

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Jesus' Resurrection: Begotten from Death

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Acts 13:29–33, KJV 1900)

Over time after the Lord separated and called Paul, the Lord blessed his labors in Antioch to begin a church and to conduct much of his ministry and evangelism from that church. Biblical evangelism should never seek a separate life of its own apart from the Lord's church. In fact, nothing beneficial in spiritual matters should ever be approached other than through the function and authority of a New Testament church. The Lord intends His church to serve His people as the "pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) No sub-culture or class of people inside the Lord's church are commanded or permitted in Scripture ever to lord themselves over the Lord's church, but rather submit to and serve the church. We never read in Scripture that either preachers or deacons—or any other group for that matter—are to lord themselves or their ideas over the Lord's church. When Paul wrote the majority of his New Testament letters, he wrote to one or more church, not to a governing board of deacons, elders, or any other hierarchical body. Hierarchical ruling subcultures within a church contradict the New Testament model of the Lord's church. Paul wrote his letters and his teachings to these churches. When Paul directed them to take action, whether dealing with the sinning member in 1 Corinthians 5 or collecting for the needy saints at Jerusalem in 1 Corinthians 16, he directed the churches to take this action (1 Corinthians 5:13; 16:1, "...as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." Paul gave his "order" to the churches), not a hierarchical governing or ruling board of any class or type. Such a hierarchy is conspicuously absent from the New Testament; it should be equally absent from the Lord's churches.

Once people are taught the truth of the gospel they need a place for worship and a fellowship of people with whom to worship. Biblical Christianity is not modelled by multitudes of individual believers all running in their own direction and doing their own thing, nor by forming their "private interpretation" of Scripture and ignoring the teaching structure that the Lord created within His churches. The Lord did not allow the men who wrote the Scriptures to write their private interpretations (2 Peter 1:20), so He certainly does

not approve of individual believers forming their private interpretations and ignoring the unique "pillar and ground of the truth" that He established and has preserved across the centuries, His church. The church, the "pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Timothy 3:15) is the Lord's spiritual vehicle by which He preserves His truth and through which He grows His believing children into spiritually mature members of His body. To the extent that any believer either magnifies himself above or distances himself from this spiritual, New Testament body, he endangers himself to the assaults of the adversary and fails to advance the Lord's truth among His people in this world.

While the "Rambo" mindset may play well on the screen in entertainment, in the real world where we live, it always fails. The wannabe "Rambo" in the real world, especially in a church, will become self-focused, self-centered, and presume to ignore and to contradict fellow-believers, rather than learning in grace the New Testament bedrock principle of looking up to them, respecting them above self, and actually submitting to them. In New Testament Christianity, we serve the Lord by serving His people, not by chasing our own windmills and ways. (John 13; Jesus literally washed the disciples' feet, a sorely needed reminder to them so soon after they had disputed about which of them would be the chief. What lesson did He teach that we should learn from this action? Do we prove by our attitude and conduct that we have learned it? Or do we contradict that example by our actions? Philippians 2:1-8; failure to honor this consistent New Testament pattern of attitude and conduct always fails to honor the Lord or to bless a church that ignores or contradicts it)

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said.... The Lord speaks to His people when and as they minister to Him and serve Him and each other. When we choose our own ways, He remains silent and allows us to grow cold beside the sparks of our own private fire. (Isaiah 50:11) The Holy Spirit directed the church to assist Paul and Barnabas, to "separate me" them to the work that He directed. Paul and Barnabas left Antioch, located in the area of modern Syria, and traveled to

the western region of modern Turkey, Antioch of Pisidia. There they entered a Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. First century Jewish synagogues apparently observed a custom that, after the reading of the Scriptures by the leader of the synagogue, men in the audience were given the opportunity to speak to the gathering. The leader of the synagogue on this day asked Paul and Barnabas if they had any "word of exhortation for the people." As always, Paul readily accepted the opportunity. We are blessed to have a rich portion of that sermon recorded in the context of our study passage. Paul started his sermon with a brief summary of God's dealings with His people in the Old Testament. You couldn't find a more concise and enlightening outline of early Old Testament history than in these words.

Paul used this summary of Old Testament history as the vehicle by which to preach Jesus and the resurrection to them. Our study passage narrates the beginning of those truths in Paul's sermon. In this study, we examine the first of three Old Testament prophecies that Paul sets forth as being fulfilled in Jesus.

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him.... You will find more references to Old Testament prophecy in the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, ending with His resurrection, than in any New Testament account of any similar time lapse. Obviously, God flooded Old Testament pages with prophecies of the events leading up to Jesus' death. Many Bible students have observed that reading Isaiah 53 and thinking of its words in terms of Jesus' sufferings and death is like reading a headline news account the day after it happened, but Isaiah wrote these words around seven hundred fifty years before Jesus came. When God prophesies, He doesn't guess or consult astrology charts. He knows whereof He speaks, past, present, or future.

But God raised him from the dead. In various passages, Jesus' resurrection is attributed to the Father, to the Holy Spirit, or to Jesus Himself. There is no contradiction. Here Paul makes the one point that needs to be known. God raised Him. The resurrection of Jesus is preeminently a supernatural event. He didn't slip into a deep coma as His time on the cross ended and revive three days later. The disciples didn't fabricate the resurrection story. He really died, and He just as really arose from death.

Not only did He arise from the dead, but many people saw Him and talked with Him after His resurrection. It was not a secret event or an exaggerated rumor. His revelations of Himself to His disciples were at times very personal, His conversations with Thomas and Peter, and at other times quite public, as His appearance to five hundred at one time.

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that

he hath raised up Jesus again. We rightly rejoice at the rich truths revealed by God in all the Old Testament prophecies and valid types by which God taught His people during that era about His coming Son. But our greatest reason for rejoicing must ever rest on the rock of Jesus' personal life, death, resurrection, and, yes, ascension. No prophecy is valid unless it is accurate, unless the person or events prophesied come to pass according to the precise information contained in the prophecy. An inaccurate prophecy or a prophecy that is so vague as to find fantasy fulfillment in any number of vaguely similar events is no real prophecy. The more detailed the prophecy and the more detailed and exact the fulfillment the more credibility the prophecy contains. In the case of Old Testament prophecies, Jesus fulfilled every finite detail precisely as described in the prophecy, as in Isaiah 53. The time of His coming is prophesied precisely in Daniel's seventy-week prophecy. His virgin birth is prophesied. His living in Nazareth is prophesied. Judas betraying Him for thirty pieces of silver is prophesied. His dying by crucifixion is prophesied. But, above all other details, His resurrection from the dead is prophesied, even the time He spent in the tomb.

And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. Not only did Jesus fulfill Old Testament prophecy, but he appeared to a multitude of people who became eyewitnesses of His resurrection. If we accept the consistent testimony of eyewitnesses, we must accept the truth of His literal bodily resurrection.

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As in many similar cases, in this lesson, we have an inspired New Testament writer giving us the Holy Spirit's intended meaning of an Old Testament prophecy. Psalm 2 does not teach about a hypothetical origin of Jesus in eternity past. Rather Scripture teaches us that He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. (John 1:1-3) God intended Jesus to revive and arise from death in precisely the three days recorded in Scripture, just as a pregnant woman gives birth to a child in approximately nine months. Just as the conceived child cannot remain permanently in its mother's womb, even so Jesus could not possibly remain in the grave. God raising Jesus from the dead fulfilled David's Psalm 2 prophecy.

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor