

PROJECT TITLE: HOPE AFTER DEATH
PROGRAM TITLE: TWO RESURRECTIONS
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So here are three questions: What's so entertaining about zombies, vampires, and other sorts of the undead? What's so appealing about the blood-sucking, brain-eating, shape-shifting ghouls that captivate readers and viewers and video gamers? And three, why is there such a huge appetite for plotlines with dramatic confrontations between everyday people and malevolent dark-side creatures?

Answers? Hey listen, don't look at me! I just have more questions. Is this all about entertainment? Or is it because people have a natural fascination with death and what comes after? After all, we are mortal beings. Death is a certainty. And hope for life after death is universal. That's not a vain hope. Let me tell you what the Good Book says about death.

First, dead people DO come back to life. It happened numerous times. But they all came back as real human beings, not as menacing spirits or supernatural mutants. More importantly, the Bible predicts two amazing resurrection events that will ultimately include every human being who has ever lived. But no spirits, ghosts, or vampires.

Look here – I'm quoting now: "The hour is coming, in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28. 29 NKJV

Then there's this: "There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." Acts 24:15 NKJV.

So there IS life after death, not for just a chosen few, but for everyone. The just and the unjust. The good and the bad. And the Bible isn't talking about a transition from our physical forms into spirit beings. It's talking about resurrection into physical, material bodies, accomplished by the power of the Creator Himself.

These two great resurrections – when will they happen? The Bible puts these events in the context of the Apocalypse – the end of the world as we know it. The Apocalypse -- that's the 2nd coming of Christ. Here's how it looked to the apostle Paul:

"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 by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." 1Thessalonians 4:15-17 NKJV

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 NKJV

It’s obvious that Paul was writing to believers. The saints. The good and the just. Their resurrection comes at the 2nd coming of Christ. The Bible calls this the FIRST RESURRECTION. It transforms them into immortal, undying beings.

Here it is: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.

Sounds great for people who come back to life at the 2nd coming of Christ, right? But what about the others? What happens to people who aren’t raised when Jesus comes?

“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:5 NKJV

That thousand-year period coincides with the fate of God’s great enemy. The prophet John had a vision of an angel coming down from heaven holding a key and a great chain.

“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years . . . so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:2, 3 NKJV

But the vision didn’t end there.

“After these things he must be released for a little while.” Revelation 20:3 NKJV

Imagine the post-apocalyptic world when that millennium is over. Another resurrection. This time the unjust, the unrighteous, the evil men of all ages, are restored to life. And Satan is released to “deceive the nations.”

What a nightmare scenario! A world populated by the newly un-dead, without a single righteous hero to restrain the progress of evil. How long will it go on? The Bible doesn’t tell us. Our only clue comes from the prophet, who hints that it will last “for a little while.” Revelation 20:3 NKJV

He does tell us how the whole thing ends. There is a final battle between good and evil. Between God and Satan. “And fire came down from God out of heaven...” Revelation 20:10 NKJV. The divine, cleansing flames rid the earth of every trace of evil.

End of story? No. That’s just the end of the beginning. For those who have a part in the first resurrection, the real story goes on and on into the ages of eternity. The apostle

John heard the voice of God saying, “Behold, I make all things new.” Listen:

And he writes – listen to this: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’” Revelation 21:3, 4 NKJV