

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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The Death of Death in Jesus' Death

Thy dead men shall live, Together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isaiah 26:19, KJV 1900)

The truth of resurrection that Isaiah surfaced in Chapter 25 he now repeats with greater personal emphasis. Not only does our Lord swallow up death in victory, but He claims that victory by the certain promise of personal, individual resurrection for each—and all—of His beloved, chosen people. While the Scriptures teach a general resurrection (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), the prophet here singles out God's people for special comfort in this reminder of a personal, individual, literal bodily resurrection to come.

Thy dead men shall live. We should read this simple clause with amazement. Only God could direct a prophet to state such a profound truth so clearly and so simply. This is the way it is. This is a fact that God has promised His people from the beginning. Job put the point in the form of a question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14) Job comforts himself that he will remember this truth "...all the days of my appointed time...till my change come."

Together with my dead body shall they arise. Many ancient non-Christian religions held to various beliefs that included some form of life after death, but the Judeo-Christian idea of God becoming a man, living, dying, and rising again stands alone. This sentence reads more like a New Testament quote from Jesus' mouth. We cannot isolate the Biblical doctrine of the resurrection from Jesus' resurrection. Further, we cannot accept the truth of this prophecy and hold any view that rejects Jesus' literal, physical human body, a body that lived, suffered, and died, but also a body that arose from death, witnessed His literal resurrection for forty days, and then ascended to glory. How can anyone reject Jesus' literal "Incarnation," His coming in a literal, physical, human body? John warns us that those who dare to deny this truth are antichrist.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:2-4)

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

According to John, "Antichrist" is not a demonic personality that shall appear near the end with supernatural and sinister powers. Antichrist was a label that John, inspired by the Holy Spirit to write truth and only truth, attached to false teachers in his day who dared to deny that Jesus came and lived in a literal, physical, human body. John expands the point; anyone who embraces this errant idea at any time is no less antichrist than the people in his lifetime of whom he writes.

Together with my dead body.... As a point of precise accuracy, this passage teaches the truth of Jesus' personal, bodily resurrection, as well as our own literal, physical, bodily resurrection. This truth echoes Paul's words.

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. (1 Corinthians 15:13-17)

When Isaiah wrote the words "Together with my dead body..." he linked our personal resurrection with Jesus' literal bodily resurrection. Take great comfort in these words. When Jesus arose from the dead and left that borrowed tomb, the event guaranteed our own resurrection so surely that the prophet associates our resurrection with that event, "Together with my dead body..."

The language of this passage adds to the clarity and the certainty of a literal, physical, bodily resurrection. Words could not make the point more clearly, "Together with my dead body...." If Jesus didn't have a literal body, how could He speak these prophetic words?

Sadly often, preachers and Bible teachers affirm the truth of resurrection, but fail to link that truth to the believer's life in the here and now. Scripture abounds with this truth and uses our certain literal

resurrection to urge us to live today like “A child of the King.”

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (Colossians 2:13)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

I include Colossians 2:13, for this verse links the forgiveness of our sins and our new birth with Jesus’ death and resurrection, “...quickened together with him.” Notice the similarity of language. Isaiah 26:19, “*Together with my dead body shall they arise.*” Colossians 2:13, “*hath he quickened together with him.*” If we are joined with Jesus in His death, we cannot be separated from Him in His resurrection! And that is the point made in Isaiah’s words, “*Together with my dead body shall they arise.*”

We cannot question that Paul wrote these words in simple, understandable language. Our hope of heaven cannot stand apart from the literal resurrection of Jesus. And our belief in His literal, physical, bodily resurrection appears in Scripture as the bedrock foundation for our hope of a literal, physical, bodily resurrection at the Second Coming. Take this truth from Christian faith, and you have nothing left.

Why preach the resurrection? What difference does it make in the here and now? Evidently, Paul and other New Testament writers understood what we sometimes neglect. “*If ye then be risen with Christ....*” Paul’s teaching that believers should live a transformed life that sets them apart from unbelievers around them is all based on the foundational truth of the resurrection. To be precise, he based this teaching on our indissoluble union with the Lord Jesus Christ, including His death and His resurrection. Earlier I mentioned the deficiency of this teaching in many contemporary Christian pulpits. In one subculture of Christianity, you hear a near obsessive and speculative framework of ideas that secularize the Christian faith regarding the Second Coming in the “Left Behind” imaginative, but unbiblical teaching. In other subcultures, this errant teaching has effectively intimidated believers, even preachers, into ignoring Biblical teaching and leaving a gigantic void of teaching. This subculture almost wholly ignores any teaching at all regarding the Second Coming. If the tight logical and Scriptural link exists between the Second Coming and our ethical conduct, what might we expect to see in those Christian subcultures where either significant error is taught obsessively or where the whole subject is

ignored? We would logically expect to see an erosion of moral consistency in the conduct of those believers? And what, in fact, do we see in the greater Christian culture of our day? Barna and a number of other Christian groups have conducted a survey’s, asking extensive questions about respondents’ moral outlook. With sad consistency, these surveys report that there is no significant difference between the moral perspective and conduct of Christians and non-Christians. This idea should alarm the serious Bible student/believer. More to the point, we need to seek any insights we can find in Scripture to reverse this rudderless ship. The answer is not in more sermons against lying and stealing or a higher respect for marriage as an institution that God established and defined. Those teachings should be intertwined in all sound Biblical teaching. However, merely teaching people that these things are wrong will not transform them. The answer lies in a return to the clear teachings of Scripture on the Second Coming and our literal, bodily resurrection! Isn’t that Paul’s point when he writes, “If ye then be risen with Christ...”?

In several instances in the New Testament, the word translated “conversation” in our King James Bible was translated from a word that refers to one’s citizenship in first century Greek language.

...to conduct oneself with proper reference to one’s obligations in relationship to others, as part of some community¹

...to behave as a citizen. Any public measure, administration of the state, the condition or life of a citizen. In the NT, the state itself, community, commonwealth, used metaphorically of Christians in reference to their spiritual community and their status as citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20).²

The principle idea of the word identifies behavior that is compatible with one’s citizenship, the country of origin or home. If we truly are a stranger here, and if heaven is our home, we owe our citizenship through this pilgrimage the ethical debt of living like citizens of heaven. And the link that compels this ethical conduct is the resurrection.

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
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Worship service each Sunday 10:30 A. M.
Joseph R. Holder Pastor

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 507.

NT (New Testament)

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).