

**PROPHECY AND THE RESURRECTION**

October 9, 2016

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Cor. 15:14).

When Martha encountered Jesus after the death of her brother Lazarus, the conversation very quickly was directed to the topic of the resurrection. Jesus said, “Thy brother shall rise again” (John 11:23). Martha responded, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24). How did Martha know this? She did not have the New Testament to teach her this great truth. In fact at this point, we know that the resurrection of the dead, even the resurrection of Christ was a mystery even to those surrounding Jesus. It was not until after His resurrection that the disciples understood that Jesus’ statement “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19) was in reference to the “temple of His body” (John 2:21) and the resurrection. John goes on to record, “When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; **and they believed the scripture**, and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:22). The Scripture referenced here most certainly referred to the Old Testament Scriptures. It was Martha’s knowledge of the Old Testament that provided her the knowledge concerning the “resurrection at the last day.” With our remaining space, we will consider Old Testament prophecies concerning the resurrection.

It is significant that the first Messianic Prophecy was spoken to the serpent in the garden. It is also significant that it spoke of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In Genesis 3:15 we read, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; **it shall bruise thy head**, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Was this the only word we had concerning the resurrection, it would, to this day remain a mystery. Yet, because the mystery has been made known, we know that Christ bruised the head of the serpent at His resurrection from the dead. It was then that He destroyed “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14), spoiled his goods (Mark 3:27) and took the “the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). It is no wonder that Genesis 3:15 is

often referred to as the “proto-evangelium,” for it speaks of the “Gospel of Jesus Christ” as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Jesus Christ bruised the head of the serpent, the devil.

Another interesting prophecy concerning the resurrection of Christ from the dead is tucked away in that grand prophecy concerning the Suffering Servant of God which is found in Isaiah 53. In verse 8, Isaiah wrote, “For he was cut off out of the land of the living.” It satisfied the Father to offer His Son by making “His soul [life] an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10). Christ died so you and I could live. However, our hope is based on the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Peter wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). Turning back to Isaiah 53 we see that after he speaks of the sacrifice and death of Christ it says, “He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days” (Isa. 53:10). The small, yet greatly significant phrase, “prolong His days” is speaking directly of the resurrection. He would die, but He would also be “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

Finally, an article of this nature would be incomplete without taking time to turn our attention to the Psalms. David wrote,

“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 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 wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psa. 16:8-10).

On the day of Pentecost, when the Lord’s church was established, Peter preached and directly referenced this Psalm from David. Let’s let Peter give us a divine commentary on this passage.

“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 had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:29-31).

The study of prophecy in the Old Testament is a fascinating study indeed. When we focus specifically on the Messianic prophecies it is even richer. And for the child of God a study of what the Old Testament says about the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a thrilling study which undergirds the hope that we have in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 6:19, 20). May we continue to meditate on these divine truths as we study our Bibles more and more.