

Article of the Month
June, 2016

John 5:28, 29
Its In-depth Meanings

These two verses have had many questions posed regarding their meaning. It is important that we understand Jesus' intentions in these words. First, two translations will suffice to see what is involved:

KJV: Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their 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.

Before giving a second translation, it is important to note that "done" is used twice in this passage. It shouldn't be. The two uses of "done" are from two different Greek words. We will see shortly why this is important.

Additionally, a quick review of the meaning of the Greek word "resurrection" (anastasis) is also important. It does not mean awakening. It means a re-standing in the sense of a brand new acceptable relationship with God. Awakening is covered in Jesus' words, "shall come forth." Resurrection is an entirely different concept.

A SECOND TRANSLATION: (We were going to supply here the NAS or any one of a number of modern careful translations. However, we are, instead, supplying a translation which stresses the nuances of the Greek text):

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all who are in God's memory shall hear his (Jesus') voice and shall come forth (i.e., awaken): those who did THE good to a life-attained-re-standing; those who continued to practice THE evil, to a re-standing determined by a judgment process.

What do we see here? First of all, Jesus is dividing resurrection (a re-standing with God) into two groups. We must *identify* these two groups. The first group is they who will awaken with life attained. In other words, their resurrection process will be finished when they awaken. They will no longer be subject to judgment. They will have at that point attained a perfected relationship with God. Who are these?

This first group is made up of those who, during this Gospel Age, have had a successful relationship with God because they have been "begotten of the spirit." In other words, it is those whom Paul calls "new creatures in Christ Jesus." We frequently refer to these as "The Church," or the "disciples," or the "saints." This group is all who have been called by God, have accepted that call, and have been begotten of the spirit since Pentecost.

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The Apostle John makes remarks about this group that are very significant in helping us understand John 5. In I John 3:9, we read:

No one who is begotten of God PRACTICES sin, because His [God's] seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.

It might be wise to stop for a moment to caution ourselves about these words. When John says "he cannot sin," he is not stating that a true Christian *does not sin*. John is making a distinction that Paul makes in Romans when Paul says that it is his FLESH that sins, but that his flesh IS NOT HE! — not his "new creature." What both Apostles mean is that this "new creature," begotten of the spirit, is a NEW MINDSET that cannot consent to the practice of sin in himself — despite the fact that his flesh *does* continue to sin. As long as the new mind never consents to the sin, all is well in God's sight. Therefore, a Christian will not "practice" sin (continue in it willingly) "because His (God's) seed (begettal) *abides* in him (lives *inside of him* as a "new creature" — abhorring what he sees in himself.)

Please note that the word "practices" in this passage is the second word translated "done" in the KJV version of John 5:29. In other words, the "begotten" class is EXEMPT from those who have "done (practiced) THE evil." This is *because* their new mindset will never consent to such a "practice." They are, therefore, a part of them who have "done THE good" because the "new creature" will not abide doing otherwise. "Done" in this last phrase means that they have taken an action that has removed them from the rest of the world. (See Romans 8:1.) They have consecrated themselves to God, resulting in spirit-begettal. THAT is THE good. It does not refer to their being better than others in terms of being exempt from sinning.

But we must be very careful here. These verses (John 5) are NOT ABOUT WORKS. They are about the classification of mankind into two groups: the FIRST group is EXEMPT from the "practice" of sin. The SECOND group has never REMOVED itself from the "practice" of sin into which it was born. They cannot remove themselves from sin EVEN WHEN THEY WISH TO! Why is this? It is because the second group is the entirety of mankind who either have never been called by God or have never answered that call. Thus they continue in the sin which is common to all men. They "*practice*" THE evil that is born into them. This is true even if they are *committed to righteousness*. (See Romans 8:7.) They remain purely "human" — not "new creatures." **This does not condemn them to eternal misery!** It simply puts off their resurrection process until the Millennial Age — the reign of Christ. At THAT time, they come forth into the process of being resurrected by being judged on their progress toward a new relationship with God. Hence, it is (as the NAS calls it) a resurrection of judgement. "New Creatures" are experiencing the process of resurrection in this lifetime. Now is the period of judgement for Christians only. The rest of humanity experiences it later. Thus we have the two classes to which Jesus refers — the TWO RESURRECTIONS.

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This is a good place to remark on the absurdity of the KJV translation's statement: "a resurrection of damnation." Since resurrection *means* a new and acceptable relationship to God, *how can there be* a resurrection to *damnation*? THAT would not be a re-standing at all. It would be a RE-FALLING! "Resurrection of damnation" is a non-sequitur or an oxymoron. The Greek word is JUDGEMENT, not damnation!

Perhaps the easiest way to summarize all of the above information is to give a paraphrase of John 5:28, 29. While this will be WORDY, it does not go beyond the intent of Jesus' words. The ideas are inherent in the text itself and in its comparison to I John 3:

ALL WHO ARE IN GOD'S MEMORY WILL COME FORTH TO FIND
A RE-STANDING WITH GOD BY ONE OF TWO PROCESSES:

(1) Those who actually DID "**THE GOOD**" because they became New Creatures and, therefore, did not consent to the practice of sin in themselves, will awaken to find their resurrection process *completed*. Thus they will have a "LIFE-ATTAINED-RESURRECTION."

(2) Those who continued under the condemnation in Adam and, therefore, continued PRACTICING "**THE EVIL**" which is inherent in their flesh (and which they could not escape — even with a dedication to righteousness), will awaken to the "RESURRECTION-BY-THE-JUDGING-PROCESS" of the Millennial Age.
