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Two Resurrections

Warren Vanhetloo, ThD, DD
Professor, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary

Christians are aware, as Jesus taught, that all who are in graves will come forth, either unto the resurrection of life or unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29). These final resurrections will include all men.

Other resurrections are recorded in Scripture, and so it is important to consider how they are related to the final resurrections unto life or damnation. These other resurrections fall into two classes in connection with asking the question, raised unto what type of existence?

Understanding of three words needs to be clear. (1) Resurrection means bodily to stand again, to come forth from the grave. (2) Resuscitation is to restore or revitalize, especially from apparent death. (3) Glorification is fitting the human body for heavenly existence. A similar change of the human body to endure everlasting punishment will also enter into these distinctions.

The purpose of this brief survey is to note resurrections that resulted in a return to a mortal, temporary life as different from those resurrections unto immortal, eternal life. Both are true resurrections. But some, in the transition to the eternal state, will not experience death and thus will not come forth from a grave.

The procedure for this survey will be to examine (1) resuscitation resurrections, those that were raised to return to a normal human life and eventually to die again; (2) some who were glorified without passing through death and experiencing resurrection; (3) resurrection unto glory or damnation; and (4) an instance of brief resuscitation followed by glorification.

(1) **Resuscitation resurrections.** Most past resurrections were resuscitations in the sense of being restorations to earthly life. Those who were brought forth from death lived normal lives once again, and later died. These later deaths, however, are not recorded in Scripture. The Old Testament records three such incidents; the New Testament, six or more.

Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath who fed him during famine (I Kgs 17:22). Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman (II Kgs 4:35). A corpse being placed in the sepulcher of Elisha revived (II Kgs 13:21). These three experienced death and benefited from miraculous raising from death.

During His public ministry Jesus raised the son of a widow at Nain (Luke 7:15), the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:55) and most impressively Lazarus (John 11:43-44). At the death of Christ, when the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, graves were opened and many saints rose bodily and actively witnessed (Matt 27:51-53).

The early church witnessed two more resurrections. Peter saw Tabitha (Dorcas) restored at Joppa (Acts 9:40). Paul saw a young man at Troas dead and revived (Acts 20:9-10).

These were not merely clinical deaths. A miracle was involved as these who were dead were brought back to life. These resumed their former lives. They were, however, a witness to the power of Jesus (God) to raise from the dead.

(2) **Glorification without resurrection.** Two did not die. They did not continue in this life, but were transported bodily to a heavenly abode. God took Enoch (Gen 5:24). He dramatically took Elijah (II Kgs 2:11). Centuries later this same Elijah was present on the mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:3).

(3) **Glorification resurrections.** Jesus predicted that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it again (John 10:18). His body was not just resuscitated to resume an earthly walk; it was a "glorious" body (Phil 3:21). The bodies of future resurrected saints will be like the body seen for forty days prior to the ascension (I John 3:2).

Predictions of future events include glorification of saints raised from the dead, and glorification without death or resurrection. At the rapture of the church dead bodies will be raised and glorified (I Thess 4:16). Also, at that time living saints will be glorified without experiencing death (I Thess 4:17).

The bodies of saints who had died during the tribulation will be raised just before Christ's earthly reign of one thousand years (Rev 20:4-6). These will receive glorified bodies, not just experience resuscitation to an earthly life. Following the millennial reign, at the

transition from the first earth to the new earth, both living and dead presumably will be glorified. The dead will be raised.

Another resurrection which is not a resuscitation is that of all unbelievers at the great white throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15) when they will receive bodies susceptible to eternal punishment.

(4) **First resuscitation, then glorification.** One prediction is of special importance in distinguishing between resuscitation-resurrections and glorification-resurrections. There is a time span between the resurrection and glorification of the two who actively witness for God for 1,260 days (Rev 11:3) and then are killed by the beast (Rev 17:7). Their dead bodies will be visible in Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days (Rev 11:8-9). When they are raised publicly, they will walk briefly on this earth (Rev 11:11) prior to an observable ascent to heaven (Rev 11:12).

God's designed resurrections have been accompanied by many infallible proofs. Our great concern should not be for resuscitation of a loved one but rather for the certainty that in the future resurrection our loved ones will be raised unto a glorious body unto life everlasting.