

Is Death the End?

Ekkehardt Mueller

Blaise Pascal, supposedly, stated that all he knew was that we would die soon. Indeed nothing in human life is ascertain as death. However, death is not an end in itself (John 3:16). There is a resurrection.

Some people claim that the concept of a resurrection is clearly unacceptable and unbelievable. At the same time they believe so many other things and trust so many persons—the pharmacist, the bus driver, the newspaper, and the TV. Why should we not trust Scripture? Others claim that nobody ever came back from the dead. It seems Jesus did. Again some say that they believe only what they can see. Yet we do not see electricity, radiation, and electromagnetic waves. The question whether or not there is a resurrection of the dead is a matter of faith, not science. The proposal that there is no resurrection must be believed as much as the statement that there is a resurrection. Therefore, we listen to God’s Word.

I. Why We Will Be Resurrected?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| (1) Jesus guarantees the resurrection. | John 6:40; 11:25-26 |
| (2) Death is compared to a sleep.
There is an awakening. | John 11:11-13 |
| (3) Jesus himself was raised from
the dead. | Matt 28:6; Luke 24:36-47 |
| (4) More than 500 witnesses testify
that Jesus was raised from the dead. | 1 Cor 15:3-8 |
| (5) Since Jesus was resurrected, we will
be too. | 1 Cor 15:20-21 |

II. Who Will Be Resurrected?

- (1) All humans will be raised from the dead.
- (2) Jesus points to two different resurrections. Both are still future.

It is our human lot to die and be raised again. Therefore, the sentence “All humans must die” must be supplemented by the statement “All humans will be raised.” In the play “The Boozed Boll,” the land owner Boll, who always is a little drunk, one day at noon finds himself in front of a church. He sees the four stone-hewn Cherubim with their trumpets. Suddenly it appears to him that they were alive and called for God’s judgment saying: “Come out of your tombs you who are dead. No excuse about decay! Come out!”

III. When Will We Be Resurrected?

- (1) There is a resurrection order - 1 Cor 15:23-26:
 - Jesus Christ,
 - the believers,
 - the unbelievers.
- (2) The believers - 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:50-53:
At Christ’s second coming, the believers will be raised from the dead with an imperishable body. Those believers who will be still alive at that time will be changed and will be like those who were “asleep.”
- (3) The unbelievers - Rev 20:4-6, 12-15:
The unbelievers will be raised after the Millennium and will experience the final judgment including their destruction.

The date for the beginning of the Millennium and therefore the dates for the two resurrections depend on Jesus' second coming and are not known. What we do know is the order of events.

IV. What Will Happen Afterwards?

The good news is that the resurrection will be followed by a new earth on which death is no longer known—Rev 21.

Since there is only the possibility to take part in the first resurrection or the second resurrection, we must make a decision. An Italian, who had lived in the United States for about twenty years, paid a visit to his home country. Because he encountered certain difficulties and problems, he turned to the American Embassy and asked for help. The officer asked him whether or not he had become an American citizen. He had not. "Then there is nothing that I can do for you," the officer declared. A second Italian who had come from the United States to Italy ran also into problems and needed help. He had moved to the United States only recently and his English was still bad. However, he had become an American citizen. The officer replied to his inquiry: "All Americans are on your side." We need the right citizenship to take part in the first resurrection, and we have it, if our life belongs to Jesus our Lord and Savior.

"Lord, where shall we go? In the end death awaits us on all roads of the world. But you, you alone, have and give eternal life."

7/06