

Right Division Soundbites # 13

Preeminence on Earth / Preeminence in Heavenly Places

Years ago a list of contrasts, prepared by a 'mid-Acts' dean, was made available for distribution. It was titled 'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth', and suggested as soundbites to create teaching situations. There were 26 separate issues listed. We plan to deal with one topic on Sunday mornings.

For your information, the titles and verses (listed directly below in the box) are exactly as they appear on the dean's chart.

13. The Goal: The God of Heaven to setup the kingdom of Heaven on the Earth; Jesus Christ to have the **preeminence on the earth**, Deut 11:21, Dan 2:44, Matt 25:34

The Goal: To form a spiritual body of believers perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ thru whom Jesus Christ will have the **preeminence in the heavenly places**, Rom 8:29, Col 1:16

The dean, the Cunning Royal Jester, the Jokers, and the 'mid-Acts-ers' commonly use this first verse as the dean's point to say that one day God will set up His (now heavenly) kingdom on the earth, ruled by Jesus Christ even though the verse does NOT say, nor even imply, anything like that. This is a typical example of 'mid-Acts' scripture manipulation:

Deut 11:21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, **as the days of heaven upon the earth.**

The 2nd verse referenced by the dean does teach that the God of Heaven will establish His eternal kingdom on earth, although it does not mention of Jesus Christ:

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall **the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and **it shall stand for ever.**

The 3rd verse used by the dean is **Matt 25:34** however, we will back up to verse 31 for the context, which shows that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man will be the King on the throne in the Father's kingdom when He comes in glory to judge both the blessed and the cursed (Gen 12:3):

Matt 25:31-34 **When the Son of man shall come in his glory,**
and all the holy angels with him,
then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
32 And before him shall be gathered all nations:
and he shall **separate** them one from another,
as a shepherd **divideth** his sheep from the goats:
33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
34 **Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, (His sheep)**
Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared
for you from the foundation of the world:

Then Christ will divide the saved from the unsaved. He will both reward the faithful and punish the wicked (also Rev 20:11-15):

Matt 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, (the goats)
Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,
prepared for the devil and his angels:

As we read this next verse, notice that the righteous will have eternal life:

Matt 25:46 And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment:**
but the righteous into life eternal.

The dean's other side of the chart says that God's goal is to form a 'spiritual body of believers'. However, to inherit everlasting life (even on this left side of his chart) is not just 'physical' life but 'spiritual' life.

Jesus taught this truth of 'spiritual life' to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

John 3:5-8 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh;
 and **that which is born (Greek: <gennao>)** **of the Spirit is spirit.**

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,
 but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:
 so is every one that is **born (Greek: <gennao>)** **of the Spirit.**

Paul taught this same truth ... comparing 'fleshly' birth with 'spiritual' birth:

Gal 4:29-31 But as then
 he **that was born (Greek: <gennao>)** **after the flesh**
 persecuted him **that was born after the Spirit,** even so *it is* now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture?

Cast out the bondwoman and her son: ('physical' Israel)
 for the son of the bondwoman ('physical' Israel) shall **not be heir**
 with the son of the freewoman ('spiritual' Israel).

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman,
 but of the free ('Spiritual' Israel
 includes US Gentiles who believe. WE are **fellow-heirs** [Eph 3:6] and
 share **inheritance** AMONG them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ
 [Acts 20:32, 26:18]).

Before we move to the right side of the dean's chart that he presents as
 a 'contrast' let's look at some other verses he did not consider.

The chapter of **Matt 25** matches John's account of **the Revelation of
 Jesus Christ** (Rev 1:1) at the last trump when the dead are raised (like
 1 Cor 15:51-52). The righteous will be worthy; the evil will be destroyed:

Rev 11:15-18 And **the seventh angel sounded;** (Rev 8:2,6)
 and there were great voices in heaven, saying,
The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord,
and of his Christ;
and he shall reign for ever and ever.

(Rev 11:) 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
which art, and wast, and art to come;

because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast **reigned**.

18 • And the nations were angry,

• and thy wrath is come,

• and **the time of the dead, that they should be judged,**

• and that thou shouldest **give reward**

• unto thy servants the prophets,

• and to the saints,

• and them that fear thy name, small and great;

• and shouldest **destroy** them which destroy the earth.

The dean did not even mention the message God sent to Mary, when the angel Gabriel told her that her Son would be **the Everlasting King**:

Luke 1:30-33 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt **call his name JESUS**.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall **give unto him the throne** of his father David:

33 And **he shall reign** over the house of Jacob **for ever**; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end**.

Peter testified that David also knew and wrote of the same promise

• that Christ would rule the kingdom from his throne forever

• and that Christ's death and resurrection would come before it:

Acts 2:29-32 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore (**David**) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh (**also Matt 1:1**), **he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne**;

31 **He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 **This Jesus hath God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.

Paul preached the same gospel when he spoke to the 'men of Israel, and them that feared God' in the synagogue at Antioch (Acts 13:14-16):

Acts 13:22-23 And when he (God) had removed him (Saul), he raised up unto them David to be their (Israel's) king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's (David's) seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

Paul reminded Timothy that was the gospel he preached. Like Peter, Paul gave the same elements the resurrection of Christ as David's heir:

2 Tim 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Isaiah also prophesied of Christ, the Ruler on David's throne forever yet the dean didn't include it in his verse list:

Isa 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

When the Lord Jesus appears **the 2nd time** (Heb 9:28), He will show Himself as **the King of Kings** and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:16) as Paul wrote:

1 Tim 6:13-15 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot (2 Pet 3:14), unrebukeable, until **the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:** (2 Tim 4:1,8; Col 3:4; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:7, 5:4; 1 John 2:28, 3:2; 2 Thess 2:8)

15 **Which in his times he shall shew,** who is the blessed and only Potentate, **the King of kings,** and Lord of lords; (also Rev 17:14)

Now we'll go to the right side of the dean's chart, where he attempted to show a DIFFERENCE in God's 'goal' from the scriptures we already read. The dean thinks God formed a SEPARATE group of believers (starting with Paul) that He called a 'body'. Before we read the dean's 2 verses, let's look at a passage and context he ignores **1 Cor 10** where God, through Paul, used Israel as our examples (1 Cor 10:6), and clearly COMBINED us WITH Israel and the new testament, of which we are able ministers (2 Cor 3:6):

1 Cor 10:16-17 The cup of blessing which we bless,
is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break,
is it not the communion of the body of Christ?
17 For **we being many are** one bread, and **one body:**
for **we are all partakers** of that one bread.

The teaching in the dean's first verse on this side, is NOT exclusive to Paul

.... neither does it say the things that the dean indicated it said:

Rom 8:29 For whom he did **foreknow**,
he also did predestinate to be **conformed (Greek <summorphos>)**
to the image of his Son, that he might be the **firstborn**
among many **brethren.**

Paul further described this change in form when Christ comes. The Greek word translated 'conformed' is a root for our English word 'metamorphosis':

Phil 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be **fashioned like unto (Greek <summorphos>)** his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Consider the phrases as we go 'outside' of Paul to see the same doctrines:

Rom 8:29-a For whom he did **foreknow**,

Peter wrote of God's foreknowledge of His chosen and their sanctification:

1 Peter 1:2 **Elect** according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, through **sanctification** of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

In Christ's 1st coming, in all things He was made like unto men, His brethren (Heb 2:17). In Christ's 2nd coming, we will be made like Him:

Rom 8:2-b he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,

This same truth was also taught by John

that believers will be made like Christ, when He appears:

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is.

Back to Romans where Paul shows that Christ is the 1st born:

Rom 8:29-c that he (God's Son) might be the **firstborn**

The epistle to the Hebrews confirms this same truth that Christ is the 1st born of the church, whose names are written in heaven (not on earth):

Heb 12:23-29 To the general assembly and **church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,** and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 And to **Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,**
and to **the blood** of sprinkling,
that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Paul told the Romans that Christ is 1st born among a lot of brethren:

Rom 8:29-d among many **brethren.** Matt 12:48-50, 25:40).

Paul, like Peter, also taught the election of the brethren:

1 Thess 1:4 **Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.**

Paul goes right along with Peter, about brethren being elect and sanctified:

2 Thess 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,
brethren beloved of the Lord,
 because God hath from the beginning **chosen you to salvation**
through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Again in Hebrews that ALL those who are sanctified 'in' Christ are made 'one' (Rom 12:5) 'with' Christ. Christ counts them as His brethren:

Heb 2:11-12 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of **one**: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**,
 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my **brethren**, in the midst of the **church** (translated 'congregation' in Psa 22:22) will I sing praise unto thee.

Jesus identified His brethren as those who do God's will:

Matt 12:48-50 But he answered and said unto him that told him,
 Who is my mother? and **who are my brethren?**
 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said,
Behold my mother and **my brethren!**
 50 For **whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven,**
the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Contrary to the dean's assertion **Rom 8:29** does NOT present an 'eternal heavenly destiny' for 'only Paul's converts' where Jesus will have preeminence in the heavenly places. ***The dean needs to 'read the lines' instead of reading BETWEEN the lines.***

The other verse the dean selected shows 'all things' in **BOTH heaven and earth** were **created** by Christ and makes no mention of his claim:

Col 1:16 For by him were **all things created**,

- that are **in heaven**,
- and that are **in earth**,
 - visible
 - and invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:

all things were created

- by him,
- and for him:

The dean should have kept reading the context where the scripture

actually presents the preeminence of Jesus Christ now:

Col 1:17-20 And he is **before all things,**

and by him **all things consist.**

18

And he is the head of the body, **the church:**

who is the beginning, the **firstborn** from the dead;

that **in all things he might have the preeminence.**

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, **having made peace through the blood of his cross,**

by him **to reconcile all things unto himself;**

by him, I say,

whether they be

- **things in earth,**
- **or things in heaven.**

After Christ's death and resurrection, His work of redemption

was done. He announced to His disciples:

Matt 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,

All power is given unto me

- **in heaven**
- **and in earth.**

After great tribulation (Matt 24:21, Rev 7:14), when Jesus returns

He will gather His elect out of heaven and earth **together in one:**

Mark 13:24-27 But in those days, **after that tribulation,** the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 And **then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.**

27 And then shall he send his angels,

and shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds,

- from the uttermost part **of the earth**
- to the uttermost part **of heaven.**

At the present time, God's family is **divided by location** because of death.

- Saints who have died are now in heaven (Psa 116:15, Rom 6:5), where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Col 3:1, Psa 110:1, Heb 1:13).
- Saints who are alive and remain here on earth will be united with them at the coming of the Lord (1 Thess 4:13-18).

But, for now, the family of God is separated

NOT the way 'mid-Acts-ers' teach by making 2 groups:

- those saints 'in Paul'
- and those saints 'outside of Paul'

but by **where they are** (some in heaven, some on earth):

Eph 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 Of whom **the whole family in heaven and earth** is named,

When Christ appears, He will collect ALL His brethren to be together:

2 Thess 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren,
• by **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,**
• and by **our gathering together unto him,**

The dean is wrong again with issue # 13 God does not have 2 different kinds of saints that He plans to keep separated for all eternity:

Eph 1:10 That **in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ,**
• **both which are in heaven,**
• **and which are on earth; even in him:**

This is David Dowell saying, "Think about it!"