April 2015

Frank W. Nelte

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

In my October 2014 article entitled "OUR ETERNAL DESTINY RESTS IN OUR OWN HANDS" I examined the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 at great length. The seed in the parable refers to the calling of God. In Matthew 22:14 Jesus Christ clearly said "**many** are called but **few** are chosen".

In that article I then examined the last three of the four groups in the parable. In this present article we'll take a closer look at the first group in that parable, those who received God's calling "by the wayside".

By way of an overview: all of humanity since the flood falls into one of two groups: **group one** consists of all those who were **never called by God**; and **group two** consists of those who were **called by God**. Group one makes up the vast majority of all human beings, running into billions of people. Group two comprises the far smaller group, though it nevertheless runs into the **tens of millions of people**, still representing considerably less than 1% of all human beings. That number consisting of tens of millions of people is what Jesus Christ was speaking about when He said "many are called".

Now group two, those who are called by God, is the subject of the parable of the sower. And group two can be further divided into four distinct categories. Those four groups are:

- the seed by the wayside

- the seed on stony ground

- the seed amongst thorns

- the seed on good ground.

Once again, the vast majority of those who are called , which vast majority I would speculate makes up in excess of 90% of those called, i.e. the "many" that are called, are represented by "the wayside". The other three groups (i.e. on stony ground, amongst thorns, and on good ground) make up the far smaller part of those who are called, with those "on good ground" making up the smallest portion of all, very likely less than 1% of all those who were called.

From the time of Adam up to the time of Christ's second coming there will be only 144,000 "on good ground". I suspect that both other groups, those on stony ground and those amongst thorns, will turn out to be greater than the 144,000-group on good ground, though that is obviously only my speculation. But that is the impression I get from the way Jesus Christ told this parable.

Now here are the cold facts applied to how God is working out His plan:

1) Those "**on good ground**" will be in the **first resurrection**.

2) Those "**on stony ground**" and those "**amongst thorns**" will end up in the lake of fire, also referred to as having a part in the **third resurrection**. They will be destroyed by God, with the memory of their existence blotted out.

3) Those "**by the wayside**" will be in the **second resurrection**.

4) Those who were **never called by God** will also be in the **second resurrection**.

The Last Great Day right after the Feast of Tabernacles represents the time for people in the second resurrection. So let's look at this more closely.

TWO DISTINCT GROUPS IN SECOND RESURRECTION

The first thing we should recognize is that the people in the second resurrection will comprise two very distinct groups. All of the people in that resurrection will have lived after the Flood and died before Christ's second coming, roughly a 4,500-year period. But they will make up two very distinct groups as already indicated above:

1) The vast majority of people in the second resurrection will be those people who were **never** at any time **called** by God. This group will comprise billions of people.

2) The rest of the people in the second resurrection will be those who were **called by God**, but who received that calling "**by the wayside**". This group will very likely comprise tens of millions of people.

The distinction between those who were never called by God and those who were called by God but never responded is significant because **these two groups will not be treated the same way** by God when they are first resurrected. This is something many people have not understood in the past. We'll come to the details shortly.

So let's look at the parable of the sower once again.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

And when he sowed, **some *seeds* fell by the way side**, and the fowls came and devoured them up. (Matthew 13:4)

Jesus Christ explained this statement a little later in verse 19.

When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and **understands *it* not**, then comes the wicked *one*, and catches away that **which was sown in his heart**. This is he which received seed by the way side. (Matthew 13:19)

The key identifying mark for the people by the wayside is that they did not really understand the truth of God when they were exposed to it. But also note that God's truth had in fact been "**sown in his heart**". The minds of people who are by the wayside had in fact been reached by God's truth.

This is more exposure to the truth than just coming across one broadcast or one booklet at some point. But whatever the exposure to the truth was, it never really sank in. **These people never understood.**

So note!

The fact that the truth of God had been "sown in his heart" brings with it a certain amount of responsibility. **They will have to give account to God** why that seed sown in their hearts was in fact **wasted**. They do not get off scot-free. God does not like waste! Never mistake God's generosity with an

acceptance of waste. Look at **John 15:8** from this perspective.

Herein is my Father glorified, **that ye bear much fruit**; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:8)

Because they never really understood at all, therefore they are eligible for the second resurrection. **However**, they will have some explaining to do. We ourselves are responsible for the quality of the ground we provide in our minds for God's truth. And these people will have to face up to the fact that **they themselves were responsible for** providing ground that was no better than "**by the wayside**".

This is different from saying: oh well, my husband / wife just hasn't been called by God, and **that is why** they are not in the Church. **That line of reasoning is simply not true!** It's never really been true! In most cases that is not why they are not in the Church. In most cases the reason they are not in God's Church is because **they themselves chose to present ground by the wayside** when they were exposed to the seed from God. And that choice brings some accountability!

Let's consider **John 6:44, 65**.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44)

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. (John 6:65)

The perspective of Jesus Christ's statement here is from God's point of view. God has to initiate the whole process, and that initiation is by sowing the seed. When that seed was sown in his heart, at that point "it is given unto him" and "he is drawn by God"! That is the precise stage of Christ's statement that "many are called".

But **then** it depends on **his response** as to whether the process moves on to the next step (i.e. whether he becomes called **and** chosen), or whether it ends up by the wayside. The "**drawing by God**" **starts before a person makes the first responses to God**! But it is the responses to God that determine the soil quality provided by the person himself for that calling from God.

We can express the number of people by the wayside in a mathematical expression as follows:

The Wayside = (Many are called) - (Stony Ground + Amongst Thorns + Few are chosen)

In other words, the exact number of those by the wayside is equal to the many who are called less the sum total of stony ground + amongst thorns + few chosen. I would speculate that in this equation those by the wayside will end up being in excess of 90% of the total number of all the people that were called. They will form by far the greatest group amongst the four types of ground in the parable.

To continue, **the fowls** that ate the seeds in verse 4 are identified in verse 19 with **Satan**. So yes, Satan is the one **whose influence was decisive** in the seed never taking root in this category of people. But that doesn't remove their responsibility; they themselves were responsible for allowing Satan to have this massive influence in their lives.

James 4:7 ("resist the devil and he will flee from you") also applies to the people by the wayside! They didn't resist Satan, and therefore Satan controlled their lives! But that had not been a foregone conclusion and they could have responded otherwise.

Our own minds are always our own responsibility, provided we still have all our mental faculties

intact and are of sound mind (i.e. dementia & Alzheimer's, brain deterioration, etc. are excluded). And that is true whether we receive God's seed on good ground or by the wayside or anywhere in-between.

God is always serious in His dealings with us human beings! At no stage does God ever take a casual approach, like saying: "Oh well, I'll just have to bring them up in the second resurrection and then work with them". There is nothing casual with the plan of salvation that God has set in motion. There is nothing casual about God sowing the seeds, with the overwhelming majority of seeds falling by the wayside!

We'll come back to this and we'll see some more details later.

MATTHEW 11:20-24

Let's look at a section here in Matthew 11.

Then began He **to upbraid the cities** wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. (Matthew 11:20)

Do you understand what Jesus Christ was doing here in this verse? The word "upbraid" refers to showing that those cities had some guilt to give account for. Christ was reproaching those cities. So the question is: why did Jesus Christ reproach people who made no effort to come into the Church?

Jesus Christ was here reproaching the people for whom the seed had fallen by the wayside!

Can you see that? The people in these cities had clearly been exposed to the seed. But they had not responded in any way, and so Satan had come in and taken that seed away.

Now here is the real significance of this section in Matthew 11 (5 verses), which most people have never really grasped. In this section **Jesus Christ is reproaching all the people in any age who receive the seed by the wayside**! God is not a respecter of persons. If those people needed to be reproached, **then so does everyone else** who receives the seed by the wayside.

The examples of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum are representative for all the people who receive the seed by the wayside! And Jesus Christ is showing some disapproval for them having only provided ground by the wayside. This is no casual matter! Jesus Christ was very serious with these comments here!

The expression "**woe to you**" is a serious warning that applies to all people by the wayside!

To make this quite clear: **Jesus Christ is quite unhappy with people who respond by providing a wayside environment in their minds!** There is nothing casual here about Jesus Christ saying "woe unto you" to all such people!

We need to understand that this was not some kind of personal frustration that Jesus Christ was venting here; it wasn't like the irritation we feel when we stub our toes on a table or on a chair. Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, and this was an expression of **Jesus Christ's concern for the consequences** that would come upon these people for only providing ground by the wayside for the seeds that had been sown in their minds. Again, this concern for the consequences is true for all people in any age who receive the seed by the wayside. It is always "woe to them"!

The seeds were sown in their minds because **every single person** (adults) in those small communities was aware of the "mighty works" which Jesus Christ had done there. Therefore their minds had been forced to interact with that awareness. This is a key we need to understand: **when a person has a significant exposure to God's truth, then the mind of that person is forced to interact and to deal with that information**. These people here were all a part of the "many are called" (Matthew 22:14). And they responded no better than by the wayside.

Let's continue.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the **mighty works**, which were done in you, had been done in **Tyre and Sidon**, **they would have repented** (Greek "metanoeo") long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (Matthew 11:21)

What Jesus Christ is saying here is that the people of Chorazin and of Bethsaida had in fact been given an opportunity to repent, but they had rejected that opportunity. What Christ is pointing out here is that the people exposed to the seed by the wayside did in fact have the opportunity to repent; it is just that **they themselves chose not to respond** to the seeds that had been sown. If other people in similar circumstances were given the same opportunities (i.e. Tyre and Sidon), then they would have been likely to make use of those opportunities.

This is extremely important! What it means is that **the non-member spouses of God's people are themselves responsible** for not responding to the evidence of God's truth that they cannot avoid becoming aware of. Like the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida **they could have responded**, but chose not to do so! We need to see John 6:44 in the correct context! You have probably never understood this before, have you?

So listen carefully:

Every unconverted mate of a Church of God member is automatically "called". That is, the unconverted mate cannot avoid having a seed sown in his or her heart. Typically most of them respond like the seed by the wayside. This means that **they are eligible for the second resurrection**. But when they come up in that second resurrection, they are going to be confronted about their inappropriate response to the seed while they were married to a converted member of God's Church. They will be required to give account for their actions.

Let's continue.

But I say unto you, It shall be **more tolerable** for Tyre and Sidon at **the day of judgment**, than for you. (Matthew 11:22)

With "at the day of judgment" Jesus Christ was referring to the day when the second resurrection takes place. The people in the second resurrection come up to a judgment! So let's be sure we understand this correctly.

The Church has always explained that the whole period allocated to those who come up in the second resurrection (i.e. 100 years) will constitute a period of judgment. That is when their minds will be opened to a real understanding of the Bible. That is what is meant by "the books were opened (to them)" in **Revelation 20:12**.

But before that 100-year period of testing gets going, **there is first going to be an accounting to God**. That accounting will be for what they did in their previous lives and how they lived those lives. And it will be made quite clear to them what opportunities God had set before them in their first lives, which

opportunities they had rejected.

And they will have to give account for how they responded to any opportunities that were granted to them. We have to give account for every opportunity that God gives us, but which we chose not to make use of. In other words, if people in effect say "no thank you Lord" when God calls them, then they will have to give account for that "no thank you" response when they come up in the second resurrection.

Next, Jesus Christ here made clear that in the second resurrection it is going to be "**more tolerable**" for some, and therefore it will also be "**less tolerable**" for others. In simple terms: it is going to be "more tolerable" for those who were never called; and it is going to be "less tolerable" for those who provided only "the wayside" for God's seed in their minds.

And that ought to make sense to all of us!

God will be "less tolerant" with those in the second resurrection who previously did nothing to respond to God's calling. In effect God will say: the last time around that I called you, **you did absolutely nothing to respond** to that call. Therefore with you I am not going to be as patient as with someone else who in their first life never had the exposure and the opportunities you had. So you better straighten out in a hurry.

Can you follow?

God is not mocked. No way does someone who was married to a member of God's Church get some kind of kid-glove treatment in the second resurrection. The same goes for everyone else who received the seed by the wayside. Clearly God is going to be "less tolerant" with such people. That is what Jesus Christ was telling us in Matthew 11:22.

Let's continue.

And thou, **Capernaum**, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in **Sodom**, it would have remained until this day. (Matthew 11:23)

That is quite some comparison, comparing Capernaum with Sodom. The people of Capernaum had all responded like the seed by the wayside. So all those by the wayside (i.e. unconverted spouses, parents, children, etc.) are in the eyes of Jesus Christ **no better than the people of Sodom**. Are you comfortable with the comparison Jesus Christ has drawn here for those who are by the wayside? Or does it make you squirm a little bit?

I understand that some of the things I am saying here are going to make some people uncomfortable. That can't be helped. We need to get it into our heads that it is going to be **less tolerable** for all those who had exposure to God's Church but chose to never avail themselves of that access to contact with God. They will be the people who **will be scrutinized more closely** by Jesus Christ than those who never had any exposure to God's truth. Yes, they certainly can still "make it" during that 100-year period. But they will be watched.

Of all the people in the second resurrection, they are basically the ones who will be "**out on parole**"! They didn't respond to God the first time around, and so God will be watching them during the second time around. They will regularly be checked on by their parole officers. Parole is for those whose crimes are considered "minor". This is the correct picture for us to see! See Luke **12:48** regarding "few stripes", which principle applies to those who didn't understand, i.e. those by the wayside. But they do still get "stripes", and that will be for their own good.

Let’s look at the last verse in this section.

But I say unto you, That it shall be **more tolerable for** the land of **Sodom** in the day of judgment, **than for thee**. (Matthew 11:24)

You’ve always hoped that your unconverted spouse or children or parents will be in the second resurrection, right? But have you ever thought that God will actually tell our unconverted relatives: "I am going to be easier on the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than I am going to be on you"? So where does that leave our unconverted relatives who through us had a considerable exposure to God’s truth?

Let’s look at another Scripture.

MATTHEW 12:41

The men of **Nineveh** shall rise in judgment with this generation, and **shall condemn** it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. (Matthew 12:41)

Again this is a picture of two different groups of people both coming up in the second resurrection. And one group will clearly be better off than the other group. So not all people in the second resurrection are equal. Some have more guilt to give account for than others.

Regarding the repentance of the people in Nineveh:

Jonah 3:4-9 = the people had a change of heart; they did change their thinking and acknowledged their evil ways. But they did not have any exposure to the seed of God! Thus they were never called by God. Nothing was ever explained to them!

Jonah didn’t explain anything at all to them. And there isn’t any single aspect of God’s plan and God’s purposes that the people in Nineveh understood.

Jonah’s only appeal was to their consciences, to do some soul-searching. Carnal people can do that ... they can recognize that their ways are morally wrong. But those people in Nineveh didn’t ever repent "in a godly manner". And **the people of Nineveh were never called**; they never at any time received the seed from God. Therefore they will come up in the second resurrection.

In regard to the Ninevites we might also look at what the Apostle Paul explained to the Corinthians.

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance: for you were made sorry **after a godly manner**, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For **godly sorrow works repentance** to salvation not to be repented of: but **the sorrow of the world** works death. (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

The expression "after a godly manner" is a translation of the Greek phrase "**kata theon**", which literally means "**towards God**".

Paul is identifying real repentance here in verse 9. With the expression "you sorrowed to repentance" Paul means that their sorrow and their remorse was **directed towards God**. This is a key for identifying godly repentance; it is always directed towards God.

We should take note of a subtle mistranslation in these two verses. In both verses the English adjective

"**godly**" is supposed to be a translation of the Greek noun for "God" (i.e. "**theos**"). The subtle difference is that the adjective infers a specific attitude for **the type of "sorrow"** we express. The adjective "godly" describes the type of sorrow, and the focus of this expression is squarely directed at the sorrow. But **that is not what Paul actually said**. It is in fact misleading!

When Paul used the noun "theos" he was not describing the quality of the sorrow at all. Paul was spelling out **the direction** in which our sorrow must be pointed. It must always be directed towards God, and not towards any other target or destination. When our sorrow is directed towards God, then the quality of that sorrow will take care of itself. Think of David's statement "against You and You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight" (**Psalm 51:4**). That statement expressed the unequivocal direction of David's sorrow.

It is the direction and the focus of the sorrow that Paul refers to, not to any attribute of the sorrow itself. And **the mistranslation here has changed that focus**. This may not immediately seem to be a major point, but we should be aware of this subtle mistranslation, like the numerous other subtle mistranslations that are liberally scattered throughout our English translations of the Bible.

So in verse 10 the word "godly" is again the Greek noun "theos", meaning "God". In this verse Paul says that "sorrow directed towards God produces real repentance".

Then Paul presents a contrast. The Greek for the expression "the sorrow of the world" here is "tou kosmou lupe". This expression means "**the sorrow that originates with the world**, the sorrow that comes from the world". The key attribute of this "sorrow of the world" is that **it is not directed towards God**. In other words, this type of sorrow does not have the focus "against You and You only have I sinned". The sorrow of the world can be a genuine sorrow, but it doesn't have the right focus.

For example, **if we accidently hurt someone**, we may have a real sorrow for the hurt we unintentionally caused. The quality of our sorrow in this case is not in dispute. But our sorrow will be directed at the unintentional victim of our actions. And that is fine and appropriate. But it is not a sorrow that is directed towards God. Can you see that?

This should help us to see the distinction between focusing on **the quality** of the sorrow as opposed to focusing on **the direction** of the sorrow. The problem with the focus on the quality of the sorrow is that people can indeed have a real sorrow, and therefore **they can convince themselves** that their sorrow is "godly". But the problem could be that **the direction of their sorrow is wrong**, that it is not directed towards God, and therefore it is not the sorrow that leads to a real repentance, a real change in the way they use their minds.

The only times that real sorrow will lead to repentance is when that sorrow is directed towards God. We should understand that many of the people who were baptized during the past 50 years were never really repentant. Yet at the time when a minister baptized them, they looked repentant to that minister, and therefore he baptized them. The minister could see that they had "a sorrow" when he asked them "do you recognize that you have sinned and are a sinner?". It was the type of sorrow they expressed that convinced the minister that they were indeed repentant.

What the minister did not discern is that their sorrow was not really directed towards God. Their sorrow had some other focus. This meant that they were therefore also not yet repentant.

Can you understand why the direction of our sorrow is so important? Can you see that a focus on the quality of the sorrow may sometimes be **a distraction**? Keep in mind that if our sorrow is indeed directed towards God, then the quality of that sorrow will not be a problem.

That is what Paul then explained in the next verse.

For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed **after a godly sort**, what **carefulness** it wrought in you, yea, *what* **clearing of yourselves**, yea, *what* **indignation**, yea, *what* **fear**, yea, *what* **vehement desire**, yea, *what* **zeal**, yea, *what* **revenge**! In all *things* you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. (2 Corinthians 7:11)

The expression "after a godly sort" again represents the Greek expression "to kata theon". It is again the noun "theos" that Paul has used here. And as already stated, this expression means "towards God". In this verse Paul lists some of the main consequences of directing our sorrow towards God. As I said, if our sorrow has the right direction (i.e. towards God), then the quality of that sorrow will take care of itself.

Let's get back to Matthew 12:41.

When Jesus Christ said to the people of His generation that "a greater than Jonah is here", Christ was inferring that the people of that generation would therefore have more to give account for. Once again, it would be less tolerable for those who had received access to God's truth (i.e. His generation) than for other people who had never had the opportunity for such access to God's truth. For those by the wayside things will be less tolerable in the second resurrection.

Let's look at the next verse.

MATTHEW 12:42

Notice Jesus Christ's next statement.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. (Matthew 12:42)

The queen of the south is called "the queen of Sheba" in **1 Kings 10:1**. This verse states that she came to test Solomon with "hard questions". The point Jesus Christ was making is that the queen of Sheba had been willing to put out a great deal of effort just to hear the wisdom of Solomon. That is the point of the reference to her coming "from the uttermost parts of the earth".

Yet the Jewish people during Christ's ministry had it all presented to them on a platter; but they were not prepared to put forth any effort to understand the teachings Jesus Christ freely made available. They rejected His message. Once again, rejecting the message amounts to being by the wayside. And rejecting the message results in less tolerance for those people in the second resurrection.

THE LAST GREAT DAY IN JOHN 8-10

Starting in John chapter 8 we have a discussion of one particular Last Great Day during Jesus Christ's ministry. In the past I have discussed the **three distinct incidents** that are presented to us in that particular context in the Gospel of John.

What I have never before explained about the three things that took place on that Last Great Day is how those three things tie together. So consider the following.

The three things on that Last Great Day cover all the people in the second resurrection.

1) **Woman caught in adultery** = typifies those **by the wayside**

- here SINS are the main issue

2) **The man born blind** = typifies those who had **never been called**

- here SINS are NOT an issue at all

3) **Combining the sheep** from **different folds** into one flock = **the end result**

Try to keep this perspective in mind as we now go through these events.

JOHN 8:1-11

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him **a woman taken in adultery**; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, **in the very act**. (John 8:3-4)

This event applies specifically to the seeds by the wayside!

The Pharisees themselves had obviously set the woman up in order to frame her, for the purpose of once again trying to embarrass Jesus Christ. They hadn't brought along the man, who obviously was also there when they caught her "in the very act". That man in all likelihood was one of their own followers. The last time I checked, you always catch two people when you catch someone "in the very act of adultery", and not just one person. The Pharisees then referred to Deuteronomy 22:22.

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, **then they shall both of them die**, *both* **the man** that lay with the woman, **and the woman**: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 22:22)

So for a start, the Pharisees were already perverting the instructions in God's law, in that they very deliberately let the man go. **They were hypocritical** from start to finish! This was a total setup!

Now this whole incident with this woman very graphically **typifies the people by the wayside** who come up **in the second resurrection**. Every single individual in that group has, to use a figure of speech, been caught with their pants down! The most important attribute of every person in that group by the wayside is that **they all come up guilty before God**! There will not be anyone from the wayside people in that resurrection who is without guilt before God. Not a one!

Yes, babies in the second resurrection are certainly without guilt. But babies are not a part of those who had received the seed by the wayside. And babies are not a part of those for whom things will be "less tolerable" in the second resurrection. So we are talking about adults who had received the seed of God, not about children.

Continuing in John chapter 8:

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: **but what do You say**? (John 8:5)

So the Pharisees set a very hypocritical trap for Jesus Christ. Since they were confident that Christ would not advocate stoning the woman, they couldn't see how Christ could get out of this one without somehow disagreeing with Moses. What now follows has great significance for the second resurrection.

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But **Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground**, *as though he heard them not*. (John 8:6)

The words "as though He heard them not" are not really in the Greek text. If anything, these words might perhaps belong in some commentary, but certainly not in the text of the Bible. So we are better off just dropping those words. The main problem with these added words is that they create a wrong impression.

Christ was not pretending to not hear them, not at all. Rather, He simply wanted them to take note of what He was doing, the words He was writing in the dust at their feet. **He wanted them to read those words.** So note!

The key to this particular incident lies in the actual words that Jesus Christ wrote in the dust at the feet of the Pharisees.

Those words conveyed a very powerful message. It was powerful enough to cause every single accuser to drop his accusation and to walk away without a murmur. And I believe that whatever those words were, they apply to the people in the second resurrection. This whole incident took place on a Last Great Day.

One significant point to take note of:

Christ's initial response was **non-verbal**! He did not actually say anything at all to start with. Does that reveal **how some people will be dealt with by God** in the second resurrection, i.e. in a non-verbal way?

Here is what I believe this tells us about the second resurrection:

As I said, all adults in the second resurrection who had received the seed by the wayside will **come up guilty before God**. Now if those people freely acknowledge their guilt, then God will not bring up anything from their past lives. If they have the attitude of the thief in **Luke 23:39-41**, then their past is blotted out, just like God said in **Isaiah 1:18-19**. (And that thief wasn't even "by the wayside".)

So Jesus Christ's "writing in the dust of the ground" **represents an opportunity** for all the guilty people in the second resurrection to very easily have all of their guilty past blotted out. **If they freely acknowledge their guilt** before God, then their guilt can be removed as easily as wiping out some writing in the dust of the earth. And then things will immediately be more tolerable for them for that period of time that will lie ahead for them.

Let's continue with John's account.

So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them: **he that is without sin among you**, let him first cast a stone at her. (John 8:7)

The statement "they continued asking Him" tells us that they thus far had not yet paid any attention to what Jesus Christ was writing in the dust at His feet. They were self-righteously fixated on the sins of the woman they had caught.

The point of Jesus Christ's statement "he that is without sin among you ..." is that there simply will not

be anyone (i.e. adults) in that group of by the wayside people who will be "without sin". After all, **the second resurrection is a resurrection for sinners**! So nobody in that group of wayside people will be able to point a finger at anyone else in that resurrection. Those by the wayside are all guilty before God.

Christ was saying this to Jews who had witnessed His ministry. Those from Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, the queen of Sheba, Nineveh, etc. could point a finger because they had never had the opportunity that the generation of Jews at Christ's time had been given. But the Jews of Christ's time themselves could not point a finger at anyone else.

This statement by Jesus Christ addressed the main problem that the Pharisees had: they were **super-self-righteous** and super critical of all other people. **Luke 18:9-14** spells out this problem of self-righteousness ... the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Let's continue in John chapter 8.

And **again He** stooped down, and **wrote on the ground**. (John 8:8)

The key lies in the words that Jesus Christ wrote on the ground! This time the Pharisees looked at the actual words Christ was writing. And **what they read written in the dust was a real shocker for them**! What they read was **very personal** and **very embarrassing**. It revealed things they thought nobody else knew about them.

Jesus Christ used the dust of the ground to communicate privately with each man who looked over His shoulder to see what He was writing on the ground.

Let's continue.

And they which heard *it*, **being convicted by *their own* conscience**, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (John 8:9)

Here is what we need to understand about this verse. **They were not convicted by the words Jesus Christ had spoken**, otherwise they would all have left at the same time. They all heard Jesus Christ's words at exactly the same time. But they only left in a hierarchical sequence, one by one, with the highest ranking one leaving first. "From the eldest unto the last" reveals a strict hierarchy.

Think about this. When the highest ranking man in their group left the scene supposedly because of the words Jesus Christ had spoken, then all of his underlings would have followed him out simultaneously. If anything, the lowest ranking men would have followed the leader out **immediately**. But that is not what happened! The lowest ranking men left last, and there is a reason for that.

The point is that **all of them**, one by one, **took a look** at what Jesus Christ was writing in the dust. And it was the words they could read in the dust that motivated them one by one to leave without a whimper. Their arguments had totally dissipated as a result of **what they saw written on the ground**. And they were **eager to leave**!

THE WORDS JESUS CHRIST HAD SPOKEN HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE REASON WHY THEY LEFT! IT WAS WHAT THEY SAW WRITTEN IN THE DUST THAT CAUSED THEM TO GET OUT OF THERE!

It was those words written in the dust that "**convicted their consciences**". And therefore those words in the dust must have revealed some very personal and embarrassing information. But there was a way to keep that information from becoming public knowledge. And that was for them to drop all their

accusations against other people, and to just walk away.

This is about the people by the wayside in the second resurrection!

Many of those by the wayside will have a somewhat self-righteous attitude when they are resurrected. **For them nothing has changed** since they died, and so they have exactly the same attitude which they had when they died. And so there will be **those who will start** their new lives in the second resurrection **with a self-righteous attitude**, as Jesus Christ mentioned in Matthew chapter 7 in the sermon on the mount.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, **Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?** and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name **done many wonderful works**? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:21-23)

Christ's reference here to "**in that day**" refers to **the second resurrection**! It can't be the first or the third; so it must be the second resurrection; that's the only option.

Christ statement "**I never knew you**" means that they had never at any time had God's Spirit. And that means that they had never at any time really repented. That means that **they had never provided good ground for the seed** they had received. They very clearly had received the seed, because they knew about Christ, but Christ didn't know them! This means, amongst other things, that **Jesus Christ "does not know" the unconverted spouses of church members**.

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 7.

For the **unbelieving husband is sanctified** by the wife, and **the unbelieving wife is sanctified** by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14)

When the unbeliever is "sanctified" then this means that the unbeliever is also "called", as per Matthew 13. In other words, God gives the unbelieving spouse the opportunity to also become a part of God's Church. It is when the unbelieving spouse does not respond to that opportunity from God, that then it becomes a matter of Christ not knowing them.

When one person comes to repentance and becomes a part of God's Church, at that point the unconverted spouse is given an opportunity by God to also become a part of God's Church. That is when the unbelieving spouse is "sanctified", i.e. set apart from the rest of humanity by also receiving a calling from God. That's the focus of 1 Corinthians 7:14. But if that unconverted spouse continues to be unconverted until his or her death, in effect never making use of that "sanctified" status, then they revert to the status of Christ never having known them. That's the focus of Matthew 7:21-23.

Christ's statement "**depart from Me**" means: "You are still totally carnal! And I want nothing to do with you **until you repent**!". Important here is that Jesus Christ does not pronounce any kind of penalty on these people; He just sends them away.

This is a **different** group **from** those in **Matthew 25:41**; that group is going into the lake of fire. But the people in Matthew 7:21-23 are those by the wayside appearing in the second resurrection, like unconverted spouses, and people in the world's churches who thought of themselves as true Christians, etc.

These people say to Christ in the second resurrection: "we did wonderful works in your name". This

means that they definitely had been exposed to God's seed. And then the only option is that they received the seed by the wayside, because all three of the other groups "are known to God", or at least "were known to God at one point". Only those by the wayside were **never** known to God.

So coming back to John 8:9, we see that in the second resurrection those by the wayside will have **a choice**:

- **Either** they freely admit their guilt before God, and it will be wiped out without ever being mentioned openly. That's **like the woman** here.

- **Or** they self-righteously look down on other people, in which case God will openly confront them with their guilt before God, and their lack of responsiveness to the seed God had given to them. That's **like the Pharisees** here.

Let's continue with the next verse.

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those **thine accusers**? **hath no man condemned thee**? (John 8:10)

Let's keep in mind that the Pharisees had already condemned her in John 8:4-5. So what this means is that, after Jesus Christ had rubbed their noses in their own guilt, via writing in the dust, the Pharisees had all withdrawn their earlier condemnation.

Let's also keep in mind that this woman was obviously acknowledging her guilt. She didn't have any facade. She recognized and acknowledged her own sins. What this means is that there will also be those amongst the seeds **by the wayside** who will **freely acknowledge** that they were guilty in not responding to the seed that had been planted in their minds. And with that approach it will immediately be "more tolerable" for them in the second resurrection.

So the Pharisees and the woman taken in adultery represent two different responses from amongst those who had received the seed by the wayside!

For the one group it will be "more tolerable" and for the other group it will be "less tolerable". And it is the attitude with which they come up in that resurrection that will determine who will become a part of each of these two groups.

Notice how the woman responded to Jesus Christ's question.

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee**: go, and sin no more. (John 8:11)

That is God's message to all the people in the second resurrection, but specifically to all those who had received the seed by the wayside. If they are willing to acknowledge their sins and their guilt before God, then God will say to them: I don't condemn you for your past actions and conduct; so go and sin no more! From now onwards no excuses will be accepted.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADMITTING GUILT

This concludes the example that applies to those in the second resurrection who had received the seed by the wayside. The key issue for this group is how **they themselves** deal with their past sins, including

their lack of response to the opportunity God had set before them in giving them the seed.

The two possible responses by these people when they are first resurrected are: either they freely acknowledge their past guilt, or they self-righteously justify themselves by focusing on the sins of other people, like the Pharisees.

It should be clear that it is extremely important to God to find out whether or not people will freely admit their sins and their failures before God. **Do you know why this is so very important to God?**

In the second resurrection God places the spirit in man for each individual in that resurrection into a new physical body with a soundly functioning brain. **The physical brain provides the vehicle for the spirit in man to achieve consciousness and awareness and personal identity.** Without a brain that spirit in man cannot function; without a brain it is useless and has no awareness.

Now as soon as that spirit in man is placed within the brain of that new physical body in the second resurrection, that spirit in man will carry on where it left off with the last breath that the person had taken in their first life. It will have the **same attitudes** it had at the point of death. That spirit in man has not changed in any way since the person had died.

In plain language: whatever **attitudes**, **emotions** and **character** the person had at the point of death, those things will be exactly the same when they first come up in the second resurrection. If they harbored resentment towards anyone when they died, that resentment will still be in their minds the moment they are resurrected. Absolutely nothing has thus far changed for their minds! **They are in effect exactly the same person** but in a different body, from the person they had been.

Can you understand why it is so very important to God that some things must change very quickly? These people must all face their wrong attitudes and any character weaknesses **very quickly**, like in the first 60 minutes of their new lives, so that those wrong attitudes are not perpetuated. God is not going to mess around with these people from the wayside and say something like: I'll tell you what, I'll give you six weeks to sort out all your wrong attitudes and rebellion from your first lives; and then we'll see how much progress you have made.

THAT JUST ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN!

When God says that it is going to be "less tolerable" for these people, it means that God is going to say something like:

Listen! I haven't resurrected all of you so that I will once again have to put up with your procrastination and rebellion and weaknesses for year after year. I had enough of that from you in your first life. I have resurrected you so that **you can have the chance to shape up**, and you better do that in a hurry, because this time around I am not going to have the same patience I had with you before. And now I am not going to be as tolerant with you, as I will be with all these other people who in their lifetime never had the opportunity to understand My truth the way you had that opportunity. So this time around I expect you to respond quickly.

That is what "less tolerant" means!

That is the way God is going to deal with the unconverted spouses, etc. who come up in the second resurrection. The weaknesses and sins from their first lives will be resolutely confronted, and they'll need to respond quickly.

Now here is why it is so important to God that these by the wayside people very quickly reject the

attitudes they had during their first lifetime. Consider this carefully:

During their first lifetime they had allowed Satan to influence them to such a degree that they were willing to ignore the calling God had extended to them. This means that a part of Satan's way of thinking had established itself in their minds in a fairly resolute way; at least "resolute enough" to not respond to God at all in their first lifetime.

This means that they are resurrected with a character that still has a leaning towards Satan's way of thinking. As far as the working of their minds is concerned, **nothing has changed** from ten seconds earlier in their consciousness when they were about to die, and now ten seconds later when they find themselves in the second resurrection. It is immaterial whether they were dead for one year or whether they were dead for 3,000 years; their minds will only **relate to** the way their minds functioned **ten seconds earlier** in their consciousness. So every individual in the second resurrection who died with a rebellious mind will also be resurrected with a rebellious mind. And **all these people will be resurrected with a mind that is still by the wayside**.

One basic fact we should always keep in mind is that God never intervenes in the way we use our own minds, as far as leading us to repentance and salvation is concerned. God will never remove a spirit of rebellion from our minds; that is something that we always have to do ourselves. Nor will God ever overcome selfish tendencies for us; that too is something that we ourselves must always do. People in the second resurrection will be given the exact same spirit in man that they had when they died.

That is what the attitude of the Pharisees in this matter with the woman taken in adultery should also drive home. That incident shows the Pharisees coming up very critical of other people. They come up feeling just as self-righteous as they felt the day they died.

Now the concern regarding those by the wayside is that **they have already one time proved themselves unreliable before God**. That is obviously something that God must take into account. The precedent of Satan's selfish way of thinking is already well established in their minds. So God is looking to see if they can overcome and resolutely reject that way of thinking.

This has got nothing whatsoever to do with the perfect, utopian conditions that will exist on a worldwide scale when the second resurrection takes place. The perfect, peaceful, ideal society that will have been established during the previous 1,000 years doesn't really enter the picture, by which I mean that these ideal conditions will not motivate any of these people to have a change of heart.

The only real issue is one of the mind. The issue is about the way they will use their minds, the way they will think, the motivations and priorities they will embrace in their innermost thoughts. Perfect outside factors will never achieve a change in heart, as far as accepting God's way of using our minds is concerned.

God requires all of these by the wayside people to have a change of heart. But the only way that change of heart can be achieved is by the people themselves deciding to make that change **from the inside**! That change must be made exactly the same way that we must make that change today.

So these by the wayside people have to change the environment in their minds from within. God will make knowledge and understanding available, but they themselves must of their own free wills decide to reject Satan's selfish ways of thinking. And God will be watching them. It is only when they themselves change their minds from within, that God will then make His Holy Spirit available to them.

Now let's move on to the next category of people in the second resurrection.

THE MAN BORN BLIND

This also took place on that particular Last Great Day. It is recorded in John chapter 9. As we go through this keep the following in mind:

This event applies only to those who were never called!

These are the people who make up the overwhelming majority of all people in the second resurrection. They were all born blind spiritually. So this account reveals to us how God will deal with these people in the second resurrection. We have already seen that these are the people for whom it will be "more tolerable" than for those who had received the seed by the wayside.

And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was **blind from *his* birth**. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, **who did sin**, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, **Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents**: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (John 9:1-3)

This man represented all those who were spiritually "blind from birth". This represents all people since the flood who never received the seed from God in any way. When Jesus Christ said that neither this man nor his parents had sinned, Christ was referring specifically to sins that would have caused the blindness. What Jesus Christ was referring to is that this man was not in any way responsible for never having been exposed to God's seed.

With this man it wasn't a case of "I just don't want to know", which is the case for some people; they just don't want to know the truth because they can sense that such knowledge will make them accountable to some degree. But that was not the case for this man. For this man **God was taking full responsibility** for the man's blindness and for the man never having had access to God's truth.

When Jesus Christ said that this man was blind so that "the works of God should be made manifest in him", Christ meant the following two things:

1) This was **an irrefutable miracle**, on a higher level than many of the other healings. This was giving something to the man that he had never before had in his life, the ability to see. That was a powerful witness to "the works of God". Because of the magnitude of this miracle Jesus Christ's enemies (i.e. the Pharisees) would do their utmost to discredit this miracle. They went out and pressured the man and his parents to discredit this miracle.

2) This miracle also pointed to the powerful way that God will **open the spiritual eyes of billions of people** in the second resurrection, people who were all typified by this blind man. And that will be one of the mightiest "works of God" ever in relation to God's dealings with mankind.

This man had never seen anything before. Those billions in the second resurrection likewise had never before understood any aspect of God's truth. They had never had any access to God in their first lives. They in fact come up totally clueless in that resurrection. Therefore there is nothing at all that God holds against them. They are the ones to whom John 6:44 applies unconditionally. And so they are the ones for whom things will be far more tolerable in that resurrection than for those by the wayside.

Let's continue with the account in John 9.

When he had thus spoken, **he spat on the ground**, and made clay of the spittle, and he **anointed the eyes** of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, **Go, wash** in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (John 9:6-7)

The way Jesus Christ gave this man his sight is by making the man realize that he was dirty; that he was in need of washing. That is a vivid illustration of just what all those billions of people are like spiritually. They are dirty, polluted with the ways of this world, and they are in desperate need of cleansing. This is a graphic presentation of the billions in the second resurrection who have never understood anything about the true God.

Notice that this man is also very responsive. He meekly accepted what was done to him, someone rubbing some dirt on his eyes. And he willingly did what he was told to do. I suspect that this is representative of the billions in that resurrection, that they will very easily and readily cooperate with all of God's instructions to them. And their obedience starts even before their eyes are opened, which is interesting. They quite willingly follow God's instructions because they can perceive their own need for spiritual guidance.

Now things become very interesting. Here is a man who had been blind all his life, and now he has been given sight. We should note how this man's mind works, because his responses to various situations run parallel to the way the billions who had never been called by God will respond to God in the second resurrection.

Therefore said they unto him, **How were thine eyes opened?** He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. (John 9:10-11)

After his neighbors were satisfied that he was indeed the man who had been blind, they asked him: what happened that enabled you to now see? The man's answer reveals that he actually knows nothing at all about the true God. All he can do is repeat exactly what had happened, but he himself hadn't even seen Jesus Christ.

That is how spiritually blind this group of people in the second resurrection is going to be. They know nothing about the real Jesus Christ. What this also means is this: these people don't have any false teachings about God to unlearn, because they had never had any contact with the true God. This man didn't even know where to find Jesus Christ (John 9:12).

Then this man is brought before the Pharisees, the people who had already decided that they wanted to have Jesus Christ killed. Of interest here is to observe how this formerly blind man uses his mind. He is clear, sharp, logical and unafraid, not intimidated by threats of being ostracized.

When the Pharisees ask how he received his sight, he tells them exactly the same story as he had told his neighbors (John 9:15). Then some of the Pharisees accused Jesus Christ of supposedly having broken the Sabbath (John 9:16), while others couldn't reconcile someone doing this kind of miracle with supposedly being a sinner (good for them; they were at least a bit more honest than the others).

So the Pharisees then asked the previously blind man again regarding what had happened and then they asked the man to make a judgment about Jesus Christ. So the man said without hesitation "He is a prophet" (John 9:17).

The Pharisees were still not satisfied. So they queried the man's parents about their son, obviously trying to intimidate them. The parents knew that the Pharisees had already agreed to disfellowship anyone who would accept Jesus Christ as a prophet (John 9:22). So the parents said: we don't know; you need to ask him and he can speak for himself.

So then the Pharisees again called the man and tried to turn up the pressure. They were clearly trying to intimidate the man into denying Jesus Christ in some way (John 9:24). Now the man's answer is very

important, especially in view of his actions typifying how people in the second resurrection will respond to Jesus Christ.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not: **one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see**. (John 9:25)

This is going to be the attitude of the people in the second resurrection who had never been called by God! The indications are that it will be very easy for God to reason with them, because they will greatly appreciate the fact that God has given them the opportunity to live again.

Are you beginning to see the vast difference in attitude between those who had never been called by God and those who had received the seed by the wayside? No wonder that God is going to be far more tolerant in dealing with these people than God is going to be with the waysiders. These people are going to be very easy to teach; and it is the conduct of the man who had been born blind that reveals this information to us.

So the Pharisees ask him the same questions again, hoping to trip him up or hoping he had been intimidated enough to change his story (John 9:26). That is the typical approach of interrogators, endlessly asking the same questions in the hope of getting different answers. The man is by then getting understandably fed-up with this stupid line of questioning. And so he gives them a very sarcastic answer:

"Do you guys also want to become His disciples?" (John 9:27, paraphrased)

This sarcasm isn't lost on the Pharisees, and so they revile the man (John 9:28). And then the Pharisees say: "We know that God spoke unto Moses: *as for* this *man*, we know not from whence He is" (John 9:29).

Now we see the impeccable logic with which this formerly blind man answers them. He is far from being intimidated by them. And so he says:

... Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from whence He is, and *yet* He has opened my eyes. Now **we know that God hears not sinners**: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. **If this man were not of God, He could do nothing**. (John 9:30-33)

I take this to represent the frame of mind of the majority of those people in the second resurrection who had never understood anything about the true God. Compare this frame of mind to the frame of mind of those who had received the seed by the wayside. Here is how this man reasoned:

1) He understands the principle that for every effect there has to be a cause.

2) Therefore the fact that Christ opened the man's eyes can only mean that He has that power from God.

3) God does not hear (i.e. respond to) the prayers of sinners. This means that sinners can't perform miracles.

4) But God does hear (i.e. respond to) the prayers of those who do God's will. This means that the person who did the miracle has to be of God.

5) Therefore this deed (the miracle) constitutes a very powerful witness from God.

6) Never before were the eyes of someone born blind opened.

7) There is no getting away from the conclusion that Jesus Christ has to be "of God".

This represents how the minds of people who had never been called by God will work when they are resurrected. They will not be prejudiced by feelings, ideas and religious biases that they had accepted earlier. Their eyes will be open to easily understanding God's truth when it is explained to them.

The Pharisees couldn't refute the man's logic. Therefore they resorted to name-calling. Their minds were totally closed to the facts they could not refute.

So then Jesus Christ meets this man again and asks him: do you believe on the Son of God (John 9:35)? This man is standing in front of Jesus Christ with 20/20 vision and he doesn't know who Jesus Christ is.

The question "who is He that I might believe on Him?" shows that all these people who had never been called have no idea what Jesus Christ looks like. They have no idea what to expect from God. They have a clear need to have the true God pointed out to them. They also have a clear need to have God's true teachings explained to them (John 9:37). And when that is done, they will be easy to lead to repentance (John 9:38).

Then Jesus Christ made the following statement:

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. (John 9:39)

This statement applies specifically to the second resurrection!

Specifically, Jesus Christ is speaking about the two groups in that resurrection: those who had never been called, and those who had received the seed by the wayside in their first lifetime.

Now what Jesus Christ was really pointing our here in this verse is that **nobody really sees the truth without God first opening their eyes**!

In the second resurrection there are two types of people to start with:

1) Those who are blind and they know it = those who were never called.

2) Those who think they can see = those by the wayside.

So when those who "think they can see" are made blind, then everybody is blind! And that is the state of all those in the second resurrection! All people in that resurrection start out being spiritually blind. It is just that some (i.e. those by the wayside) cannot recognize their own spiritual blindness. But starting out from that position of all those in the second resurrection being blind, God can then open their spiritual eyes so that they may see.

[**Comment:** Those by the wayside had never really understood the truth. But they had been exposed to the truth. And in their own minds they thought that they understood a certain amount. In actual practice they didn't grasp that all their "understanding" was in fact terribly flawed. So at the time they are resurrected they think that they know more than they do. And **they need to be made blind before they can understand**.]

What this Scripture shows is that opening the spiritual eyes of human beings requires two steps for some people, and it requires only one step for other people. In this process the people who recognize their own spiritual blindness (those who were never called) are always better off, and they are easier for God to work with. They are the ones that require only one step, for God to give them the ability to see.

Those who don't recognize that they are blind (those by the wayside) must first be brought to the point where they will be **confronted** by their own blindness. Once they can recognize their own blindness, then God can work with them as God works with the other group, by also giving them the ability to see.

The point is this: unless those who think they can see come to **recognize their own blindness**, they cannot get to the point where they will really see God's truth.

This principle is not limited to people in the second resurrection. It also applies equally today to all of us in this present time.

IN OUR AGE TODAY

There are large numbers of people who think that they can see. That includes not only all the people in the world's so-called "Christian" churches, but also many people who are a part of the scattered churches of God.

The only way God can lead such people to an understanding of the truth is to first lead them to the point where they recognize that their present understanding is not correct. **God in effect first has to make them blind.** The way that will manifest is that they come to the point where they say to themselves: I actually didn't understand this teaching (or this whole subject, or true Christianity) at all.

Once they have reached that point, **and not before then (!)**, can God then "give them sight", i.e. give them an understanding of the truth on that particular subject. That is when Jesus Christ can lead those who recognize they "see not" to the point where "they will see".

Now for **people in the world's churches** who respond to God's calling this two-step process covers the whole picture. For such people it covers all doctrines. They didn't really understand any part of God's truth. And they need to learn everything new. But this process can only start if **they first come to the point of being blinded**. Their previous religious ideas and their previous interpretations of the Scriptures block out an understanding of the truth. It is only if they are blinded (i.e. their previous religious ideas are removed from their sight) that it then becomes possible for them to see the truth.

That more or less describes the process of people coming into God's Church in this age. It should be easy to see that therefore those people who start out knowing they are blind (i.e. they don't have any previous religious understanding that first needs to be blotted out) can progress through this process at a faster pace. They can proceed directly to step two. They don't need to first be made blind.

Now **for us in God's Church** the process is the same, but on a smaller scale. Where people out in the world's churches have to throw out their entire previous religious understanding, for us this process usually only involves a doctrine here and another doctrine there. But for us this process does not involve the whole picture.

For every doctrine where our present understanding is not correct, it is impossible for us to understand the truth **unless Jesus Christ first makes us blind on that particular subject**! And unless we can perceive our blindness on that subject, it will be impossible for us to come to the point where "we see"

that subject correctly and clearly. The way we come to perceive our own blindness is to realize: I always thought that I understand this quite clearly, but now I see that I actually didn't understand this matter at all.

Now quite a number of you who will read this article have in fact gone through this precise process a number of times during the past decade or so, right? You had to get to the point where you were first made blind on a specific teaching. Only then was God able to make you see the truth. And in that way your understanding has changed on a number of subjects.

I know that I myself have gone through this process multiple times, and I now have a different understanding on a number of things from the understanding I had during Mr. Armstrong's time. And in every case I first had to be made blind towards the teaching I had previously accepted.

That is what Jesus Christ was talking about in John 9:39. He was speaking to you and to me as much as He was speaking to anyone else. So while the application of this statement is aimed at the people in the second resurrection, it certainly also has an application for our time today.

Let's move on in the account in John's Gospel to the last thing that applied to that particular Last Great Day.

JESUS CHRIST HAS OTHER SHEEP

Notice John 10:16.

And **other sheep** I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one fold**, *and* one shepherd. (John 10:16)

First let's deal with a mistranslation in this verse.

There are two words we need to consider in the context of looking after sheep. In this context the word "**fold**" refers to **the place** where sheep are kept, usually some kind of enclosure to provide some security. The word "**flock**" refers to **the group** of sheep, the sum total of all the individuals in that group. These two words "fold" and "flock" are not synonymous, and so they are not interchangeable.

A correct translation of the Greek text **should read** something like this:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one flock**, *and* one shepherd." (John 10:16)

The error can be led back to the Latin Vulgate translation, where Jerome correctly translated the Greek word "aule" meaning "a fold" with "ovile" into Latin. Then Jerome incorrectly translated the Greek word "poimne" meaning "a flock" with "ovile" into Latin. The Latin word "ovile" means "a fold". The Latin word for "a flock", which word Jerome should have used but didn't use, is "grex", the root of our English word "gregarious", which literally means "to behave like sheep".

So instead of correctly translating from the Greek text, many English language translations have simply copied Jerome's error, and that is why we erroneously have the word "fold" twice in this one verse.

So here is what Jesus Christ was saying on that Last Great Day:

By "**this fold**" Christ was referring to the present, i.e. to all those who will be in the first resurrection. The 144,000 in the first resurrection make up that first fold.

The "**other sheep**" Jesus Christ has are at present not gathered into a specific "fold". But they will in time comprise "**a second fold**". These "other sheep" are all the people from the millennium plus those from the second resurrection that will eventually become a part of God's Family. All of them together will be physically alive at the end of the 100-year period. And that is when they will make up "a second fold".

And when all of those people are changed into spirit beings just before the third resurrection takes place, **then** they will be combined with the first fold to form "**one flock**". So the ultimate "one flock" refers to **the entire Family of God** except for God the Father Himself and for Jesus Christ. God the Father is supreme. Under Him will be Jesus Christ. And under Jesus Christ will be "the one flock" that has been built on the sacrifice which Jesus Christ brought for all His "sheep" by giving His life for our sins.

So with this statement in John 10:16 Jesus Christ has tied the whole picture together.

And that concludes Jesus Christ's discussion of various different aspects that apply to the people in the second resurrection, which resurrection is represented by the Last Great Day at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Frank W Nelte