

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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God's Effectual Drawing

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:37-39, KJV 1900)

Occasionally Bible students observe that Scripture often uses "shall" in a strong, decisive way. The word in our present context leaves no ground for doubt or uncertainty as to the outcome. When God in His eternal (Remember the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary's definition from our last study, having eternal consequences) and redemptive purpose declares that He "shall" do something, we cannot doubt His intention or His effectually bringing that consequence to pass. Jesus begins our study passage with such a sentence structure. "All that the Father giveth me **shall** come to me...." Jesus takes the question of whether they come to Him or not off the table. **They shall come!** They shall not be cast out. In this context, Jesus specifically identifies the "eternal consequences" of His work; "...raise it up again at the last day." Yes, in the chapter, Jesus deals with His being the bread of life, but, even in that analogy, His application of bread to His own body and blood nudges us to think of the chapter in terms of eternal consequences. The Roman Catholic view that this chapter interprets Jesus' body and blood as Communion, that the bread and wine of Communion mystically become the body and blood of Jesus, leaves advocates of this view open to the charge of cannibalism, and its defenders work to defend their view against this charge. However, once you hold that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus, and you eat the bread and drink the wine, you have no real defense against the charge. Scripture never teaches that the bread and wine are changed in chemical or effective substance during Communion. You eat unleavened bread and drink wine, that is, if you follow Scripture's teaching on the correct symbols for Communion, the same items that Jesus used when He instituted it. Jesus uses an analogy in this chapter, but His analogy refers to His intimate, personal relationship with each of His beloved children, particularly His nurturing and protecting them securely in His care. There is no basis in the context of John 6 to think that Jesus was teaching on Communion by His reference to eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Thus, no defense against cannibalism is necessary in this chapter, nor, for that matter, in Communion if we hold the right view of Communion. The bread represents Jesus body,

broken and died for us; the wine represents His blood, His life, freely and sacrificially given for us. Communion is a representation of His body and blood; the elements do not change, literally or mystically.

Any analogy that depicts the child of grace as an entity outside the Lord Jesus Christ makes that child a parasite, invading and consuming the Lord's body. But a healthy body, nourishing itself and maintaining its immune system to ward off invading disease, is a powerful lesson to remind us of the Lord's abundant care and provision for His beloved children, His "Body." Only when we discover the proper perspective of the lesson do these silly problems go away. If the child of grace belongs to the body of Christ, is actually a part of His body, then the child eating His flesh and drinking His blood becomes a simple and rational process of the body nurturing, feeding, and keeping all of its body parts healthy and vital.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Ephesians 5:30)

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (Colossians 2:19)

In Ephesians 1:22, the church to which Paul refers is far broader than any given local church, or all local churches for that matter. As members of His body, feeding on Him is a routine part of our permanent and loving family relationship with Him. As we live in a dirty, sin-diseased world, He constantly feeds and protects us from the invasion of the sin disease that could drag us down into eternal woe.

Thus, even in the bread of life sections of this chapter, Jesus is teaching the truth of His loving, effectual drawing and sustaining power over His elect. It is He who keeps you alive spiritually and in a fixed loving union with Him. What is the final note

of this lesson? "...that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

If we ponder the analogy of the body that Jesus uses in this chapter, we must deal with two facets of "Food" and the body. 1) The person chooses and eats food to satisfy his body's needs. 2) This person's body breaks down the food that he has eaten and digests its nutrients into the blood system, from which the blood system delivers oxygen, nutrition, and antibodies to every part of the body. In John 6, Jesus is not dealing with the first of these food dynamics, but the second. Jesus teaches us that He lovingly and sufficiently nourishes and protects His whole body from danger or loss. He shall "...raise it up again at the last day."

Further, in John 6:44, Jesus clarifies His role in this "coming" to Him. This coming is not an act of believer's willing and voluntary obedience, but rather the result of God's divine drawing. The Greek word translated "draw" in this verse is a powerful word. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of a net full of fish being drawn into a boat. The question begs to be answered. Did those fish in some way volunteer to be taken into the ship? Were they required to exercise their "Free will" before the fishermen could draw them? Were they required to look up to the fisherman and respect him as their lord and master before he agreed to "Really" draw them into the boat? Does their being drawn into the boat by a power outside themselves and their control mean that the same power also controlled or "Orchestrated" their every action before the net, while they lived in the water? Of course not.

When Jesus teaches extended lessons such as we see in John 6, He sets the context. He frames the lesson as He intended. The greater lessons of John 6 clearly include two distinct truths or principles. The first principle is relational and eternal in its consequences. He gives life to the world. Do not twist the language. No amount of wresting can morph the meaning of Jesus' words from giving life to the world into the common construction of offering life on a "Take it or leave it" proposition. Nothing in the verse (John 6:33) so much as implies that Jesus came down from heaven and offered life to anyone. **He gives it.** People who formerly had no life (Spiritual, eternal life) now have it, and their having it resulted from His gift, not from their accepting His offer. (Ephesians 2:1-9) He didn't offer it; He gives it. The question of interpretation in this verse deals with the meaning of the "world" named, not with whether Jesus offers or gives life to that world. The simple fact that the verse states that Jesus gives life to this world should shock folks who hold the populist view into serious reconsideration. Whether in first century Jewish culture or our own culture today, "world" often is used to refer to a specific subculture, such as the political world, the religious

world, etc. First century Jews referred to anyone outside their culture as part of the world. John obviously uses this idea in another passage, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19) John distinguishes two classes of people in this verse; 1) one class belongs to God, 2) the other class, identified by John as "the whole world," resides in wickedness. Clearly those who are "of God" do not belong to the "whole world" of wickedness.

Sometimes we can learn much about a passage by simply acknowledging that it says either too much or too little for any given interpretation. In this case, John 6:33 says too much, far too much to support the populist view of the day that Jesus died for every human being who ever lived, and that He offers eternal life to anyone who will make a decision for Him, believe in Him, or whatever the various facts of this belief system impose as their requirements on the individual to obtain this salvation himself. The verse doesn't indicate a conditional offer, but an unconditional gift, fully bestowed and conveyed. He "...giveth life unto the world."

Jesus did not teach universal salvation in this verse. He identified that He gives, **never offers**, eternal life to a specific group of people, a gift based on His own love and purpose, and a gift that required His personal work to remove their debt and transform them into members of His own body. As part of His body, He gives them life. Their whole life in His body depends on Him. As part of His body, He also feeds them, nourishes them to keep them health and free of damning disease. Nothing can so infect them or damage them as to endanger their position and security in His body. That is the basic point of Jesus' words and lesson in this chapter.

From this point of coming down from heaven and giving life to the world, Jesus next speaks the words of our study passage. What Jesus said in our text relates specifically to His giving life to the world. The "world" to whom He gives life is the world that the Father gave to Him for safe keeping and redemption. All individuals in that world, according to Jesus (Could we find a better spokesman?), shall come to Him, not be cast out, but be raised again at the last day. He gives this world life. He preserves and sustains this world. And, at the last day, He shall raise this world and glorify it (Them) to be like Him and to be with Him in joyful and endless glory.

We shall praise our God and Savior throughout eternity in ways that we cannot fathom. Are we praising Him as we should now?

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

10:30 A. M.
Pastor