

An Hour Is Coming – John 5:25-29

After celebrating our 20th anniversary as a church the past few weeks, we're returning to the book of John this morning. The basis for our series, *That You May Believe*. Believe and live. It comes straight from chapter 20 where John says – [30] *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ [our Savior], the Son of God [God in the flesh], and that by believing you may have life in his name.* (ESV) That you may believe, and have life. It's the purpose of the book and the purpose of our series.

And the passage this morning is no different. John 5:25–29.

Jesus is speaking, and says – [25] *“Truly, truly, I say to 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. [26] For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. [27] And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. [28] Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice [29] and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.* (ESV)

This is about as concise a summary of end times theology as you'll find in all the Bible. Especially as it relates to us. What happens to *us* at the end of the age. And the point Jesus makes, is that it's coming. V25 – *Truly, truly, I say to you* [an expression of solemn affirmation, and authority, and importance; like grabbing somebody by the shoulders and saying, “You gotta get this!”] *Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming* (25). Not necessarily a literal hour, but a designated time.

And then he says it again in v28 – *Do not marvel at this* [don't be surprised; don't be shocked], *for an hour is coming*. It's coming, and it's certain. That's the point.

And within it, he describes several events associated with that hour, and one very important truth for today. 5 events and one truth. Let me see if I can sort it out, to make sure you believe.

The first event is the return of Christ. An hour is coming . . .

When Jesus returns (John 14:3)

It's not found here, at least not explicitly, but it sure is elsewhere in John. Jesus would leave, and sometime later return, to do all that he says here. That's the implication.

But they didn't even know he was leaving at this point. It would be another year and a half until he even *mentions* his departure. A veiled reference in John 7:33 – *I am going to him who sent me*. Which to them, could mean he was going back to Nazareth. Or Bethlehem. But in chapter 8, he gets more explicit. *I am going away*. John 8:21.

But even then, there's no mention of his return. Not until John 14:3 about 6 months after *that*; on the night of his betrayal. When Jesus said – *If I go . . . I will come again*. He closes the loop. I'm going away, and I'll return.

So while it's not explicit *here*, in chapter 5, it sure is *there*, in chapter 14. Not to mention the rest of the New Testament. An hour is coming when Jesus returns.

And when he does, he'll speak. An hour is coming . . .

When Jesus speaks (v25, 28)

That's the second event. And it *is* explicit. Saying in v25 – *the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God*. Referring to himself. And again in v28 – *an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice*. Because he's speaking.

It's the very thing the Apostle Paul said about 20 years later in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – *the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command*. A loud instruction. To do what? Well, based on John 5, to tell the dead to come forth; to come out of the grave. Because that's what they do. *All who are in the tombs [v29] will hear his voice and come out*. Just like he said to Lazarus in chapter 11. *Lazarus, come out*. (John 11:43)

So Jesus is not only going to return, but speak. Calling forth the dead. *All* the dead. Believers and unbelievers alike. V28b – *All who are in the tombs will hear his voice*. *All* who are dead will hear him speak. No more ignoring him and no more rejecting him. Consciously *or* subconsciously. Intentionally *or* unintentionally. Distraction won't prevent it. Unbelief won't prevent it. The devil won't prevent it. Not even death will prevent people from hearing the voice of Jesus.

What in the world? Do you hear that? What kind of a voice is heard by the dead? The same voice that created the universe and was heard by everything (Gen 1). The same voice that spoke from a bush and was heard in the desert (Exodus 3). The same voice that whispered on a mountain and was heard in a cave (1 Kings 19:9-18). The same voice that spoke at a baptism and heard over the water (Mt 3:17). The same voice that thundered in Jerusalem and was heard by the people (John 12:28-29). And the same voice that roared in a dream and was heard by John (Rev 1:15).

No wonder the dead will hear. An hour is coming.

Third, an hour is coming . . .

When the dead are raised (v28b-29a)

V28 – *Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice [29] and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment*. An hour is coming, when the dead, good and bad, believer *and* unbeliever, are raised to life. Not the same kind of life, but life.

Nor are they raised at the same time. It might seem so based solely on *this* passage, but when you take other Scriptures into account, the resurrections are separate. Not that Jesus mis-spoke, but that he's summarizing the lesser things, the timing, to emphasize the greater things, the consequences. The results.

But I don't want you to be confused, so let me try to make it clear. An hour is coming when *all* the dead are raised, but **first believers**. *Those who have done good* as Jesus says in v29. Not that our resurrection to life is based on our good works, but on our belief in Jesus as *shown* by our good works. It *has* to mean that, otherwise it would directly contradict a host of other Scriptures. Scriptures that clearly say we are saved by grace through faith. So *those who have done good* refers to believers.

And they're raised first. (**1 Thess 4:16**) *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet*

of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. The dead in Christ meaning those in union with him. Those who are saved. Those who believe in him.

First believers, **then unbelievers**. Indicated by Revelation 20. Where the Apostle John, recording his vision of the end times, says that believers *came to life* [at Christ's return] *and reigned with [him] for a thousand years*. And then he says in v5 – *The rest of the dead [unbelievers] did not come to life until the thousand years were ended*.

So an hour is coming when the dead are raised, believers *and* unbelievers, but they're **separated by a thousand years**. The Millennium. And that's about it of what we know about the timing. Especially for unbelievers. Because once again, the emphasis is on the result. The result of being raised.

Which leads to the fourth event. An hour is coming . . .

When believers are blessed (v26,29b)

That's the first result. First part of v29 – *Those who have done good* [believers; will come out of the grave] *to the resurrection of life*. The blessing of *all* blessings. The likes of which God reveals over and over in the Bible, in a variety of different ways. Let me give you five. The first is a glorified body.

An hour is coming when believers will be raised and blessed **with a glorified body**. A body just like Jesus. 1 John 3:2 – *When he appears we shall be like him* [speaking to believers], *because we shall see him as he is*. No longer dimly, but face to face (1 Cor 13:12). **(1 Cor 15:52b-53)** *For the trumpet will sound [1 Cor 15], and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. [53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality* [the ability to live forever]. Must. Because it's the only way to be like him. An hour is coming.

Second, believers are blessed with a glorified body **to live a glorified life**. No more death, no more pain, no more crying, no more shame (Rev 21:4). No more sin and no more sinners. No more toil and no more thorns. No more evil and no more hate. Only good. Only peace. Only joy. Only blessing. An hour is coming.

Third, we're going to be blessed to live a glorified life **in a glorified city**. The New Jerusalem. Referring to both a place and a community (Rev 21:9-10). The church. A glorified city of such stunning beauty it defies description. *Coming down out of heaven from God* [Rev 21], *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel* (11). Indescribable. A city with no sun or moon, *for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb* (Rev 21:23). What a blessing.

Fourth, is a glorified life **on a glorified earth**. *For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away* John says. Rev 21:1. All things will be new (Rev 21:5). All. Nothing will be old and nothing will decay. Nothing will break down and nothing will deteriorate. No longer will the earth yield itself to the plow grudgingly, but willingly. The *stain* of sin will be gone, and the *curse* of sin along with it. An hour is coming.

And fifth, the blessing will last **forever and ever**. Rev 22:5 – [God's people] *will reign forever and ever*. It's coming. Blessing upon blessing. *The resurrection of life*. Life to the full and life forever.

You know why? Because Jesus has life to give. V26. *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself*. That's not to say he was ever without it at some point in eternity past, but to emphasize the fact that even in the *flesh* Jesus has it. *Life in himself* and life to give. That's the implication. Like he said in v21 – *For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will*. Not sparingly, but abundantly. Not temporarily, but eternally. An hour is coming when believers are blessed.

But an hour is also coming . . .

When unbelievers are judged (v27,29c)

When all who are in the tombs will come out, v29, including *those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment*. Evil, as in those who *continue* in their sin while alive. And go to the grave with it. Unrepentant and unforgiven. The exact opposite of what it means to have *done good*. Unbelievers through and through.

And the point is, they're going to be judged. Condemned. Punished. The very thing God the Father has given Jesus the *authority* to do. V27 – *he has given him authority to execute judgment* [carry out condemnation], *because he is the Son of Man*. The Messiah. The appointed, anointed, and promised one of old. The one of divine origin (Daniel 7:13-14). The one who will rule and reign over all the earth someday. In other words, Jesus has the power and *authority* to judge unbelievers, v27; and he will, v29.

Which means, unbelievers will rise **to forever suffer**. To forever agonize. Thrown into the lake of fire to suffer constant, unrelenting torment (Rev 20:15). Like it says in Rev 14:11 – *The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night*. An hour is coming.

And we know the suffering is not only emotional and spiritual, but *physical*. Emotional, because hell is dark and hate-filled; spiritual, because everyone is separated from God and all common grace; and physical, because the *bodies* of unbelievers are raised. That's what resurrection *means*, and that's the implication when contrasted with the physical resurrection of *believers*. Unbelievers it seems, will be raised with physical bodies, to physically suffer in a lake of fire.

What exactly those bodies look like, we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us. It just implies that they're unglorified and last forever, for the sole purpose of suffering. Perpetually dying but never ceasing to exist. An hour is coming when unbelievers are judged.

And the time is now to decide your fate (v25-26)

At this hour. V25 – *“Truly, truly, I say to 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. [26] For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself*. Not just for later, but right now. That's what it says. V25 – *An hour is coming, and is now here*. Right now.

Which must mean that *the dead* in v25 refers to both the physical *and* spiritual dead. Otherwise, how could Jesus say that the hour is *now here* when the dead will hear and live? We haven't seen a mass resurrection in the last 2000 years. Though he could have been thinking of Lazarus. Physically raising *him* from the dead; just two years later.

Foreshadowing what's to come at the *end* of the age. That kind of fits his statement in v25.

But that can't be *all* of what Jesus has in mind, because "the dead" in v25 is a *group*. It doesn't say "an hour is coming and is now here when *a* dead person will hear and live," but *the dead* will hear and live. And since there were only a few in the apostolic age who were resurrected, far from *all* who have done good and believe, *the dead* must predominantly refer to those who are *spiritually* dead. Dead in their trespasses and sin.

And it makes sense. *An hour is coming, and is now here* [Jesus said; right now], *when the dead* [mostly the spiritually dead] *will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live*. Live spiritually. And later, physically.

Which means, the time to decide your fate is now. What you hear and believe *now* determines your future later. If you hear and heed his call now, you'll live; forever blessed. If you don't, if you ignore him and disbelieve, you'll die; forever cursed.

And you have no idea how long the window of opportunity, the window of "now," will remain open. Because you might die or Jesus might return, closing it for good. With no second chance, no appeal, no purgatory, or any other figment of your imagination. None of those things are biblical.

The time is now to decide your fate. The opportunity is now to determine your future. Whether you'll hear and live at the return of Christ, or hear and suffer.

If you're hearing the call of Jesus as I speak, and you've never responded; you've never believed, and repented, and entrusted your life to him; now's the time. Pray with me, will you? Right where you sit.

Prayer – "Lord Jesus, I hear you. I hear you, and I believe. I believe you died for my sin, and rose again for my life. Please forgive me of my sin, and save me from the consequences. Come into my life and help me. I want to live forever, and I want to live for you."

Father, bless and keep those who just prayed. Affirm them and protect them. And give them an overwhelming desire to connect with us. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

You Are Loved