

Resurrection in the OT Scriptures

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[0 : 00] In Isaiah 26, we read in verse 19, The reason for focusing upon this verse, and others of course that we're going to do as well, is that this is one of the few references to resurrection in the Old Testament Scriptures.

And the reason it's necessary to look at some of these is because in the New Testament, in the letter to Corinthians, for example, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 4, when he says, I deliver unto you first of all that which I also receive, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

Now, of course, it's perfectly possible to find quite a number of Scriptures, such as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and so on and others, that would point to the death of the Messiah.

But to say that he was buried and that he rose again, according to the Scriptures, means that given that Paul is working at that stage, as all the New Testament apostles and saints were at that stage, only, exclusively with the Old Testament Scriptures, that's the only thing that's qualified as Scripture in their day, then it means there must be Old Testament Scriptures pointing to, not only the resurrection in general, but also the resurrection of the Messiah.

So what we have here in verse 19 is, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. So there is a reference here to a general resurrection of those who are dead, particularly those who are dead in the Lord, and an individual speaking.

[1 : 55] Now, clearly this individual being referenced here is the Messiah, and it is Christ.

Ultimately, he's looking forward to the Messiah. The prophet has been given this inspiration to quote, as it were, for the Messiah.

Together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye plural that dwell in the dust. For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Of course, reference ultimately in Revelation, where the dead shall be raised up, not only from the earth which will cast out the dead, but the sea as well. In Revelation 20, verse 13, And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.

And they were judged every man according to their works. Now, of course, this must be a reference to the resurrection of the body, because although those who had been, say, buried at sea, or lost at sea, or buried in the earth, you know, within a very few years, such as remained of their physical remains would have been long gone.

It would have been decayed and corrupted, or if it was in the bottom of the sea, then creatures would have actually eaten it and consumed it. So there would be virtually no physical remains left.

[3 : 09] What is the sea giving up? What is the earth giving up? What is it casting out? Well, it cannot be the souls of the departed, because their souls at the point of death will already have gone immediately to be either with the Lord, or to be separated from all eternity.

But given up the last day, the resurrection will mean the resurrection of the body, to be reunited with the soul for all eternity. Then it must be the resurrection, the giving up of the bodies of the dead.

But what if there's no body left? What if it's all disintegrated or gone? Or if they've been martyred and burned on the sea, it's just burned in powder, it's ash, it's dispersed from the four winds, there's nothing left.

What can God do about it? Well, as I've mentioned in the past, the Lord created the first man out of the dust of the earth. Is it really such a problem for the Lord to bring back together every individual grain of dust from those martyred and burned at the stake and their remains and powdered ash scattered in the four winds?

He can draw every grain back again. He can reform, remake every deceased body. He can put back together again with new and eternal elements, as it were, all those corroded by the depths of the sea over many, many centuries and so on, and those in the body of the earth and so on.

[4 : 33] The earth cast out the dead. The earth shall cast out the dead. The sea shall give up the dead, as Revelation tells us, and we have a resurrection of all these bodies.

But prior to this, we have an individual. Thy dead men shall live together with my individual. Dead body shall they arise.

Clearly an individual is being spoken of. So we have this instance here, where the prophet is foreseeing the resurrection of the Messiah. It is not the only instance.

Paul says, not according to the scriptures. Other scriptures. Remember that Peter, in the day of Pentecost, when he speaks about David being buried and so on, he quotes from Psalm 16, verses 9 and 10.

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth. My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Neither shalt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

[5 : 34] Now, they'll show me a path of life and so on. Now, Peter quotes this instance as an example of how, although David's remains have decayed and so on, he didn't rise, but Christ rose from the dead.

He is even greater than David. He is stronger than David. He is more powerful than David. And so we have him saying, in the Acts of the Apostles, at chapter 2, where he says, David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face.

He is on my right hand that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad. Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made me to know the ways of life. Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. And then he goes on to say, 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.

Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit in his throne, he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell.

[6 : 47] Now, of course, some translate that as shale, or as the place of the dead, as opposed to a place of eternal punishment. And so David's soul, obviously, would not have gone to hell in the sense of a place of eternal punishment.

David's soul would have gone to be with the Lord. But in the sense of it being the place of the dead, there's different words that are used in the Greek for hell, and often it simply means the place of the dead.

This reference to shale, as it sometimes is. There's a different word, which is the word gehenna, which is used to describe the situation, for example, that the rich man in Luke 16 finds himself in a place of eternal torment.

That's not where David, obviously, is going, but it's a reference to his being dead. His soul is not left in this state of deadness. He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. So if we were to doubt as to whether or not Psalm 16 referenced the resurrection of Christ, in other words, that the Old Testament scriptures there referenced the resurrection in the New.

[7 : 59] Peter spells it out for us in Acts chapter 2. Furthermore, we could go on to others. Job chapter 19, we've mentioned in the past how Job is almost certainly the oldest written book in Scripture.

In chapter 19, we read these famous verses, of course. Verse 25, In other words, Although, after my skin, worms destroy this body, this body will be eaten by worms, it will decay, and so on. And yet, yet I shall see God, not merely with the ethereal sort of soul, but I will see God in my flesh, I will stand before him in my resurrection body.

That's the only possible understanding of it. Yet in my flesh shall I see God. So we have Old Testament scriptures, Isaiah, we've got the Psalms, we've got Job, and so on.

I'm sure if our knowledge of Scripture was more fulsome, we could discover others. But these three at least point us to the fact that in the prophets and in the ancient writings, such as Job and in the

Psalms, there is this foreseeing, this prophesying of the resurrection of our Lord, pointing the way to the resurrection of all who likewise trust and believe in him.

[9 : 34] Now, of course, there will be a resurrection at the last day of all, whether they trust in him or not. It won't be a particularly happy event for those who have not trusted in Christ. But for those who have and are putting their trust in Christ, then what they rise to is that blessed state that he has gone before them into.

The context, if we can come back to our original text here, in verse 19 of Isaiah 26, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body, shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust. It's as though it's outdressing the dead. For thy dew, the freshness, the refreshment is as the dew of herbs. The earth shall cast out the dead. Even though you are dead, you can sing for joy, because you're going to rise with the Messiah who goes ahead of you.

That's the sense. In the original context, this verse 19 is, is we might say, a kind of contrast with what we have at verse 14 and 13.

They are dead. They shall not live. Contrast, thy dead men shall live. Together with my dead body shall they arise. But who's the they that are dead? Well, verse 13, we see, O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

[10 : 55] Now, two things there. First of all, one is that other lords beside thee have had dominion over us. And that's a reference both in the first instance to earthly tyrants, kings, oppressors who have ruled over the Lord's people despite their own preferences, despite their own choice.

They have ruled over them. Also, though, there's a sense in which whilst these earthly tyrants will die, you know, they are dead, they shall not live. There's also a sense of which is an acknowledgement by the prophet that even the Lord's people or people of Israel, shall we say at least, had turned away from the Lord in the past.

They have sought other gods. They have worshipped idols and false gods. And those false gods which they worshipped, they are dead. They never did live.

They were always dead statues. They could never redeem. They are dead. They shall not live.

They are deceased. They shall not rise. Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them and made all their memory to perish.

Contrast with the living power of God which is in both his Messiah and also in all those who trust in him. Now, the context here is important because just as we've seen that there's earthly rulers that oppress the Lord's people and they likewise give themselves up to that kind of oppression when they put themselves under spiritual dead masters.

[12 : 25] In other words, false gods. And as I've mentioned many times in the past to an extent we're all guilty of this or have been at least in the past because setting up an idol is not so much like it is in many countries in the East.

You know, you make a little statue a little shrine and you put candles in front of it and you burn incense and that's you setting up an idol. In the literal sense that is what is being done there. But we make idols of anything that we make more important than God.

Now, you might think oh well if your career is more important than God then that's your idol or if sport is more important than the Lord then that's your idol or if money is more important than the Lord that's your idol but the most common idol and the one that encompasses all of these things at the end of the day is the oldest one in the book literally going back to the garden and that is the idol of self.

The idol that we put in place of God is 99 times out of 100 it's traced back to self. We want to be in the place of God but when we try and rule ourselves when we try and be our own gods it is a deathness.

It is a complete death because we have no power to save. We have no power to redeem and when we make other lords beside thee have dominion over us by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

[13 : 50] We may think we are happy when we rule our lives or we think we rule our lives. When we make little gods of our own selves we may think I am a judge I am the power here I decide what I do as though our times were in our own hand.

And as I've mentioned in the passage just stop and consider how few things in your life did you actually have any direct control over.

And just to begin with the obvious ones you didn't have any choice of where you were born. You didn't have any choice of who you were born to. You didn't have any choice of what nationality or country or land you were born in.

You didn't have any choice of what your mother tongue was. You didn't have a lot of choice of what school you went to or people that you mixed with when you grew up were. But we just accepted these things as normal.

We didn't think oh I never had a choice. We just accepted this was life. But in fact we were channeled into certain channels over which we had almost no choice or direction or opportunity to choose something different.

[14:53] And as you get older of course your job that you're able to do tends to be channeled both by your gifts talents, abilities qualifications or opportunities. all these limitations.

And we think I am in charge of my life. Of course you're not in charge of your life. You're hemmed in on every side and the choices that you can make are limited by so many factors outwith your control.

You are not the Lord of your life. I am not the Lord of my life. The only person who is ultimately in control of our lives that can open doors and close other ones bring things alive and kill off other hosts is the Lord.

And the only way in which we are enabled to recognize this eternal wonderful liberating truth is if the Lord himself opens our eyes by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

Even our being able to recognize our need of the Lord is itself a gift of his grace. Now of course we are born and conceived in sin and so on.

[16:02] We could look at the previous verses to verse 19 and get sidetracked with that and put notes about that but let's not get sidetracked here. We have to recognize that the power over death whether it be spiritual death or physical death which we all face the power over death is something which is in the Lord's hands alone.

And this is something which potentially we all face but not just death is seen as the ultimate power. You know Paul says going back again to 1 Corinthians 15 you know where he says at verse 26 the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Now that is true I suppose for each one of us because it's the last thing we will do in this world unless the Lord comes back first. It is the last thing that will happen to any of us. So in each individual life it is the last enemy that shall be destroyed or not as the case may be if it were out with Christ.

But it is destroyed how? It is destroyed because having faced it through law it is overcome. You see sometimes we try and think well if God has won the power over death why can't we still die?

Why does that still happen to us? Why isn't that just prevented? God does not demonstrate his power over something by just making it not happen.

[17:22] But rather greater power is shown by letting the enemy come at you with all his might let him throw his entire arsenal of weaponry at you and absorb it all and still come up the other side having triumphed in that battle not by simply skillfully avoiding the battle happening but rather facing the battle full on taking all that the enemy has to throw to you and still being standing at the end of it.

It is by winning the fight and not by avoiding the fight that the triumph is actually achieved. The victory over death is possible only because you pass through it and you triumph over it. the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death as Paul says verse 15 verse 26 Nevertheless there are so many things in this life that we think oh well God hasn't really got the ability to do this and he'll do that can he really bring life from the dead well we know he brought life from the dead in Christ we know that if we are in Christ he has brought spiritual life from the dead in each one who is a born again believer we know that he has the power over time and eternity you think yeah but God can't really actually turn back time can he he's not going to do that he's never done that well actually he has done it you know if we go to the scriptural example 2nd Kings chapter 20 we go from verse 8 Hezekiah said unto Isaiah what shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me and I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day and Isaiah said this sign shall thou have of the Lord that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken shall the shadow go forward 10 degrees or go back 10 degrees now this was on the sundial of Ahaz sundials were a new sort of exciting thing that nobody had before but Ahaz had seen the sundial in one of the courts because you won't be the

Syrians or whatever and he had brought one back into Jerusalem so the sundial of Ahaz by which you could tell the hours of the day this was a great novelty this was technology it was an amazing thing to them so will the shadow go forward 10 degrees or go back 10 degrees and Hezekiah answered it is a light thing for the shadow to go down 10 degrees just for the sun to set a little bit sooner but let the shadow return backward 10 degrees and Isaiah and Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord and he brought the shadow 10 degrees backward by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz now this is also referenced in Isaiah chapter 38 where there's a reference to it again in slightly more abbreviated form but in chapter 38 you read verses 7 and 8 for example there this shall be the sign unto thee from the Lord the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken behold I will bring again the shadow of the degrees which is gone down and the sundial of Ahaz 10 degrees backward so the sun returned 10 degrees by which degrees it was gone down now we know of course astronomically that the sun does not in fact go down the earth nor does the sun go up or go down if the sun is going to appear to go backwards or the shadow is going backwards then the sun must climb backwards in the sky effectively now for that to happen it means that the earth which is constantly turning on its axis must not simply have been arrested in its spinning as would have been the case for example in the days of

Joshua when the Lord caused the sun to stand still for that to happen the earth must if you think about it cease spinning for a moment or two or for however many hours it may be effectively for a day it simply didn't turn so the sun stayed in the same position in the sky not because the earth had ceased to go around it that's the seasons of the year we're talking about its orbit around the sun but rather it's spinning which makes night and day so the Lord stopped the earth spinning for a day and so it just stayed in place and the sun stayed in the same place in the sky because the earth was not spinning but when it comes to the dial of Ahaz going back ten degrees however many hours I think it's three hours or something it proves to be then that actually means the earth must have been turned backwards again it must the Lord have effectively stopped the globe from spinning and then reverse that spinning ever so slightly just a few degrees and I think oh come on God didn't do that nobody would be big enough and strong enough to do that just remember the size of this creation God has made we've used the illustration in the past of the huge big star

[22 : 13] Arcturus which if you were to think in terms of human being I've used this illustration you're having your dinner your mince and tatties at the table and there's a child outside playing with his basketball and it comes in it plomps the basketball down to the table and one of the peas jumps off your plate because of the force of the ball banging down that little green pea next to the basketball would represent the sun over against Arcturus the star the star Arcturus is massive compared to our sun if you were to think in terms of our earth it would like be a tiny little grain of fine salt beside the green pea if you're putting salt on your mince and tatties at the same time so you have one tiny little grain of salt would be like our earth compared to the green pea which would be the sun compared to the basketball which would be Arcturus and God is bigger than all of these he could squash out the sun just like that with his little finger he can pick up the grain of salt and turn it this way or that or whatever he chooses to do turning the earth back a little bit on its axis may seem massive to us it's child's play to

God this is how powerful and great God is he can turn back time he can alter time if he chooses he chooses to divide time as we know it in terms of his son we don't even give it a second thought we think in terms of what this year is we say 2019 what does that mean it means that it is calculated as per that 2019 years ago is the date that we take Christ as having been born and so we say AD as opposed to BC before Christ time itself is divided into the arrival of God in the flesh in this world God divides time he can turn back time he can arrest time he can change time think oh wait a minute God can't change change the facts of what's happened in history God chooses not to change the facts that happened but he can change the implication of those facts take for example the death and resurrection of our Lord the Lord could easily have simply made it that the crucifixion didn't happen he could have chosen to turn back time so that we're back to good Friday or to the Thursday meal and Passover meal and Jesus simply gets away from his accusers and then the crucifixion doesn't happen but how does that help our salvation it is necessary not simply to skillfully avoid the battle it is necessary in order to triumph to face the battle full on to let the enemy throw his entire arsenal of weaponry at you and still be standing at the end death had to be thrown at God's son death had to come at him full on he had to meet that death on the cross absorb all its power and pass through it and then rise again victorious to demonstrate to prove that even death itself had

no power over them you see turning back time to making us know the resurrection that the law of the crucifixion had not happened would not really have helped anyone would not really have done any good but it does mean that the death of our Lord in the light of his resurrection instead of being the disaster that for example the disciples on the road to Emmaus obviously thought it was you know Jesus said what are these discussions you have amongst yourselves as you walk together and outside and they said oh well are you alone a stranger in Israel have you heard of a Jesus of Nazareth prophet mighty indeed we had hoped that we'd be him who would deliver Israel but our rulers took him and crucified him and put him to death we've heard strange things about the empty tomb and so on and then Jesus opened their eyes to the scriptures and said oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written and then he expounds them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself and then they realized that he was risen but the fact that he was risen didn't think oh thank goodness for that so the death doesn't really matter anymore the thing that was making us sad oh good now what happens not just that it means that the thing that was making us sad is in fact proven to be the key and central event of the entire work of salvation history all that the Lord brought the world into being for was so that his son could die on the cross and then rise again the third day so in the light of the resurrection this resurrection that is prophesied here in Isaiah 26 and verse 90 as foretold in the scriptures as Paul says this resurrection then causes the death of our Lord not to be undone not to dismantle the facts or to turn back time or change the facts of history but to change the way in which that history is then seen to unfold instead of being a disaster it becomes a triumph it becomes the key thing in all that the Lord has ever done remember that God intended from all eternity that his beloved son will die upon the cross remember this is part of his work because the one thing God cannot do is he cannot be untrue to himself now it is one thing for God to perhaps arrest or perhaps at times reverse his own laws of nature he made the laws he can he can make exceptions if he chooses he can stop the world from turning for 24 hours for Joshua if he chooses he could turn the world the world slightly back in its axis for a few hours in the sundial of Ahaz if he chooses that is making exceptions to his laws of nature but it is not making an exception to himself because he as God has absolute power to interpret and to make exceptions to these laws and and to to work through them or with them or under them or against and as he sees fit he is in absolute sovereign control over time and eternity and life and death and all these things the one thing he can never do is he cannot deny himself this means that when it comes to the salvation of sinners God cannot simply say I'll let you off doesn't really matter never mind you don't see anything I won't see anything will which let you into heaven anyway that becomes a denial of his very being his purity his holiness the identity of who he God is he cannot deny himself and therefore if his perfect laws not merely of nature but the laws of his own identity the laws of his own character the laws of salvation itself if these are not to be violated then fallen sinners cannot dwell in his presence and why somehow the wages of sin have been paid and these fallen sinners these pathetic little human beings they cannot pay it somebody must pay it angels cannot pay it that only leaves God himself God himself who comes down to earth and lives that perfect and sinless life and dies upon the cross not a disaster but an intentional facing of the battle to absorb the very worst that the devil can throw at him the very worst of the powers of darkness to face down and absorb death itself to demonstrate his power over death the only way to triumph over death is to go through it and demonstrate that you are still alive after it at the end of it this is the power of the resurrection that Christ himself goes through first of all and in doing so opens the way for all who will follow him in resurrection all who will go the way that he has gone just as he is the head of the body all others who are his will follow likewise that body as sure as as we've said in the past you're pulling yourself through a hedge if your head and shoulders come out the hedge at one side your legs and feet will infallibly follow the rest of the body will follow the head and the shoulders because it's attached it's part of it and the body of Christ will follow where Christ the head has gone before God's power over death then is is absolute he controls and has the power over death he has absorbed its effect he has triumphed over it his power over life likewise he is the giver of life he can decide who lives and who doesn't it is he who sustains life all that he needs to do is withdraw or withhold your next breath your next heartbeat that's all it takes if one heartbeat does not follow the last one you and I die every creature dies when its heart stops beating but just before its heart stops beating there will be one beat before it stops there will be a second last beat before that a third last beat before that and there comes that point when the last beat still goes but nothing after that all he has to do is withhold one heartbeat one breath that you don't breathe we don't realize just how much breath by breath

heartbeat by heartbeat we are dependent upon the grace and mercy of God he has absolute power over time he has absolute power over eternity he has absolute power over the way things unfold even though he chooses not to change the facts of history he has changed the outworking of those facts of history and what they end up coming to mean just as when a soul is saved for example as we see with Saul of Tarsus as we see with the other apostles and so on that that that which was in their own life their old life though it may in itself have been carried out in a state of sin once they are they are converted God takes all their gifts all their abilities all their experience all their memories all their skills and he takes that and in their sanctified state he is able to make use of it he is able to make use of all that went before so that nothing is wasted gather up all the baskets of fragments that nothing be lost there is nothing wasted there is nothing wasted with God not a single day not a single heartbeat not a single power of life or death is wasted with this power over death with this power over life with this power over planets and stars and the earth and its axis and its turning and the seasons and the years and all that we have with this power over all things with this power over all things and over me and having the power and ability to do with us whatsoever he wishes whatever he desires whatever he desires what do we read in the prophet was easy for I desired mercy and not sacrifice and the love of God more than all burnt offerings I desired mercy that is why the resurrection took place that is why the resurrection took place that is why the resurrection is prophesied in the old testament that is why the resurrection is the promise to which we seek to aspire and eventually however little things or few things in life we may have faced with faith when it comes to death we really have to have faith because we cannot walk by sitting there.

[35 : 04] We cannot go in our experience. Whoever else may have gone through that door before us, we ourselves must go through that door alone. Only if we are in Christ, we are not alone.

But still, we have never passed that way before. And so we must go with faith. We must have faith in Christ or else it is just one big black pick-mouth going into a lost eternity.

But if we are facing that last enemy in the strength of Christ, it becomes truly the last enemy which shall be destroyed because all the other enemies, sin and fear and false worship and all the things that cluttered and darkened our lives before have all one by one been destroyed.

And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Not because we don't have the means to avoid it. But God would not have you run from it nor evade it.

He would have you go through it to experience your triumph over it. Your triumph in Christ and Christ alone because with all the power of heaven and earth and his fingertips, being able to do with sinful creatures as we are, whatever he wished, whatever he desired, he desired mercy.

[36 : 30] And that is what the Lord desires for you and me. Thy dead men shall live. Together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.

For thy dew is as the dew of herbs. And the earth shall cast out the dead. And as they are cast out, they shall be dead no more, but living in the one who is the Lord and giver of life.

Let us pray.