

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Resurrection: Intimately Personal

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: For he shall receive me. Selah. (Psalm 49:15, KJV 1900)

Often the little teaching that occurs on the resurrection in contemporary Christian culture deals with ideas that miss the personal, intimate teaching of Scripture. David rejoices that God "...will redeem **my soul** from the power of the grave." In the Old Testament, "soul" is used in a variety of ways. Here and in Psalm 16:10, interpreted by New Testament inspired writers (Acts 2:25-31; 13:35-37), soul refers to the body, or perhaps the living animated body that loses its "animation" in death. But these passages remind us that the grave is not the final chapter in the journey of our physical body. It shall not be left there. In the New Testament sense of the word, our "soul" is not our body, nor does it go to the grave at death. Thank the Lord for these two references in Acts that give us an inspired interpretation of Psalm 16:10, thereby helping us more clearly understand similar passages such as the one we here study. This passage further supports the point made in our last study, that redemption is not complete till the resurrection of our physical body, including its transformation that as fully removes sin and sin's impact and influences from it as God removed sin from the soul/spirit in the new birth.

For he shall receive me. David assigns the reason that God shall redeem his soul from the power of the grave, death. While New Testament teaching affirms a general resurrection of both the elect and the wicked, all in the same hour, not separated by an extended period of time (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), it also emphasizes the same personal intimacy that David here claims. (Philippians 1:21-24; while Paul here refers more to the intimacy of His being with Christ in personal and joyful fellowship, that close fellowship cannot be ignored or denied relative to the subsequent resurrection) Every act of God in the process of our final deliverance from sin and sin's impact to our being raised at the Second Coming in His glorified image focuses on this personal intimacy that gives David such comfort and joy. We read of the death of godly people in Scripture, people such as Stephen (Acts 7:55-60), but do we embrace the powerful and comforting lessons that these experiences give to us? When faced with a cruel and painful death, Stephen manifests a focus that ignored his pain and rejoiced at seeing and soon being with his Savior, "I see..." "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:56, 59)

From election to resurrection, all of God's saving grace is applied personally and intimately to each of His beloved children, almost as if you were the only one being redeemed. But, praise be to our gracious and loving Savior, He is able to treat every single one of His children with the same grace. When you and I face that final moment, by His loving grace, we can say the same words that David wrote and feel the same unspeakable comfort that he felt when he wrote, "For he shall receive me."

Our generation has witnessed an interesting acknowledgement within mainstream Christian thinking of the Bible doctrine of election. However, the contemporary "Twist" on the doctrine ignores and contradicts the teaching of Scripture that makes God's love and grace so intimately up close and personal to each child of grace. The modern idea works to depersonalize God's saving work. According to this teaching, God elected Jesus and Jesus only. If you make your decision and comply with the various requirements imposed by the various partnership salvation ideas, you effectively put yourself into Jesus; since God elected Jesus, and since you have put yourself in Jesus, you are supposedly now one of God's elect. How does this idea match up to Scripture? Simply stated, it doesn't.

Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Timothy 1:9)

Notice Paul's emphatic point. All of this saving work is "...not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." We didn't bring ourselves into contact with this purpose and grace by our decision or by anything that we did. God **gave it to us** "...in Christ Jesus before the world began."

We may reasonably discuss what the Reformers meant by their term "Justification by faith." However, the more appropriate discussion should be about terms used in Scripture and what the Holy Spirit intended those terms to mean. The contemporary school of theology that teaches the idea of our putting ourselves into Jesus, who is God's exclusive elect, thereby making ourselves

one of God's elect, also imposes an errant idea onto our faith and our belief of the gospel. Supposedly, requiring that a person believe the gospel is not to be classified as "Salvation by works." You believe in salvation by works, according to this thinking, only if you require water baptism, and/or a certain minimum level of good works for eternal salvation. The major question to be answered typically remains unanswered and unaddressed. Is our belief a "work" or not?

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (John 6:28-29)

If we accept the simple truth that these two verses teach, we cannot accept the contemporary idea that our belief is not a work. Simply stated, **Jesus said it is a work.** It is the work of God, what God commands and teaches His children to do, but, in the end, Jesus did say that believing "...on him whom he hath sent" is a work, didn't He? So do we believe the modern interpreters, or do we believe Jesus? No contest for me; I believe Jesus. How could He have made the point simpler? "This is the **work** of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

This illogical hybrid belief half-way between Arminian and Calvinist ideas has far less Bible support than its advocates suggest. Jesus' words in John 6:29 contradict and therefore reject the idea. Think further. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus used the analogy of a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats in his flock to depict the Second Coming. Pay special attention to the way the saved reacted to the news, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When Jesus tells them that they had ministered to Him, what was their response? Did they tell Him that they vividly recalled the date, hour, and place when they first heard the gospel and believed it? Did they tell Him that they still remembered their moment of believing and accepting Him? If God required them to exercise cognitive faith and actively believe in Him and in the gospel to be born again, surely at that epochal day, they would recall such an important event. Surely, Jesus would also mention that event to them. How did they react?

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (Matthew 25:37-39)

Not only did they not remind the Lord of their "Hour of decision," but they reacted to the good news with

a touch of surprise, if not bewilderment, "When saw we thee..." Think about their response. If the saved at that day respond with surprise at their glorious inheritance, when did they forget about their decisions and all their good and faithful works? That they responded with "When saw we thee..." instead of proudly rehearsing their decision offers a powerful commentary. According to the common decision-based teaching of our day, only those who consciously hear and believe the gospel, and, to some usually unstipulated degree, obey it shall be invited to spend eternity with the Lord. **Why then does Jesus depict those whom He saved as being surprised at the good news?** Could it possibly be that all of their good decisions and belief in the gospel actually didn't play into their inheritance, either as the cause or the instrument of their inheritance? I suggest that is precisely the case. Thank the Lord, we shall inherit that glorious place and state of eternal, living fellowship with the Lord because of what He did for us and in us, not because of what we did or said, mental or in actions. We shall praise Him throughout eternity, not celebrate our decisions.

For he shall receive me. In these words, David captures the amazing mystery of the ages. Despite the corruption of our physical bodies while we lived in this world, He shall raise us wholly purified from all of that corruption. The same body that sinned against Him and His righteous Law shall be so gloriously changed that it shall praise Him perfectly!

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:3-4)

In the first two verses of Colossians 3, Paul teaches the Colossians—and us—to respect and to regard our risen state with Christ right now, to seek our God and heavenly things. He builds his point on the premise that, just as Jesus arose from the dead in a glorified body, so also we shall arise in the same body in which we lived, but it shall be wholly transformed. Paul describes as much of this change as we can grasp—if we can fully understand his points. Our corruption is made incorruptible, our dishonor is raised in glory, our weakness is raised in power, our natural body is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

For he shall receive me. Yes, He shall receive you, you individually and personally. His "Come, inherit the kingdom..." shall be spoken to you, declaring for all eternity that you are His and He is yours. What a day that will be!

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor