

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Not Left

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm 16:10, KJV 1900)

We read many Old Testament lessons that give us comfort in their reading and meditation, but, in the case of this verse, we have the added benefit that New Testament writers cited the verse and gave us the Lord's interpretation of it, so we need not question or ponder its meaning.

Sadly, we read more commentary on the word "Hell" that grows out of paganism than out of Scripture. How many commentaries are content to imply that the word refers to some mystical underworld place where the spirits of those who die reside till the Second Coming, an idea that New Testament Scripture consistently rejects and refutes? Twice the New Testament specifically refers to the place where our spirits go at death as "Paradise," not hell. (Luke 23:43; in Jesus' own words, and 2 Corinthians 12:4) Occasionally Scripture uses the word to refer to the grave where our bodies lie till the Second Coming, the interpretation given to our study verse by two inspired New Testament writers. We read non-inspired books and hang on every word, often buying their private interpretations, but, in this case, we have two inspired "Commentaries" in the persons of Peter and Paul. I'll take their interpretation over any uninspired notion. Let's examine the lesson with the value of New Testament explanations and see what it really means.

First, take note of the verse. David, the inspired writer, rejoices that his soul would not remain in this place. He adds a prophetic note that his "Holy One," two words that our wise King James translators chose to capitalize, an indication that the words form a name or title, most likely of God Himself in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. His joy is not that he would avoid this place, but that he would not be left there long enough to decay.

What interpretation do New Testament writers, inspired writers, give us to this verse? In Acts 2:22-36, a major segment of Peter's Day of Pentecost sermon, Peter anchors his point regarding Jesus' literal, physical, bodily resurrection on this passage. Rather than citing one verse, Peter quotes several verses from Psalm 16. His primary point relates to Verse 10, our study verse. How did Peter interpret this lesson? We cannot read these verses and reach any conclusion other than that they are a prophecy of Jesus' literal bodily resurrection. While David could indeed rejoice that his body would not

remain in the grave, as Peter reasons, his body did remain in the grave long enough to see corruption, decay. But Jesus' body only remained in the grave for three days, and then He arose. His body that was crucified, buried, and arose, alive and was forever then immune from death and its associated corruption. Peter reasons that this passage was intended as a prophecy of Jesus' bodily resurrection. He reminds his audience that David's tomb, housing his body, was known by those present, but the object of David's prophecy, the Lord Jesus Christ, arose from His grave, from death, three days after his death and burial, seeing no corruption and thus fulfilling the prophecy.

While the New Testament uses the word "soul" in a fairly specific way, the word is used in the Old Testament in a more generic sense. Often in the Old Testament, the word is used for a living person, or that person's body. The Hebrew word translated "soul" in our study passage is defined as follows:

nephesh (659b); from an unused word; a soul, living being, life, self, person, desire, passion, appetite, emotion:—any(1), anyone(2), anyone*(1), appetite(7), being(1), beings(3), body(1), breath(1), corpse(2), creature(6), creatures(3), dead(1), dead person(2), deadly(1), death(1), defenseless*(1), desire(12), desire*(2), discontented*(1), endure*(1), feelings(1), fierce*(2), greedy*(1), heart(5), heart's(2), herself(12), Himself(4), himself(19), human(1), human being(1), hunger(1), life(146), life*(1), lifeblood*(2), lives(34), living creature(1), longing*(1), man(4), man's(1), men*(2), mind(2), Myself(3), myself(2), number(1), ones(1), others(1), ourselves(3), own(1), passion*(1), people(2), people*(1), perfume*(1), person(68), person*(1), persons(19), slave(1), some(1), soul(238), soul's(1), souls(12), strength(1), themselves(6), thirst(1), throat(2), will(1), wish(1), wishes(1), yourself(11), yourselves(13).¹

We see the wide variation in meaning that appears in the Old Testament in this definition, including Peter's inspired explanation that this prophecy

¹ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* : Updated Edition (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998).

refers to Jesus' body. Actually, given Peter's inspired explanation in Acts 2, especially verses 31-36, we have no need of a definition. Peter quite clearly gave us the precise meaning intended by the Holy Spirit in his explanation. We need little or no explanation of Peter's words. They are clear.

However, New Testament testimony to this lesson adds yet another clear and consistent witness to the truth of Peter's inspired interpretation of our study passage.

Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. (Acts 13:35-37)

In this passage, Paul adds his voice to Peter's and gives us the same precise explanation as Peter in Acts 2. Words could not more clearly identify the prophecy's reference to Jesus' literal body. David died, was buried, remained in the tomb, and his body decayed, saw corruption. Jesus was crucified, buried, and three short days later He arose, bodily, alive. His body saw no corruption. His body is not today in a tomb or otherwise dead and corrupted. He arose in that same body in which He lived, but He arose in glory, and He further accented that glory when He ascended. (Acts 1:9-11) That same alive, not corrupted by lingering death, body shall descend at the Second Coming to raise the bodies of His beloved children, glorifying them so that they shall be like His body, all the corruption that destroyed their physical bodies then itself destroyed by His resurrection power.

The New Testament consistently builds our own hope of resurrection on the historical, literal fact of Jesus' resurrection. If you deny His literal, bodily resurrection, you have no grounds for hoping that your own body shall ever be raised and purged from the corruption of death and the grave.

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

We can't get from our frail and temporary humanity to His glorified and incorruptible immortality other than through His own resurrection. In the opening verses to this chapter, Paul clearly defines the resurrection as referring to Jesus' literal human body. The body in which He lived during the Incarnation, the body in which He suffered, was scourged, crucified, and died, is the same body in which He arose from the dead, appeared to the disciples for forty days, and then ascended bodily—but now a glorified literal body—back to the Father. Interestingly, Scripture records the translation of two Old Testament patriarchs, Enoch and Elijah, a distinct indication of their bodies being translated directly into glory rather than experiencing death as we know it. Because Moses appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and because of Jude 1:9, some Bible commentaries hold that Moses was also raised at some point after his burial by God. Was the dispute between Michael and Satan over raising Moses' body or some other event? I don't know. I know what the verse states, and its objective is not to deal with resurrection, but with God's authority, a principle by which we may claim greater authority over Satan and his minions than we might claim personally.

Notice Scripture's inspired and defined objective for Biblical predestination.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Ephesians 1:5-6)

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

We should carefully distinguish Romans 8:29 the conforming into Christ's image in 2 Corinthians 3:18. In that context, our being conformed to the image of Christ, albeit distinctly by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is contingent on our removing the veil of unbelief that first century Jews consciously used to cover their minds, consciously hiding the truth of Jesus from their minds. We must look steadfastly at Him in the mirror of gospel truth if we hope to experience the Holy Spirit's transforming power in our personal lives. This contingency of personal conduct and faith in us separates this passage from Romans 8:29 where all of the transformation is performed by God alone.

Biblical predestination is not fatalistic at all in that it does not govern what people do, but where God's elect shall arrive in the end at the Second Coming. It uniquely relates to the final outcome or destination of God's beloved and chosen family. If you do not object to being resurrected in His bodily image, you do not in fact object to predestination.

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor