

How Old Testament Prophecy Works



Resurrection (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture.

My theme this week relates to the single most important event that has ever taken place in human history. It also looks forward to the next major climax due to take place in human history. It can be summed up in one dramatic and powerful word: Resurrection.

In my introductory talk yesterday, I explained that the Gospel consists of three simple historical facts and I based that statement on the words of Paul in 1st Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 4. I'll read those verses again:

> "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that 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." (NKJ)

You'll see there the three facts. Christ died. He was buried. He rose again. I pointed out that on this basis, Christianity differs from other major religions in three important respects. First of all, it centers in the person of Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, there could be no Christianity. It's not merely that He propounded the truths on what happened in His life, that the entire Gospel is based. This is not true of other major religions. Another person by a different name could have propounded those religions and it wouldn't have changed their essential nature, but the Gospel centers in a person, Jesus Christ. Secondly, it's rooted in history. It depends upon the truth or the falsehood of certain historical statements. If they are true, the Gospel is true. If they're not true, the Gospel is not true. And thirdly, it is verified in personal experience. It claims that for those who believe the three facts and obey the teaching related to them, there will be produced in those persons a definite, powerful, supernatural

transformation which could not be produced by any other means. So it is based on human experience.

Now my talk today will be based on one phrase from 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, one vitally important phrase. That's in verse 4 of the chapter where Paul says, concerning Jesus, that He was buried and then that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. That's the phrase that I want to deal with today, according to the Scriptures and we have to bear in mind that when Paul wrote those words, the New Testament, as a complete set of scriptures, did not yet exist. And so when Paul says according to the Scriptures, he means the Old Testament Scriptures, not primarily the New Testament Scriptures. So the confirmation of Christ's resurrection is to be found in the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament. Now, to appreciate this, we need to understand how Old Testament prophesy works. What is the principle that brings forth the truth in Old Testament prophesy. This is explained for us by the Apostle Peter in his first Epistle in some words that are of great importance for our theme. First Peter, chapter 1, verses 10 through 12; this is what Peter says:

> "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, [So Peter says, like Paul, this grace of the Gospel was predicted by the Old Testament prophets. He goes on to say,] searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (NKJ)

So we'll see the essential facts about Old Testament prophesy are that the Spirit of Christ was in the Old Testament prophets and He testified through them of two things concerning Christ the Messiah, first of all His sufferings, and then the glories that would follow out of His sufferings.

Let me sum up that in two important points. First of all, it was the Spirit of Christ, the Messiah, in the first person, speaking through the Old Testament prophets and secondly, that Spirit of Christ in them predicted two main phases in the experience of Christ, first, His sufferings, and second, His glory.

Now, we're going to look at two specific examples of this from the writings of the Prophet David in the Book of Psalms and bear in mind that the New Testament calls David a prophet. Much of what is written in the Psalms is prophesy. The first passage from David's writings is in Psalm 22, verses through 18 where he says:

> "For dogs have surrounded Me; The assembly of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." (NKJ)

Now I want you to notice that David, speaking in the first person, says that a lot of things happened which never happened to David, and yet he speaks in the first person. He says, "They pierced My hands and My feet." That did not happen to David. "They divide My garments among them." That did not happen to David. "For my clothing they cast lots." That did not happen to David and yet David speaks in the first person. What's the explanation? The explanation is given by the Apostle Peter. It was the Spirit of Christ, of the Messiah, speaking to them, saying things that were not true about the prophets who spoke them, but were to be fulfilled in the experience of Jesus.

And then we look at another passage in the writings of David in Psalm 69, verses 20 and 21:

> "Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (NKJ)

You see again, David speaks in the first person and he says things that never happened in his experience, "For my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." There's no record that ever happened to David yet the experience he describes did happen to Jesus and it's carefully recorded in the New Testament. All the things that I've read there out of the writings of David in the Psalms were fulfilled, not in his experience, but in the experience of Jesus in the New Testament. Listen to these two verses from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, verses 34 and 35:

> "They gave Him vinegar mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. [That's Jesus on the cross. The next verse says] Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." (NKJ)

Notice the things that David said about himself in the first person that were not fulfilled in his experience were fulfilled

in the crucifixion of Christ and the writer of the New Testament says they were fulfilled that it might be fulfilled which were spoken by the prophet. In other words, this was the outworking of the prophesies of the Old Testament.

Now I want to turn to the Prophet Isaiah and I want to give you an example of the same principle in the prophesies of Isaiah. In other words, the Spirit of Christ, the Messiah speaking through Isaiah in the first person, of things which never happened to Isaiah but which were fulfilled in Jesus. This is the passage, Isaiah 50, verses 5 and 6:

> "The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me. And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." (NKJ)

Now there's no record or suggestion that those things happened in the experience of Isaiah and yet he says them in the first person. What is the explanation? Well, we've already seen it. It was the Spirit of Christ, the Messiah, in Isaiah speaking of things that were to be fulfilled in the experience of Jesus. And again, the New Testament very carefully records the fulfillment of these things.

First of all, in Matthew 26:67, speaking about Jesus after He had been arrested, it says, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands." And we read in Isaiah 50, verse 6, "I gave my cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting," fulfilled exactly in the experience of Jesus, not of Isaiah. And then in Matthew, chapter 27, verse 26 we read again concerning Jesus, "Then Pontius Pilot released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified." Notice Jesus was scourged before He was crucified. It had to be so because Isaiah had said in chapter 50, verse 6, "I gave My back to those who struck Me." So, in the scourging of Jesus, those words were fulfilled, "I gave my back to those who struck me." They were not fulfilled in Isaiah. They were fulfilled in Jesus.

So, you see the principle again, and it's very, very important to understand this principle. The prophets said at times, in the first person, things that did not happen to them, but did happen to Jesus. The explanation given by Peter, the Spirit of Christ, the Messiah, was in those prophets speaking in the first person, testifying of things that were to happen in the experience of Jesus and primarily of two successive phases. First, His sufferings, and then the glory that was to follow.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. In my talk tomorrow I'll further develop this theme of Old Testament prophesy. I'll be sharing with you some specific Old Testament prophesies of Christ's resurrection.

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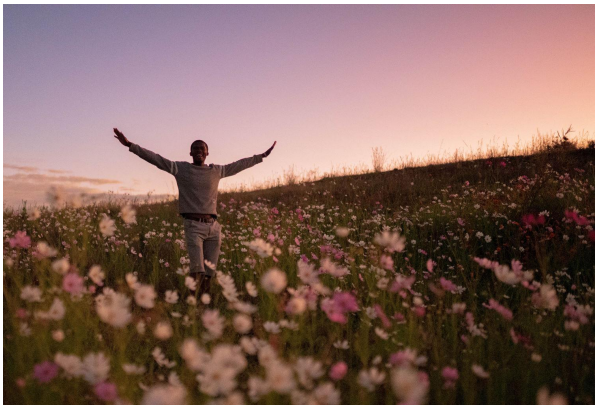

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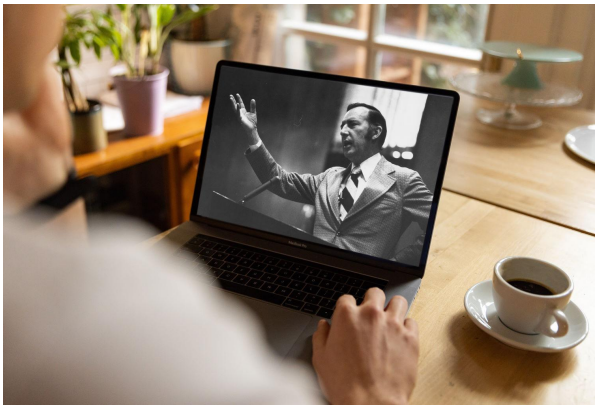

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