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# THREE RESURRECTIONS

MINI BOOK

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bibleTalk<sup>TV</sup>

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I am never surprised by the many ways that unbelievers have found to dishonor the name of Christ, or ridicule the gospel and Christians in general. For example, there was an editorial cartoon in the Montreal Gazette Newspaper a while back that showed the iconic cross atop Mt. Royal (a 103-foot-high landmark representing the city's Catholic heritage) wearing a

Montreal Canadian's hockey sweater. The artist thought this was a cute way of merging two of Montreal's great symbols.

Of course, had any other group been so insulted; or had any other religious group's symbols been so trivialized - everyone would have been up in arms and rushed to denounce the cartoonist and the Gazette in defense of their history or religion. But this was an insult to Christians and, as everyone knows in our society, Christianity is fair game for ridicule. I'm insulted but, like I said, never surprised at the new and creative ways the world finds to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. I am surprised and disappointed, however, when those who claim to be disciples and believers manage to do the very same thing, while wearing the name Christian. For example:

- Several years ago a religious think-tank called the "Jesus Seminar" made up of eminent scholars and professors led by a man named Robert W. Funk issued a statement saying that at their most recent meeting they had concluded that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not true. In previous years this same group reported that they rejected miracles, the virgin birth, and other teachings contained in the Bible. However, this year they timed their press release to coincide with the Easter weekend so they could announce to the world that the "Jesus Seminar" now held the position that the resurrection of Jesus Christ never really happened.

When you hear this type of pronouncement from those who call themselves Christian teachers, and who claim great knowledge, the words of Paul in Acts 20:30 take on a chilling reality,

...and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Even though this event attracts those who ridicule and deny, I am glad that the world focuses on the resurrections of Jesus each year because it gives us an opportunity to talk about not one, but all three resurrections described in the New Testament.

We focus so much on Jesus' resurrection that we overlook the fact that the Bible refers to three resurrections, not only one.

# 1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The first one is, of course, the resurrection of Jesus Christ - the one most people are familiar with. There are many factors connected to this event, but the main things to remember are:

## **HIS RESURRECTION WAS PROPHESED**

The resurrection was not an afterthought or a "Plan B" operation to patch up a botched ministry. That Jesus would live as a man, die, and then resurrect was planned by God from the beginning and spoken of throughout the Bible:

- **Genesis 3:15** - God alludes to the Christ and how Satan would temporarily stop him (heel) but

with the resurrection Christ would destroy Satan (head).

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

- **Acts 2:31** - Peter claims that Daniel (700 years before Jesus) spoke of the fact that the Messiah would resurrect.

he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.

- **John 2:19** - Jesus Himself alluded not only to His own resurrection, but the number of days in which it would be accomplished.



Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The resurrection is the event that ties both the Old and New Testaments together - one looks forward to it and the other describes it and the results it accomplished.

### **THE RESURRECTION WAS THE PROOF OF JESUS' DIVINITY**

Many had done miracles of the same nature and power of Jesus. Many had claimed to be the Messiah. Paul, however, says in Romans 1:4 that the resurrection is what proved Jesus to be the Son of God with power.

If people wanted an undeniable sign of who was to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior, the Holy One, the Lord, the divine Son of God - the resurrection was the sign, the only sign that God provided for this

purpose. Therefore, Jesus' resurrection is the first and foremost of the three resurrections in the Bible - but it's not the last!

## **2. The Resurrection of Believers**

In I Corinthians 15:20 Paul, in talking about Jesus' resurrection, reminds his readers that His resurrection was only the first in a series of resurrections to come:

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

Farmers look at the first blooms, the first fruits of their crop, signaling that the entire harvest will soon be ready to gather. Many,

like the psalmist David, believed and hoped for a resurrection in the future:

But God will redeem my soul from  
the power of Sheol;  
for he will receive me.  
- Psalms 49:15

Until Jesus, however, the confirmation of that hope was always on the horizon - something hoped for, promised but never seen. The resurrection of Jesus fulfilled the promise and secured the hope of believers that this thing called "resurrection" was indeed possible because Jesus actually accomplished it.

Paul's comment on the first fruits explains that His is the first but not the last of the resurrections. In I Thessalonians 4:13-17,

the Apostle provides the details as to when this will happen.

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive

and remain will be caught up  
together with them in the clouds  
to meet the Lord in the air, and so  
we shall always be with the Lord.  
- I Thessalonians 4:13-17

Jesus was the first to rise, and believers are the second to do so when Jesus returns. If He appeared once and resurrected once; He will appear a second time for our resurrection. I feel sorry for those who ridicule and deny the resurrection of Jesus because in doing so, they are ridiculing and denying the possibility of their own resurrection leaving them laughing perhaps - but laughing without hope.

### 3.

## The Resurrection of the Creation

We talk the least about this one because we know the least about this one. We have details about the resurrected Jesus and how He was physically present (John 20:27):

- He spoke and listened.
- You could touch Him.
- He was humanly recognizable.

And yet His nature was changed (Luke 24:36; Acts 1:9-12):

- He appeared and disappeared.
- He ascended into heaven.

We have some descriptions about our own resurrected state (I Corinthians 15:51-54):

- We will be conscious and communicative.
- We will also be recognizable, but our natures will be changed - like angels - and thus have their powers and capabilities.
- We will no longer be subject to sin, decay, or death.

We have less information about the resurrected creation but the Bible does refer to it.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation

was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

- Romans 8:18-22

Paul equates the longing to be free from sin and death in order to be with God to the same type of yearning that the creation experiences in its innate desire to be free from decay and ultimate destruction because of sin. The point here is that God's perfect creation also suffered because of sin and the final results will be that its



present condition and form will be destroyed when Jesus comes:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.  
- II Peter 3:10

When we put these two Scriptures together (Romans 8 and 2 Peter 3) we see the resurrection of the creation.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away...  
- Revelation 21:1

The old creation was polluted by man's sin and doomed to ultimate destruction. The violence, the struggle to survive the collective sigh of despair is witness to this.

At the return of the resurrected Jesus to signal the raising from the dead of believers and, of course, disbelievers who will be condemned and sent to punishment, this old creation will pass away and a new one will be resurrected. Just as God will resurrect a new man fitted for eternal life, He will also resurrect a new heaven and earth as a suitable dwelling place for resurrected man.

It will not be an improved earth or heaven where we live in a similar fashion as we do now for a number of years. It will be a resurrected creation much like our bodies will be resurrected bodies with an eternal nature.

The Bible does give us some information concerning what this will be like:

In the new heaven and earth there will be

- No need of sun or moon because there will be no night there (Revelation 21:23-25).
- No sea there (Revelation 21:1).
- A prepared city where God will dwell with His people in a precious surrounding of jewels and precious gold (Revelation 21).
- The Tree of Life and the river flowing from God's throne will be there (Revelation 22).
- No tears, no pain, no sorrow, no unclean thing, no death, no Satan, no condemnation (Revelation 21).

God turns defeat into victory by sowing and resurrecting man in glory - He does the same by resurrecting in perfection the creation that He originally designed for man to live in.

## **SUMMARY**

It's nothing new for the world not to believe in the resurrection, but for the saints the resurrection is the event we have spent our lives preparing for. Let us therefore be convinced of all 3 resurrections:

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ as a signal that death was not final and that He is the true Son of God and Savior of our souls.
2. The resurrection of believers, now made possible by Jesus'

resurrection, which we anticipate each time we meet for communion.

3. The resurrection of the creation which God will accomplish in order to provide for His sons and daughters a new and eternal home suitable for their glorious resurrected bodies.

These things being so, and because God cannot lie, let us face the world with a mixture of confidence and compassion:

- Confidence that despite the disbelief and rejection now, God will keep His promise to resurrect all believers and His creation.
- Compassion because those who disbelieve have so little time and so little joy in this corrupted world.

I encourage all of our brothers and sisters not to lose hope and to remain faithful because He is faithful who has promised.

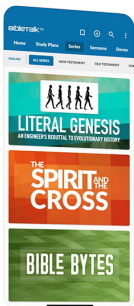
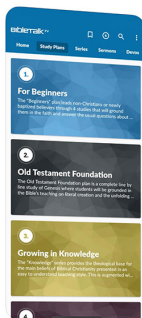
I also encourage those who desire resurrection but have not believed, to shake off your pride, confess Christ, repent of your sins, and be baptized that you might also look forward to the dual resurrections to come (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4-6).

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