

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 14)
John 5:24 - 29
“Life and Death”**

Introduction

In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John 1:4

As we discussed previously, there can be no dispute as to whether or not Jesus publicly claimed to be equal with God. In fact, the Scriptures are clear that He did. And it is for that reason alone, that the religious leaders of Jerusalem wanted to kill Him. To them He was a blasphemer deserving of execution, but to those who could truly see Him, He was the light of men. Jesus brings light and life where there was once only darkness and death. This is the reason that He came, to seek and save those who are lost. And everyone who believes in Him is passed from death unto life.

The Pharisees, however, simply could not see Him. And they had no excuse for their unbelief, for they too would witness the mighty wonders that He would perform as He went about preaching the kingdom of God. It seems that some people refuse the truth, when it is staring them in the face. God knew the hearts of these wicked men, and He would use them to carry out His plan to rescue the world. To them, the cross was the destruction of someone they viewed as an enemy, but to those who believe, it is the glorious path to life everlasting.

In the **Fifth Chapter of John's Gospel**, we are allowed to “over hear” the dispute that arose between Jesus and the Pharisees. It all started over the miraculous healing of a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda and culminated in an argument over Jesus' authority to heal someone on the Sabbath. The LORD made it perfectly clear to these self-righteous Jews that their man-made rules did not apply to Him. The reason that they did not apply is that He was the Creator of the Sabbath. He explains to them that He is equal in every way to the God that they claimed to worship and adore! He was equal in activity, doing the very work of God The Father. He was equal in awareness, seeing exactly what The Father sees, for He is of one mind with The Father. And also He is equal in Authority with The Father, for He is God.

Make no mistake, the Pharisees knew exactly Who He was claiming to be, but they refused to believe. After Christ tells them these truths to reveal His very nature, He goes on to say that He has the authority over life and death itself! I imagine that this claim really caught their attention. Let that sink in for a moment: Jesus is in charge of who lives and who dies. Why? Because He is the very source of life. Let us revisit John's opening statement in **Chapter One** that we read earlier:

In Him was LIFE, and that life was the light of men.

John 1:4

Jesus continued to present His case before these self-righteous unbelievers. And two separate times He says to them **“truly, truly, I say to you..”** The words that He actually uses here are “*Amen and Amen*”, which is a way of emphatically stressing the importance of what He was saying. And what was He saying that was so very important? That He has full authority over life and death. Jesus is the ultimate judge of those who will stand before God. In Him is life. He is the supreme court justice of the universe. There is no appeal beyond His ruling.

As He explains this truth to the religious leaders of Israel, He even breaks down exactly the kind of decisions that He will hand down from His court. Some will be given life, and others will be sentenced to death. And the decision will be made based not upon religious works, but by whether or not you have believed in The Son of God. Let us now look to the warnings of Christ for those who do not believe. He has been given all authority over the resurrection of the dead. And in this passage we see three separate “types” as it were, of resurrection: *The Resurrection of The Spirit, The Resurrection of Life, and The Resurrection of Condemnation*. Please allow me to explain.

Resurrection of Spirit (vs. 24-25)

“Truly I tell you, anyone who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of The Son of God, and those who hear will live.” **John 5:24-25**

Before we begin our discussion of the three “types” of resurrection discussed in this passage. It is vital that we understand that without the most important resurrection of all, none of these would even be possible. The resurrection to which I am referring is that of Christ's resurrection after His atoning death upon Calvary's cross. Without it, there would be no hope for any other resurrection of the dead. Or as Paul has so eloquently stated:

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, “There is no resurrection of the dead?” If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that He raised up Christ — Whom He did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. **1 Corinthians 15:12-17**

So there it is, without the resurrection of Christ, nothing else really matters. But since God did in fact raise Christ from the dead, we too have to hope of resurrection! Christ's resurrection proves His own claim that in Him IS LIFE (**John 1:4; 5:26**). He is its source. And He, as Paul says, is the “Firstfruits” of the resurrection to come.

But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **1 Corinthians 15:20**

It is very important for us Gentiles to comprehend this verse. In Jewish faith, the very first sheaf of grain that sprouted in the spring was lifted up to the heavens and dedicated to God. It was a way of thanking God The Father, for the harvest that was yet to come. Jesus was offered up to God as the “firstfruits” of the resurrection; meaning that because of His resurrection, there is the guarantee of the coming harvest. In other words, He was the first of many more to come! Because He rose, we will rise!

Now we are ready to discuss what Jesus was saying to the Pharisees that day about the different types of resurrection. First, He speaks of a “spiritual resurrection”. Listen carefully to His words:

“Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is NOW HERE, when the dead will hear the voice on The Son of God, and those who hear will live.” **John 5:25** (emphasis added)

Now, we know that the physical resurrection of the dead has not yet taken place. We are told in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians that this will occur at the rapture of the Church, when Christ calls us to meet Him in the clouds (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). So why does Jesus tell the Pharisees that “an hour is coming and is now here?” Because in this portion of His argument He is speaking about a “spiritual resurrection”. For you see, when we are lost in our sins, we are dead to the things of God. But when we believe, we are made alive in Christ.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshy desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. BUT GOD, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!” **Ephesians 2:1-5**

I just LOVE that passage! It tells me that I was dead in my sins, but when I believed the Word of God, I became alive in Christ Jesus. This is exactly what Jesus was explaining to the Pharisees that day, when He said that those who would believe His words would pass from death unto life. We who believe are now living in resurrection power, knowing God and being made aware of His nature and His ways. We no longer live in the darkened tombs of our sin, but have been resurrected to live in His light! That reality, as Jesus says, "is now here".

Just as the crippled man needed to heed the words of Jesus in order to be healed, we must heed His words in order to experience this "spiritual resurrection". It is called being "born again". And it only comes by hearing The Word.

"Truly I tell you, anyone who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life."

John 5:24

Resurrection of Life (vs. 26-29a)

"For just as The Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to The Son to have life in Himself. And He has granted Him the right to pass judgement, because He is The Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come out — those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life...."

John 5:26-29a

Not only have those who believe in Jesus been resurrected from spiritual death into life in the "here and now", but those who place their faith in Him also have the guarantee of the resurrection of life. We will be raised from the dead to live forever with Him, at the rapture of the Church. It is this physical bodily resurrection that Jesus is speaking about in **verses 26-29a**. And as He plainly states in this passage, He has been granted full authority to grant this resurrection to those who have placed their belief in Him, for He is the source of life.

"For just as The Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to The Son to have life in Himself."

John 5:26

Jesus has the absolute authority to decide who will have everlasting life, and who will not. And that judgement will be predicated on whether or not a person believes in Him. The Father has given the right of this judgment to The Son, "because He is the Son of Man". This is a title for the Messiah, and it is found in the book of Daniel. He has every right to judge men, because He **became** one! And lived a sinless life as a man.

I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached The Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13-14

When Jesus returns for His Bride, The Church, He will ***"...descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet The LORD in the air, and so we will always be with The LORD."*** (1 Thessalonians 4:16b-17). This is the physical resurrection of the righteous who are found in Christ.

During the Tribulation period, many will refuse to worship The Beast, who is also called The Antichrist. They will instead turn to Christ for salvation and be martyred for their faith (**Revelation 7:9-17**). These believers, who come out of the Great Tribulation, will also be raised from the dead to receive everlasting life (**Revelation 20:4**). So these two events represent the physical bodily resurrection of the saints to receive everlasting life. Those who place their faith in Jesus are guaranteed to take part in this resurrection.

Resurrection of Condemnation (vs. 29b)

“...but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

John 5:29b

But sadly, not everyone will receive either the spiritual resurrection, nor the physical resurrection into everlasting life. Those who reject the word of God and disregard the opportunity to believe in Jesus and be saved will experience a different type of resurrection. It is a resurrection of the eternally condemned. These non-believing souls will be resurrected at the end of Christ's millennial kingdom to stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment.

Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. **Revelation 20:11-15**

Can I share with you a wonderful message of hope today? If you will place your faith in Christ Jesus for salvation, you will be judged according to His righteousness, and you will not be condemned, when you stand before Almighty God. This is why the gospel is called, the “good news”. We have not been appointed to suffer God's wrath (**1 Thessalonians 5:9**).

But sadly, if you reject The Son of God, then the wrath of God remains upon you (**John 3:36**). And you will not be judged by the good works of Christ Jesus, but instead you will be judged based upon your own works. *The Bible* tells us that the very best we can do is as filthy rags before The LORD (**Isaiah 64:6**). So when you are judged by your own works, you will be condemned to spend an eternity in hell. So why not place your faith in Christ Jesus today? For just as the lame man, who was unable to heal himself at the pool of Bethesda, you cannot “fix yourself” before God. He heard the word of Jesus and was healed. We too must hear the word of The LORD, in order to be made whole. So come to Jesus. Come to Jesus... and live.

And let those living today in resurrection power all say... **TRUTH!!!**