

“Watchman, what of the night ?”



“The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!” Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

► THIS ISSUE'S READING

“THE BIBLICAL TESTIMONY CONCERNING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION 'ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES'” -2-

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Editor's Preface

This edition of WWN enters into the new year of 2023 with our continuation of an analysis of Christ's resurrection from the dead as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). As noted in the previous issue of the thought paper, the New Testament declares that a literal bodily resurrection of the whole person, body and soul, to everlasting life was progressively foretold throughout the writings of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24: 44-46; 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4). It was by this means that God's promise of deliverance from the curse of sin - ultimately death - would finally and forever be accomplished (see 1 Peter 1: 3-5). From the very beginning of the entrance of sin into this world, by the transgression of humanity's first two parents Adam and Eve, this salvation God promised through the woman's "seed" (Genesis 3: 15) was progressively 'unfolding' amidst the inspired history of the pre-Messianic era. Successively it indicated that a singular divine/human male offspring of Eve (the 'Messiah') would through His own death and resurrection destroy "the serpent" (Satan's) power, work, and influence over all of Adam's descendants thereby pioneering the way to finally deliver them, also through a literal bodily resurrection, from the grasp of death and the grave unto eternal life (2 Timothy 1: 8-10; Hebrews 2: 14-15; Revelation 1: 13, 17-18).

In part -1- of our last bimonthly's write-up, we particularly concentrated on the biblical testimony



of the Old Testament Scriptures regarding the resurrection event itself. Throughout, both implicitly and explicitly, the Hebrew Scriptures bear witness to multiple examples of bodily resurrection events - the more prominent ones being listed in the article. There were others, however, that for lack of textual space we left out such as:

Again, toward the close of Moses' life, God makes a self-declaration as the One who brings life from death:

"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and *I make alive*; I wound, and *I heal*: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." (Deuteronomy 32: 39, emphasis added).

That this was understood as an explicit hint of resurrection from the grave was stated centuries later by Hannah, under inspiration, in her song of praise and thankfulness to God for granting her request and giving her a son (Samuel):

"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and *bringeth up*." (1 Samuel 2: 6, emph. added).

Along the same lines, Ezekiel symbolically depicts National Israel's restoration and return from Babylonian exile by using, in very graphic detail, the language of literal bodily resurrection (see Ezekiel 37: 1-14).

This abundant attestation of the Old Testament concerning the resurrection event is generally acknowledged by most Bible students and scholars. Many have little trouble linking the resurrection of Jesus and His people as an *event* foretold in accordance with the Hebrew Scriptures. However, the same cannot be said of the *timing* of Christ's resurrection occurring on "the third day according to the (same) scriptures." Most agree that *explicit references* to a "third day" literal bodily resurrection of the Messiah are not

stated in the Old Testament. For example, note the following exposition by Nick Lunn, a translation consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators, of the claims made by the New Testament (specifically 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4) in this regard:

"For our purposes here we only note the two balanced lines specifically dealing with the death and resurrection: 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (verse 3), and 'he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (verse 4). ...

"The event of his resurrection 'on the third day' was also prominent in the teaching of Jesus himself (e.g. Matthew 16: 21; 20: 19; Luke 9: 22; 18: 33; 24: 21). In one place his words seem to entail, in a similar fashion to 1 Corinthians 15:4, that the Scriptures themselves contained a prediction of this very thing. Toward the close of Luke's Gospel it is recorded:

'Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day' (Luke 24: 45-46). His use of the introductory formula 'Thus it is written' strongly implies that there was a textual warrant, not only for Messiah's death, nor for his resurrection also, but even specifically for a resurrection on the third day. The identical time phrase also occurs of the same event in the early kerygma (proclamation) of Acts (10: 40, 'Him God raised up the third day'). ...

"What, then, of Christ being raised on the third day? In addressing these words to the Gentile believers at Corinth Paul evidently expected them to have some comprehension of what he intended. Yet in this case there was no direct verbal prophecy in the ancient Scriptures which predicted such a thing. In

view of this, the event claimed in the confession must be wholly supported by means of a figural interpretation of Old Testament texts." (emph. added).¹

Lunn's "figural" attempt to link the day three Genesis creation account with the resurrection of Jesus on the third day is indicative of many others who, in like manner, endeavor to connect Christ's resurrection to any mention in the Hebrew Scriptures of a third / three / or similar equivalent. The result seems strained, weak, and questionable / doubtful because outside of a (relative) few occurrences set forth by some (e.g., Jonah 1: 17; Hosea 6: 1-2)², most of these references are generally not even applicable - or at least vague and implied at best. It is not in the scope of this article to discuss all the fanciful typological connections made over the centuries in response to this issue. Suffice it to say that the most troubling, and undoubtedly deceptive, of these figurative interpretations of the timing of Christ's resurrection that claim to be based upon Old Testament Scripture have come down to our time through the writings of the post-Apostolic Church Fathers. Pointedly, the post-Apostolic "Easter Sunday" tradition has supplanted the biblical testimonial truth regarding this matter with a deceitful blending of truth and error. The resultant skewing and misdirecting of the timing away from its true scriptural import and unto an unwarranted and biblically contradictory focus based on tradition, has almost universally been the accepted understanding concerning this topic. Yes, according to the weekly cycle of calculating the time, Christ's resurrection did take place on "the first day of the week," i.e., Sunday - specifically sometime after sunset Saturday night and before dawn Sunday morning (Matthew 28: 1; Mark 16: 2, 9; Luke

24: 1, John 20: 1). But we need to carefully note that Scripture never speaks of the Lord's resurrection occurring on the first day of the week until after the event actually happens. This factor is crucial as we proceed forward in this study.

With this issue of WWN, we will present the biblical understanding of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in light of the true scriptural relevance regarding its timing.

“The Importance Of Christ's Resurrection From The Dead ‘According To The Scriptures’”

Overview And Insights From The Old Testament On The Timing Of Christ's Resurrection —

During the time of the Exodus from Egypt, when the newly liberated Israelites came to Mount Sinai to receive instruction from God upon entering into a covenant relationship with Him as His chosen people (nation), God delivered to them His Law. It consisted of ten commandments which the Lord Himself had spoken along with additional "statutes and judgements" that He gave to Moses to teach the people. (see Deuteronomy 4: 1, 10-14; compare with Exodus 20: 1-17, 21: 1 - 23: 33). The redemptive promise of deliverance through the destruction of the "serpent" (Satan) and his "seed" by the divine / human "seed" of the woman, which had progressively been the Messianic hope passed down to a successive line of chosen men during the patriarchal legislative era, became more detailed, codified, and centralized under the more advanced administration of a nation of people under the Sinaitic Covenant. The Hebrew people (somewhat later on known as the Jews), at this stage of

salvific history, became the 'custodians' of the knowledge of the true God as revealed, and successively advanced, in the Old Testament Scriptures. The witness of the New Testament Scriptures confirm this testimony:

"This is he (Moses), that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: *who received the lively oracles* to give unto us" (Acts 7: 38, *emph. added*).

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? *Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*" (Romans 3: 1-2, *emph. added*).

"Think not that I (Jesus) am come to destroy *the law, or the prophets*: I am not come to destroy, but *to fulfill*. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from *the law*, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least *commandments*, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall *do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5: 17-19, *emph. added*).

Multiple times throughout the course of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ authoritatively spoke of His imminent resurrection from the dead as an upcoming, near future event linked to a specific time-frame that was foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. Bear in mind that though this timing was spoken of in somewhat varied expressions, they all were pointing toward the same specific "day" that His resurrection would occur on. (note: all *emph. added* in the texts).

1. The third day —

• "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must ...

be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matthew 16: 21).

• "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said ... they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." (Ibid. 17: 22-23).

• "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples ... and said unto them, ... the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests ... to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Ibid. 20: 17-19).

• "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation (right after Christ had died and been entombed), the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, ... Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead" (Ibid. 27: 62-64).

• "For he (Jesus) taught his disciples, and said ... The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." (Mark 9: 31).

• "And he (Jesus) took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying ... they shall condemn him to death ... and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Ibid. 10: 32-34).

• "Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things ... and be slain, and be raised the third day." (Luke 9: 22).

• "And he (Jesus) said unto them, ... I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." (Ibid. 13: 32).

• "Then he (Jesus) took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, *and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.* For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall ... put

him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." (Ibid. 18: 31-33).

- [On resurrection day, the angels that addressed the women that had come "very early in the morning" to finish preparing the body of Jesus for burial]: "He (Jesus) is not here, but is risen: remember how he (Jesus) spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." (Ibid. 24: 1, 6-7).

- [Later, still on resurrection day as "two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus" and were unknowingly joined as they journeyed on by the resurrected Jesus Himself and related to Him recent events about His rejection and death at Jerusalem]: "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done." (Ibid. 24: 13, 21).

- [A few years after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, Peter, while bringing the gospel message to the gentile Cornelius, bore witness to this aspect of Christ's resurrection]: "Him (Jesus) God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; ... unto witnesses chosen before of God, ... after he rose from the dead." (Acts 10: 40-41).

2. Three days —

(Three days and three nights) —

- "But he (Jesus) answered and said unto them, ... For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12: 39-40).

(After three days) —

- "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation (right after Christ had died and been entombed), the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." (Matthew 27: 62-63).

- "And he (Jesus) began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, ... and be killed, and after three days rise again." (Mark 8: 31).

(In / within three days) —

- "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, ... wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples ... believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." (John 2: 19-22).

- [The maligned accusations of "false witnesses" who 'twisted' the words of what Jesus actually meant when He spoke about His upcoming death and resurrection]: "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; ... At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow (Jesus) said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." (Matthew 26: 59-61).

- "And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; ... And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." (Mark 14: 55, 57-58).

- [The general disdain of the common populace "that passed by" while Jesus was on the cross and "reviled / railed" upon Him in the same manner as had the false witnesses at His trial before "the council"]: "And they ... reviled him (Jesus), wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save

thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matthew 27: 39-40).

• "And they ... railed on him (Jesus), wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross." (Mark 15: 29-30).

Clearly Jesus, and others in the New Testament who were familiar with what He said on this subject, all bore varied witness to basically the same Old Testament fulfillment of His resurrection in "the third day / three days." So far, the only New Testament passage considered that specifically links this timing to an Old Testament text is Matthew 12: 39-40 (compare with Jonah 1: 17), and it does so typologically. However, aside from this passage, the only other instance in the New Testament that also specifically links this timing to an Old Testament reference is 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23:

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ... But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (emph. added, compare with Acts 26: 23; Colossians 1: 18; Revelation 1: 5).

Significantly, "the firstfruits" stated here in connection with Christ's resurrection is a reference to ancient Israel's feast day of the firstfruits of the barley harvest, the first grain of the year. The way that the feast of firstfruits pre-figures Christ's resurrection on the third day is in the fact that the festival of Passover / Unleavened Bread was a consecutive eight day celebration which actually encompassed three feasts. As the table below illustrates, the apostle Paul's introduction to "the gospel" (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4) covers the first three days of this eight day festival.

1. The first thing Paul lists in connection with the gospel states: "that Christ died for

FIRST MONTH: NISAN FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER

PASSOVER (Day 1)	UNLEAVENED BREAD (Day 2)	(BARLEY) FIRSTFRUITS (Day 3)
A Lamb	Unleavened Bread	Sheaf of barley
Lamb Slain Blood on Doorposts <u>Exodus 12: 6-7</u>	Purging of All Leaven A symbol of sin <u>Exodus 12: 15-17</u>	Wave Offering of Sheaf Promise of harvest to come
First Month 14th Day of Nisan <u>Leviticus 23: 5</u>	First Month 15th Day of Nisan (annual sabbath) <u>Leviticus 23: 6-8</u>	First Month 16th Day of Nisan (the morrow after the sabbath) <u>Leviticus 23: 9-14</u>
"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"	"Purge out therefore the old leaven ... as ye are unleavened ... Therefore let us keep the feast , ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."	"Christ risen from the dead, ... the firstfruits of them that slept ... every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
<u>1 Corinthians 5: 7b</u>	<u>1 Corinthians 5: 7a, 8</u>	<u>1 Corinthians 15: 20, 23</u>

our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15: 3b - the antitype).

Earlier, in the same book, he stated: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (Ibid. 5:7b - the type: the feast of Passover) - Day 1.

2. The second thing Paul lists in connection with the gospel states: "And that he (Christ) was buried" (Ibid 15: 4a - the antitype).

Earlier, again in the same book, he stated: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. ... Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (Ibid. 5: 7a, 8 - the type: the feast of Unleavened Bread) - Day 2.

3. The third thing Paul lists in connection with the gospel states: "and that he (Christ) rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (Ibid. 15: 4b - the antitype).

A little while on in the same chapter he states: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept ... Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (Ibid. 15: 20,

23 - the type: the feast of Barley Firstfruits) - Day 3.

This fulfillment of the third day resurrection timing, along with all the other festal year events and timing, are undeniably abundant proof that Jesus of Nazareth is the foretold Messiah according to the Scriptures. The biblical connection of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week (Sunday) is not at all focused on the first day of the week, of itself, as having any sanctified relevancy. Rather it is in the fact that the first day of the weekly cycle coincided with the third day of the annual Passover festival that year (31 A.D.). ❖ GLP

1. Nicholas P. Lunn, "Raised On The Third Day According To The Scriptures": Resurrection Typology In The Genesis Creation Narrative (Louisville, KY: The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, JETS 57/3 [2014] 523-35), 523-524. https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/57/57-3/JETS_57-3_523-35_Lunn.pdf

2. (Note: These two texts, which involve a 'three day' time factor, appear to indeed have a scripturally valid typological reference to Christ's resurrection on "the third day.")

*All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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