanctification** is thus a "process" that occurs after the "event" of **justification**. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- Protestant churches vary in how much they suggest we can grow in holiness (= in **sanctification**) in this life.
 - Lutherans: most pessimistic, would say we can hardly change at all or not at all in this life. True sanctification must await the world to come.
 - Methodists: most optimistic: teach we can achieve **Christian Perfection, Entire Sanctification** in this life through the grace of God.
 - Reformed Christians (and Baptists, who generally follow the Reformed tradition), lie somewhat between Lutherans and Methodists (but closer to Lutherans). ■

Our Response: Protestants

- Once we are justified through faith, we can think of ourselves as forming a "good tree", consisting of the combination:
 - the radiance of God's Spirit and the Jesus' righteousness and justice, covering and cloaking us,
 - our corrupt inner selves. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- This "**good tree**" that we form by living "within" Jesus, living covered, cloaked by the radiance of Jesus' righteous and justice,
- will *naturally* bear the "good fruit" of good works.
- Notice:
 - The "good fruit" are a side effect, a by-product, a natural consequence of being a "**good tree.**"
 - Producing good fruit *does not* in any way *make* a tree good.
 - The tree is already "good," and because it is good, it produces good fruit. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- That is: (leaving the metaphor):
 - Our good works are a side effect, a by-product, a natural consequence of being justified by faith.
 - Doing good works does not justify us.
 - We are already justified by faith, and it is because we are justified, that we produce good works. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- Some side notes:
- **High Calvinists = 5-Point or 4-Point Calvinists** (part of the **Reformed tradition**) believe:
 - God pre-decides (= **predestination**) who will be saved (the "elect") and who will be not be saved (the "reprobate").
 - God "zaps" each elected person with an *irresistible* grace, causing them to have faith. The elected person has *no choice* in the matter.
 - The elected person *can know* they are one of the "elected" (**Eternal Security** or **Blessed Assurance**) by:
 - the internal testimony of the Spirit in them,
 - the external evidence of the fruit of their lives. ■

Our Response: Protestants

■ **Moderate Calvinists** (primarily **Baptists**) believe:

- accepting Jesus as your savior (= having faith) is a *free* choice.
- If you have that moment of faith, if you freely accept Jesus as your savior, you can be assured of salvation (**Eternal Security** or **Blessed Assurance**).
- God will keep his promise to you to save you, no matter what you do later on. ■

Our Response: Protestants

- **Arminians** (part of the **Reformed tradition**, and all **Methodists**) also believe accepting Jesus as your savior (faith) is a *free* choice.
- But there is no **Eternal Security** or **Blessed Assurance**, because you always have the freedom to later reject God and lose your faith.
 -

Our Response: Protestants

- **Calvinists** and **Arminians** would all say that once you have faith:
 - the law and the commandments will no longer seem like a damning list of all the ways you don't measure up (= the "**second use**" of the law).
 - Instead, the law and the commandments become *instruction* (= the "**third use**" of the law) on how you should live your life, now that you are justified, cloaked with the radiant righteousness of Jesus). ■

Our Response: Protestants

- **Lutherans** would agree with **High Calvinists** that God pre-decides (**predestination**) who will be saved.
- But no one can know on this earth if they are "elected" or not. It is not for you to know such things.
- The challenge of this life is to *have faith*, to believe in the **gospel promise** of God's love and mercy, that Christ died *for you*.
- Lutherans are very leery of the "**third use**" of the law and the commandments.
 - They fear in following the law as instruction, you may begin to believe that your "work" in following the law is saving you. ■



Our Response: Roman Catholic Christians

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Roman Catholic Christians are part of Western Christianity, and with Protestants, largely agree:
 - Our problem is that the image and likeness of God within us is nearly destroyed.
 - The only thing we can freely do is sin.
 - God looks upon us and sees only an ugly sinner.
 - The sight of us arouses the wrath of God. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- To solve this problem, God gives us the "created grace" called **sanctifying grace** in Baptism (it could equally well be called justifying grace, or justifying-sanctifying grace), a grace that:
 - does not merely *cloth* or *cover* our fallen, corrupted natures,
 - but *shapes, molds* our souls so that we become *intrinsically* capable of being:
 - up "right" and "just," and
 - holy. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- The theory behind this “created” grace of **sanctifying grace**, comes from Thomas Aquinas trying to incorporate Aristotle's theory of virtue into Christian theology.
- Aristotle had noted when we practice something, it shapes us, forms us, hones us, making us better at it. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- For example, when we practice playing the violin, the constant, daily practice will gradually shape us, form us, hone us,
- so that playing the violin well becomes in us a “second nature”;
- playing well becomes a “habit.”
- Practice changes us from a bad violin player to a good violin player.
- Practice changes us from someone who makes ugly, dissonant music to someone who makes beautiful music. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Aristotle reasoned becoming virtuous must be the same.
- We become virtuous by practicing / doing virtuous things.
- We become good by practicing / doing good things. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Aquinas suggested that God molds, shapes, hones, forms our soul, so that the shape and form of our soul:
 - is the shape and form a soul would have *if it could* acquire years and years of "practicing" love,
 - is the shape and form a soul would have *if it could* acquire years and years of "practicing" hope,
 - is the shape and form a soul would have *if it could* acquire years and years of "practicing" faith. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Our souls are molded into the "habit" of doing years and years of practicing" love, hope and faith,
- so that,
- without having to do the "practice" ourselves,
- we become people of love, hope, and faith. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

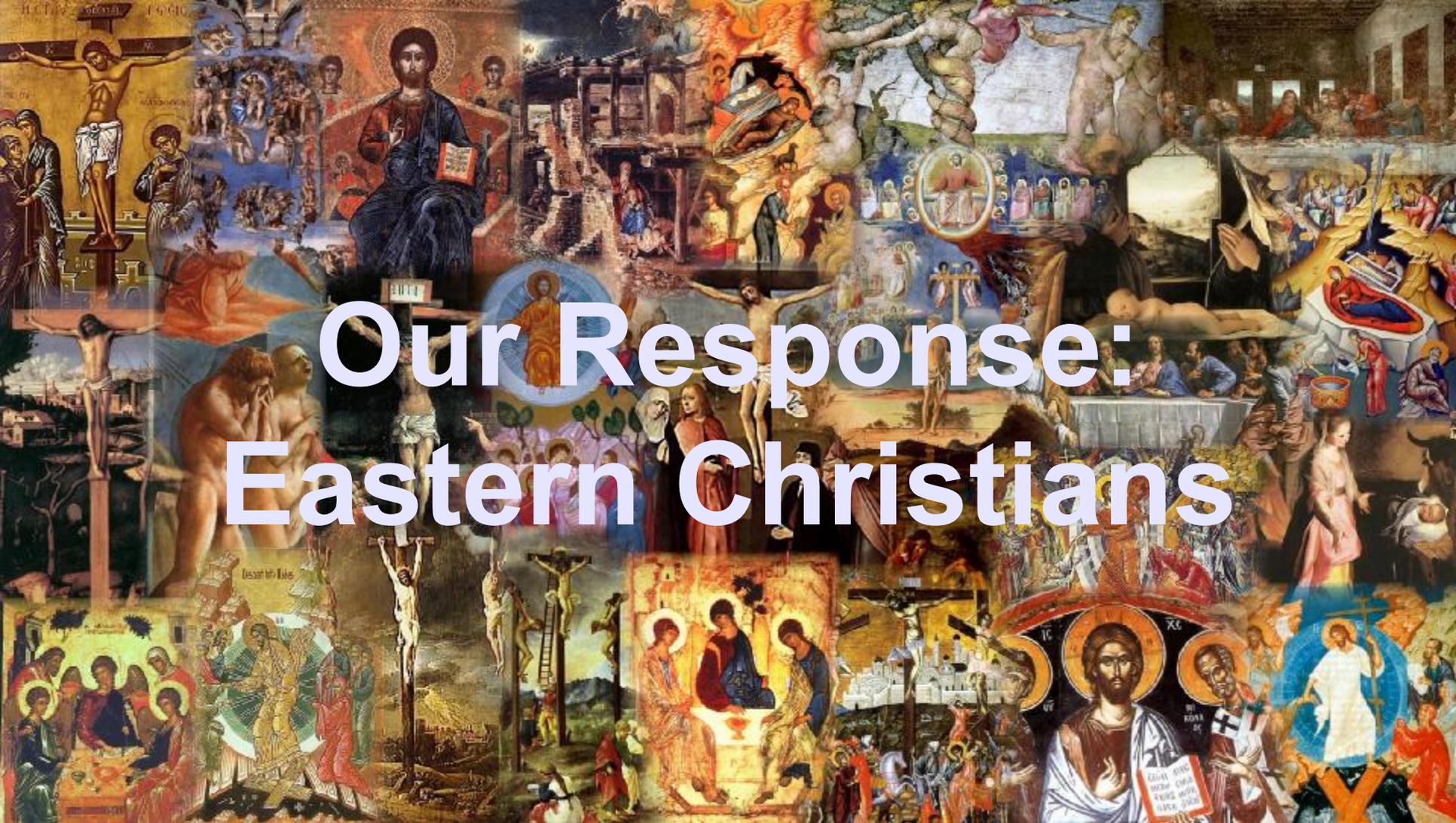
- Aquinas called this change God renders in the form of our souls a "created grace."
- He called this grace in particular **“habitual” grace**, because in a single fell swoop it molds our souls in the “habit” of doing years and years of “practicing” love, hope and faith.
- **Sanctifying grace** is the name Roman Catholics now given to this **habitual grace**. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Now once you are a skilled violin player, *you can't stop practicing* and expect to maintain your skill.
- And as you practice, it will not only maintain your skill, but will likely increase your skill.
- In the same way, once you are a skilled person of faith, hope, and love through the gift of **sanctifying grace**, *you can't stop practicing works of faith, hope and love* (= “good” works) and expect to maintain your skill.
- As you practice works of faith, hope and love (which you can do through the additional actual graces of God), it will not only maintain your skill, but will likely increase your skill. ■

Our Response: Roman Catholic

- Good works then are an *integral part* of maintaining and honing the shape of your soul provided by God's gift of **sanctifying grace** (= the grace that sanctifies and justifies).
- **Justification-Sanctification** is a *process* that
 - begins with receiving **sanctifying grace** (in Baptism), and
 - continues as we maintain and increase (or not) our gift of justification-sanctification through the *necessary* "practice" of good works. ■



Our Response: Eastern Christians

Our Response: The East

- Unlike the West, Eastern Christians say the image and likeness of God within us is merely tarnished.
- We still have the capacity to choose to do good.
- God still looks upon us with love and not with wrath. ■

Our Response: The East

- Our problem is that our human nature is *sick* and needs to be *healed*.
- We were created to participate in the divine life of God, but our sick and weakened human nature is too ill to manage it. ■

Our Response: The East

- Eastern Christians don't really use the terms "justification" or "sanctification:"
 - Our problem is *not* primarily that we are not up "right" or "just" (that is: not justified)
 - Our problem is *not* primarily that we are not "holy" (that is: not sanctified)
- It may well be true that we are not up "right" or "just" or "holy," but that is not the *core* problem.
- Our *core* problem (the reason why we may not be up "right" or "just" or "holy") is that our human nature is sick and ill and needs healing. ■

Our Response: The East

- Healing, partaking of the medicine we need for healing is the purpose and goal of our life on earth.
- How are we healed?
- By participating in the Divine Energy of God,
- for the Divine Energy of God is a transfiguring energy that heals us. ■

Our Response: The East

- To love another is to participate in the Divine Energy of God,
- for God is Love,
- and that Divine Energy of God is a transfiguring energy that heals us. ■

Our Response: The East

- To do a good "work" is to participate in the Divine Energy of God,
- for God is the Good, the source of all goodness
- and that Divine Energy of God is a transfiguring energy that heals us. ■

Our Response: The East

- To appreciate beauty in art or music or in nature is to participate in the Divine Energy of God,
- for God is the Beautiful, the source of all beauty,
- and that Divine Energy of God is a transfiguring energy that heals us. ■

Our Response: The East

- To pray and worship God, to perform ascetical spiritual practices (fasting, denying oneself ...) to partake in the holy "Mysteries" (The Eastern term for sacraments) is to participate in the Divine Energy of God,
- and that Divine Energy of God is a transfiguring energy that heals us. ■



What Are We Looking Forward To?

What's Ahead?

- What ultimately are we being saved for?
- All Christians, East and West, agree:
 - For life with God and God's people,
 - For life abundant. ■

What's Ahead?

- We can say this without knowing the details, because:
 - All that is fulfilling in life,
 - All that we ultimately yearn for,
- is from God, is identical to God.
- All that is loving, good and beautiful is from God.
- Indeed:
 - God is Love,
 - God is the Good,
 - God is the principle of Beauty itself. ■

What's Ahead?

- In the Western traditions, the unspoken emphasis has been on how can we gain admittance to this life with God and God's people. How can:
 - a sinful,
 - unholy,
 - unjust
- people
- stand before an
 - infinitely good,
 - infinitely holy,
 - infinitely just
- God? ■

What's Ahead?

- The West has focused on how a sinful, unholy, unjust people can:
 - be made sinless enough, holy enough, and just enough, *or*
 - at least *appear* to be sinless, holy and just enough,
- so they can be admitted to eternal life with God and God's people.
- The alternative is to be turned away at the pearly gates, the gates of admittance to eternal life with God and God's people. ■

What's Ahead?

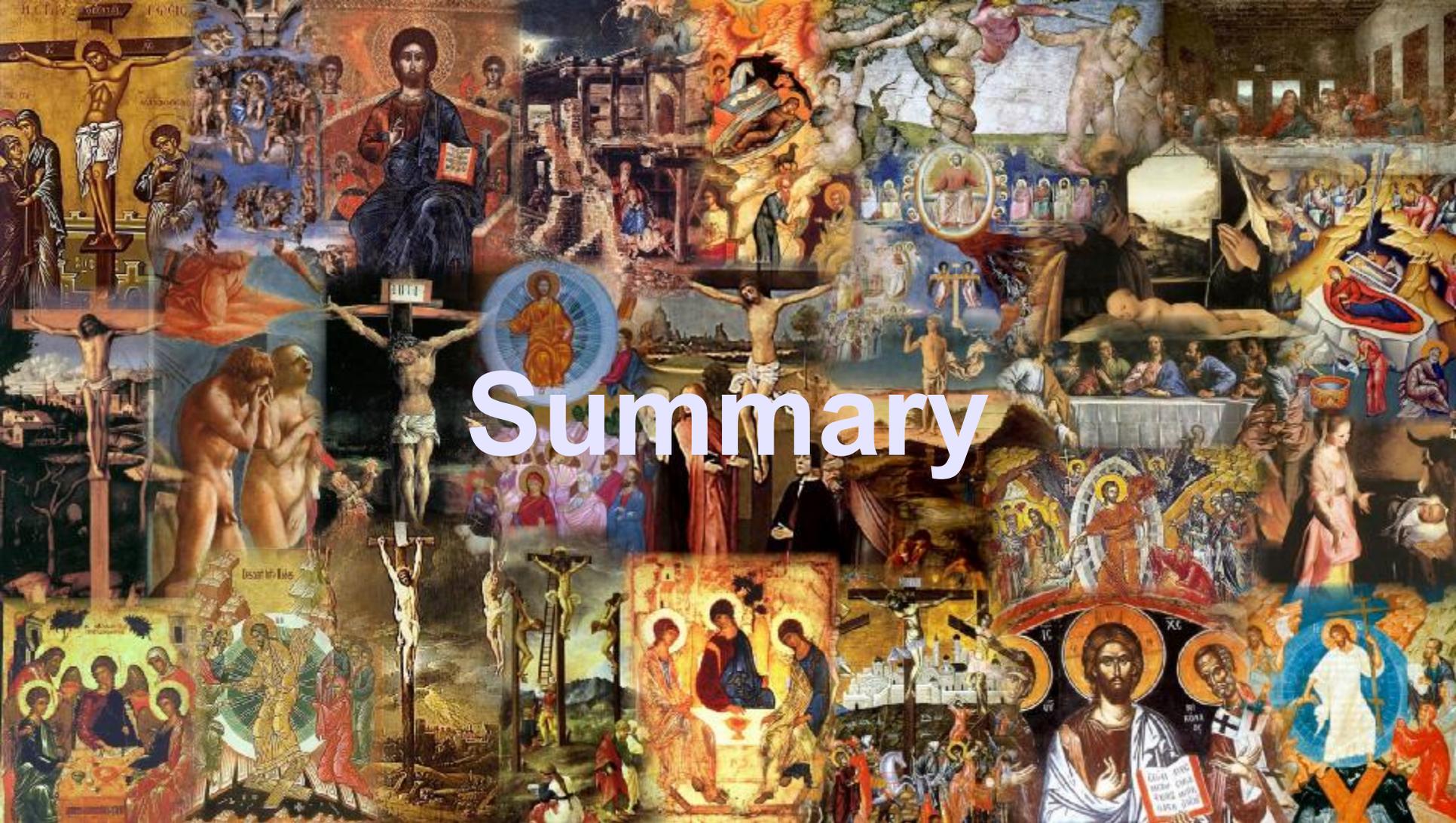
- In the East, the emphasis is not on how we can *gain admittance* to life with God and God's people, but rather on *preparing* for that life.
- In the East, there is no "pearly gate" of admittance where we might risk getting turned away.
- In the Eastern tradition, in the world to come:
 - God's presence is everywhere.
 - God is in "heaven,"
 - God is in "hell,"
- God's infinite goodness, love, beauty permeates *all* of the world to come. ■

What's Ahead?

- Those who have prepared for participation in the life of the world to come:
 - by learning to love others and be loved,
 - by learning to appreciate goodness and by participating in goodness by doing good acts,
 - by becoming sensitive to beauty,
- will find the infinite goodness, love, and beauty permeating all the world to come a delight, a joy;
- to them, the world to come will be “heaven.” ■

What's Ahead?

- Those who have *not* prepared for participation in the life of the world to come:
 - who have not learned to love others and be loved.
 - who have not learned to appreciate goodness, and have not participated in goodness by doing good acts,
 - who remain insensitive to beauty,
- will find the infinite goodness, love, and beauty permeating all the world to come painful and dissonant;
- to them, the world to come will be “hell.” ■



Summary

Summary

- To try to summarize all this, grant this metaphor:
- Let us say the world to come is a great concert hall.
- The people of God were created to play beautiful music,
- music that will blend with the beautiful music of others to create a sublimely beautiful symphony, a symphony conducted by God.
- That is what we were made for, that is the only thing that will bring us ultimate fulfillment. ■

Summary

- But the sin of the first humans corrupted our human nature.
- We lost the talent to play beautiful music.
- Yet enough of the vestiges of what we were created for remains in us that we still yearn to play beautiful music. Nothing else can give us fulfillment. ■

Summary

- God became human to heal and fix our corrupted human nature, to restore to us the possibility of doing that for which we were created, to play beautiful music. ■

Summary

- Protestant Christians say:
 - On earth, *if we have faith*, God will surround our souls with the beauty and righteousness of Jesus.
 - *Inside* we still have *no* musical talent; we can produce only ugly and dissonant sounds.
 - But surrounded by the beauty and righteousness of Jesus, we together with Jesus, form a good "tree," a beautiful "tree," and we can (and should) produce the "fruit" of beautiful music during our lives. ■

Summary

- Protestant Christians say:
 - When we die:
 - St. Peter, at the door to the concert hall, will not look at us and say, "You can only produce ugly and dissonant sounds, get out of here!"
 - St. Peter will greet us, see that we are surrounded by the beauty and righteousness of Jesus, and see that we can, with Jesus, make beautiful music. St. Peter will invite us into the concert hall.
 - Once inside the concert hall, God will transform our inner selves, restoring to us an innate musical talent, so we can take our place with the other musicians to play in the joyous symphony of heaven. ■

Summary

- Roman Catholics say:
 - *On earth*, through Baptism, God *shapes* and *molds* our souls by giving us **sanctifying grace**.
 - This grace changes us. We become *on this earth* persons with innate musical talent, capable of playing the beautiful music of faith, hope and love,
 - *as if* we had been practicing, playing the beautiful music of faith, hope and love for years and years.
 - During our lives we must then "maintain" the shape of our souls, maintain the gift of our musical talent, by continuing to practice, by continuing to play the music of faith, hope and love. ■

Summary

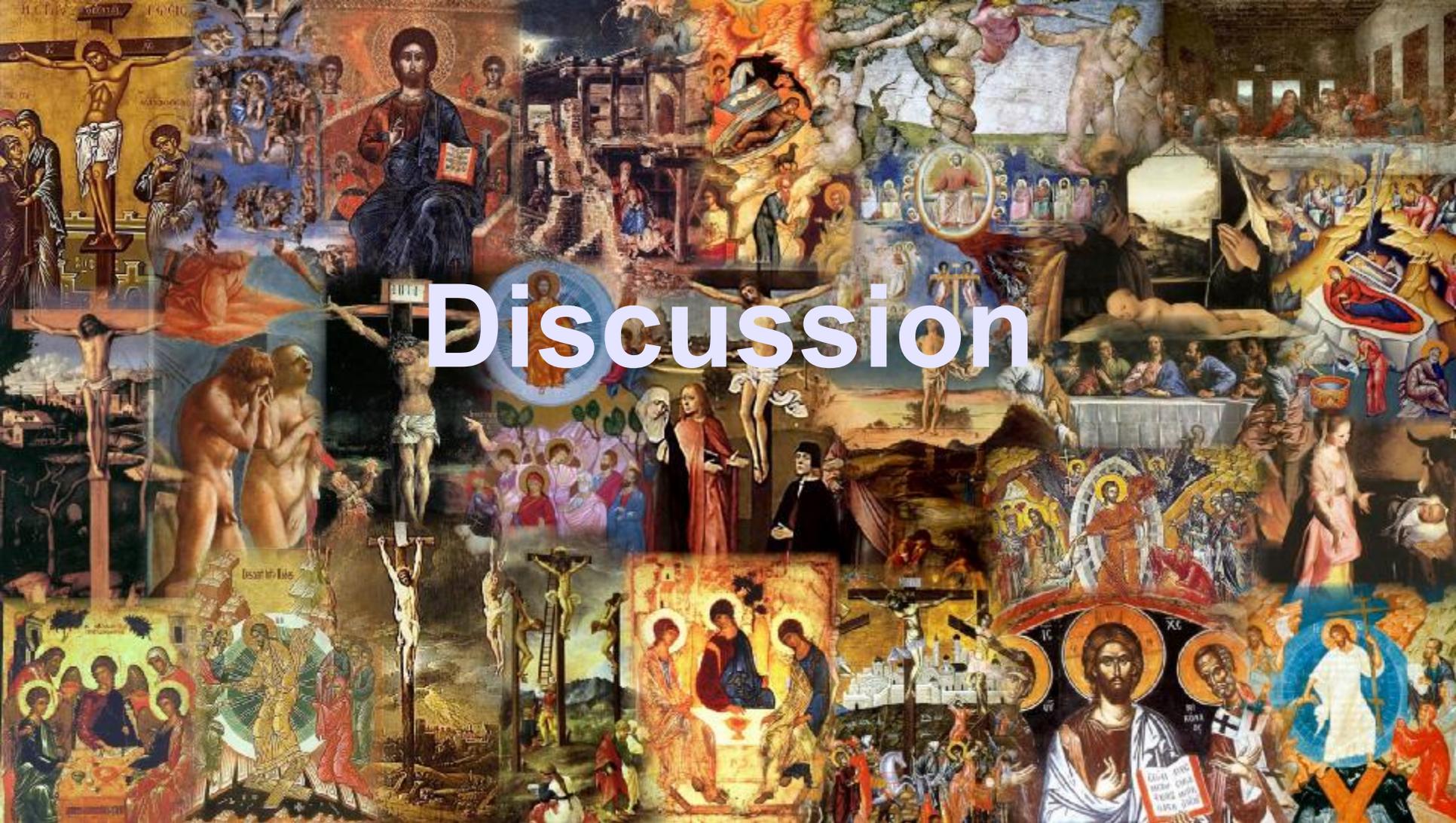
- Roman Catholics say:
 - If we do continue to assiduously practice, when we die:
 - St. Peter will not look at us and say: “You don't have the skills to play here, get out of here!”
 - St. Peter will greet us at the door to the concert hall, see that we are ready to play, and invite us to take our place with the other musicians. ■

Summary

- Eastern Christians say:
 - On earth we will have had many opportunities to participate in musical recitals with master musicians named "Love," "The Good" and "The Beautiful," who help us to restore, return to "health" our innate musical talent.
 - When we die, we will all go to the concert hall. There is no other "place" to go!
 - Those who have participated in the recitals will be ready to play, to participate in the great symphony conducted by God.
 - They will be able to make beautiful music,
 - They will hear their music blending with the music of others to produce the joyous symphony of heaven. ■

Summary

- Eastern Christians say:
 - Those who have not participated in the recitals will not be ready to play:
 - They will hear the dissonance and ugliness of the sounds they make.
 - Trying to play in the symphony will be painful to them, it will not be "heaven" to them, it will be "hell." ■



Discussion