

Ultimate Fairness

Key Verse: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*”
—John 5:24

Selected Scripture:
John 5:19-29

THE FIRST TEN VERSES OF the fifth chapter of John recount the occasion when the Lord healed a sick man on the Sabbath—a day in which no work was permitted under the Law. Seeking anything with which they could charge the Lord, the authorities seized upon this technical breach of the letter of the Law chastising him for performing his miracle on the wrong day of the week. The Lord responded, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”

(John 5:17, *New International Version*) The authorities became even more outraged. “The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” (vs. 18) In verses 19 through 23, the Lord explained that his statement was meant to emphasize he was at one with God. It was God, therefore, who healed the sick man. It was God who chose the Sabbath upon which to do it. Who among them would question God’s choice?

The Lord expanded the subject, from the power of God to heal the sick, to the power of God to translate the dead to life, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (vs. 24) Those to whom he was speaking were believers of the Gospel Age who, upon his death and resurrection, have his precious blood applied on their behalf that they may be justified thereby, sanctified thereafter, and, upon proving faithful, glorified.

The Lord, speaking of himself as the Son of man, reveals that the fairness of God is not limited to the godly, “Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice.” (vs. 28, *Revised Standard Version*) The Lord makes clear that all will be brought forth from the grave. He also makes clear that there will be two resurrections, “Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to a resurrection of judgment.” (vs. 29, *RSV*) The first resurrection is for all those whom the Lord had previously spoken of in verse 24, viz., the believers of the Gospel Age. Of these it is said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev 20:6) Thus is the ultimate fairness of God revealed.

All mankind is to be brought forth from the grave, and given the opportunity of gaining everlasting life on earth. Christ and his disciples, whom during the Gospel Age the world has resisted, persecuted and killed, will, for the thousand years of the Millennial Age, help mankind to turn its heart from sin and iniquity to the spirit of righteousness. (Rev. 20:4) Having turned from sin and having been returned to perfection and at-one-ment with God, mankind will be offered everlasting life by Christ and his church characterized as the Spirit and the bride in the Book of Revelation. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. 22:17 ■