

John 5:25-29 "God Has Life In Himself"

JOH 5:25-29 "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

This particular section of Scripture is part of a discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ who is responding to the Jews who desired to kill Him because He had healed a man on the Sabbath.

And so, it would certainly appear that the Jews, particularly the leaders in Jerusalem, loved the letter of the law more than they did people whom the law was designed to protect. And Jesus has brought out how the law was never intended to restrict mercy and compassion for people, or even animals, even on the Sabbath, as we pointed out last week in the gospel of Luke.

LUK 13:14-16 "Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

And so, in our text, our Lord continues to point out that God has every intention of extending mercy and compassion to people; and being very God in the flesh, Jesus is not restricted from doing the Father's work on the Sabbath since the Sabbath was not made for God, but for man. But even as a man our Lord Jesus violated nothing concerning the Sabbath.

But, also, this entire section of chapter five really points out the deity of Jesus Christ as we saw last week. Not to accept Jesus Christ is not to accept the Father who sent Him. Not to accept Jesus Christ as God in the flesh is not to accept the Father as God.

They are one in essence though separate as persons of the Godhead.

And this is the reason Jesus can offer eternal life to men. We know that only God can forgive sin and give life to we who are dead in our trespasses and sins. And so for Jesus to extend this offer of life clearly shows that He is none other than God Himself. And this was the portion we ended with last week.

JOH 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

And so, as we come to our text this morning our Lord Jesus continues to point out how He is the one who will be responsible to bring people into a living relationship with the Father.

JOH 5:25 "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

This is in reference to what our Lord said back in verse 21 where Jesus says, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it."

Keep in mind that most of the Jews believed in the general resurrection of all men according to the Scriptures.

DAN 12:2 "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

And so, when Jesus speaks of such a resurrection the Jews know exactly what He's talking about. They also know that Jesus has just said that He is the one responsible for calling people out of the grave, in particular those believers who will hear the voice of the Son of God, who hear and will live.

What this means is that Jesus is plainly telling these people that the Old Testament Scriptures which spoke of God raising the dead, both believers and unbelievers at the end of time, is none other than Jesus Himself raising them from the dead, thus making Himself equal with the Father.

As I said last week this would have been unprecedented in Israel for a man to equate Himself with God and then do the very works of God in the midst of these people. And yet, this is exactly what

Jesus is doing. But, these people don't have eyes to see or ears to hear since they want to kill Him, who is the giver of life.

But there is something instructive here in verse 25 which speaks not only of a bodily resurrection but also of a spiritual resurrection. Notice that Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and ***has now come*** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

There is not only a future promise of the dead hearing the voice of the Son of God, where believers will be bodily resurrected from the dead, but we're told that this has already come, present tense.

So, what does this mean? Well, there is a sense in which there is a resurrection of our spirits from death to life. In other words, we have been delivered from death and its penalty as we are brought to life in Christ. The Scriptures put it a number of ways.

EPH 2:1.5-7 "As for you, ***you were dead in your transgressions and sins***, 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 ***made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions*** - it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And ***God raised us up with Christ*** and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

COL 2:13 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, ***God made you alive with Christ***. He forgave us all our sins..."

ROM 6:4 "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just ***as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.***"

What kind of a life? A new life. A resurrected life from death to life in Christ who rose from the dead to assure us of this new life in Himself. This new life begins the moment we believe and is therefore not necessarily a reference to a future bodily resurrection, though it certainly points to it.

When Jesus says in our text "that a time has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live", He is telling these Jews that He is the one who not only calls them to life but is the One who actually brings them to life as He calls them out.

Again, this is something only God can do. No mere man can make such a claim. This is why it is ludicrous to think that men can work their way to heaven by some good work or works. If getting to heaven can only come from receiving life at the hands of God, (being born from above), then how does a good work from sinful man accomplish that?

It can't. If it were possible for us to earn God's favor with some supposed good work then God's salvation would cease to be a gift and would then become a wage we earn. But of course we know what wage we deserve.

ROM 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

EPH 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."

This is the point Jesus is making to the Jews. He is saying that He is the One who can offer them this gift. If they are willing to accept Him by faith, then they will have been resurrected from death to life as they receive this gift of salvation from the hand of the Son of God.

By the way, this ability to hear the voice of the Son of God and live, is found to substantiate what John calls the first resurrection in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation 20:6** <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in *the first resurrection*; over these the second death has no power, but *they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

The first resurrection mentioned here in Rev.20 is in the context of saints killed for their faith as they begin ruling and reigning with Christ in heaven during the thousand years.

**Revelation 20:4-5** <sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus* and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; *and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection is juxtaposed with the second death in Rev.20:6, which is to say that the first death is a temporary judgment in the present age that leads to the eternal death called the second death in the age to come.

On the other hand the first resurrection is a temporary reward for believers in the present age in the present heaven while the final resurrection is for the age to come on the new earth.

So, whether a first resurrection or a first death, they are both bound to the present age. Both the final resurrection of the bodies of both believers and unbelievers will determine where they will spend eternity in the age to come after the second coming of Christ who raises His people from the dead.

**John 6:39** <sup>39</sup> "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

And so, the first resurrection, which is spiritual and tied to this age, necessarily starts at the time that the Spirit of God raises our dead spirits to life through regeneration and give us life eternal life in Christ which starts today.

This same spiritual resurrection is resumed on a higher and more intimate level in the present heaven with Christ for those who have died in Him, but awaits the final resurrection of the body on the last day.

Some argue that the first resurrection in Revelation must be speaking about the same kind of resurrection on the last day, which is to say that both are physical in nature. But this simply defies logic unless of course we believe in two or more physical resurrections.

The Scriptures just don't teach this. But they do teach a resurrection of the whole man, both body and spirit. This spiritual resurrection, ostensibly the first, happens when our spirits are made alive as they are brought forth from death as the prophet Ezekiel points out.

**Ezekiel 37:12-14** <sup>12</sup> "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> "*Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.* <sup>14</sup> "*I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life,* and I will place you on your own

land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."

This coming to life of a dead and obstinate people, called Israel, can only happen as God puts His Spirit within them, (regeneration) and they come to life (resurrection). This is precisely what we pointed out earlier in this study with the very words of the apostle Paul.

**Colossians 2:13** <sup>13</sup> *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him*, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Thus, this first resurrection from death to life in Christ leads to the second and final resurrection on the last day, which is our hope.

This is good news, which is what the word gospel means. But there's something else in verse 25 which we must not overlook. Notice that Jesus speaks of those hearing the voice of the Son of God. The voice of the Son of God? Yeah.

This is to say that the mere word from Jesus produces life. In a spiritual sense this is creative power; the ability to create life where there was only death. This is different from what is being taught in many circles today where believers somehow receive this creative power from God as they speak the word of God.

When it says here in our text that people will hear the voice of the Son of God, it is not mere words being referred to, even if those words are the words of God, (e.g., the Scriptures).

The power of the word is not simply in the words. The power of the word is the Word, the Son of God. In fact, this is precisely what Jesus Himself means when He addresses the ability of His people, His sheep, to hear His voice and then follow Him.

**John 10:27-28** <sup>27</sup> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Only God can accomplish such a task and it is this same God who creates all things.

JOH 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

If believers had this same power through simply speaking the word, then it would only be a matter of speaking those words of life to people, and everyone would necessarily come to Christ.

What many in the word/faith movement promote is this ability to speak the word as they conceive and believe and by faith receive the promise of that word. But what I find curious about this methodology is that believers are being encouraged, by-and-large, to use this word for personal gain.

In other words, the promoters of the word/faith movement exhort all believers to take the word and claim healings, prosperity, happiness and so on.

Now, I have nothing against any of those things. But when we use God's word in a way where it focuses more on what we can get from God than on how we can serve God and others it has to make one question the validity of such claims and the motivation of their hearts.

Again, if believers have such power from simply speaking the word in faith then why aren't they out in the highways and byways speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ to people, which would presumably assure that everyone who hears will be saved, according to their theology?

You see, one approach promotes self and what we can get from God, while the other approach promotes Christ as He offers people the free gift of eternal life as only He has the power and authority to give this life.

Yes, it is true that Paul says in ROM 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the *gospel*, because *it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."

But Paul never thought for a moment that he could save anyone by merely sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. He didn't have that power, but God did. And as Paul or any of us share the gospel of Jesus Christ it is God who then opens the eyes of the spiritually blind as He gives them eyes to see.

Paul was a witness to the truth just as we are, but not even he could give resurrection life to someone who was dead. He could only herald the truth and trust that God would do the rest as He saw fit.

But there's something else we shouldn't lose sight of when Jesus says in verse 25, "when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

In these words Jesus is actually declaring Himself to be creator. Remember how this world was created?

GEN 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Well, how did He do it? Did He scoop up existing space dust and form it and mold it like some huge snowball? No. Prior to God creating the universe there was nothing. There was no existing matter as evolutionists teach.

What God did was simply speak the universe into existence.

GEN 1:3 "***And God said***, "Let there be light," ***and there was light.***"

GEN 1:6 "***And God said***, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water."

GEN 1:9 "***And God said***, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." ***And it was so.***"

God said. God spoke and it was so. Jesus is saying the same thing when He says that those who hear the voice of the Son of God will live. When He speaks creatively it is so, whether it has to do with the material world or the spiritual.

And by the way, we know that Jesus Himself, the Son of God, created the physical universe we live in. We need only go back to the beginning of this gospel of John.

JOH 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 ***Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***"

The apostle Paul would concur.

EPH 3:8-9 "Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, ***who created all things.***"

Here Paul points out that it is God who created all things. And yet, Paul wrote to the Colossians that Jesus created all things.

COL 1:15-17 "***He is the image of the invisible God***, the firstborn over all creation. 16 ***For by him all things were created***: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; ***all things were created by him and for him***. 17 He is before all things, and ***in him all things hold together***."

The writer of Hebrews also concurs that Jesus Christ is creator of the entire universe that was spoken into existence by God which is recorded in Genesis.

HEB 1:2 "but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and ***through whom he made the universe***."

This is the Almighty Savior we love and serve. This is the King of kings and Lord of lords we can come to so as to know that the resurrection life He gave us, as He called us, is just as real as the universe He spoke into existence. Our life is sure in Him and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

We don't have to fret and fear wondering if we will be with the Lord when we leave this world, either through death or the resurrection. We don't have to go through life as I did as a Roman Catholic never knowing for sure that if I die before I wake I hope the Lord my soul to take.

Was I good enough? Did I do enough by saying the rosary or going to Mass, or saying penance? I never had the assurance. And yet what does the apostle John, who wrote this gospel, say about such things? We need only go to his first epistle.

1JO 5:13 "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God ***so that you may know that you have eternal life***."

After I came to Christ back around the beginning of 1973 this is the very verse to which I held tight. I never had any assurance of salvation before that time, now I did because God said I can. "You who believe in the name of the Son of God may know that you have eternal life."

The same God who spoke the universe into existence is the same God whose voice we hear when He calls out to us as He opens our

eyes and ears and we see and hear like never before because we have been brought from death to life in Christ. Praise God!

JOH 5:26 "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself."

Here again Jesus is telling these Jews that just as the Father, whom they claim as their own God, has life in Himself, Jesus has life in Himself.

Now what does this phrase, life in Himself, mean? As it relates to the Father it simply means that no one gave Him life. No one gave Him existence. Unlike man, He always was. He is eternal, without beginning and without end.

In contrast, man does not have life in himself. He had to get his life from someone else, which is also sustained by someone else. And of course he got his life from God who can give life. But notice that verse 26 says that the Father has granted the Son to have life in himself.

Some have mistaken this to mean that the Son did not have life in Himself and therefore needed the Father to grant Him life. Again, as I said last week the cults will take a verse like this and conclude that Jesus is not God but a creature created by God, at best, to be a lesser god.

That is not what this passage teaches. First we must look at this logically as the Scriptures reveal the Son of God. If the Son of God were created then He could not be God. He could not have been there in the beginning with God as God and He could not have been the creator of the world.

What might throw us here is the word granted, as the Father has granted or given the Son to have life in Himself. A.W. Pink sheds some light on this in his commentary when he says, "the word "given" must be understood figuratively and not literally, in the sense of appointed, not imparted."

If we don't compare Scripture with Scripture then we can come up with all sorts of strange views about God and Jesus Christ. If we take a less clear passage and let that define the more clear passage then we are not rightly handling the word of God.

We looked at just a few passages which cannot be any clearer that God created the heavens and the earth and then we looked at an equal number of passages that the Son of God created the heavens

and the earth. If Jesus Christ is not God He could not be creator. And if the Father has merely granted Him life where there was no life before then the Son of God is necessarily a creature and not God.

So, to make a long story short what verse 26 means when it says that the Father has granted the Son to have life in Himself, He is simply declaring that just as the Father and the Son are one in nature and therefore one in will, they are also one in life. What the Father has the Son has. What the Son has the Father has. Each declare to be God. Each declare to be creator and each declare to have life in Himself.

That is to say, just as the Father has life in Himself and therefore has no beginning or end, the Son has life in Himself and therefore has no beginning or end. What are we told about God as it pertains to Him being eternal, and as it pertains to there being only one God?

ISA 44:6 "This is what the LORD says - Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God."

And yet, what does Jesus Christ say of Himself in the book of Revelation?

REV 22:13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

The same God who is Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty, is the same God who tells us in Revelation that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last.

In other words, both the Father and the Son are the same God, but different persons in the Godhead, just as the Holy Spirit is the same God only a different person in the Godhead; otherwise Isaiah 44:6 and Rev. 22:13 make no sense.

JOH 5:27 "And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man."

This is related to the passage we studied last week.

JOH 5:22 "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son..."

God alone judges the world and the Son of God is just that; very God who will judge the world as the Father has specified. And it is

interesting that in verse 27 of our text it says that it is the Son of Man who judges men.

The reason this is important is that it shows the close connection God has with men that the Father would appoint a man to judge other men, albeit the Son of Man, who is both God and man, Jesus Christ.

This is to show us what God's original intent for man was; that men were to be perfect and sinless before their God. And now the perfect man, who is also God, is able to judge men on a level that speaks to the love God has for men that Jesus Himself will be our judge, or Savior, as we choose self or Christ.

As judge He has all authority to call men to judgment at the last day.

JOH 5:27-29 "And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not be amazed at this, *for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*"

Jesus Christ is given authority as the Son of God to bring life back to men as they are brought from spiritual death to spiritual life in Him. This is the first resurrection of men, and all men's spirits will be reunited to their bodies to live in their resurrected bodies forever in the second and final resurrection.

But notice the stipulation of men's existence in verse 29. "... those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

Here again we must compare Scripture with Scripture or else we can come away with the idea that those who live and whose bodies rise will do so on the basis that they have done good.

This is not teaching a works oriented salvation as we noted in the beginning of this study.

EPH 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."

Rather, Jesus shows us here what the fruit of each group will be. Those who have done good who will rise to live is identifying those who have placed their faith in Christ and now possess the

Spirit of God, who has sealed us for the day of redemption, along with the fruit of the Spirit.

And by this our Lord also instructs us that those who are indwelt with the Spirit ought to be walking with the Lord to the very end as they are found faithful to the end. This does not teach that only those who are walking in a certain measure of holiness will be resurrected to eternal life.

But what is it that ultimately pleases God, making us eligible for the resurrection? It is the shed blood of Christ put to our account which pleases the Father and reconciles us back to Him; not even our good works in the risen Christ can accomplish that.

On the other hand those who practice evil, or those who are outside of Christ, will rise to be condemned. It's an either/or proposition. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart and be saved, or reject Him and suffer the penalty of your own sin forever.

Either way, all people will rise from the grave to receive their reward. If your reward is Christ you will live in your glorified body in His presence forevermore on the new earth among the new heavens. If your reward is the wages of sin, which is death, you will rise to suffer eternally in the second and final death.

For we who are in Christ this is our promise.

REV 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. ***The second death has no power over them***, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

For those who reject Christ this is their promise.

REV 21:8 "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - ***their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur***. This is the second death."

Which do you possess? Which one do you want to possess? The choice is yours. If you've chosen Christ rejoice that you have life, resurrection life, abundant life and live in that life in the power of the Spirit to the glory of God, knowing that we will rise to life in Him.

If you have not chosen Christ this is the time to do it. Repent, and believe on Him now so that you may know that you have eternal life today and forever.