

Sunday, September 23, 2012

Where Is Christ's Resurrection "On The Third Day" Pictured in the Old Testament?

In 1 Corinthians 15:4 the apostle Paul says that Christ "was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures". Have you ever wondered where the third day is mentioned in the Old Testament and how does it picture the resurrection of Christ?

Here are some of the occurrences of "the third day" that are mentioned in the Old Testament. Think about how these examples could foreshadow the resurrection of Christ "on the third day":

- Life sprang up out of the ground "on the third day" of creation (Gen. 1:12-13). Similarly, Psalm 85:11 says, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." Cyril of Jerusalem (313 - 386 A.D.) affirms, "A garden was the place of His Burial, and a vine that which was planted there: and He hath said, *I am the vine!* He was planted therefore in the earth in order that the curse which came because of Adam might be rooted out. The earth was condemned to thorns and thistles: the true Vine sprang up out of the earth, that the saying might be fulfilled, *Truth sprang up out of the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven.*" (Catechetical Lectures, Lecture 14, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, see Phillip Schaff, *Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 96-97.)
- Isaac, his father's only son, carried the wood for the burnt offering up to Mount Moriah (Mt. Calvary), willingly laid himself on the altar in complete obedience to his father, and then he received back his life "as a type" (Gen. 22:1-14, cf. Heb. 11:17-19), "on the third day" (Gen. 22:4).
- Dinah was rescued from Shechem's house "on the third day" (Gen. 34:25-26).
- Pharaoh's chief cupbearer was released from prison "on the third day" (Gen. 40:20).

- Joseph's brothers were released from custody "on the third day" (Gen. 42:17-18).
- Moses was permitted to leave the company of the Israelites and ascend Mount Sinai "on the third day" (Ex. 19:10-25; cf. Deut. 5:24).
- The defiled Israelites outside the camp were cleansed and released from death "on the third day" (Num. 19:11-13, 19, 31:19).
- The two Israelite spies told Rahab the harlot, "Our lives for your lives!" (Joshua 2:14). They hid for three days (they went "into the hills") and then they left their place of hiding alive (Josh. 2:15-24).
- The Israelites, led by the tribe of Judah, fought against the tribe of Benjamin due to a wicked act committed by men from the tribe of Benjamin. The men of Judah and Israel were killed in battle (Judges 20:1-29), but on the third day they set an ambush, and at exactly the right time ("on the third day" Judg. 20:30) they charged out of their hiding place (Judg. 20:33) and were victorious (see Judg. 20:30-35)! Then Judah and the tribes of Israel offered peace to the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 21:13-14).
- David hid in a field until the third day because King Saul wanted to kill him (1 Sam. 20:5, 12).
- David rescued Abigail and the village of Ziklag from the Amalekites "on the third day" (1 Sam. 30:1). David recovered everything and lost no one (1 Sam. 30:18-19, cf. Jn. 6:39). He also took great plunder from the enemy, which he then shared equally with his men. David also gave some of the plunder as gifts to the elders of Judah (1 Sam. 30:18-26). Similarly, Christ "when he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8).
- God sent a plague on Israel because of King David's sin, but on the third day the plague was stopped and the people were saved because David built an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. 24:10-25) and offered sacrifices to God. 2 Chronicles 3:1 identifies this location as Mount Moriah (cf. Gen. 22:2). Mt. Moriah is where Abraham offered up his only son Isaac and "received him back as a type" (Hebrews 11:19), "on the third day" (Gen. 22:4).

- Hezekiah was restored to life after a deadly sickness "on the third day" after he prayed (2 Kings 20:5).
- The second Jewish temple was rebuilt "on the third day" (Ezra 6:15). Similarly, Jesus said (speaking in reference to His physical body): "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He was speaking of the temple of His body" (Jn. 2:19-22).
- "On the third day" (Esther 5:1) Esther's life was spared by the king; she risked her own life to save her people from Haman's evil plot (see Esther chapters 5, 6, 7; cf. Esther 4:11).
- The prophet Hosea spoke of the resurrection of the nation of Israel, saying, "After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will restore us, that we may live in His presence" (Hosea 6:2).
- Jonah was in the stomach of a fish for "three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17-2:10). When the religious leaders of Israel asked Jesus for a sign, Jesus answered and said to them, "A wicked and adulterous generation demands a sign, and no sign will be given to it except for the sign of the prophet Jonah, for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:38-40).
- Christ died for our sins and was buried, but then He was raised to life "on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4; cf. Lk. 18:31-33, 24:44-48; Acts 10:40).

* * *

In regards to the Old Testament, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "*You examine the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is those very Scriptures that testify about Me*" (John 5:39).

Posted by Jonathan Perreault