JONAH-DEAD OR ALIVE?

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LECTURE-6

THE RESURRECTION

The Crowning Fact of the Gospel

"...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" (I Corinthians 15:3, 4).

"...Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

References to the Resurrection in the Old Testament

The great doctrines and facts of the Christian faith are amply illustrated in the Old Testament, Gospel truths going back to Genesis where we find Blood atonement and substitution. Grace and justification by faith are demonstrated in Abraham. Exodus is the book of redemption. Leviticus is the book of worship. The historical books afford practical lessons in Christian living. For example, the Book of Job teaches repentance, and the Book of Esther sets forth the providence of GOD.

However, no book seems to teach primarily the greatest fact of the Gospel: the resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. There is scant reference to this important feature of the Gospel. There are a few, including the following: the offering of Isaac by Abraham contains this important element (Hebrews 11:19); Aaron's rod that budded (Numbers 17), and the cleansing of the leper by the offering of the two birds (Leviticus 14) illustrated it. Psalm 16 is recognized as a Messianic Psalm emphasizing the resurrection.

The Resurrection in the New Testament

It would indeed be strange to find no book of the Old Testament committed to the resurrection, since there was not a sermon preached in the New Testament that did not have the resurrection as its center. The first message of Peter in the book of Acts and the last message of Paul set it forth as the central fact of the Gospel. It is the crowning fact of the Gospel. This is demonstrated in I Corinthians 15. This chapter is popularly conceded to be the resurrection chapter of the Bible, but a careful examination reveals that it is the Gospel chapter of the Bible. Paul opens with, **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel..."** It is true that he deals largely with the resurrection, but that is because it bulks

large in the Gospel message. When Paul declared in the first part of the Epistle that he **"determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,**" it is obvious from the 15th chapter that **"Jesus and Him crucified"** implied and included the resurrection.

The fact that there seems to be an omission of a book on the resurrection in the Old Testament makes little impression upon us, for the Church today gives the resurrection scant attention. The examination of any well-known theology book will reveal this. An entire volume is given over to the death of CHRIST, while fifteen pages are given as proper treatment of the vital doctrine of the resurrection. The contrast is obviously one-sided. Any modern hymnal will reveal that there are scores of hymns on the cross, which is proper and fitting, but it is nothing short of tragic to find a scant half-dozen on the empty tomb.

Once a year we observe Easter, and we preachers feel that one sermon a year on that subject is adequate. However, the writer preached one Sunday in August on the subject: "An Easter Sermon in Summer." It was nothing short of sensational, one dear lady remarking, "Why, it is just
like Easter Sunday." For even the crowd was there. It was too much of a novelty for the curious to miss. Every Sunday is Easter Sunday. We recognize the LORD's day, the first day of the week, because of the resurrection of CHRIST. If the New Testament preachers always preached an Easter sermon every time, then surely the pendulum of the clock is on the wrong side today.

The Resurrection Problem Today

The fact of the resurrection seems to create an embarrassing problem for the Church. It means that we have a living CHRIST on our hands. The "liberal" finds this a very awkward situation, to say the least. Easter is a Sunday when hedging, evasion and downright misrepresentation are the rule. For some time the writer has taken positive delight (of the flesh) in scanning the subjects of liberal preachers for Easter Sunday. It would be more humorous than the comics if it were not for the fact that it is so tragic.

They adopt any sort of tactics to avoid the issue, and are evasive. A sermon topic for Christmas does not bother them, but Easter is a hurdle difficult to clear.

Several years ago a preacher in Chicago came out with this ingenious Easter subject: "Spring Is Here!" That is some event in Chicago, but a Southern California preacher was more restrained in the land of flowers and fruits, his subject being: "Easter Means Spring-time."

Jonah the Resurrection Book of the Old Testament

Jonah supplies the necessity of a book on the resurrection from the Old Testament. The statement in Jonah 2:9, **"Salvation is of the Lord"** becomes the key to the Book. The resurrection of JESUS is the crowning fact of the Gospel. It sets the seal of salvation on the death of CHRIST,

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). It is the proof for the present and a harbinger of the future. The present

ministry of CHRIST, as Intercessor, rests upon it and the future glory depends on it.

Salvation is in three tenses: We have been saved; we are being saved; we shall be saved. The death and resurrection of CHRIST furnish a complete salvation. **Salvation is what GOD has done in CHRIST for sinners. Salvation is GOD's work for man, and it is not man's work for GOD.**

1. It is accurate to say, **"We have been saved."** Scripture states this, as seen in the following verses:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God"(I Corinthians 1:18).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation; but is passed form death unto life" (John 5:24).

A person is never more saved than he is at the moment he accepts CHRIST as Saviour, for the death and resurrection procure a complete salvation that cannot be added to, and it secures every sinner who trusts CHRIST.

2. "We are being saved." As the other, the fact that we have been saved, is past, this is the present work of GOD. Scripture states this, also: **"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, For it is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Philippians 2:12-13). The first part of our salvation is a deliverance from the penalty of sin, and this latter is a deliverance from the power of sin.

3. "We shall be saved." "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13: 11). **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"** (1 John 3:2).

It is evident that GOD will deliver us from the presence of sin, and that we have not arrived at the goal of salvation. The total picture of salvation is told in Philippians 1:6, **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."** Salvation rests upon the death and resurrection of CHRIST. "**Salvation is of the Lord"** (Jonah 2:9).

Peter's statement to the Sanhedrin still stands: **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

The man healed at the beautiful gate of the temple stood there because of the resurrection of CHRIST: **"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead even by him doth this man stand here before you whole"** (Acts 4:10).

Jonah, appearing in Nineveh with a striking color produced by the gastric juices of the fish, was a sign to the Ninevites that GOD had a message for them. This man from the dead had a strange story to tell. It is recorded, **"So the people of Nineveh believed God."**

GOD has a strange story to tell to this generation. His Son was put to death on the cross, but He was raised from the dead. GOD asks men to believe that He did it for their salvation, inspired by His love for sinners. Sinner, believe it and live!

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