

The Resurrection

By: Rev. W.H. Offiler

We do not write with any thought of presenting to the world some new evidence or some new scientific treatise on the subject of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; rather, it is written that the heart and spirit of the people of God may be refreshed and requickened in a resume of those astounding events which are so wonderfully associated with the Death of the Son of God on Calvary's Hill, and with His glorious defeat of man's last and greatest enemy - Death - in the triumph of His Resurrection, and in the endlessness of His Life.

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ comes at the time of the year when all nature bears an irrestible testimony to the fact of a physical resurrection - the cold death of winter giving place to the warmth and beauty of summer life. To Israel, in the First Passover, it was to be the "beginning of months, Ex. 12:2," and as the time when they first began to live in the actual Presence of God, and as the first month of their Spiritual Year.

At the Feast of the Passover all Israel was to touch the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, and to Sprinkle it upon the Lintels and upon the Door posts of all the houses in which they dwelt in order that the Judgements of the Lord God might Pass over them, so that they might enter into that Covenant Relationship with God, which by and by was to fructify into actual union when God's Messiah should come. However, the sad truth of their unbelief is ever with us, for while the Christian Church - which was purchased with the precious Blood of Jesus - celebrates with joy the fact of the Finished Work of Christ, and rejoices in the glory of His Resurrection from the dead. Our brethren, the Jews are yet shrouded in the shadow of a typical observance, the veil being yet upon their hearts. May the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob speed the day when the veil shall be taken away, and both Jew and Christian be One in the same Messiah and Lord!

The Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is one inseparable operation and constitutes the sure foundation which underlies both Testaments. The shadow and glory of these coming events continually fall across the pathway of earthly Israel as an ever present Spirit Truth, minisitering to them, in symbolic sense, that which has become so blessedly real to God's people today, and which holds for him the Promise of marvelous life and Divine association for the Eternal Future.

The Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is by far the most important doctrine of the Scriptures, and it occupies the First Place in the heart and mind of the Godhead. From the beginnings of God's dealings with men, the Atonement - which is fully comprehended and perfectly fulfilled in the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ - is revealed as the foundation underlying every major operation of God for the deliverance of His People in this or any other age. The Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ covered a period of Three Days and Three Nights of actual time; and in this way - in a prophetic sense - it is very often seen in the Times of the Old Testament.

That the Covenants under which we live today were originally made with the Patriarch Abraham is too well known to need any repetition here. The Covenant with Abraham was not a Law Covenant. It was a covenant of Salvation by the Grace of God, and through the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was sealed - in its temporary sense - in the typical offering of Isaac on the Mount Moriah by his Father Abraham,

Heb. 11:17, 18 & 19. In its "Everlasting" phase, this covenant was sealed with the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and in its prophetic sense, it is comprehended in the Three Day and Three Night Journey which Abraham must take before the Land of Moriah was reached, as commanded by the Lord. Gen. 22:4. This period, as stated before, is always significant of the time in which Jesus lay in the Grave - Seventy-Two Hours, or Three Days and Three Nights, Matt. 12:40 - according to the Word of the Lord.

Again, when the Lord God undertook to deliver Israel from the Bondage of Egypt, we find the same thing in First Evidence, for when Moses was to stand before Pharaoh in Israel's behalf, he was to deliver God's Message that he "let my people go, that they may go Three Days journey into the wilderness and there offer Sacrifices unto the Lord," Ex. 3:18. None will dare to question the magnitude of this work of Jehovah, nor may the marvels of its prophetic import be denied! This was the greatest manifestation of His Almighty Power to go into the records, and the theme of Israel's Everlasting Song. Rev. 15:3. Its foundation, its basic revelation, was the Three Day and Three Night period in which the Lord Jesus Christ lay in the grave awaiting the Seal of the Father upon His Finished Work, in His Glorious Resurrection out from among the dead! In due time Moses led them out of Egypt according to the Word of the Lord, under the covering Blood, and enveloped in that Spirit Cloud!! They made the required Three Day Journey into the wilderness, where the Lord - at the beginning of the wilderness journeyings - made with them the Covenant of Healing (Ex. 15:26) from all their diseases.

Built upon the same Atonement that had carried them through the Sea of Waters in a National Baptism into the likeness of the Death of Christ," He now makes a covenant with them as they camp in the solitude by the twelve Wells of Water (the symbol of the Twelve Apostles) and in the shade of the Seventy Palm Trees (the symbol of the Seventy Elders) Lk. 9:16 and Lk. 10:1 to 11. Please turn and read these scriptures NOW. He, Jehovah, made with them the Covenant of Healing from ALL their sickness, which is Healing in the Atonement of the Finished Work of Christ as clearly as God Himself could make it. Give God the Glory right now as you read, ye that are sick, for there is Healing for you in the Precious Blood of Christ.

After Israel's wanderings by the space of Forty Years in the wilderness - wanderings that were to be a lasting memorial to the hardness of their hearts, and a continual testimony to their unbelief - the time came for them (in spite of their failures; Thank God) to inherit the Promised Land. Once again the Hand of the Lord was to be outstretched in the deliverance of His People. The Jordan lay before them, a raging torrent, a mighty flood; yet God was to take them safely over that flood of certain death as a babe in the arms of its Father. He would carry them on His shoulders as He had aforesaid promised to do, but He must work according to His own Plan. He must place them again in the sure refuge of the Atonement of His Son.

Before the crossing of the raging Jordan was possible, the spies must view the land and reveal the Power of the Scarlet Cord to their Protectress, Rahab (the Harlot), and then secret themselves for Three Days, (hide themselves in the Atonement) until their pursuers had given up hope of finding them, Jos. 2:22, and then return to camp. Then the Officers of the Host were to pass through and say to the people: "Prepare yourselves vicutals, for in Three Days we shall pass over this Jordan," Jos. 2:2. And Israel passed over the raging waters of the Jordan Dryshod. As the Three Day journey at the beginning of wilderness march brought them into the realization of the fulness

of the Promise of God, in the inheritance of the Land which He had sworn to their Fathers of an Everlasting possession.

Thus the Atonement of Jesus was found underneath every prophetic symbol; Covering His people with the protections of the Blood; Sealing them with the Holy Spirit in the Cloud; Covenanting with them the sure Healing from every sickness; and Carrying them through on "Eagles' Wings" to the inheritance of the land where Milk and Honey flowed! Well may the saints of God rejoice; for those operations of God, although symbolic, have a marvelous bearing upon the events of these last days upon the destinies of the True Church, inasmuch as the first recorded phenomena in which Israel was delivered from Egypt under the covering of the Passover Blood was symbolic of the dawn of this Dispensation of the Holy Spirit when mankind was delivered from the hard bondage of sin, through the Power of the Precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were also healed by the Power and Virtue of the very same Atonement, for "by His Stripes, we are healed."

The second manifestation of His marvelous Power was at the brink of the Jordan river and in the inheritance of the Land, which is likewise symbolic of the days in which we now live. Sin, like a raging torrent or flood which threatens to destroy us all, stands between us and the Eternal Glory of the Promised Kingdom of God. Hearts are failing them for fear because of the grim conditions that face our country and our civilization, but the true Minister of God is going through the host of the saints and the Members of that church, which is the Body of Christ, and calling the people from their sin and their indifferent attitudes to the things which belong to their eternal peace. "Prepare yourselves food" - get acquainted with the Bread and the Wine as the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; for in the Atonement which Christ in His Three Days and Three Nights in the grave has so fully accomplished, we are now to become partakers to the full. The Atonement will carry us through. The Death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is magnificently able to perfect in us all the Power and Glory of the Finished Work of Christ. This is the Atonement.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ was, and is without reservations. It was a perfect work. Not one sin of man was excluded from the covering of the sacred blood. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is more than sin. It is altogether outside the pale of Blood Atonement. It is a deep Spiritual Fault; and once more we say it: - Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is something more than SIN!

Space forbids the mention or the multiplication of these prophetic operations; nevertheless, we may not pass from this Old Testament record without just one more corroborative instance of the truth here involved. The story of the Prophet Jonah and the great fish is necessary to the perfection of this theme and to the establishment of this foundational truth, for here we are on solid ground, because we have the testimony of the Blessed Christ Himself to the truth of the story, and the dependability of the Word of God in this regard. For the Prophet Jonah, like no other man, was made an actual partaker in the Atonement, which Atonement is wrought in the actual Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and in the manifestation of those Post-Resurrection Powers of the Son of God.

First of all, Jonah was cast into the raging, boiling sea; down into the depths of that sea sank the prophet, with the weeds of the sea about him. If ever a man was drowned in the depths of the sea, Jonah was that man. In addition to this death, the prophet was swallowed by the great fish - twice dead! For Three Days and Three Nights the prophet was in this living grave. At the exact end of that period Jonah was cast out

upon the shores of the great sea and bidden by the Lord to go to Nineveh to deliver the message of Repentance, or suffer the just vengeance of Almighty God. The prophet, after many objections, began his Three Day journey to the City of Nineveh; as he entered the city limits he began to deliver to the people the message of repentance toward God and the forsaking of all their sin. The people heard the message and gave heed to the warnings of the prophet. They repented in sackcloth and ashes and the Lord forgave their sin and spared their city, and in the New Testament it is written: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgement of this generation and shall condemn it, because they Repented at the preaching of Jonah," and said Jesus, "behold a greater than Jonah is here."

If evidence other than the simple statement of Christ were necessary, it is provided in the results which followed the preaching of Jonah for this is true that there is one source, and only one source from which repentance can spring, and that source is the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "For thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, that REPENTANCE and remission of sin should be preached in His Name to all nations." Luke 24:47. There is not another being in Heaven or in the Earth who can bring repentance unto life but the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the reason that the prophet Jonah himself must first become a partaker of the Atonement of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Son of God. Repentance was impossible until the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Men could be baptised with a baptism unto repentance, and they could bring forth fruits meet for repentance; but until the atonement had become the actual fact, repentance was impossible to man. The Death and Resurrection of the Christ became the Sign of the prophet Jonah, and no other sign shall be given to the world. Hence, the sign of the prophet Jonah is the greatest and most powerful sign that will ever be given to men. And once more the Sign of the Prophet Jonah is the sign of the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To meditate upon the atonement of Christ, as provided in the Gospel Plan, is like walking thru Elysian Fields in the Garden of God. It is a breathing of the sinless atmospheres of the Kingdom Glory, a drinking of the Waters of Life which proceed from the Holiness of the Throne of God, and a basking in the Sunlight of Christ's Redemptive Work. But we must not tarry among these spiritual perfumes nor rest on the banks of the River of Life, for there is work to do. And this is the work of God: "that you Believe on Him whom He hath sent." Nor can we find a field for Spiritual research that will yield greater values to Christian Experience, nor a surer anchorage for active Faith, than that of the Finished Work of Christ, as revealed to the Church in the Atonement of His Blood.

The period of time covered while Jesus lay in the tomb has presented a subject for vast discussion even though this period is expressly stated to be Three Days and Three Nights, Matt. 12:40, by the Lord Jesus, Himself. Yet, volumes have been written to prove that it was much less. The oft repeated expression of the Gospel that: "the Third Day He shall rise from the dead," has been greatly stressed in an effort to prove that Christ was crucified on Friday, as the Catholic Church declares, and that He rose again Sunday, the First day of the week. This would leave Christ in the grave but one day, for the Jewish Sabbath began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown of Saturday. For long centuries the offering of the Wave Sheaf "on the morrow after the Sabbath" had established fact that the Resurrection of Christ must take place on the first day of the week - that is, our Sunday - and all christendom seems agreed on this vital point. Thus, all one has to do in order to arrive at the truth of the matter is to measure back Three Days, which brings us to the evening of Wednesday, when the

body of Jesus was laid in the tomb. Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, and in the year that He died, Wednesday was the 14th Nisan, and the 14th Nisan was the very day commanded of God for the slaying of the Passover Lamb. Thus, Christ lay in the grave all of Thursday, all of Friday, and all of Saturday until sundown, when the first day of the week began!

Why the period of the Atonement should be Three Days is capable of but one explanation. First, it was to preserve the flawless record of the Word of God; and second, to reveal the mighty fact that in the Atonement, The Godhead Bodily were involved as The Father, The Son, and The Blessed Holy Spirit. This truth is shadowed in some of the Holiest Oracles committed to the care of the People of God.

But we are not interested in the theological details nearly so much as we are in the Face of His Resurrection with its priceless blessings and promise of the future life and Glory. The Ministry of Jesus began with the testimony of the Father God to the Deity of His only begotten Son, namely: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and that Ministry ended on Calvary's Cross, a perfect Work. Jesus had offered Himself by the eternal Spirit without spot to God; He had not faltered nor failed in the perfect accomplishment of that which had been committed to Him. The Second Adam had passed through the test, scatheless. God's New Man had proved Himself capable of living a sinless life in the Temple of His Body, thus making Himself equal with God! Jehovah was under no necessity of changing His initial testimony, for He was still well pleased with His obedient Son. Thus the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the crowning witness of God to the absolute Deity of His Son, and the Seal of the Atonement wrought by His Blood. This was God's way of destroying the last enemy, death. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ banished forever the gloom and darkness of the tomb, and covered the grave with His own eternal Glory.

At the presence of the lifegiving Spirit of God "the keepers did shake and become as dead men;" the Rocks were rent, and the invisible realms of the dead were shaken to their deepest foundations. Life came out of death - mortality had put on immortality - the natural man had become a spiritual man - the earthly had become the Heavenly - and death was swallowed up in the perfect Victory of the Cross. The sting of death was forever gone, and there was life after death for all who would believe.

It was Resurrection Power that lifted Enoch from earth to Glory. It was Resurrection Power that restored Isaac, the beloved son, to the arms of his Father, Abraham, after the Three Days journey of death. It was the Power of the Resurrection which carried the millions of Israel through the Red Sea dryshod. The Three Day journey into the wilderness was the foundation for the Covenant of Healing, namely: "I am the Lord that Healeth thee," Ex. 15:26. It was the Resurrection Power which carried Israel over the Jordan and into the inheritance of the Promised Land - that smashed the Walls of Jericho - which fed Israel in the desert - that brought Water from the Smitten Rock, Ex. 17:6, and which prevented their clothes from wear and tear during the Forty Years of wandering. It was Resurrection Power that preserved the life of the Prophet Jonah, and which brought Repentance to the Ninevites, Lk. 24:45. It was Resurrection Power which brought Christ again from the dead, and that smashed the gates of the grave. It was the Power of the Resurrection which was bestowed upon the Church on the Day of Pentecost, and looking ahead, it will be the Power of the Resurrection - in the Baptism with the Holy Ghost - that will bring God's Plan to its ultimate of complete Redemption in the Glory of the Perfect Church, Eph. 5:26-27.

It will be the Power of the Resurrection - at the end of the Present Age - which will bring from the grave all the Righteous Dead of every age and time and reveal the Kingdom of our God. The death of Christ was a crushing blow to all the disciples; not one of them had in any wise comprehended His teaching concerning it. They did not expect Him to Rise from the Dead. The visit to the tomb in the early hours of the morning by the women was but to bring spices with which they could more perfectly embalm His Body, for they had not expectation that the horrid silence of death would ever be broken. Their hope was gone.

To satisfy the Priests of Jewry, the grave was sealed with the signet of Pilate, and a guard of soldiers were set to allay their fears, and every precaution was taken to prevent the theft of the body from its grave. Back and forth paced the soldiers one day and one night with nothing unusual taking place. The second day and night - nothing hapened. The Third day came to its close as the Sun went down, when suddenly! The Angel of the Lord descended and the stone was rolled away. In the twinkling of an eye the Life of the Spirit had filled the bruised body of the Savior, and He rose from the dead, and went out into the garden in Magnificent and Glorious Peace.

He outbreathed eternal life. No anger, no condemnation, no reproaches. Nothing but the outbreathings of His Marvelous and Perfect Love. Oh, how He loved the world in those first hours of His Resurrection Life! How he longed to impart the Word of His Resurrection to His beloved disciples! Coming up the garden path with bowed head and tearful eyes was the form of a woman who but a short time ago was filled with "Seven devils" a fallen

woman; a sinner of the lowest kind! But now she was pure and holy and good. Jesus stood in the shadows of the Rock, close by the tomb, as Mary Magdalene approached. She saw the empty tomb and the stone rolled away, and stood without the sepulchre, weeping. In a moment the Lord Jesus was by her side with her name on His lips - "Mary!" The news of His Resurrection was carried to His disciples, who simply thought of them as "Idle tales," but saw very soon that the Lord was risen Indeed!

The Glory and Power of that Resurrection has swept through the hearts of thousands of millions - yes, many have believed. Though some have said that there was no resurrection from the dead and have made light of this truth, yet there are countless hosts of the saints who know its wonderful Power, and who have been sealed with its glorious seal. The Magdalenes of the centuries have believed and have been saved, while today the eyes of the Children of God everywhere are looking heavenward and waiting for the Coming of the Lord. "For the Lord Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel and with the Trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise First . . . wherefore comfort one another with these words." I Thess 4:16. "With great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all," Acts 4:33. The greatest words ever uttered by the Son of God are these - "I am the resurrection and the Life, and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die," John 11:25-26. This utterance was followed by the most wonderful demonstration of Resurrection Power ever wrought upon the human body, for Jesus made His way to the grave where Lazarus lay, and causing the stone to be rolled away, He spake the Word, and Lazarus came forth from the Grave - bound hand and foot with graveclothes - and said Jesus, "loose him and let him go," John 11:23 to 44.

One other question often asked in connection with this subject is, "Where was the Lord Jesus for the Three Day and Three Night period He lay in the tomb?" For many centuries of time it has been taught that Jesus descended into Hell. In the Apostles creed of the Church of England - under which the writer was brought up - we used to repeat: "He was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell." The last clause of the quotation is absolutely wrong. Jesus did not descend into Hell! Hell was never made for the Son of God! If Jesus went to Hell to preach to the spirits in Hell, then the Catholic Church is right, and men do get a second chance; and purgatory and prayers for the dead are right also. But the Lord Jesus did not go down into Hell, nor any other place of departed spirits, nor does the Bible give us any such thought!

The scriptures used to establish these faulty interpretations are those found in the 1st Epistle of Peter, 3:18; "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which, (that is, BY THE SPIRIT) He went and preached to the spirit in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." And that was the moment when the preaching was done. It was done by Noah, a preacher of Righteousness, in whom the Spirit of Christ was, or he could never have been a preacher of Righteousness, and the preaching was done just before the flood, and while the Ark was being prepared. Noah preached for one hundred and twenty years the wonderful righteousness of God to the ante diluvians, and the Righteousness of God is our Lord Jesus Christ!! Then it was that the Spirit of Christ preached, through Noah, the Righteousness of God, which alone could forstall the impending Judgements of God.

Again, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead," I Pet. 4:6, but it was preached to the ungodly multitudes in Noah's day while they were yet alive, and before the judgements of the flood came upon them, and swept them away forever. In the account of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man died and went into Hell. He pleaded for one drop of water to quench the agony of his burning thirst, but he received none, because there was a great gulf between them, and that gulf was impassable!! So the rich man said to Abraham, "I have five brethren; let him go and testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment," Luke 16:18-31. The rich man pleaded that if one went to them from the dead they would surely listen. But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them!"

Enough has been written to show to every honest heart that any communication between Heaven and Hell is absolutely impossible. And yet, because of faulty reading of the scripture, men seek to have the Son of God violate His own Word and go from the Cross of Calvary down into Hell - if Hell is down - and preach to a rebellious and polluted generation, whose very flesh was rotting on their bones because of Sodomitic sin. They were not fit to live; hence the fiat of God: "The end of all flesh is come before me," Gen. 6:13. And again, "And if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," Luke 16:31. How wonderfully true is all the Word of God. There is a vast and impassable gulf between the saint and the sinner - between Heaven and Hell. There is no second chance for any living soul because men go to Hell of their own choice! Before men can get into Hell they must spurn the sacrifice of Calvary and they must trample underfoot the Precious Blood of the Covenant, which alone can cleanse and sanctify us, Heb. 6:4; 10:29. It is not so easy as many think to get into Hell. God has barred the way; the Body and Blood of Jesus must be despised; the Word of God must be ignored, until men reach the impossible state.

There is no second chance of Salvation after death. For all who die in unbelief and sin, Christ died in vain! Jesus did not descend into Hell! Men live in the prison house of their own unclean bodies, and they are slaves to their own lusts. The teaching that Jesus descended into Hell and preached to the unclean hosts is near blasphemy. As the Son of God hung upon Calvary's Cross, His tri-partite nature was torn asunder. His Body hung shattered and bloodstained upon the tree. His Soul-life was poured out as an offering for sin, and the soul-life of all humanity is in the human bloodstream. But man has a tri-partite nature too - Body, Soul and Spirit. The last words of the Son of God - "Father, into Thy hands I commend MY SPIRIT" - set at rest all the questions as to where Jesus was during His sojourn in the grave*. He was in the Bosom of the Father - His work on earth was done - the Atonement was fully accomplished, and is at our disposal today. By the Atonement the spirit indwelt humanity was perfected and the Glory of the Lord fully revealed.

Resurrection Power is manifested in the unpolluted Virtue of the Godhead. It is the immortal enemy of sin, sickness and disease, and in the ultimate, of dying and death. Virtue destroys disease in answer to Faith. The woman touched the hem of His garment in faith, and she was instantly healed - made every whit whole. Jesus said, "Who touched me . . . for I perceive that Virtue has gone out of me." Virtue touched her, and corruption vanished. The Resurrection is definitely the Crowning Glory of the Atonement. The Seal of God upon the Finished Work of His only begotten Son; it is the Divine Oracle committed to the Church for its perfection, and for the bringing forth of a "Glorious Church" that is without Spot, or Wrinkle, or Any Such Thing, and fit to become the spotless Bride of the Lamb of God. AMEN

- Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42,43 NIV (editor's note)