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Will There Be a Third Resurrection?

Eric V. Snow, sermonette notes, 1/2/10, UCG, Ann Arbor, MI

Will there be three general resurrections, or just two? Will the unrepentant wicked be resurrected and then be burned in the lake of fire? Or will those who committed the unpardonable sin get to remain dead for all eternity? Are the ignorant dead and the incorrigible dead resurrected at the same time? What does the Bible say?

For many years, some in the Church of God have questioned the teaching about the third resurrection. This doctrine says the called, but knowingly unrepentant wicked, will be brought back to life last and then thrown into the lake of fire.

So today, I will show that . . .

S.P.S. The Bible's different descriptions of the resurrections prove logically that the second and third resurrections are different.

This is a difficult scripture sermonette, so let's turn to the difficult passage in question.

Rev. 20:4-15

v. 4: It's a mistake to assume only martyrs will rule with Christ, but John focuses on them here. This is a warning also to us.

v. 5: This text mentions both the first and second resurrections. The first occurs when Jesus returns, and is to eternal spirit life. The second resurrection, as we'll see, is to temporary, physical life.

Poor verse division/numbering problem. Here the NIV better than NKJV. It puts parentheses around the first part of v. 5: "(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection." So no one should think the

resurrection that happens when Jesus returns takes place **after** the millennium ends!

V. 6: Higher reward, but higher risk trade-off. It's more dangerous spiritually to be called during our first physical lives, because we're more apt to fall away. We have to live lifelong with temptations from Satan, our evil human nature, and a hostile world. Those called after being physically resurrected during the Great White Throne judgment will have an easier time of it. But they will receive lower positions in the kingdom of God than we do.

V. 7-10: However, Satan will test those living at the end of the millennium too. Their spiritual lives won't always be easy by comparison.

V. 11-12: Great White Throne judgment. Second resurrection, the dead stand before God. The book of life is still open, so they can still be saved.

V. 13-15: Compare with prior two verses. They indicate a separate resurrection, not just a repetition. These dead people come to life, and the book of life isn't mentioned as being open for them.

V. 14: **People can't have a second death if they didn't have a second life!** This shows that the unrepentant wicked will be resurrected, and not be allowed to lie dead for all eternity. God will punish all unrepentant sinners the **same way**, by being cast into the lake of fire. It doesn't matter if they lived before, during, or after the millennium.

There will be no multiple lakes of fire either: All the wicked will be executed at the same time, not at different times separated by a hundred, a thousand years, or whatever.

Now, let's compare what the following two texts say in order to know the second and third resurrections are different:

Ezekiel 37:11-14

Almost no one in the house of Israel was called or received the Holy Spirit. Most of them worshipped false gods using idols and/or broke the Sabbath. Most were terribly unrighteous and died unsaved. But, did God throw them into hell right after bringing them to life again? No, he put them into the land of Israel!

Now, compare that description with what this text says:

Daniel 12:2

This text mentions two resurrections also, like Rev. 20:5 does. But if someone is resurrected to “shame and everlasting contempt,” he will have no opportunity to still get saved! By simply inductive logic, it’s obvious that the resurrection to “everlasting contempt” simply can’t be the resurrection that puts the house of Israel back into their land again!

Would the unrepentant wicked get to wait around 100 years or more waiting to be executed while the ignorant dead get their first chance to be saved? How absurd! There is no second chance to get saved. We only get one chance.

So in conclusion,

The second and third resurrections are definitely different. The Bible's different descriptions of the resurrections of unsaved people shows the uncalled, ignorant dead are resurrected at a different time than the knowingly unrepentant wicked will be. And most importantly, we Christians should strive to make sure we're in the first resurrection, and not to fall away and end up in the third.

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