

The Resurrection of Life and the Resurrection to Damnation

John 5:28-29,
Easter Sunday IV, May 3, 2015

Sermon Text, John 5:28-29 (KJV):

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."

Beloved of the Lord..... From the Holy Scriptures we know that once a sinner dies, his eternal destiny is set. We know this because just before Jesus ascended up into heaven, He said in Mark 16:15-16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus each Christian is to teach the Gospel because after death no soul has an opportunity to repent of their sins and believe on Christ and thus be saved. What then "shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul?" God does not give any soul a second chance after death. There is no Catholic purgatory where eventually you get bumped up into heaven. Nor is there any intermediate or "between place" where ghosts wander on earth as the devils teach. Simply put, those who despised the grace of God while on earth by sinful living, impenitence and unbelief, such will immediately damned at the moment of death, while penitent believers are received into life everlasting. Jesus Himself taught this in Luke 16, by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." Whatever hopes in the afterlife the unbeliever may have before he dies, these hopes vanish when they awake in hell. Proverbs 11:7 says, "When the wicked man dieth, his expectations shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth." This subject then of death and hell is not child's play, and no Christian should joke about hell or treat the subject lightly. Neither should any pastor even preach about hell, unless he is earnestly desiring to lead souls to heaven, preaching Christ crucified before the hearts and souls of men. Jesus therefore said of Himself in Proverbs 8, "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

When a Christian thus dies in the blessed faith of Christ, like Lazarus they are immediately received into heaven, just as Jesus said "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise". As for the question, do the angels come to take us home or is it Jesus Himself at that very moment of death, we will just have to wait and see, but thanks be to God Jesus said right before ascending into heaven "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

I. The details of the universal resurrection on the Last Day. Moving on now to the particular details of the Last Day, or Judgment Day, from the Scriptures we know that

day will come upon us like a thief in the night. “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” In other words, don’t turn away from the love of Christ so that you give yourself over to sinful living without repentance. Revelation 1:7 says, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” Muslims, Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Atheists, Agnostics, Adulterers, Fornicators, Homosexuals, Drunkards, namely all **IMPENITENT SINNERS WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF CHRIST**, such will be terrified when the Judge descends from heaven. Life on earth will come to a screeching halt. But for the believers Jesus promises, in Matthew 24 “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Here then understand Jesus wants us to teach and preach the Gospel so souls will be saved from this dreadful fate. For “then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

When Christ appears, those yet living on earth see not only Christ and the angels, but also the saints, and then the universal resurrection of **ALL THE DEAD** takes place. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” I Thess. 4:16-17. This is why Jesus said “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.” At some point then all the souls of the saints in heaven and all the souls of the damned in hell return to their earthly bodies so they are quickened in the grave. Nor does it matter at all if that person perished at sea, or was eaten by wild animals, or burned to death so they are nothing more than ashes. By the power of Christ’s voice all the dust of the earth which once made up that body, will come back together, reassembled so to speak, and the soul will return to its body. We know this because of Revelation 20:12-13. The Apostle John writes, “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” It is then a universal judgment which no man escapes, and only those names written in the book of life receive heaven.

In the resurrection the bodies of believers begin what is called a glorified state, a spiritual body with no flaw or defect. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.” This is why Job rejoiced in the Old Testament

saying, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." In the resurrection Job knew He would see Jesus with his own eyes, face to face. Likewise when Jesus ascended up into heaven the angels spoke of His VISIBLE return saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Hence there is no invisible return of Christ as the Millennialists teach, nor is there any thousand year reign of Christ on earth where there is peace on earth alone, for it is written "we must through MUCH TRIBULATION enter into the kingdom of God".

While the bodies of believers then are glorified on this Last Day, the resurrected bodies of the unbelievers are just the opposite of glorified, for they rise only to everlasting contempt and shame. Daniel twelve says, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Because in unbelief thy refused Jesus' gracious offer of forgiveness and life, the ugliness of their works and their great shame is revealed publicly to all on Judgment Day, and so they are objects of contempt and an abhorring to all flesh, a dreadful sight to see. While they boasted and bragged about their works and shameful life on earth, they will be publicly shamed before God and the saints. They will not only feel God's anger upon them for despising His only-begotten Son, but also they will feel the total shame of their sins. Because they despised the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, they will suffer eternally forever and ever, without any break or relief from the torment. So let us ever remember dear believer, that is what we deserve also for our sins, and that is the torment Christ Himself endured for us, so we would not be damned, but saved, redeemed, washed, justified, and counted righteous in His sight, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." So great is this love of Christ!

And so dear friends it ought to be evident, we are justified by faith alone. The real difference between Christians and non-Christians is not sin or lack thereof, but grace and faith. In this world then we are ashamed of our sins and we confess them to one another, and daily seek to amend, but unbelievers boast and brag about their works to God and man. But it will all be reversed when Christ appears to judge the quick and the dead. We by His grace alone will be exalted, but they will be eternally condemned and ashamed. In this life then never forget, you are saved by grace alone and not your works, as the Psalmist says, "If Thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." Ps. 130

II. Have we done good or evil? But if all this is true, why then does Jesus say "they that have done good" will receive the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, the resurrection of damnation? Have we then done good or evil? Truthfully Christians can say both, for by our flesh our works are evil, yet because Christ is the vine and we the branches, it is also true believers have a beginning of good works. Yet not even our best works done by faith and love justify us before God, for it is written "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" and "by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of

yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.” The true boast then of any believer is Christ alone, for to God alone be glory. Thus connecting the grace of God which saves us to that subject of good works, First Corinthians five says “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” I Cor. 15 We have good works only because Jesus has resurrected us from spiritual death by His own resurrection. Christ is even now the firstfruits of our life because Jesus fulfilled God’s laws and commandments for us in love. He placed Himself under God’s law, that He might fulfill it in our stead. Likewise we are justified before God by the good works of Jesus and not our own, especially His blood-atonement of the cross. This is why we ought to boast and brag only about the works of Jesus our Savior. In His own triumphant resurrection then dear believer, you should see a fruitful and green life given to you, put and placed into your account, as if you did all these good works yourself, though you didn’t and Jesus did.

Moreover once you see Jesus to be your life and salvation by faith, what happens? The answer is you grow and bloom like a flower in Spring. The Son of Grace which shines in the sky causes you to open up and bloom like a tulip or rose because His love is upon you and in you and for you. And just as those Springtime birds sing God’s praises early in the morning, so you break forth in song praising God from whom all blessings flow. Therefore on the Last Day, Judgment Day, what does God see when He looks at you, a believer in Christ? He sees all the good works Christ has done for you. He sees His own son or daughter from whom He loved and died and rose again. He sees a holy child who has done holy works for the glory of His name, out of thankfulness of heart, and He does not see any sin or flaw, no shortcoming, no defect. He sees only holiness, because He Himself draped you in the holiness of Christ. Such is the power and strength of His glorious resurrection, so that His resurrection becomes our resurrection, and “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Amen.