

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

Volume 31, Number 27

July 6, 2014



Jesus' Resurrection: Literal and Physical

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28–29, KJV 1900)

As a passage that simply and clearly establishes cardinal truths, John 5 excels. Jesus affirms an oft-rejected truth in John 5:24-25, that the new birth is not a cooperative effort between Him and the believer, but rather a work wholly and exclusively accomplished by God alone. He further emphasizes this truth in John 5:39; Scripture testifies of Him; it does not impart eternal life to those who study it. Verses 28-29, our study passage, also utterly rejects the idea of annihilation of the wicked. Both righteous and wicked are raised at the same time. In the greater context of the chapter, we see a powerful affirmation of His deity, His godhood. In seven specific ways, Jesus affirms that He possesses the same prerogatives of godhood as the Father, Verse 19.

1. He does the same work as the Father. (Verses 17-18; the Jews understood His calling God His "Father" as claiming equality with the Father, and Jesus did not correct their understanding. Nor does John; see John 1:1)
2. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, temporal and eternal. (Verses 22-23, 27)
3. He has the power to give life to whom He chooses. (Verses 21-29; these verses cover both new birth life and final resurrection life)
4. To dishonor the Son is to dishonor the Father also. (Verse 23)
5. He gives eternal life sovereignly. (Verses 24-25)
6. His voice shall raise the dead. (Verses 28-29)
7. He shares the exclusive right of self-existence with the Father. (Verse 26)

Verses 28-29 simply set forth the Biblical doctrine of the resurrection at the Second Coming. Contradicting the contemporary split rapture madness, Jesus leaves no doubt that both righteous and wicked shall arise in one hour, not two hours, separated by some debated lapse of time. Do not miss the article, "...**the** hour." Jesus in no way indicates two distinct and separate hours. The Bible doctrine of the Second Coming and resurrection is so simple that a dying child can

grasp its comforts. The contemporary confusion of secret rapture and split comings is so complex that a rocket scientist would struggle to make sense of it—and would likely fail; it is nonsensical when analyzed against the teachings of Scripture. A doctrine that never saw the light of day prior to 1825-27 is about 1,800 years too young to be a sound Biblical truth. The dominant concepts of modern dispensationalism didn't exist prior to this time.

Paul also affirms a single resurrection.

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be **a** resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:15; emphasis added)

How many resurrections did Paul acknowledge in this verse? Only one; "...there shall be **a** resurrection...." Further, in that one resurrection, both just and unjust shall rise at the same time. One shall arise to life; the other to judgment, damnation, a legal verdict of "Guilty as charged," followed by the righteous sentence against them. To make the point simply, Scripture leaves the "Left Behind" doctrine behind!

In the context of our study passage, Jesus goes to great length to document His claims by witnesses. Deuteronomy 19:15 requires two or more witnesses to a matter. Take note. This passage does not require added witnesses only when an existing witness is not credible. Even with the most honest and credible of witnesses, the passage requires more than one witness. While Jesus spoke truth and only truth, and while He needed no witness to verify that truth, He accommodates His own Law by documenting that the truth that He teaches is verified by more than two witnesses, even if we exclude His own testimony. Why would He make this point? Simple; He intended to leave no doubt whatever about His teachings. Every word that He spoke was true and verified by multiple witnesses.

1. Though He did not need a human witness, He reminds us that John bore a true witness of Him. (Verses 32-25)

2. The Father bears witness of every word that He spoke and every deed that He did. (Verses 36-37)
3. Scripture bears a faithful witness of Him. (Verse 39)

Let's reconstruct and try to follow Jesus' simple explanation of His resurrection truth.

1. "...the hour is coming." First, Jesus contrasts this miraculous event, all future, with another event that He described as both present and future. (John 5:24-25) That event refers to the new birth. Jesus described it as the result of one hearing His voice, not His voice plus a mortal man's voice. His voice alone works in new birth. Further, Jesus described the new birth as preceding belief, not occurring simultaneously with belief or subsequent to belief. The hearing believer is, presently already born again. (John 5:24) How then can our belief contribute, either causatively or instrumentally, to our new birth if the new birth precedes it? It cannot. As Jesus' voice speaks with sovereign and efficacious power in the new birth, so also He shall speak at the Second Coming. Lazarus heard His voice and left the tomb; all that are in the graves at that day shall hear His voice and come forth. No one shall be "Left Behind" then, shall they?
2. "...all that are in the graves...." Jesus knows nothing of some hearing and coming forth, while others remain. At that epochal moment, all graves shall be emptied. All shall come forth, both righteous and wicked, both those who shall hear the joyful "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit..." and those who hear "Depart from me...." Friends, you don't need to have an advanced degree in theology to understand Jesus' teachings about His return. It is not so complicated as to stir endless debate. Example; dispensationalists are hopelessly divided over when the Second Coming shall occur relative to their view of the "Great Tribulation." Does He come before it, in the midst of it, or after it? His teaching is simple. He comes, He raises the dead, He judges, and He takes His beloved children to glory to be forever with Him in glory.
3. There is no annihilation of the wicked in Jesus' words. Both righteous and wicked are raised.

Does Jesus teach that we in some way contribute to our eternal salvation by our faith or by our good works in His description, "...they that have done good...and they that have done evil"? I suggest that the answer is no. Otherwise, we must

deal with a contradiction between Jesus and numerous other New Testament writings that repeatedly and clearly affirm that our eternal salvation is all of God and "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:9) Rather than teaching that our works contribute to our eternal life with Him, Jesus is teaching that His grace has made a difference in the moral and spiritual character of those whom He by grace has saved from their sins. Scripture does not give us the liberty to set imaginary hurdles of certain moral or spiritual height or difficulty over which we must pass to gain or to know that we have eternal life. Every effort to impose such hurdles eventually leads to insidious legalism and excessive judging by people regarding who, in their opinion, is and who is not born again. Scripture rather forbids such self-righteous judgments and warns us to leave all such judgment in the hands of Him to Whom the Father committed this judgment. (John 5:22-23, 26-27, 30) Leave the identification of wheat and tares to Him who knows how to distinguish between the two.

If we try to assess Jesus' words as His judge, a foolish posture for frail mortals, we might quibble about whether or not His judgment is just. If we examine His words and judgment in the passage from a more objective legal perspective, something that most of us are somewhat limited to do, we will conclude that Jesus engages in a straightforward, concise, and righteous judgment of those who appear before Him. And that is a good conclusion. I suggest that, in our present sinful mortality, none of us is remotely capable of assessing the justice of the sentence pronounced upon either class. Given Scripture's consistent description of our God as being wholly righteous and merciful beyond our comprehension, we best serve our faith by praising Him for these two traits, even if we cannot fully grasp them in this setting.

In our finite perspective, we often view righteousness and mercy as being more opposed to each other than as complimentary. However, this tension should lead us to the heart of the gospel. In Jesus, these two tension-set principles come together in perfect harmony.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. (Psalms 85:10-11)

Only in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ can we see God's mercy and the truth of our sinful condition come together in a joyful resolution for us. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor