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THE THIRD RESURRECTION

Many people understand that there will be a first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. They also understand that there will be a second resurrection 1000 years later. But is there really proof that there will be another (i.e. a THIRD) resurrection at some time thereafter?

Yes, there is proof for this third resurrection.

Understand the following:

The Bible does NOT identify the three resurrections with the terms "first", "second" and "third". It is THE DESCRIPTION of what happens that reveals to us which resurrection is being spoken about. This is similar to the different TITHES ... the Bible does not refer to them as "first", "second" and "third" tithes ... we get this understanding from the description of what each tithe is to be used for.

The key lies in a very careful study of Revelation chapter 20. So let's briefly notice the different resurrections:

FIRST RESURRECTION:

Revelation 20:4-5 = it takes place at the return of Jesus Christ; to rule with Him for 1000 years; it is called "the FIRST resurrection"; it is clearly to SPIRIT life.

The parenthetical statement in the first part of Revelation 20:5 ("but the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished") clearly implies a "second" resurrection after exactly 1000 years.

Revelation 20:6 = the first resurrection is to immortality.

Revelation 20:7-10 = 1000 years are finished; Satan is loosed; rebels are rounded up and destroyed; Satan is bound again for good and for ever.

SECOND RESURRECTION

Revelation 20:11-13 = the dead stand up in a resurrection; a time of judging; thus it will be a physical existence; access to Book of Life is opened up for these people.

Matthew 11:22-24 = Tyre & Sidon & Sodom come up in this resurrection to physical life.

Matthew 12:41-42 = Nineveh also comes up in this resurrection.

Ezekiel 37:1-14 = This is a resurrection to physical life.

THIRD RESURRECTION

Revelation 20:14-15 = death and the grave are cast into the lake of fire.

> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14-15)

The word "hell" is the Greek word "hades" and it means "the grave". Now HOW can "the grave" be cast into the lake of fire?

It can ONLY be cast into the lake of fire IF IT, THE GRAVE, IS TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY EMPTY!

If there are any human beings who have lived at any time prior to Christ's second coming and whom God did NOT resurrect in either the first or the second resurrections, THEN they must first be resurrected BEFORE THE GRAVE CAN BE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE.

The THIRD resurrection is referred to by Jesus Christ Himself in Luke chapter 16! It is the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Notice the account in Luke 16:19-31.

In Luke 16:22 Lazarus is pictured as dying and then being in the FIRST resurrection. This is symbolically represented by him being "in Abraham's bosom".

> And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; (Luke 16:22)

The rich man also dies. Notice that! Now read the next verse.

> And in hell (in the grave!) he lift up his eyes, BEING IN TORMENTS, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16:23)

If he "lifts up his eyes" in the grave, it means that he MUST be in a resurrection! BUT THIS IS <u>NOT</u> A DESCRIPTION OF THE SECOND RESURRECTION! The second resurrection does NOT involve "torment".

Let's continue ...

> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME. (Luke 16:24)

He is not pictured as being "IN" a flame ... he is pictured as being "IN" the grave. What it means is that he was in MENTAL torment because he was terrified BY the flames that he understood would burn him up (Malachi 4:1) to the point of becoming ASHES (Malachi 4:3).

He asked for ONE DROP of water to lick his tongue which was sticking in his mouth because of fear. He was not in a huge fire being burned and worried about his tongue drying up. The picture Christ painted here was one of MENTAL anguish.

So here is the point: in this parable Jesus Christ contrasted TWO different resurrections without regard to the time-lapse between the two. He contrasted the first resurrection with the THIRD, which is to the fate of immediately being burned up by the worldwide lake of fire. The second resurrection does NOT feature in this parable.

The "great gulf" between Abraham and the rich man is NOT physical distance, though the rich man sees Abraham "afar off". The gulf is much greater than that. The gulf is that Abraham and Lazarus are immortal, and that the rich man is resurrected to MORTAL life. That is an insurmountable gulf!

John 5:28-29 = again here Jesus Christ compared TWO resurrections.

> Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29)

This is a comparison of the FIRST and the THIRD resurrections. The second resurrection does NOT feature in this description in John chapter 5.

WHY THE SECOND RESURRECTION IS NOT EXPLAINED BY CHRIST

The purpose of the second resurrection is to give a first real chance to those people who never understood the truth! It follows that Jesus Christ, in explaining the truth to people, could not really say: "By the way, for all those who don't understand and who don't obey God in this life, the Father will give them another physical lifetime to make good." That would have been a de-motivator, by first saying that "narrow is the way", and then saying "BUT those that don't find it will have another chance later".

So in Christ's ministry it is the first resurrection which is contrasted to the third resurrection in direct statements. The second resurrection is "hinted at" by the references to Sodom and to Tyre and to Sidon, etc..

It is ONLY AT THE END OF THE BOOK, in Revelation chapter 20, that God spells out CLEARLY this opportunity for those who never really understood.

THE PURPOSE OF THE THIRD RESURRECTION

It is a resurrection to physical life and it takes place JUST BEFORE the lake of fire consumes this entire planet, which is just before God creates the NEW heaven and the NEW earth.

The purpose of this resurrection is to empty the grave and to resurrect everyone who had died before Christ's second coming and not been resurrected up to that point in time; i.e. the incorrigible wicked who had committed the unpardonable sin, and who therefore had NOT been resurrected after the 1000 years of Christ's rule.

FIRE will formally and officially blot out the record of existence of all those that are burnt up. They will THEN be as though they had never existed (Obadiah 1:16).

I suspect that those who were ALREADY once burnt up by FIRE FROM GOD (i.e. the rebels DURING the millennium, Ezekiel 38-39, and those AT THE END of the millennium, Revelation 20:9) will NOT be resurrected just to go through the same process again, though I don't know that for sure. As they were burnt up by "fire from God", I suspect this means that they didn't really "go to the grave" in the eyes of God; rather, it means that they were "blotted out" by God at a time when they really should have known better than to rebel.

This should suffice for comments on the third resurrection. Study Revelation chapter 20, then the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, and then John 5:28-29.

Putting all this together it means that there must be a time when "the wicked" who are dead are given physical life, in order to then be in the lake of fire and to become "ashes" under the feet of those who will then be immortal. It is NOT intended to be some kind of physical torture. Rather, it is God's way of formally and definitely blotting out the complete record of their lives and existences. None of them will ever be remembered again by those who will then be immortal.

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