

## John 5:24-29 Notes

*By Ed Stevens - February 13, 2014*

**[QUESTION 1]** Jn. 5:25-29 "and now is" -- Here Jesus tells of the dead who will hear the voice of the Son of Man and live. We know He isn't just talking about spiritually dead people, since He uses the words "all who are in the tombs." I understand why Jesus said, "an hour is coming," but why did He say "and now is?" Are the dead who hear "now" the martyrs of Revelation 20:4? Or, are they the ones raised during the ministry of Jesus (i.e. Lazarus)? If the dead were ALREADY hearing the voice of the Son of Man, does that mean that John 5:25-29 can't be used as evidence that Jesus preached to those in Hades AFTER His crucifixion? - Derek Truesdale

**[QUESTION 2]** I am hoping you could help me with this particular passage: John 5:28 Marvel not at this; for the 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. (NASB) How does the full preterist position deal with this passage? Jesus seems to be referring to the tombs, or the graves, and the physically dead bodies in them. He does not say in verse 28 that "the souls in Hades" will hear His voice, but "all" in the physical "tombs" will hear. I am fully aware of all the passages that support the full preterist view of the resurrection and it's imminency. But John 5:28 seems to contradict the FP view of a non-physical resurrection. Can a dead corpse hear the voice of Christ? Lazarus did. So the dispensationalist will also say the physically dead (in the TOMBS) will hear the voice as per John 5:28. I had convinced myself that Jesus must have been referring to Hades when He mentioned the tombs. But I struggle to prove it scripturally. Jesus said the dead in the TOMBS would hear His voice, implying a physical resurrection. If one was to say that Jesus was actually referring to Hades when He said "tombs", what scriptural support or companion texts can be used to prove this? I struggle with the terminology Jesus is using in verse 28, and it's physical suggestiveness. - Mike Rodgers

**[QUESTION 3]** I have been more and more convinced that the preterist perspective is correct. I would be interested in what you think was meant in John 5:28-29. "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; that that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." It sounds as if He was predicting a specific day of judgment for all of mankind. Can you help me here? -- Darryl Trapp

**[QUESTION 4]** I am working through some passages that are used by non-Preterist theologians against Preterists. Just wanted to know about John 5:28-29. "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment". Jesus seems to be saying that people will rise at the resurrection from the tomb that they were placed. It is a completely different Greek word (mnēmeion) than Hades. How does this fit with Preterism? -- David Johnston

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**[REPLY FROM ED]** First, a little bit about the context: This chapter of John 5 records some of Jesus' early teaching right after his baptism in Judea and his return to Galilee, and then his trip to Jerusalem for one of the feasts. It was on this occasion that he healed the sick man at the pool of Bethesda. In the context, the Jews were questioning Jesus about this miracle performed on the Sabbath. Jesus was defending His right to "work" on the Sabbath, since He was doing the good kind of "works" (healing and resurrecting), the same kind of "works" that the Father does every day of the week including the Sabbath. There is no law against doing good on the Sabbath, especially if the "Lord of the Sabbath" is the one who is doing it!

Jesus is affirming things here about WHO He is and WHAT He will ultimately accomplish (as Son of God and Son of Man). Because of this whole-ministry perspective being in view here (from first coming to second coming), there is interpretative justification for suggesting that Jesus is talking about events relating to His ministry and its immediate consequences during the next three years leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection, as well as events that He will accomplish at His Parousia. He very definitely seems to have in mind the final resurrection/judgment event at His Parousia.

Note that the Resurrection-Judgment text of **Rev 20** does not mention tombs, but it does mention souls being raised out of Hades with a **judgment** afterwards. And it is crystal clear that both texts (John 5:28-29 and Rev 20) are talking about the same **JUDGMENT** event that occurred at the Parousia, so therefore John 5:28-29 must also be talking about the same **RESURRECTION** event that Rev 20 is talking about. That means that we need to take a closer look at why Jesus referred to the "tombs" in Jn 5:28-29.

Outside of the Gospels, the word "tomb" is only used one other time in Acts 13:29, which refers to Christ's body being put in a tomb. This is NOT what we would expect to find if, in fact, the final resurrection was supposed to be "bodies out of the graves" (BOG). This lack of usage in the rest of the NT suggests that John 5's usage may be using the phrase "all who are in the tombs" as shorthand or a *metonymy* referring to "all [the dead in Hades] whose [bodies] are in the tombs." A *metonymy*, according to Wikipedia, is a figure of speech in which an attribute of something is used to stand for the thing itself, e.g. "laurels" when it stands for "glory" or "brass" when it stands for "military officers." If that is the sense in which Jesus used the phrase "all who are in the tombs" here, then it is not teaching a "bodies out of the graves" (BOG) resurrection at all, but rather simply referring to the resurrection of those souls in Hades "whose bodies were in the tombs" (i.e., those who had already physically died). I would recommend checking the usage of the Greek word for "tomb" in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT) and in secular Greek outside the Bible. That might discover some similar usages to how Christ is using this word here.

In John 5:28, Jesus seems to be talking about those who had **died physically**, whose bodies were in the tombs, and whose souls or spirits were in Hades. Jesus referred to them as "ALL who are in the tombs" in order to contrast with those he had mentioned in verses 24-25 who were physically alive but **spiritually dead**. This is Jesus' way of distinguishing between the **living folks** being given eternal life (vv. 24-25) and the **physically dead** folks being raised out of Hades at the Parousia for judgment. Rev 20 shows that the souls-spirits had to be raised out of Hades before the judgment could take place, so the resurrection of souls-spirits out of Hades is necessarily implied in John 5:28-29 as well. Otherwise we would have a contradiction with Rev 20. The hour was coming when all those souls-spirits in the UNSEEN Hadean realm would be raised out of Hades and judged in the UNSEEN realm. This occurred at AD 70. Jesus speaks of them as being those whose bodies were already in the tombs, implying that they were **physically dead** folks, and NOT physically alive folks hearing the gospel and being made **alive spiritually** (like he had just mentioned in verses 24-25).

It may very well be that we have **three different resurrections** being referred to here in this context: **(1) John 5:24** - living folks believing in Christ and receiving eternal life; **(2) John 5:25** - the righteous dead firstfruits in Hades heard Christ's voice when he descended into Hades at His death and announced salvation to them and they came back out of there with Christ when He was raised in Mt 27:52f; **(3) John 5:28-29** - the final resurrection and judgment when the rest of the physically dead were raised out of Hades and judged (i.e., all whose bodies were still in the tombs, in contrast to those who had already been raised at Jesus' resurrection). This resurrection out of Hades and judgment of the rest of the dead occurred at the Parousia in AD 70. John 5:28-29 is very similar to both Daniel 12:2 and Rev 20 in its description of this resurrection and judgment. All three of these texts seem to be pointing directly at AD 70.

Some others have applied this text to the "first resurrection" that is mentioned in Rev. 20:4 and which occurred historically in Matt. 27:52-53. Those who were raised out of their tombs at the time of Jesus' resurrection were those who heard Jesus' voice in Hades and came forth with Him out of Hades. The phrase "and now is" would then be a reference to his earthly ministry (not later at AD 70). That means Jesus was saying that this is an event that will be fulfilled in connection with his earthly ministry when He descended into Hades at His death and preached to the souls-spirits there, and then brought them back out with Him when He arose out of Hades. However, this does not fit the terms of John 5:28-29 which seem to indicate that "ALL would come forth," not just some like we see in Mt 27:52f. And the judgment mentioned here is the final judgment, which did NOT occur at the time of Jesus' resurrection. This means that John 5:29-29 has to be referring to the final judgment at AD 70, the same resurrection that was predicted in Daniel 12:2 and described in Rev 20.

To sum up, John 5:28-29 seems to be referring to those who had died physically, whose bodies (**not souls**) were in the tombs, in contrast to the spiritually dead that he had just talked about in the previous verses. The **souls** of these physically dead folks were in Hades. The hour was coming when those disembodied **souls** in the UNSEEN Hadean realm would be raised out of Hades and judged in the UNSEEN realm (see Rev 20).

This occurred at AD 70. It is not talking about bodies being raised out of the tombs. It is merely identifying what kind of “dead ones” he is talking about (i.e., the physically dead whose bodies were in the tombs, NOT the spiritually dead who were being born again by accepting the gospel message).