

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Bodily Resurrection: Jesus First

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11, KJV 1900)

Throughout the New Testament, our future bodily resurrection is consistently linked with Jesus' bodily resurrection. God who raised Jesus from the dead shall also raise us. Jesus did not die in spirit, but in body. He told the thief on the cross that they would be together that day in Paradise. His body died on the cross and was raised three days later.

...by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. From new birth to death, the Spirit of God dwells in every child of grace. He doesn't come and go. He permanently resides within us. While man in his unregenerate state, not born again, is totally depraved, to impute total depravity onto a regenerate child of grace blatantly denies the presence, life-creating work, and abiding influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This errant idea builds on the false premise that the Holy Spirit does not permanently indwell a born again person, that the new birth makes no real change whatever in a person. Historically, many who held to fatalistic leanings on predestination also held to a non-permanent residing of the Holy Spirit within and to the no-change-in-new-birth error, sometimes referred to as "Hollow-Logism." The "Hollow log" term refers to a frequent analogy used to describe this error. A rabbit may enter and leave a hollow log at will, never changing the log. So those who embrace this error hold that the Spirit of God may enter and leave a person at will, but He makes no change in the person. This errant view denies that the new birth makes any change in the person at all.

Building on the false premise that God causes everything, folks with this belief are hard pressed to explain sin in the life of a regenerate person. One attempt at this explanation is that, when God temporarily resides within, He irresistibly and wholly controls every word, thought, and deed. Ah, but how do they explain sin in the life of a child of God. Their answer typically begins with "When left to ourselves...." This term obviously implies that the Holy Spirit at times vacates the individual, leaving them no different than previous to their new birth. So one moment you are a regenerated child of the King, and the next moment you may be wholly no different than a child of wrath. This idea contradicts Scripture. (Hebrews 13:5 as only one clear example of many. It also contradicts the basic premise of God's new covenant written in the heart and mind; Jeremiah 31:33-34)

At its heart, this belief utterly denies any permanent and residual effect from the new birth. Whatever impact you experience from the Holy Spirit is, in this view, confined to those occasions when the Holy Spirit chooses to briefly visit you, but you can't rely on His abiding indwelling, so you live with a convenient, built-in rationalization for sin in your life. I suggest that this idea is wholly contradicted by Scripture, not to mention that it is also far too convenient for the person who seeks to rationalize his conscious decision to sin. It further contradicts the obvious fact that the best efforts of a believer are often, if not always, to some extent mixed with sin. If their righteous acts are wholly controlled by the Holy Spirit, you'd expect no sin whatever in their minds or actions when so controlled. They offer no real explanation for the presence of sin, even in their supposed times when wholly and irresistibly moved by the Spirit.

In our study verse, Paul takes us directly and powerfully to the truth that we need to know. The present indwelling Holy Spirit guarantees that we shall be raised "...up from the dead" just as Jesus was raised "...up from the dead." As used in this verse, "quicken" refers to the process of restoring to life that which was dead. And what is it that died but shall be raised up? Paul answers the question, "...your mortal body." He does not refer to a "spirit body" or to a symbolic body, but to "...your mortal body." Given the corollary between Jesus' resurrection and ours, there can be no doubt that He possessed a real "Mortal body," though without sin. Neither at death or in the resurrection does God fabricate and give us a substitute or replacement body. He shall raise that same mortal body that died, though He shall raise it immortal. The resurrection shall not merely restore us to the life that we experienced here. "...we shall be changed...." (1 Corinthians 15:51)

The Spirit is both the instrumental cause of the resurrection-act and the permanent substratum of the resurrection-life.²⁵³¹

²⁵³ 253. Gerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, p. 169.

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ro 8:11.

Whether we ponder the resurrection event at the Second Coming or the abiding life the elect shall enjoy with the Lord for eternity, the Holy Spirit is the key. Simply put, our continuing life after the resurrection shall not rely on food, oxygen, physiological processes, and the other necessities of our present physical life. The Holy Spirit shall raise us to a life that transcends anything that we can presently comprehend. Further, God, not our private pursuits, shall occupy us in heaven. Paul elsewhere sums up the same principle.

...that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28b)

When we think of heaven and being there, do we think of what or how we shall be, of whether we shall know loved ones as we knew them in this life, or other questions related to our personal experience? If we follow the lead of Scripture, should we not rather focus on our Lord and Savior and how we shall praise Him than on how much of our earthly life and relationships shall carry over? For the many loving and affirming relationships that may have blessed us in this life, relationships that we might naturally desire to continue in heaven, we must also consider the less-than-affirming or ideal relationships that we experienced with children of grace in this life who were not agreed with our beliefs or who simply did not mesh with our personality. Think about that brother or sister who yelled at you or who accused you of unworthy motives that likely you had not entertained at all. If earth's relationships carry over intact to heaven, how will these relationships mesh with your experience? Honestly, we know little from Scripture that even indirectly addresses these questions, but Scripture abounds with evidence that we shall enjoy fully our relationship with our Lord and Savior.

The new life to which we shall be raised shall be so different from our present life that we surely have little perception of its details. We presently know only what Scripture reveals, and that emphasis consistently enlightens our praise to our Lord. I gravely doubt that praise in heaven shall remotely resemble our times of worship in church. Don't lose any sleep. Heaven shall not be one eternal uninterrupted season of singing, praying, and preaching—or listening to preaching. Whatever form our worship of God shall take in heaven is worthy of our God and Savior. If the form of worship that He has ordained for glory pleases Him, there can be no question. We shall also find presently unimaginable joy in the experience.

Scripture consistently links the truth of a literal bodily resurrection with the ethics of how we live in the here and now. The physical body in which we now live retains its old, fallen, and sinful nature. However, in the context of this passage, Paul exhorts us to consciously strive to subdue that nature and to cultivate the character of our new spiritual nature, bestowed by the Holy Spirit in our

new birth. In short, what the Holy Spirit did for our immaterial being in the new birth, He shall do for our physical body in the resurrection. The Spirit doesn't come and go in us. He resides in us, permanently so. We may either obey His influence or not, though disobedience shall be accompanied by conviction, conflict, and chastening.

Paul does not teach the pagan idea that all individuality ceases, and the individual is wholly re-absorbed back into deity. On the mount of transfiguration, the disciples saw Moses and Elijah, not two non-descript spirit figures. They saw and recognized the two saints from the past. At the least, this point indicates that our individuality shall continue after death and the resurrection. We see a similar fact in the lesson of the rich man and Lazarus. Both the rich man and Lazarus existed as individuals after their death. (Luke 16:19-31) Paul rather teaches that God shall be the focal point of all heaven's activities. Often believers who think of heaven so focus on what they shall think, know, or do, that they miss this central truth of heaven. "Thou art worthy..." (Revelation 5:9)

This verse teaches clearly that the believer still has a sinful human nature within him even though he has died with Christ. God does not eradicate the believer's flesh at conversion. Therefore we must not "*live [walk] according to*" it. Progressive sanctification is not something the Christian may take or leave. God commanded us to pursue it (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3-11).²

This point is crucial to our right understanding of our Christian conduct. The Holy Spirit does not orchestrate or puppeteer our advance in godliness. He commands it, but we must consciously exert the effort to grow in grace and in knowledge of God's truth. The believer who falsely embraces the idea that God irresistibly ordained and causes his perseverance in the faith inevitably becomes either lax in his pursuit of godliness, or he shall become unbalanced and legalistic, often prideful that his attainments and knowledge in the faith, divinely orchestrated as he believes, is vastly superior to others who do not hold to his ideas. Satan loves few ideas as fondly as to convince a believer that God has put him on auto-pilot for godliness.

Paul further teaches us that the fact of the indwelling Spirit undeniably leads to certain conclusions, the chief truth being our future bodily resurrection. If the Holy Spirit dwells in you now, rest assured, fully so, that He shall raise you to glory with your Lord Jesus.

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
16434 Woodruff
Bellflower, California

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ro 8:12.

Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor