

Luke 24:33-49 (DHT)

³³Having arisen that hour they returned to Jerusalem, and they found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, ³⁴saying: The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon! ³⁵They began explaining the things on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the Bread. ³⁶But as they were speaking these things, he stood in their midst and said to them: Peace to you! ³⁷But having been terrified and filled with fear, they thought they had seen a ghost. ³⁸He said to them: Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? ³⁹See my hands and my feet, that I AM! Touch and see me, for a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see I have. ⁴⁰Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹Now while they were still disbelieving, for joy and amazement he said to them: Do you have anything here to eat? ⁴²They gave him a piece of a broiled fish, ⁴³and having taken it, he ate before them.

⁴⁴He said to them: These are my words I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms about me must be fulfilled. ⁴⁵Then he opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them: This is what has been written: The Messiah was to suffer and rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹Behold I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you must remain the city until you should be clothed with power from on high.

Introduction

Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus includes two Bible studies. In these two Bible studies, Jesus makes clear that his disciples *should have already known* that the Scriptures predicted his suffering, death, and resurrection. Now, what we call the New Testament (NT) is *not* what Jesus is talking about when he said “The Scriptures.” He is talking about what we call the Old Testament (OT). Our OT has all the same books as the Hebrew Bible (HB), but the HB does put them in a different order, and has since before the earthly life of Jesus. The HB was the Scriptures of Jesus, the disciples, and the early church. Even before his death, Jesus had a number of encounters with people he rebuked for neglecting what the Scriptures said, namely that the Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead.¹ His disciples should have paid attention to these Scriptures, for if they had then they would have believed. They were simply looking for a victor; a victor in their own eyes.

Many over the years have questioned the messianic focus of the HB. After all, there are only a few dozen messianic passages in this massive HB, so they say, so “Messiah” must merely be a marginal emphasis, if even that. By that same logic, however, the heroes of *The Chronicles of Narnia* would be Mr. and Mrs. Beaver; after all, they are mentioned a whole lot more often than Aslan. Equating the quantity of references to the quality is a non-sequitur. It is instead the

¹ E.g. Luke 11:51; 16:29-31; John 5:37-40; 20:9

gravity of the references to Messiah in the HB and at key moments, such as at the “canonical seams”² that lead us to affirm the Messiah is the center of the Scriptures.

However, much of our theological landscape has been shaped by a rejection of this idea. One prominent Reformer interprets Gen. 3:15 as promising the sureness of human-animal hostility, not the promise of a future-messiah.³ One leading scholar of our day, John Goldingay, has said the key to understanding the OT is to detach it from the NT.⁴ Another OT scholar of great influence today, Tremper Longman, bluntly says, “no psalm is messianic,”⁵ and elsewhere says it is “impossible to establish that any passage...[predicts] a future messianic figure.”⁶ This is why the preeminent scholar, Walter Kaiser, has called the interpretation of OT Messianism the defining issue for Evangelicalism and how the modern, western Church is to view Scripture.⁷

The Scriptural predictions of the Messiah’s resurrection were so central that they become part of the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel. There is not one sermon in Acts without at least one messianic prediction from the HB. Paul even summarized the Gospel like this in 1 Cor. 15:1-4—*I want to make clear for you...the Gospel I preached to you... The messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, [and] he was raised... according to the Scriptures.* In our passage, Jesus taught that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead; and he taught this from the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. These are the three sections of the HB, and these three sections are collectively called: “The Scriptures.” So what specific passages is Jesus talking about when he says the Messiah was to rise from the dead? To answer that, I am going to share a sample of passages with you: three from the Torah, one from the Prophets, and one from the Psalms, that predict the Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead.

The Law of Moses

Section one of the HB is called the Torah, or the Pentateuch, or the Law of Moses as it is in Luke 24. Genesis begins with an account of what God did in the *first days*. God prepared a special place for a special people and gave them a special purpose; but his people violated that purpose in that place. So God cursed the ground and the serpent, and he exiled his people. In

² Seth Postell, “Messianism in Light of Literary Strategy,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 177, no. 707, 2020.

³ John Calvin, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 1:167.

⁴ John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel’s Gospel* (Downers Grove: IV Press, 2003), 26-27.

⁵ Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove: IV Press, 1988), 67-68.

⁶ Tremper Longman III, “The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 13.

⁷ Walter Kaiser, “Review: The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of OT Messianic Texts.” *JETS* 42 (1999), 102.

doing so, God spoke the first promise in the Bible, told as a poem: *Enmity I will put between the serpent and the woman, between its seed and her seed. He shall bruise its head, and it shall bruise his heel.* Somehow, mysteriously, this mutual deathblow would reverse the curse of exile and return God’s people to his presence. The rest of Genesis seeks to answer the question: Who is the Seed of Eve? After tracing this line through Seth, Noah, and Shem, we get to Abraham, to whom God promised would be a catalyst of his blessing: *I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you; all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.*

Then the seed of blessing is traced through Isaac, Jacob, and then in the long poem of Genesis 49, Judah is the chosen child from which the royal seed of Eve will continue. These last words of Jacob to his sons begin with a significant Hebrew phrase: This is what will happen in *the last days*. God promised a king would rise from the tribe of Judah. This Lion of Judah will be rejected by his brothers and left to die, wearing garments stained with his own blood and the blood of the enemy-*brothers*. Following the death of this rejected future-king of *Israel*, the question is asked: Who shall raise him?

Following Genesis, the next narrative sequence leads to Numbers 23-24, also a long poem about *the last days* (Num. 24:14). The Israel-hating King of Moab commissioned a seer named Balaam to curse Israel. But Balaam could not curse the descendants of Abraham without being cursed himself, so he instead blessed Israel to the dismay of his commissioner. The Moabite king gave Balaam several chances, but each oracle “against” Israel got progressively more blessed. In these oracles, Balaam foretold of *the last days* when *a star will come from Jacob and a scepter will arise from Israel to crush the head of Moab...* (Num. 24:17). Balaam described this ruling star of Jacob as a lion who is rejected by the nations and left to die, wearing garments stained with his own blood and the blood of the enemy-*nations*. Following the death of this rejected future-king of the *nations*, the question is asked: Who shall raise him? (Num. 24:9)

Following the oracles of Balaam, the next narrative sequence leads to Deut. 31-32, also a long poem about *the last days*, specifically Israel’s exile from the Promised Land (Deut. 31:29). They hadn’t even entered yet, and Moses was already telling them they would be exiled from that Promised Land centuries down the road. Moses said they needed their hearts to be changed; their hearts needed to be circumcised because they, like the first generation after the flood, were wicked from their youth.

After saying these words, Moses died. Deut. 34:9-10 says this: *Joshua...was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid hands on him. So the Israelites obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. [But] no prophet has yet arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.* This is in direct reference to God’s promise to raise up a prophet like Moses from among the Israelites to rule them, and it is through this individual alone that God will reveal his will for his people (Deut. 18:15-18). Deut. 34 makes the profound claim that Israel was still waiting. The close of Deuteronomy, in the context of Moses’ final words about *the last days*, launches the hope that God would raise up the Royal Messiah who would return Israel from *exile*; an exile they hadn’t even started yet. This was the coming one who all are commanded to listen and obey.

The Torah has a strategic composition. Genesis begins with a poem about the *first days* with a promise of a coming individual who would reverse the curse of exile. The first narrative sequence ends with a long poem about *the last days* with an individual ruler killed by the Israelites, and the question is left hanging: Who shall raise him? The second narrative sequence ends with another long poem about *the last days* with an individual ruler killed by the nations, and the question is left hanging: Who shall raise him? The third narrative sequence ends with another long poem about *the last days* that *answers* the question left hanging in the previous two: Who shall raise him? Who shall raise him? *God* will raise him. When the Messiah who will reverse the curse of exile comes, he will be rejected by and suffer at the hands of the Israelites, and be killed by Gentile rulers. But in *the last days* this lion of Judah will not stay dead, for *none other than God* will raise him from the dead to reign over a never-ceasing kingdom that stretches to the ends of the earth. This is the *Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch*.⁸

The Prophets

Section two of the HB is called the Prophets. In the context of his grand narrative, “Isaiah saw the future glory of Israel and the work of the Messiah in the context of the end of the exile, speaking of a new beginning for Israel, a new creation, a new exodus, and a time when all the world will see the glory of the Lord.”⁹ In four poems called the Servant Songs, we read of an individual who represents all Israelites. The Israelites were supposed to be a light to the nations,

⁸ Kevin Chen, *Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: IV Press, 2019).

⁹ Michael Brown, “Isaiah 52:13-53:12: The Substitution of the Servant of the Lord” in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies & Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 2019), pg. 962.

but they failed in their repeated and unrepentant idolatry. The nation was supposed to be a vehicle through whom God would bless all the nations, but they failed by Pharisaically keeping God’s salvation to themselves. But it was this servant who was called for this mission from *before his birth*; one who is taught directly by God himself; one who is to be obeyed *equally* as much as God is to be obeyed. It is this servant, to whom God said: *It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations to be my salvation to the ends of the earth (49:6).*

Isaiah 53 is the fourth Servant Song. This poem describes the work of the servant that accomplishes this restoration from exile, and extends God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. This servant would grow up like a normal Israelite until he was rejected by the Israelites, and subjected to intense suffering at their hands. Ironically, it is the suffering and piercings that will heal the sickness of sin in God’s people and the nations. *We all went astray like sheep.* All of us when in exile did not turn toward God for mercy, but God turned toward this servant with his wrath instead of deservedly turning toward us for our sin. In the last three verses in this famous poem, Isaiah says: *Yet it was YHWH’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer; and though YHWH makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring; God will prolong his days, and the will of YHWH will be accomplished in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a great inheritance, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors...*

This innocent servant was crushed by God to satisfy God’s wrath due to our sin. What the Israelites who rejected him and the Gentile rulers who killed him intended for evil, God intended to accomplish his good will, that many would receive salvation from their sin and return to him from their exile (cf. Gen. 50:20). Do you notice in Psalm 53 that the servant dies and yet continues to have life? *Because* he poured out his life as an offering for the guilt of his people and the nations; *because* he did this in accordance with God’s will, God will prolong his days; God will give him the light of life; and the many who are justified by his death are given to him as an inheritance; an inheritance he will *see* as the resurrected mediator between God and man. Isaiah 53 is not just a depiction of a man of sorrows; it is also a depiction of God raising the Messiah from the dead. Who shall raise him? *None other than God* will raise him to secure the justification of his people in exile (cf. Rom. 4:25). This is the messianic vision of the Prophets.

The Psalms (Writings)

Section three of the HB is called “The Writings.” Since a majority of this section is in its opening book alone, the section is sometimes more simply referred to as “The Psalms,” as it is in Luke 24. Psalm 16 has great theological significance in a book of poems all about establishing God’s promise of a future Messianic King-like-David.¹⁰

“Psalm 15 describes Israel’s ideal king, one who lives a pious life, and who, therefore qualifies to dwell in the Lord’s holy mountain (Ps 15:1-5a). David assures us that this ideal king will “never be moved” (Ps 15:5b). [Psalm 16] takes up this confident hope: ‘I keep the LORD in mind always. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be [moved],’ (Ps 16:8; see 17:5). This confidence leads to assurance of the king’s eternal pleasures at God’s right hand (Ps 16:11), which was defined in the preceding psalm as the Lord’s tent and holy mountain (Ps 15:1). In order to ascend to the mount of the Lord (Ps 15:1), the king must first descend into the grave and conquer death (Ps 16:10:11).”¹¹

Psalm 16:8-11 say this: *The LORD is at my right hand, I will not be moved. Therefore my heart rejoices; my body also rests securely. For you will not abandon me to Sheol; you will not allow your faithful one to see decay. You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures.*

“The King described in Ps 16:10...is an ideal king who walks blamelessly and has clean hands (Ps 15:2; 24:4), a king who has been viciously assaulted and put to death (Ps 17:9-12; 22:12-18), who loves the Torah more than gold or silver (Ps 19:1), whom David identifies as the Messiah (Ps 18:50; 20:6). Not only is this king blameless (Ps 15:2; 18:23, 25, 32; 19:13)... [He] is laid in the grave [but he] does not experience [the decay of the grave].”¹² For the grave was merely borrowed space. David knew he was not talking about himself (Acts 2:24-31). David knew he was talking about the Messiah who would suffer and die before conquering death by rising to the everlasting throne God promised to his seed *in the last days* (cf. 2 Sam.7). It would be precisely through the Messiah’s resurrection from the dead that all repentant hearts remaining in exile would be brought back to life with God. This is the messianic vision of the Psalms.

¹⁰ See the Chiasm in *Moody*, page 519

¹¹ Seth Postell, “Psalm 16: The Resurrected Messiah” in *Moody*, 521.

¹² *Ibid*, 524

The Canonical Seams Provide a Unified Messianic Expectation

So we have a sample from the Law of Moses from about 1,400 BC, a messianic sample from the Psalms from about 975 BC, and a messianic sample from the Prophets from about 725 BC. Nearly 700 years separate this sampling of passages, and yet they are all ultimately rooted in God’s first promise from Genesis 3:15—a Messiah would come to reverse the curse of exile precisely *through* his death and resurrection by none other than God himself. The Scriptures provide us a unified witness, leading us to the expectation of a Risen Messiah. I mentioned to you that the Pentateuch has a strategic composition. This is also true of the whole HB. We can see this in the “canonical seams,” the passages that begin and end each of these three sections.

Section 1, the Pentateuch, ends with the future hope that God would raise up a Prophet-Like-Moses. Section 2, the Prophets, ends with the future hope that God would raise up a prophet-like-Elijah to announce the arrival of this Messiah (Mal. 4:5-6). How peculiar it is that Moses and Elijah are who appear at the messianic coronation of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration! The endings to the first and the second sections of the HB are linked with a unified vision that extends into *the messianic last days*.

Section 2, the Prophets, and Section 3, the Writings, both begin in a strikingly similar way. In Joshua 1, we read: *This book of Torah must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night... For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do*. And in Psalm 1, we read: *Blessed are those whose delight is in the Torah of the LORD; he meditates on it day and night... In all he does he prospers*. Just as the first and second sections are linked by their endings, so also the second and third sections are linked by their beginnings; beginnings that call us to remember God’s faithfulness from the past; endings that call us to expect God to remain faithful in the future.

Section 1, the Pentateuch, begins with the entrance of sin into God’s ideal creation and the exile of humanity from his presence. Section 3, the Writings, ends with the edict of Cyrus from Persia, “freeing” Israel from the exile. Whereas the prophets foretold a rebuilt temple whose splendor surpassed Solomon’s temple, we read in Ezra-Nehemiah that the people were despondent at the lack of splendor in this second temple. That should come as no surprise, for the Glory of YHWH did not fill the second temple as it had the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple. In other words, while the people were geographically back in Jerusalem, their hearts had not been made right with God; their worship was not humble and repentant; their isolationist spirituality

left them proud, stubborn, and legalistic, *just as Moses has said*. The exile was “over,” but not really, and the HB ends with the hope of a resurrected messiah yet to be fulfilled.

And then God was silent for four hundred years; no prophets, no priests, no kings. These four hundred years of silence leave the Israelites feeling their God had forsaken them, just as they did after 400 years of waiting in Egypt. But as Isaiah told us, a New Exodus is coming.

According to the Scriptures

These four hundred years of silence are difficult to grasp, for from our vantage point we simply turn the page from 2 Chronicles 36 into Matthew 1, where we are introduced to a man named Jesus, and we’re introduced to him with a genealogy. There are actually only two books in the whole Bible that immediately begin with genealogies: Chronicles, the last book of the HB, and Matthew, the first book of the NT. We’re introduced to this man Jesus whose genealogy tells us he’s the descendant of David, Judah, and Abraham. It is this individual who is *called the Messiah, for he will save his people from their sins* (Matt. 1:16, 21). It is this Jesus who lived a totally innocent life; he never once violated any of God’s commands; he never once loved himself more than his neighbor. He lived the life that each and every one of us fail to live. Despite coming to save God’s people, it was his very own people, his fellow Israelites, who rejected him as their Messiah, and who handed him over to Gentile rulers to torture him to death. This was the Coming One the Israelites for millennia had expected and they killed him. But he was not abandoned in Sheol; he did not experience the decay of death, for two days later, on the third day, this Jesus was raised from the dead by none other than God himself (cf. Rom. 10:9).

The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not get this. Have you ever noticed they were walking *away* from Jerusalem; they were on a self-exile away from where they, their people, and all the Gentiles nations should have been streaming toward (cf. Isa. 2:2-4).¹³ *We were hoping he was the one to save us! But alas, he has died*. In those 400 years of silence, they lost a grip on the messianic vision of the Scriptures, that Israel’s redemption would come not in contradistinction from death, but precisely *through* death. The Author of Life had to die and be raised from the dead to demonstrate his power over death. Contrary to John Owen, the death of death is in the

¹³ N.T. Wright, “Walking to Emmaus in a Postmodern World” in *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is* (Downers Grove: IV Press, 2015), 150-174.

resurrection of Christ.¹⁴ And then Jesus, still hidden from their vision, gave them a Bible study unlike any other. He opened up to them *all the things concerning himself* in the Scriptures. Jesus broke bread with them, they realized who he was, he vanished, and with great joy, they realized they were wrong! The Messiah they were hoping for had indeed come, so they left Emmaus and *returned to Jerusalem*.

While in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared again to more of his disciples; he opened their minds to the Scriptures they had misread and taken for granted. Luke summarized Jesus’ Masterclass, saying: *the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead the third day that forgiveness and salvation may be declared to the ends of the earth, beginning in Jerusalem*. Jesus showed this to them from all three sections of the HB: the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is the consistent vision of the *entire HB*, written over the course of centuries: the Messiah must suffer and be raised from the dead, and this resurrection must be proclaimed to all the earth.

The consistent witness of the HB before the earthly life of Jesus cast a clear vision of a Messiah who would reverse the curse of exile precisely *through* his death and resurrection. The consistent testimony of the NT writings is that Jesus was the one the Scriptures predicted would come, and that any and all who now put their faith in his resurrection will be saved from their sins and brought back into the presence of God to live with God, unhindered by sin, unscathed by the brokenness of our world, for all eternity.

Have you put your faith in the resurrection of Jesus? On this conviction alone hangs all human history; all meaning for your life, for this conviction alone directs every fiber of how we see God; how we see one another; how we see our sin; how we see ourselves; and ultimately how we live. If you have not put your faith in Jesus as your Resurrected Lord and Savior, then I invite you to do so now. While our sins are many, his mercy is more; while our shame floods us with grief, his grace is sufficient. Jesus is the sure foundation in whom your soul will find refuge. Only when you put your faith in Jesus will your exile truly be over; only then will the chasm that separates you from the presence of God because of your sin finally be bridged. Believe today in the victorious resurrection of Jesus; and if you do he will change your heart—the very thing you need to live right with God. Believe today in the victorious resurrection of Jesus and he will transform your life in preparation for life in the presence of God, as was intended in the garden.

¹⁴ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*.

If you have repented of your sins; if you have put your faith in the resurrection of Jesus, then with millions around the world and throughout history, we can confess boldly these words from the Nicene Creed: “We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ... For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he...was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. [And] the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.”¹⁵

Let’s Pray.

¹⁵ <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds/nicene-creed>