

## The Two Resurrections, Which?

Many Bible reading Christians understand that there will be 144,000 people in the First Resurrection, but most who claim to be Christians know little or nothing of resurrections, believing that, on death, they will go to Heaven or perhaps, Hell.

The hope of almost all mankind and the Bible promise to the Christian is actually the resurrection from the dead. The bible refers to (1) the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead and the pioneer of our salvation; (2) the resurrection of the saints, the faithful Christians - called the "first resurrection" - at the return of Christ when the true believers shall become spirit-composed members of God's family; (3) the later resurrection back to physical life for all who have ever died without having understood God's way, for their first opportunity for salvation; (4) the later resurrection of the incorrigibly wicked - those who have refused to repent and have rejected God's way - to be consumed in the lake of fire (called the "second death").

We must understand that by the time the *Second* Resurrection occurs, the whole earth will have had 1000 years of the millennium to be prepared, after the horrendous Great Tribulation. (Read our article number 59, 'Return to Eden'). It will gradually become a world of peace and beauty, and the Government of God, full of the knowledge of God's way, based upon His Laws, Isaiah 11:9, '[They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea](#)'.

Once we have understood these things, does it really matter which of the two main resurrections a Christian will be in? Obviously, no-one wants to be in the fourth Resurrection as listed here, that of the incorrigibly wicked who have totally refused to repent of their evil ways. All *they* have to look forward to is the Lake of Fire, which is the second death, and final extinction. Revelation 20:14, '[Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.](#)'

So, Jesus referred to two main resurrections of *mankind*: the First, to the resurrection of Life; the Second to the resurrection of Judgment. John 5:28-29, '[and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil \(failure to follow God's way\) will rise to experience judgement.](#)' New Living Translation. The King James translation is quite wrong here in translating 'judgment' as 'damnation'.

The Second Resurrection will be the one in which most nominal Christians, and all the rest of mankind from Adam, will be brought back to physical life, as in Ezekiel 37:3-6, '[And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these](#)

bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

What will life be like for those in the second resurrection? There are no scriptures which tell us at what age the dead will be resurrected, but they are promised 100 years in Isaiah 65:20, ‘No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.’ Obviously, all will be raised whole in body and mind, so that each has a fair chance of attaining a successful and righteous character in their new life. For example, my son lost a leg in a motor-cycle accident, but will be raised with two legs.

They would need to be mature enough to understand and appreciate repentance, so most who lived to old age are expected to be resurrected around the age at which Christ was considered mature enough to begin His ministry, that is, about 30. Everyone then, will have another ‘lifetime’ to understand God’s Laws, with the help of Christ’s Bride, the 144,000, as their teachers, and be judged on their choices. The people raised, will quickly find their wives and families with the help of God’s angels. Children who died young will be brought up by their parents, though they will have no more children, Matthew 22:30, ‘For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven.’NLT.

It is very sad that today so many who think of themselves as Christians have allowed themselves to be deceived by Satan, Revelation 12:9, ‘And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, **the deceiver of the whole world**’. I say “allowed” because if they had seriously read their Bibles, they would have seen that we are *all* judged by our works, James 2:24-26, ‘You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also **faith apart from works is dead**’. Sadly, Satan has managed to persuade almost all Christians that God’s Commandments have been “done away” and that all we need is ‘love’, but true ‘love’ is expounded by the Ten Commandments. The first four show us how to love God and the last six reveals how to love our fellow men and women.

So many “Christians” thus falsely believe they have been given the Holy Spirit, but, in truth it is given only to those who obey God’s word, Acts 5:32, ‘And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given **to those who obey him**.’ Romans 2:13, ‘For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but **the doers of the law who will be justified**’. Jesus Himself said, John 14:15, 21, “**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**” v21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be

loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” All of those deceived, as well as those who had never heard of Jesus Christ, will have their chance to chose to obey God and progress to Eternal Life at the end of the 100 years, as we read in Isaiah 65:20. ‘No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed’.

However, those who have been wicked in their lives will at last receive appropriate punishment, the indications being that the very wicked, such as world leaders who have caused the death of many thousands, may even be cast into the same prison as the demons, Isaiah 24:21-22, ‘On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven above and kings of the earth below. They will be gathered together like prisoners in a pit. They will be confined to a dungeon; after many days they will be punished.’ HCSB. Only if they truly repent will they be released.

Evil will not be allowed to take root. Wrong choices will bring chastisement from the Lord, Isaiah 30: 20-21, ‘And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers, Your ears **shall hear a word behind you**, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.’

It will be clear that everyone is being judged to determine if they are prepared to live by God’s Law. Those who do, will on their death gain Eternal Life. Those who don’t will eventually face the Lake of Fire.

Having revised the 2<sup>nd</sup> Resurrection, let’s turn to the First Resurrection. We read that this is only for a tiny fraction of those who have ever lived. Revelation 14:1-5 describes those who become the 144,000.

‘Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless’.

These are those *spiritual* virgins whose lives qualified them to become the Bride of Christ, as in Matthew 25:1-10. Here they are pictured in Heaven after their marriage, so they have the Family name on their foreheads. They are not to be confused with a second 144,000 in Revelation 7, who were not prepared for the First Resurrection in the previous chapter, Revelation 6, which is also described in Matthew 24:30-31.

Notice that the *latter* 144,000 only receive the Holy Spirit *after* the First Resurrection, whereas those in the First Resurrection were sealed with the Holy Spirit long before then, either during the New Testament era or the Old. Ephesians 4: 30, ‘**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**’.

How special the first 144,000 are can be seen by dividing 144,000 by 6000 (years). The result is only 24 in each year, which of course is quite unrealistic, but it makes us realise how small a proportion this is, of the earth’s total population over 6000 years. God is a master planner. He knows just how many will be needed as the Bride of Christ, who, together with her husband, will bring many ‘children’ into God’s family during the Millennium, as those who survive the Great Tribulation are gradually taught the Way of The Lord.

As succeeding generations live and die, the repentant will gain Eternal Life and be added to God’s family to help teach future generations, though none of them will ever become the Bride of Christ. Only the Bride will ever attain that close familial relationship to Jesus Christ and His Father. We can’t really imagine the closeness of that special relationship except by comparing it with the special “oneness” just a few attain in marriage in this life, but that relationship gives us some hint of the unity and oneness they will share with Christ, and His Father, as in John 17:21, ‘**that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me**’.

However that “oneness” helps us to realise just how high the standard must be, by which the Bride is measured. None of us will make it into that exalted position unless we are totally dedicated to our calling, as pictured by Proverbs 31:29, “**Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all.**” If we remain truly repentant, for none of us is without sin, our Father considers us holy, sanctified and set apart as a priestly people, acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 2:5, ‘**And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God**’ NLT. No wonder the Bible mentions only 144,000!

Each of us however, has a different calling, according to the talents God has given us, and God expects us to be faithful to that calling, as were Abraham and David, both of whom were trustworthy and loyal in their calling, despite their failings. Thankfully, we have a lifetime to reach that standard, but the one thing God looks for from our baptism, is active faith. Just look at those listed in Hebrews 11. None were perfect, but all of them strode out in that faith, often by putting God’s will first, even before their lives!

All of these folks were still living in faith when they died and most would admit that they often felt aliens and strangers in the societies in which they lived, as we see for instance in the psalms of David. Instead, they held a vision close to their hearts, a

longing for a better ‘country’, a better society, and for that reason, God is not ashamed to be called their God, Hebrews 11:16, ‘But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city’.

Truely, we have been blessed to read of the opportunity of the 144,000 (Rev. 1:3). There is no higher calling. Nothing we could imagine is more precious, and the amazing thing is that God has chosen *us* to have that chance! If only we can be faithful to our calling, we will return from Heaven with Christ as Kings and Priests, to fight against the world’s armies at Armageddon, Revelation 17:14, ‘They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, **and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.**’ Then will come the glorious Kingdom of God!

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