

The Gospel of John

Two Resurrections (Part 1)

John 5:25-29

INTRODUCTION:

John has told us about the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. Jesus apparently performed this healing in order to get the attention of the Jewish leaders. They did not believe that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. Now that He has their attention, He is going to present to them one of the greatest discourses or sermons that our Lord ever gave concerning His deity. It began in verse 17 and runs all the way to verse 47. We have made it down to verse 25 at this point. Try as I might, it seemed impossible to cover all five verses in one sermon. We don't want to move too rapidly through this discourse because there is a tremendous amount of valuable information written here in these 31 verses.

Jesus is talking to Jewish leaders in Israel. He is, as far as they are concerned, a false teacher, a pretender to be a representative of God. Even though they know He does miracles, they have explained them as power coming from Satan. They reject Him. They look at Him as the **ultimate blasphemer** without comparison, without parallel, without equal because He claims to do the very things that God alone does in the very way that God does them. In fact, as we remember from verse 18, He makes Himself equal with God and that is their assessment, their accurate assessment, of exactly what He was saying.

But how does it come down to the subject then of resurrection, this claim to deity? Well, it gets to this point because of Jesus claiming to be God back in verses 21 and 22. He says that **He raises the dead and He judges** as God raises the dead and gives life and judges. So He is the one who introduced the subject of resurrection and judgment. So it is all a part of this message that Jesus is giving about His identity to these Jewish leaders.

Back in verse 16 they were persecuting Jesus, first of all, because He was violating their traditional Sabbath rules. Even worse, He was calling Himself God. So they were condemning Him for healing on the Sabbath and for being the ultimate blasphemer.

Jesus responds to these condemnations by elevating His claims. He did not try to back off from His claims or explain anything away. Rather He elevated them. We saw in verses 17 to 24 last week that He claims to be...

- Equal with God in person
- Equal to God in works,
- Equal to God in power,
- Equal to God in judgment or authority
- Equal to God in honor
- And equal to God in truth.

What He says is as true as what God says. Just as God is to be heard and believed, so He too is to be heard and believed.

So in verses 17 to 24, He makes these amazing, astonishing claims of equality with God, and in the middle of it, verses 21 and 22, are these two claims that essentially are the most elevated of all claims: He has the power to give life and has the power to judge. That is to say, He brings people into existence and then determines the nature of their eternal existence. He is God, fully God, it is unmistakable.

Now, since they are not convinced that He is the Messiah, they are obviously going to be shocked and irritated by this claim.

Our scripture reading this morning and for the next couple of weeks is from John 5:25-29.

All Stand and Read Scripture.

John 5:25-29 (NASB)

²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

Prayer

I want you to notice the main points that are given here. It would be very easy to miss the fact that Christ mentions **two** resurrections.

1. Spiritual resurrection from spiritual death.
2. Resurrection at the second coming of Christ.

We also learn that both the saved and unsaved will be resurrected at Christ's second coming.

From this we also get insight into the often asked question, "**What happens after we die?**"

BODY:

I. SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

Every person who has or will ever live on this earth will experience resurrection. I know that we as believers understand the Christian resurrection that God has planned for His people, but you need to understand also that every human being who has ever lived will be raised from the dead and there will be a literal resurrection of the ungodly just as there will be of the godly. There will be a resurrection unto judgment or damnation just as there will be a resurrection unto life. All men who ever live on this earth will be raised from the dead. When the body goes into the ground our existence does not end there. God created us with eternal souls. Eternity is not just a place for spirits, it is a place for

resurrected glorified bodies containing spirits. The resurrection is the subject of this passage as you could easily see. And it is in this passage that our Lord makes the astounding claim that He is the one who raises the dead and then judges all of them.

Let's look, first of all, at verses 25 and 26 and take a look at the truth of spiritual resurrection...**spiritual resurrection**. That's the subject.

"Truly, truly I say to you, an hour is coming and now is"...and 'now is' is the key there...if something **now is**, then He is saying it is happening now. That means it can't be the future resurrection. The resurrection that was already happening was a spiritual resurrection. So He says to you, "I say to you, an hour is coming and **now is** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live, for just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son to have life in Himself." Those two verses point to the spiritual resurrection. This is an emphatic, authoritative, absolute statement and that is why again we see "Truly, truly." We saw it in verse 24. We saw it earlier in Jesus' discussions with Nicodemus. It was used by Jesus in speaking to Nicodemus several times.

And the reason we see this so frequently is because this is brand new information. This is contrary to everything they have ever known and believed and affirmed and taught. And it is also the most solemn way to introduce a thought, "Truly, truly," to emphasize the urgency of this. "An hour is coming and now is," Something has arrived in the present and yet has a future aspect. What could that be?

Well obviously spiritual resurrection. The New Testament era began when our Lord began His ministry. The ministry of redemption, the ministry of salvation, the ministry of sanctification (the cleansing from sin). It will not end until the work of redemption is finally complete at His second coming. This is just our Lord's way of saying redemption has begun, regeneration has begun. When He said to Nicodemus He said, "You must be born from above, you must be born again," that is both now, Jesus says, and to come. This is an ongoing ministry, the saving work of the Lord Jesus is already beginning to make people alive. As Jesus spoke to the Jews that day, He had the power in that very hour to give people life.

I have often wondered how the people were saved during Jesus' ministry.

Matthew 3:11 (NASB)

¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

We know from scripture that those who were baptized for repentance by John the Baptist needed to be baptized again after Jesus died on the cross, but the people baptized by Jesus seemed to be already saved despite the fact that He had not died on the cross yet.

Let's back up to verse 24,

John 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Just to be clear, "What is this **eternal life**?"

"Life" is explained in many places in the scriptures. A very good explanation is found in the witness of John the Baptist about Christ...

John 1:9-13 (NASB)

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who **believe** in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God**.

This "life" is referring to those who **believe** that Jesus is the Messiah sent by God and, as Jesus told Nicodemus, were "born again". They died to their sins and Jesus filled them with His righteousness. They born again into a new sin free life. It is a new life in Christ!

II. AN HOUR "NOW IS" FOR RESURRECTION.

I want you to notice that this rebirth was happening during the ministry of Jesus. An hour is coming, yes...and **now is**, when the dead, **the spiritually dead**, will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Jesus is simply saying that the hour has begun. The ministry of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ has begun. Even before the cross, He gave life. Even before His own resurrection, He was giving life to people.

At the end of chapter 3 when Jesus closes out His message to the disciples, He says this, **"He who believes in the Son has eternal life."** He who believes in the Son has eternal life. You remember in chapter 4, the next chapter, and verse 42, they were saying to the Samaritan woman, **"It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this one is indeed the Savior of the world."** They were **believing**. In fact, in verse 39, they believed in Him because of the Word the woman gave. And then in verse 40, they were asking Him to stay with them and He stayed there two days and many more **believed because of His Word**. and go back to chapter 5 and verse 24, **"He who hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life."** So they were believing and they were being given eternal life.

Don't be confused that **only** Christians will live forever. The dead in Christ, those who reject him, will also live forever. The difference between the two groups of people will be their eternal destination.

In the period between the arrival of Christ and His own death, He was giving spiritual life to those who believe. **What did they believe?**

- They believed in the true and living God.
- They believed that He was holy and righteous.
- They believed that they had offended Him.
- They believed that they were sinful.
- They believed they needed mercy and grace.
- They believed that God had sent His Son to be their Savior, the Savior of the world as the Samaritan woman at the well put it.
- They believed all that had been revealed to them at that point, even though they had not seen the work of Calvary and the open tomb. Just believing in the Son of God was all that they had to believe because that was all that God had revealed up to that point. He had begun to give life. And that's why He says, **"It now is."**

III. AN HOUR "IS COMING" FOR RESURRECTION.

But at the same time, an **hour is coming**. When He uses the term “hour,” He is not talking about one literal hour, He is talking about a period of time. We also know from **John 1:12**: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” And there again the same idea. If they believed in who He was, **John 3:16**, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him...” it doesn’t say anything about the cross or the resurrection yet, but it is about believing in Him as the Son of God, the Savior of the world. That would incorporate, obviously, the belief that God was holy and they were sinful, and they needed salvation and that salvation would be in Him though they didn’t know yet exactly how it would work out. The Holy Spirit hadn’t come yet in the full sense of convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. Pentecost hadn’t happened yet and therefore the Holy Spirit had not come and filled the church and taken up residence in the believers to cause them to have the power to give the witness to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the world, as promised in **Acts 1:8**.

So those things hadn’t happened. **That is the hour that is coming**. The hour that is coming is the revelation of Christ's death the cross and His resurrection from the tomb. It is the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and He taking residence in the believers. It is the work of the spirit through the church in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. That is the hour that was coming in its fullness.

Whether you lived during the ministry of Christ or after the Day of Pentecost, you have to believe in Christ to be resurrected from your spiritual death. For example, when the disciples in John 1 who came to Jesus and affirmed who He was, they quit following John the Baptist and started following Jesus who was identified as “**the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**”. They had found the Messiah and believed! You have to believe that they were given eternal life.

You have to believe that the Samaritans were given eternal life for believing in the name of Jesus. There would be no legitimate reason to withhold salvation from them. It would be given to them similar to those who were redeemed in the Old Testament with the addition that the **Old Testament saints** were **looking forward to the one who would come** and those **early believers in the New Testament**, before the cross, before the resurrection, before the arrival of the Holy Spirit, **were affirming who the one who had come actually was**. It was already the hour of life, but it was only beginning. In fact, when that hour actually arrived in its fullness on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand were saved, and then five thousand were saved and it was explosive from there on.

So what our Lord is referring to here is not literal resurrection at the last coming, but spiritual resurrection.

CONCLUSION:

Spiritual death has been a reality ever since the fall of man. All men are born into a state of spiritual death. All men, when they reach the age of accountability and realize that they have sinned, are dead in trespasses and sins. And so, God is in the business of making people alive. All the Old Testament saints were dead in trespasses and sins and made alive when they came to true faith in God.

How do we receive that new life?

John 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and **believes** Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, **but has passed out of death into life**.”

Jesus is the only one, the only voice with the only message that gives life in a world of spiritual death. Only those who hear His voice come alive spiritually.

Now this is not just a **general** hearing, but this is an **effectual** hearing **with the heart**. This is not just **information**, this is **transformation**. This is part of the work of the Spirit that we saw in John 3 in regeneration. This is God reaching down and giving life and then speaking with a voice that the heart hears, the soul hears. New life pours in to the soul. This is not a superficial hearing.

You remember that in Matthew 7, Jesus will say one day to some people, “**Depart from Me, I never knew you.**” And who are those people? They are people who will say, “**Lord, Lord, we’ve done all this in Your name. We’ve proclaimed Your name. We’ve done miracles in Your name. We’ve cast out demons in Your name.**” And Jesus will say, “**Depart from Me, I don’t know you.**”

This is not a physical hearing. This is an effectual hearing, this is a hearing in the believing heart and the believing soul. This is based upon God’s gracious awakening of the dead soul. **There is only one voice that can penetrate spiritual death and that is the voice of the Son of God.** Mark it down, verse 25, “**The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.**” You may be the witness, I may be the preacher, but the voice they have to hear is **not our voice!** The voice they **have to hear** is the voice of God, for He alone can give life!

Men don’t come alive on their own. Dead men don’t come alive by some religious ritual or ceremony. They don’t come alive through the cleverness of a teacher. They don’t come alive by works, morality, or self-improvement. They come alive when they hear voice of Christ calling out to them and believe.

Ephesians 2:1-6 (NASB)

² And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. That describes the condition of all human beings at some point in their life. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

If you don’t come to Christ, you will die in your sins because He is the only one who gives life.

The Family of God.