

The Truth About the Resurrections #2

**2000 Last Great Day, P.M. Service
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This afternoon, brethren, for this final service, we want to continue on and complete the topic that I began this morning. We are talking about the resurrections of the dead in the Master Plan of God for the salvation of mankind. And this morning I let you know that I had been waiting and planning these sermons for many, many months. It is my intent, not only in doing what I'm supposed to do in providing meat in due season for this Last Great Day but, simultaneously, also to tackle some of these hypotheses that are being submitted and promulgated by some of these other groups, or by certain individuals, who consider themselves knowledgeable enough to challenge the original teachings of Mr. Armstrong by pointing out what they think are errors in his conclusions, as opposed to what they say is the "simple" and "clear teaching of the Bible" concerning the resurrections. And the third resurrection, as a concept, has been an easy mark for these, because if you start from the premise that you don't believe Herbert W. Armstrong received *any* divine inspiration, whatsoever, from God, and you are looking for an opportunity to try and attack, the third resurrection is an easy mark because, as I said this morning, there is no place to which you can turn in the Bible that includes the labels "third resurrection" or "final resurrection"—which is how Mr. Armstrong always referred to it. And yet, it was part of the original teaching.

So, is there substantiation for it, or, as the naysayers would have us believe now, this many years after, that the Bible "clearly," as they say, teaches only two—two and only two resurrections? If that is so clear, we should be able to find it, and yet, as I pointed out this morning, the one scripture they seem to point to in order to substantiate the idea of two, and only two, resurrections is John chapter 5 and verse 29, and as I've already shown you, the technicalities do not prove it one way or the other.

But let's continue on with what we learned this morning: We began to tackle the issue of the plan of salvation by looking first at the groups of people, the unique groupings of individuals, that God is working with. In determining what are the unique elements of these groups, and how many groups there are, I could probably name more groups, if I wanted to get more specific, but we focused, primarily, on four major groups—three of which we are going to focus upon this afternoon.

First, we have the Firstfruits, a unique group composed of those called out and given their opportunity to understand the Truth by a miracle—an opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit—while yet the rest of the world is in darkness, for reason. They have their one opportunity for salvation now, in this present training ground—those of us who are at risk *now* for our chance at salvation. Those are called the Firstfruits.

Then we identified a second grouping: those who will live through all of the trauma, and the terrible circumstances, of that time leading up to, and through, the Day of the Lord and the return of Jesus Christ. They will live into the Millennium, and their progeny will be born during the Millennium.

We also noted, by reading Ezekiel chapter 37, another grouping of those who are going to be resurrected from the dead. They will have already lived an entire lifetime in the flesh, and yet they are going to be resurrected again to fleshly bodies. This time, however, they will be given their first opportunity at the knowledge of God—to have their minds opened and given the chance to become converted.

And then we noted a fourth category which cannot be denied, although the naysayers are certainly overlooking them, because they never reference them—they never mention them. And yet, God said there are those who, having been given their opportunity to know the Truth, will reject that knowledge and will die, having made the wrong decision and the wrong choice. Only God knows who they are. He's the only one who can judge, because it's a matter of heart and mind. But there will be someone in that category who is currently dead, or will be dead in the flesh, who will fail. And we have already seen the scriptures that show there is going to be a second death for those individuals that fail. How are they going to die a second time unless they, too, are resurrected?

And the question becomes, when are those incorrigible ones who rejected God going to be resurrected? Because, if there is no third resurrection—a final resurrection, which is a resurrection of the incorrigible—as we were taught there would be, then how are these going to be dealt with? They are not given another opportunity to prove themselves worthy, because they have already made the mistake and have lost their chance. They will be resurrected only to receive the guilty verdict of the Judge, and then will pay the final price: the second death in the final conflagration, when all of the earth, the physical things, and the elements of this world, are going to be burned up, finally, in that great inferno. When are those individuals going to be addressed in the plan of God if not in a separate and final resurrection?

Well, let's go through and look at some of the specifics, now. We will go back first and look at what is going to happen with those of the first resurrection. This morning, we avoided talking about the circumstances of the resurrections, specifically, and I focused instead on the classifications of people. Now we are going to look at those resurrections and call them by name. So let's begin by going back to the resurrection chapter: 1 Corinthians 15, and let's begin in verse 19, and this time I'm going to read certain elements I intentionally skipped over this morning, and we will fill in some of the gaps. 1 Corinthians 15 and beginning in verse 19:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept [So this tells us the overall plan. It's a plan that began with Christ. Christ was going to pave the way, and then all of mankind would follow in their own times]. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order [now here are the pieces as we put them in order]: Christ the firstfruits . . .

Christ was first. He died, He was resurrected from the grave after three days and three nights in the tomb, he then ascended to His heavenly Father, was sanctified and became our High Priest, and now sits on the right hand of God, the Father, as High Priest, awaiting His given responsibility to become King of kings.

"Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Someone is in a classification that's called "Christ's." "Then cometh the end . . ." In this particular passage there is little given as to what happens after that first resurrection, but that is what we are talking about here: ". . . afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." At His coming someone else is going to receive eternal life, as Christ was resurrected and received eternal life. That is the first resurrection.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

This actually leaps over whole elements of the story, which we will pick up in other places, concerning the Millennial reign of a thousand years, about the White Throne Judgment period, and how God is going to handle and finally resolve the issue of the incorrigible that have to be resurrected, somewhere, also. That is when the plan is completed, and Christ turns it all back over to the Father, having completed His assignment and His mission from the beginning.

Skipping down to verse 51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This is referring, specifically, to those of the Firstfruits who actually are alive at the time Christ returns. They will have lived through all of the seven seals—all of the seals of the book of Revelation, including the fifth seal, which is the great tribulation. They will have lived through all of the monumental signs and wonders, and the proclamation of that final Gospel by miraculous means, at the hands of those servants God will use, including two witnesses, a mighty angel who preaches that Gospel around the world, and all the manifestations that He will give to this world so that these people—the people of all the nations—will have no excuse for not knowing Who it is that rules in heaven and earth. These are those who will live through all of those things, will remain faithful, and will receive their rewards.

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye [when?], at the last trump . . ." What trump is this? I went through this exhaustively at the Feast of Trumpets to show that the seventh trump is a part of the seventh seal, and there are seven parts to the seventh seal in the plan that finishes the story. The seventh seal is divided into seven parts,

represented by seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet plague will occur when that trumpet sounds and announces that the reign of Jesus Christ has commenced, even though He is still sitting on the right hand of His Father. That is the moment when the Father gives possession of the Kingdom to Christ and then He descends with His mighty angels to take possession of that which He now is due. And it is at that very moment, at that same seventh trump, when Christ becomes the King, that all of these who are a part of the first resurrection will receive their reward—eternal life.

"[F]or the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." So, those who were dead, who died in the Faith—however many hundreds and thousands may be included in that—who have been part of the true Church, and have been faithful and judged as such, will first be resurrected from the dead, followed immediately thereafter by the change of all who may still be alive at that time, and these will rise together to meet Christ.

. . . and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Let's turn now to 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 13, where we see more details of this particular aspect of the first resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." No, when you are called and become a part of the Body of Christ, the Church, you have an understanding of this Master Plan and, therefore, in spite of the sorrow that we experience at the death of our brethren, we do not have to have fear and trepidation about their futures, because we know they *will be* resurrected. There is life after death, but it is not according to the way the world interprets it, but according to the perfect Master Plan of God, and what a perfect plan it is.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto

you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them [meaning that we will not precede them. We are not going to go before them] which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [and, as we have already seen in 1 Corinthians 15, this is at the last trump, that seventh, final, trumpet], with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds . . .

This is not talking about the clouds spoken of as being around God's throne in the third heaven, it is talking about the clouds of this atmosphere as Christ is descending to take possession of His throne, which is on this earth. Then the first resurrection of those who have been faithful and have died in the Faith, along with those who have remained faithful and are still alive at the time of their changing, will ascend and meet Christ in the clouds of this atmosphere. ". . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now I'm finally going to turn to Revelation chapter 20. Revelation chapter 20 and beginning in verse 1, and we'll see how the story begins to lay out:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

This denotes the time, the very same time, when Christ receives power to possess His Kingdom from the Father, and He comes to take it. Satan, simultaneously therefore, as the prince of the power of the air—the god of this world—is dethroned. He is bound, there is a change in leadership, and the theocracy of the government of God will begin to rule with authority upon this earth.

"And I saw thrones." What are these thrones? All of the eternal offices under Christ and His government—the ones we've been talking about all of this

Feast of Tabernacles—those which each one of you have been given an opportunity to train for. These are offices that have your names on them. God wants you to be a part of that government and to rule with Christ, and they are ours for the taking. All we have to do is prove that we love that Way of Life more than anything else.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast [no, they didn't embroil themselves in the false, doctrinal concepts of this world, and all that Satan has promulgated upon man], neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.

And we don't begin to speculate about what the physical fulfillment of this prophecy is. The one thing I can tell you is that the majority of the world will not recognize it, even when it comes, because these prophecies will only be spiritually discerned—only those of the called will really recognize them. Oh, there are lots of fundamentalist "Christian" groups who are very cognizant of these prophecies, and they have all kinds of schemes designed to be able to recognize the fulfillment, and they won't be able to do so. They might understand certain physical parts of these, but I guarantee you that they are going to be caught up in deception just as much as the rest of the world, because it's only going to be the people of God who have their eyes focused upon the Truth who are going to be able to avoid the mark of the beast, whatever it is. The uncalled "Christians" will not avoid it. They are going to try. They can see certain elements of it, but they are just as deceived as the rest of the world.

. . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [Now here is a parenthetical expression:] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

So, as we were always taught, you can put parentheses around that particular sentence. Then following, in verse 5, it says: "This is the first resurrection." That statement does not refer to the parenthetical expression about "the rest of the dead," it refers back to verse 4 and those who come up in the first resurrection.

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Is there a second death? Is somebody going to pay the price of the second death? Yes, or otherwise its inclusion here—the reference to it—makes God out to be quite fickle, and we don't believe that.

"[O]n such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign . . ." You see, they are both priests, and they reign. Who is it that reigns? A king. They are simultaneously priests and kings. They are officers in the theocracy of God's government, which does not have a separation of church and state. They are combined offices, even as Christ is both King of kings—or destined to be King of kings—and He is High Priest.

"[T]hey shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." That's the first resurrection. You see, this doesn't cause much controversy among those who still believe in the resurrections, to some extent, because the Bible is very clear—it spells out that this is the first resurrection, and it tells you who is in it.

What about the second resurrection? It's called the Great White Throne Judgment—that which we are even picturing today on this most Holy Day. The Great White Throne Judgment. And, again, we look at that verse 5—that parenthetical statement: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

What does this tell you? The first resurrection occurred when? At the very moment that Christ took possession of His Kingdom at the seventh trump. Those of the first resurrection received eternal life and they met Christ in the clouds, and they descended and put their feet upon the Mount of Olives and began to reign. They put all of this world together under Christ's dominion—under His feet, under His rule—and established that perfect Government. Then, we have a thousand-year reign of that government—called the Millennium—on earth, which we just completed picturing yesterday with the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Then, at the end of that thousand-year reign, the plan is still not completed, because here we just found, in verse 5, that it says that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." So, first, the thousand-year

Millennial reign comes to a close, and then another resurrection occurs directly after. And, remember, how many people are in the graves at this point that have yet to receive their first opportunity for salvation? Remember the valley of the dry bones— Ezekiel 37? Well, let's look at verse 7 of Revelation 20:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

The only thing we can say about these individuals is that they must be a part of the human beings who were converted, because remember, when the Millennial reign begins, all of the minds of humanity are opened—they all have a chance to be converted and to learn the laws of God. Whoever these human beings are who have not been given eternal life at the end of the thousand years, must be in that category of those who have rejected the Truth. And so, as we were taught, Satan is loosed for a little season. How long is that? How long does it take in order for him to rally these already rebellious, incorrigible ones, that did not qualify for salvation, together into an army to come up against Jerusalem? We don't know. It says they are as the sand of the sea. How many people are included? We don't know. We still hope that, by comparison to all who will accept that Way of Life and ultimately be born into that Family, it is still a small percentage.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are . . .

It is not the word "are" here, at all. That's a mistranslation. It should be "were cast." It is past tense, because the beast and the false prophet were human beings. They were individuals that made up that government. They were human beings—they were flesh and blood. They had no immortal souls, as the translators of the *King James Version* assumed. No, they were thrown into that unquenchable

fire, but because they were flesh and blood, they were immediately consumed when Christ returned. But Satan, being a spirit being that lives forever, is not hurt by physical fire. He is symbolically cast into that same fire, it says, and "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." But that is not the fate of human beings. Human beings are never going to be burned forever and ever in torment. No, the fire is that which is unquenchable—the penalty for sin and death is undeniable. It lasts forever for those who fail, but it is only Satan and his fallen angels, as eternal beings already, who will pay a penalty for all eternity. Human beings are mercifully going to be extinguished if they reject God.

Verse 11. Here we come to the second resurrection:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God . . .

This, brethren, is what we were taught is directly related to the story we read this morning in Ezekiel 37, and those who are raised back to flesh and blood bodies at the end of this thousand-year reign and given their first opportunity at saving knowledge. That's what this day, the Last Great Day, pictures: the Great White Throne Judgment.

Now, is that a judgment *day*? You hear that word used by many people in the world. You see, they confuse the Day of the Lord and the White Throne Judgment, and they come up with "Judgment Day." Is it a judgment day? I used to think that. It was easy to think that when I was a child: that here these people—these masses—were going to be resurrected just in time to stand trial and to be judged. And how ever much time God is going to give each one of them to stand before Him, and for the evidence to be weighed, they will be judged as either worthy of eternal life, or not worthy of eternal life. But does that make sense—that we are talking about a judgment *day*? Is this a White Throne Judgment *day*, or is this a White Throne Judgment *period*—a span of time, of some length, that follows the end of the thousand-year Millennium?

We are going to see that as we go along, because think about what our experiences, as the potential Firstfruits, are like right now: When you were first called and given a knowledge of the Truth, were you immediately ready to be judged? Has it been a judgment *day* for you? Or, are we currently being judged,

now, according to our works in the flesh, while hopefully putting on the nature of Jesus Christ? You see, what we were taught is that, for those who are raised up in the second resurrection, it will be for them a judgment period, just like we are involved in right now with our judgment period. Because when Christ returns, the resurrection happens—the first resurrection—and those who are faithful are judged as such, and are changed, and meet Christ in the air. He doesn't come back and call a time out, and then set up this great lengthy, expansive court hearing so that, one by one, we pass before Him and He weighs evidence. Because, do you know why? The evidence is being weighed right now.

Why do courts have to have lengthy proceedings in order to determine a verdict? Because they have to hear the testimony of witnesses in order to arrive at the truth. Isn't that true? And so the prosecution calls witnesses that they think support their conclusion about truth, and then the defense calls their witnesses to support what they think confirms what the truth is. But I think people forget that when we are talking about the judgment of God, and the resurrections, we are dealing with a God who knows all things. Does He not know what the Truth is? He doesn't need to call other witnesses in a lengthy, expansive proceeding in order to know exactly what's in your heart, and my heart, and mind. He knows. And we are proving it, right now. This is, in essence, our judgment time, in which we are demonstrating what our fruits are, and whether we love His Way, or whether we are willing to trade it for our own concepts. The evidence for us is being weighed now. When Christ returns, the only thing left to do is for the judge to pass a verdict: guilt or innocence, life or death. That's how all of the dead in Christ are going to rise at one time, and all of those who are alive, and are judged as having been faithful, are going to be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, and rise together to meet Christ, and then immediately set about to do the work of taking possession of the earth. The judgment is a period of time, and so shall it be for those of the second resurrection in the White Throne Judgment. We will see that as we go along.

Verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened [What are these books? The books were opened]: and another book was opened . . ." Okay, so there is something separate and distinct between the two. You have one set of books, and they are opened, and then you also have another book referenced, and it is opened too.

. . . and another book was opened [and it tells us what it is], which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

What does this tell us? Are all of those in the billions of people who were deceived all of their lives, and died without saving knowledge, ready to be judged when they stand upon their feet, and the sinew and the flesh comes back upon their bodies, and the breath of life is given to them in the flesh again? And at that moment their minds are opened to the Truth and they are given access to the Holy Spirit. Are they ready to be judged? It says here that they are going to be judged according to their works. What works? They were just resurrected—they have just come up, they have just gotten their lives back again, and they just now are being given an opportunity to have a relationship with God. They have had no time, whatsoever, to have any works, either good or bad. This is obviously telling us that the White Throne Judgment is a White Throne Judgment period in which these people are going to live physical lives, after the end of the thousand-year Millennium, and based upon the fruits of their lives, having now been converted, they are going to demonstrate, just as we are doing right now, whether they will choose to build holy, righteous character, or whether they will ultimately reject the laws of God in favor of their own concepts and ideas. So, it's going to take time for the completion of the White Throne Judgment period. It is not a judgment day, it's a judgment period. Keep that in mind, it is very, very important.

What are those books—those first books that are opened? They are the Holy Scriptures. It means that those books of the Bible are going to be opened to their understanding for the first time. Those books, which had been hidden from them, in spite of the fact that many of them, in their previous lives, read them continually, as do we. And they were able to glean certain valuable information and principles, and yet, in reality, their minds were closed to understanding those books, and to see the tapestry of the perfect plan of God. For the first time, those who are resurrected in the flesh in the second resurrection are going to have an opportunity to understand the Bible, in the same way that each one of you was given that opportunity when God called you and opened your mind so that you could respond to the message of the last-day servant, when all those around you couldn't understand what you were doing, nor why. They will have that same opportunity.

So, at the end of the Millennium, a second resurrection takes place. The books of the Bible are opened, meaning these people are finally offered true conversion. But they are not ready to be judged right away. They will be judged according to their works, and those works, therefore, will have to be played out over some period of time. The question is, how much time do they have? Now here we technically get into an area that has to be speculation. So, let's turn to the scripture of speculation which was most used: Isaiah 65. Isaiah 65 and beginning in verse 19. The interpretation of this, I can tell you, was never taught originally by Mr. Armstrong as revelation—that this one-hundred-year period applies to the time given for judgment after the Millennium. It came from one of the evangelists who was quite a scholar. He submitted that he felt it was a direct correlation to that period. And maybe it's true. It seems to fit. It very well could be a description of how long that period will be. Technically, for us, it doesn't matter. We know it is a period of time after the thousand-year reign, whether it's a hundred years, or some shorter or greater amount of time. But let's read Isaiah 65 and beginning in verse 19:

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

This obviously is referring to something—to some group, and some portion of God's plan—after the return of Christ. It is not under man's government, or under Satan's auspices, it is under the perfect government of God when the joy of this structure is in existence. Is it specifically a reference to that period following the Millennium? Can we conclude that it is absolutely, irrefutably, a one-hundred-year period which all of those of the second resurrection are given to prove their works during the course of their judgment? It's possible, we are just not going to be dogmatic about that.

The Firstfruits *are* being judged now, just as they will be judged then over a course of time that God allows. 1 Peter 4 and verse 17 emphasizes the point. 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 17, lest anyone think that we, as the potential firstfruits today, are waiting yet for the judgment to begin sometime in the future, and especially at the time Christ returns. No, the judgment is not going to begin then, the *verdict* is going to be given then. Our judgment, then, is now. Notice 1 Peter 4 and verse 17: "For the time is come [the time *is* come] that judgment must begin at the house of God." Are we in a judgment here right now? You had better believe it.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:
and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not
the gospel of God?

The clock is ticking now, brethren. One of these days the surprise that all men have expected, have talked about, but don't really believe, is going to occur. The Father *is* going to give possession of the Kingdom to His Son and He *is* going to return, and if we wait until then, it will be too late, because judgment is occurring *now* upon those who are at risk—having received that Way of Life and having become responsible in the eyes of God. Likewise, as the Firstfruits are being judged during the course of our current physical lifetimes now, so it will be that those of the White Throne Judgment period—and it is a period—will be given time in order to use and allow the Holy Spirit to grow within them, and to manifest greater and greater fruits of that Spirit by subjecting their own carnal minds, just as we are now doing, and putting on more of the mind of Christ.

That's the second resurrection, and it does, without doubt, correspond directly to the opportunity of salvation for all of the masses—the billions who died without saving knowledge—who are resurrected and given their first opportunity.

Now, what about this controversial final resurrection? Mr. Armstrong taught that there would be a final resurrection of the incorrigible which is separate and distinct from the first two. So, for those who have a problem with us using the term "third resurrection" because Mr. Armstrong didn't seem to use the term "third resurrection" himself: Well, he did use the term "final"—a "final resurrection" which is separate and distinct from the first two. A rose by any other name is still a "third resurrection." If it's not one, and it's not two, call it anything you want,

but it's a third. Revelation 20, again, and verse 11. Starting in verse 11, we are going to pick up the White Throne Judgment again. Beginning in verse 11:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened [the books of the Bible were opened to their understanding at conversion]: and another book was opened, which is the book of life [Remember, God wrote our names in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world. They get to stay there if we just do what we are supposed to do.]: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

So, those of the second resurrection, if they embrace the Truth, crucify the self over the period of their resurrected lifetimes, whether that is one hundred years or whatever, they also will keep their names in the Book of Life.

Verse 13: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it . . ." Now, obviously the dead are coming up out of the ocean—those who died and their bodies were buried at sea. And it says, "[A]nd death and hell [just meaning the grave—on earth, the land] delivered up the dead which were in them." So, there are more graves, now, being opened, both in the ocean and on land. "[A]nd *they* were judged every man according to *their* works." Here comes our controversy: Those who are of the "two, and only two, resurrections" believers say that this is just a further description of the White Throne Judgment, which we just saw, beginning in verse 11. Mr. Armstrong, however, said, that beginning in verse 13, it is describing a final resurrection which is separate and distinct from the White Throne Judgment, or the second resurrection. Can I technically prove that? No. It can be debated by anybody who wants to debate it, because there is no technical demarcation here that says, "Okay, starting in verse 13, now, we are talking about a totally different resurrection which hasn't been addressed yet." But let's go forward and see what it says. If you want to mark your Bible, as I have mine marked, I have a little "3" with a circle around it next to verse 13 where I have marked the description of a third resurrection.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged

every man according to their works. And death and hell [death and hell] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

What we were originally taught is that this final resurrection, which is separate and distinct from the first one, or the second one, is a resurrection of the incorrigible. We were taught that at the end of the plan—after the Firstfruits have been given eternal life when Christ returns, after the thousand-year Millennial reign has been completed and the great resurrection of billions in the second resurrection, during the White Throne Judgment period, has occurred, and those billions out of the White Throne Judgment, who have passed the test and have been judged to be worthy, are also given eternal life, when all of the human beings who *are* going to achieve eternal life *have* achieved it and are now part of the God Family—the only thing left to do will be to dispose of the remainder of the physical earth, which has now outlived its usefulness. That lake of fire which burns throughout is now ready to consume the entire earth, and yet, what about those, as we have already seen, who are in this classification of the incorrigible—who died, having saving knowledge, but having rejected Christ? They have only died one time to this point. It says that the result for those who are in that classification is the second death. If they are not resurrected, they cannot die a second death. They will only have died a first death. And so some conclude, "Well, they just stay dead. God would not be sadistic enough to raise someone to life just to throw him into a lake of fire." Well, those are the same people who say a whole lot of things about what God is like and what God is not like, in spite of what the Holy Scriptures tell us. What it emphasizes, if you believe the original teaching, is that the plan is not completed until final sentencing is passed upon all human beings, and that is God's intent for these—that they will be resurrected in order to know that they have failed, to hear that final sentence, and to pay the final price, which is the second death, and be cast into that lake of fire, which is burning so hot that it immediately consumes them. There will be very little pain or suffering, whatsoever. They are just blotted out. And, as we read in Malachi already this morning, they become ashes under the soles of the feet of the saints. It will happen, brethren, if we believe what the Bible says.

Those contending, however, with Mr. Armstrong argue that there is no evidence that this is a separate and distinct resurrection from the second

resurrection. They claim that all of the dead who were not part of the first resurrection are resurrected at one time, at the second resurrection. That's what they claim. They claim that all of the dead who are not resurrected at the time Christ first returns are going to be resurrected at one time, at the end of the Millennium. What proof do they offer for what they say is this "clear Biblical teaching"? Well, they refer back to Revelation 20 and verse 12. So, look up the page where it says: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Now, what they claim is that Mr. Armstrong's teaching—that the incorrigible, who have already died, are not going to be raised at that time, but must wait until the end of the plan to be resurrected to a final resurrection—denies what, they say, is clear here: "I saw *the* dead, small and great, stand before God." They say it doesn't say *some* of the dead, and since it doesn't say, "I saw *some* of the dead," at this moment "stand before God," it implies, by default, "*all* of the dead." How do you like that rationale? I admit it doesn't say "*some* of the dead," but neither does it say "*all* of the dead." It just says "the dead." That is a rationale for those who are trying to get their end, and so they back up and create the evidence to support it. They say it doesn't say "some," so it must mean "all." No, it just simply says "the dead," and we cannot tell from this scripture, one way or the other, or infer from it, whether it is just "some" or whether it is "all." It says "the dead." To say otherwise is pure presumption. So they accuse *Mr. Armstrong* of presuming by saying it's "some"—only those spoken of in Ezekiel 37 who are resurrected and given their first opportunity for eternal life. Whereas, they are claiming that *all* of the dead that were not resurrected in the first resurrection are going to come up at the very same time.

The old *Correspondence Course*, as I referenced this morning, states in Lesson 39 that John chapter 5 and verse 29 refers, specifically, to the third resurrection. I cannot prove this technically, but neither can they disprove it. Turn with me again to John chapter 5 and we will begin in verse 28. John 5:28: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves . . ." Now, here the word "all" is used. Here, the word "*all*" is definitely used. The problem is, it doesn't give us a time reference to tell us whether or not it all happens at one time. It just says that they all are definitely going to be resurrected at some time.

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

And as I said, the naysayers want to interpret the *krisis*, from the Greek, here as being a general word for "judgment" which does not imply a negative or a positive outcome, only that a judgment of some kind will occur. And they apply that, specifically, to the second resurrection and those that will receive their first opportunity. Is that certifiable—without doubt? No, that's a conjecture—it can't be proven. I've already shown you this morning the scriptures that demonstrate that this word *krisis* can, and very often is, rendered "damnation"—a guilty verdict. So, for anyone to try and say that the context of this indicates a "general judgment"—and not a guilty verdict and the second death—is being just as speculative as they claim Mr. Armstrong is being.

While a separate and final resurrection cannot be clearly proven from this passage, neither can the interpretation of those who would have you believe it is "so clear and easy to discern." They claim to know for sure, from "clear Biblical teaching," yet, each conclusion is equally unsupported. Therefore, who are we going to believe? How are we going to know what the Truth is? Are we going to believe Mr. Armstrong, or are we going to believe one of the self-proclaimed Biblical scholars?

Again, as I told you before, neither I nor Mr. Raymond Cole can open the Bible and specifically prove a third resurrection and make it that clear. This is not like other scriptures about which Mr. Armstrong said: "Don't believe me, prove it from your own Bibles." And how many of those were we certainly able to prove? For example, the keeping of the Sabbath and the Holy Days—they are commanded and they apply to Christians today. Who else knew that? Who taught it? No one—we learned it from Mr. Armstrong. Who understood the significance of what those Holy Days mean? They are not simply rituals memorializing events that happened in the past, they show the entire picture of the future and the plan of salvation for mankind. Who else understood that? Not these johnny-come-latelies who are now taking issue with the teaching. But what I can tell you is that we *were* able to prove many, many, many doctrines that Mr. Armstrong taught, which no one else was teaching, and I'm not talking about all those prophetic things that we don't believe are part of the revelation to begin with. Mr. Armstrong demonstrated that he was not a prophet, but he did prove to us that he was given the revelation of the true doctrine, and that's what we are holding on to.

So, who are we going to believe when it comes to those grayer areas of interpretation that maybe cannot be absolutely proven as easily and directly from

the Bible as the fundamental doctrines? One thing I can tell you is that the concept of a third resurrection does not violate those things you can prove from the Bible, whatsoever. It does not violate them, whatsoever, because God is going to have to do something to clean up the final piece of the puzzle. There will be those incorrigible ones who fail in their opportunity in this life, and it says that they are going to die the second death. They cannot die the second death unless they are resurrected. So, they cannot just stay asleep in the grave where some of them are today. So, when are they resurrected? Are they resurrected at the time of the White Throne Judgment period? Now think about this: You have two different classifications of people, as we went through this morning, and they can't be handled the same way. Those of the White Throne Judgment are those who died without having saving knowledge. Therefore, they are going to be resurrected to their judgment period, whether that is seventy years, whether it is one hundred years, or whatever it is. They are not ready to have a verdict passed on them until the end of that life, and yet, what we are led to believe, I suppose, by those who say there is no final resurrection, is that these two groups of people, having nothing in common—one group who are being resurrected for their first chance at eternal life, and another made up of those who have already had their one chance and failed (their judgment period is over and the only thing left for them is to have their final verdict of guilt announced, and to pay the price)—are going to be resurrected at one and the same time, at the end of the thousand years. Well, what is God going to do with the incorrigibles while these others get their chance for seventy, or a hundred, years, or more? Are they just going to kind of hang out and wait? Or maybe God will resurrect them right then and go ahead and throw them into the fire and then continue on? I guess that's a possibility. The interesting thing is that the ones who have written these articles fail to address that, one way or the other. It's like letting one shoe drop and waiting for the other one, and there is never a second shoe. They tell us what there isn't—that there is no final resurrection—but they don't tell us how those incorrigibles are finally handled by God, and how they pay the price of the second death. Interesting, isn't it?

There are some hints, according to logic, that support Mr. Armstrong's teachings. First, not all, as we have seen, are in the same category. That is why I went through this morning and set the stage, before we even got into Revelation 20, by focusing you instead upon the differences in the classifications of the people involved, and the fact that they can't all be handled the same way. They all have to be accounted for. Let's go back to Daniel 12 and verse 1. Daniel 12 and verse 1:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book [here, again, is a reference to that Book of Life which is going to be opened, and there is going to be judgement made]. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And that word from the Hebrew for "contempt," as I told you, means "contempt," and only "contempt"—a "state of aversion." It is not even a possibility that we are talking about a general judgment that might be positive, or might be negative. It means "contempt."

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." That tells you that when you are dealing with the unjust, it is referring, brethren, to a resurrection that completes the sentencing of those who had their chance and died, having failed their judgment period in this life. When does it happen? Does it happen at the end of the thousand years, at the very same time that all of the other billions are being resurrected to receive their first chance? Or is it, as Mr. Armstrong said, at the end, when those have been judged—eternal life has been given to those billions—and it's just a matter of cleaning up the final pieces of the puzzle, and the incorrigible are resurrected to receive their verdict?

Let me ask you this: If there is no final resurrection, what is the point of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man? I haven't heard any of these naysayers address this either. Let's read that parable in Luke 16 and verse 19. Luke 16 and beginning in verse 19:

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died [the beggar died], and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

And this, of course, is one of the parables that is so misunderstood and used to try and support the idea of an immortal soul, and of a hellfire, and I gave a sermon on this last year at the Feast of Tabernacles—on this Last Great Day—to explain what we were always taught.

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." Okay, he was dead. "And in hell"—the grave. He is dead. He was buried in the grave. "And in [the grave]," which is what this *hell* is, "he [lifted] up his eyes." How is he going to lift up his eyes? We know the dead know nothing. Only life comes from the resurrection of the dead, and the only way this man can lift up his eyes is if he is brought back from the dead through a resurrection of some kind.

So, the rich man in the grave, in hell, lifts up his eyes—he is resurrected—"being in torments." Being in torments—why? What is disturbing to him? What is tormenting him? "[A]nd seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." If we do not believe in an immortal soul that wafts off to heaven to be with God, but that Christ is going to rule on this earth, then what state are Abraham and Lazarus in? They must have been of those resurrected at the return of Christ, in the first resurrection, and they were given eternal life. We know that's the state of Abraham, else Lazarus, if he wasn't called, was resurrected in the second resurrection and given his chance then. Either way, at this moment, in this parable, when the rich man is resurrected, he sees Lazarus and Abraham. Now, if they died, what state are they in here? They must have received eternal life in God's Family, as we will see.

[He] seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

This is not an indication that he was literally burning in the fire, but likely, he is coming up in a resurrection, and that fire is burning close by—so close that he is tormented by its sight and the feeling of its heat.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

What is this great gulf? It's the difference between flesh and Spirit. This confirms that Abraham and this man of the parable, Lazarus, have been given eternal life and they are now Spirit Beings, and this man who has been resurrected out of the grave, tormented by this fire licking at his heels, is seeing these Spirit Beings across the gulf, and he cannot reach across it. There is no compatibility between Spirit and flesh.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren . . ." So, he doesn't understand even what time this is. Remember, at the resurrection, those who have died and awake in the resurrection, not knowing that any time has passed, whatsoever, to them it is the same moment they died. Their last thought, before their last breath, is followed immediately by the first thought that enters when they are resurrected, and they don't perceive that hundreds, even thousands of years, may have passed between those two thoughts. And so he, being resurrected, does not even realize, now, that he is not in the same time in which he died.

For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This man now knew he was facing extinction—that he had failed. He was being resurrected to face a final sentence of death, not to receive eternal life, as Abraham and Lazarus had, but to receive a guilty verdict and to be thrown into the lake of fire.

Now, if there is no third or final resurrection, what is the context of this entire parable that Jesus Christ spoke with His own mouth and had recorded by the apostles under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Why is it here? What does it mean? We can speculate all we want, but all I can tell you is that this parable of Lazarus and the rich man absolutely supports the concept that we learned from Mr. Armstrong of a third and final resurrection which is separate and distinct from the first and the second.

Those seeking, you see, to repudiate Mr. Armstrong's teaching about a final resurrection are those who reject the concept of divine revelation to begin with. No, they are going to figure everything out by their own Bible study. They have their preconceived ideas about what the Truth is, and then they just look in the Bible for scriptures they think support their conclusions, and especially when it is of those who once believed what they heard from Mr. Armstrong, but have since been turned off, many by the mistakes of the ministry—those who proved *they* didn't have a love for it, and did all manner of things which caused offenses in others and in the body. They now have disdain for Mr. Armstrong and have made it their purpose to discredit his teachings.

These are the kind of people who are coming up with all of the alternative interpretations of the resurrections, brethren, and they *do* have an axe to grind. Either that, or they are so young they don't know the original teachings. I think one of the men who wrote some of this said in a short biography that he had graduated from college in the late 1980s, which means he is a whole lot younger than me. He wasn't even around to know what the original teaching was. All he can do is read about it.

They are those who reject divine revelation. They do not believe Jesus Christ revealed Himself through a specific chosen servant in the last days. So they are among the majority of those, now, who should know, but have forgotten what they received. Yet, this concept of divine revelation is paramount in receiving and accepting Christ. I think I've made that plain throughout this Feast of Tabernacles.

Notice with me 1 John 4 and verse 2. 1 John chapter 4 and verse 2: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ *is* come [*is* come] in the flesh is of God." "Is," here, is not past tense, brethren, and it has nothing to do with the idea that you have to admit that Christ was born of the virgin Mary, grew up, lived and conducted His ministry, and died. That's not what this is saying. It is present tense in the Greek: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ *is* come in the flesh is of God"—meaning that He is here *now* in some way, working through flesh-and-blood beings who are His authorized representatives, carrying out His ministry, doing His will, under the direction and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Accept that fact and you can be of those who are approved. Reject that fact and you are among those who are denying Christ. Verse 3:

And every spirit that confesseth *not* that Jesus Christ *is* come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Many are using the name of Christ. So what? It means nothing. The false christs, and the false ministers, and the false prophets are all using the name of Christ. 2 John, verse 5. 2 John and verse 5: "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee." No, we are not gaining understanding of Truth on the back of the corruption of that which we received from the beginning. Not at all. It never has happened in the past, and it never will happen.

And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

It is a law of love—love toward God, and love toward fellow man—contained in those Ten Commandments written on stone.

"And this is love, that we walk after his commandments." How simple. It's the simplicity of Christ. There's not a single one of us, brethren, who will stand for our verdict in that day, who is going to be able to say, "Well, Christ, it was just too complex to understand." No, it's not. It's so simple. For those who are called and have had their minds opened, it is ridiculously simple.

"This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." How much more plain could the Apostle John, under the inspiration the Holy Spirit, have made it? This was written for the last-day church. Those who are not of the antichrist, who are not rejecting Christ, are those who recognize the validity of the Commandments and that which we were taught from the beginning.

For many deceivers are entered into the world [and, boy, don't we know it], who confess not that Jesus Christ *is* come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Anyone who says that Christ is not now, today, manifesting himself somewhere, using even the foolishness of the preaching of certain faithful men who are holding on to that which we were taught from the beginning—anybody who claims that this is a false or foolish concept—is called here "antichrist." I didn't write it, brethren. It's right here.

Galatians 1 and verse 6—the last scripture for this Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. Galatians 1 and verse 6: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." How might these words resonate in the ears of those who, if they do not turn around and embrace again the Truth which they once accepted, will have to hear from the righteous Judge who will pass verdict on them in that Day: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." When He might say, "All you had to do was hold on to that which you received through *my* servant whom *I sent* to you. He taught the Truth to you and you received it, and loved it, at one time, and you respected him as having something special, and all you had to do was hold on to that Faith and believe it no matter what happened, no matter even if that very servant, before his own death, in his old age, was manipulated, and changed the Way and refuted it himself." And God says, "That was a part of my plan in order to test whether or not you would believe what you received, and love it enough to hold on."

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another . . ." There is no other Gospel. There is only one. There is no allowance for competing doctrines. No, there is only one Way.

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Many would have you believe today, brethren, that there is no perversion. You kind of believe your thing about Christ's doctrine, and I believe my thing—none of them are perversions, they are just different ways to get to Christ, and to get into God's Kingdom. I can never accept that, brethren, and to do so, I know, would spell the death penalty for me, if I didn't repent.

"[B]ut there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we . . ." Here is how serious it is, and here is how simple: "But though we"—even the very apostles who taught the church what that Truth was, by revelation, were not allowed to change it. Paul received it by revelation,

didn't he? He didn't think it out of the Holy Scriptures. He was a Pharisee, and he was separated from God in his own concepts concerning the interpretation of these Scriptures. God had to reveal it to him, and he was taught it for three-and-a-half years in the wilderness, and then he took what he had received by revelation and he taught it to the church. And here is how critical and simple it is: "But though we . . ." The Apostle Paul taught it by revelation, just as Mr. Armstrong taught it to us by revelation, if you believe it. If you don't, then I can't help you. If you don't believe that, hopefully one day, even through difficulty and trial, God will make it plain.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven . . ." Even if you see mighty signs, and wonders, and miracles which seem to support a different doctrine. "[And] though we"—even if the very man through whom we received the revelation changes it later, and says, "Well, we were wrong about that. You know, we had almost all the Truth, but, you know, Pentecost, that one I was kind of mixed up on, and we need to change it to Sunday. And divorce and remarriage? We were a little bit overboard on that, so we need to relax that. Divine healing? Well, God can heal, but He really uses the doctors to heal."

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

How simple—how absolutely simple. Truth comes at the beginning. If it ever was God's Church and it ever was His work, Truth came at the beginning, and then the mission is to hold on to it, no matter who changes it. Even if that very original servant fails, himself, you don't follow a change—you repudiate the notion of change.

As we said before, so say I now again [he even repeats it to emphasize how critical this is], if any man [no matter whom—even that first servant] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God?

Whom are we trying to fool, brethren? If you convince me that Mr. Herbert Armstrong was not that servant who received revelation, you still can't convince God. All you can do is corrupt my hope for salvation.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

And if we ever were a part of the true Church of God, then what we received was not after man from its beginning. Convince me, brethren, that Herbert Armstrong was not an inspired servant who received revelation, and all you have convinced me of is that the Radio Church of God nor the Worldwide Church of God *were ever* God's Church, because wherever the true Church is, it *will have received divine revelation*, period. If it wasn't Herbert Armstrong, then it is somewhere else, and we are all playing a lot of games—thinking that we have the Truth—because splinter groups off of that body can have no more integrity than the original body had. If it wasn't Truth, then neither is anything that came out of it. It's somewhere else.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So, what does that have to do with the resurrections and the final resurrection? Simply this, brethren: When the naysayers come out with their next cosy interpretation of the Scriptures, maligning that servant who taught us originally the plan of God, you have a choice. That voice is the only way any of us ever knew what God was working out here, and why we even value the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. No one else taught it, only him, and a part of that original teaching was a final resurrection of the incorrigible at the completion of the plan. Is that an element I can absolutely support from Scripture? No. But then you have a choice, like I do. Not being able to prove that one absolutely, like we can all of the other fundamental doctrines, whom are you going to believe? These Johnny-come-latelies, or are you going to include that as a part of the revelation that fits perfectly and harmoniously with all of the other Scriptures into a perfect mosaic, from the book of Genesis, even to the book of Revelation? It's your choice. As for me, I know what I'm going to believe, and what I'm going to teach.

God be with you, brethren. Have a safe journey home. May we all come back together, God willing, again, to keep this marvelous Feast.