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# THE OLD TESTAMENT BASIS FOR THE RESURRECTION FAITH

by IRWIN REIST

**P**ROFESSOR REIST, Associate Professor of Bible at Houghton College, New York, examines the Old Testament basis for the primitive church's confession that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead; he expounds the biblical perspective and opens up some promising areas of discussion.

## 1. THE CENTRALITY OF THE RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### A. *The New Act of God in Christ in the New Testament*

A careful consideration of the New Testament documents reveals that the resurrection was the crowning act of history for the primitive Church. It was because Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead that His life, teachings, ministry, and death had formal and material significance for the early disciples. The apostolic preaching consisted of six basic elements according to the now famous studies of C. H. Dodd: <sup>1</sup>

- (1) God's new age had come in Jesus Christ
- (2) this coming centred in Christ's death, ministry, and resurrection which occurred according to the Scriptures<sup>2</sup>
- (3) Jesus the Christ had been exalted to God's right hand as Messianic Lord by His resurrection
- (4) the existence of the Church as a dynamic fellowship was proof of the gift of the Spirit
- (5) the messianic age will be consummated by the return of Christ
- (6) all men are called upon to repent and receive God's gift of the Spirit.

This new act of God in Christ enabled the apostles to proclaim in their speaking and writing the climax of all of God's deeds in history in the Old Testament. The right starting point for them was the resurrection of Christ. Christ the resurrected Lord was for them the central, controlling concept of their message and of

<sup>1</sup> Summarized in G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology As Recital* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Note here the reference "according to the Scriptures". The early church had a Bible, the Old Testament, and she believed that in the climactic event of Jesus Christ and His resurrection was to be found the fulfilment of the Old Testament eschatological hope.

their method of biblical interpretation.<sup>3</sup> For the early church, the Old Testament

... was not only a record of specifically prophetic utterances, but a series of divine acts which reached their climax and found their fulfilment in the redemption brought about by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

Hence the overwhelming references to the resurrection in the apostolic preaching and writing. The apostles did not invent the doctrine of the resurrection; they, like the Pharisees, already believed in it. Their unique emphasis was that they believed that the eschatological promise of the resurrection in the Old Testament and the inter-testamental development of the doctrine had been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. For them the promised act had occurred; for the Pharisees and pre-Christian Judaism it was yet to come. Hence the apostolic church had a ready language to express her faith in the resurrected Lord, the Old Testament and inter-testamental expression; she did not have to search for one. The coupling of the two elements (the language of apocalyptic and pre-Christian Judaism and the historical resurrection of Jesus) crystallized into the predominant message of the primitive community.

... Pannenberg analyzes the meaning of resurrection within the context of apocalyptic eschatology in post-exilic Judaism. Jesus and his disciples shared this expectation; the clear eschatological hope for a resurrection hope already existed before the resurrection happened. When it happened there was a ready vehicle of communication.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most important passage in the New Testament revealing the centrality of the resurrection and its importance in God's redemption is 1 Corinthians 15. Here, in a concise summary of the early apostolic preaching, Paul states that Christ was raised according to the Scriptures and then goes on to speak of the relevance of this fact for Christian faith, preaching, worship, and eschatological hope. In Matthew 28: 18-20, the evangelistic task of the church is made dependent upon the risen Christ and his word of command and promise. In Philippians 3: 10-14, the

<sup>3</sup> F. V. Filson, "The Focus of History", *Interpretation*, 2 (1948), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> R. V. G. Tasker, *The Old Testament In The New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1946), p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> C. E. Braaten, "The Theme of the Future In Current Eschatologies", *The Record, Lutheran School of Theology*, Vol. 71, No. 3, August, 1966, p. 9.

resurrected Christ is shown to be the impulse toward transformed Christian living and the magnet which draws the believer to the final eschatological act of glorification. In Acts 2: 31-32; 26: 16-18; 17: 30-31, the preaching of the church, the repentance of the sinner, and the present and future deeds of God are keyed to the resurrected Christ. In his great doctrinal epistle, Romans, Paul hangs the cardinal themes of reconciliation (or atonement) and justification upon the resurrection of Christ in 4: 25. For the apostolic witness, then, the resurrection was not a sidelight of the kerygma, but was the heart of its message. The Christ-event was the midpoint from which the early church looked at the past acts of God and toward the future, final act of God's eschatological workings.

The Christ-event at the mid-point, that is to say, is on its part illuminated by the Old Testament preparation after this preparation has received its light from that very mid-point. . . . The death and resurrection of Christ enable the believer to see in the history of Israel the preparation for Jesus, the crucified and Risen One.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus Christ is the second Adam who makes all things new.

### *B. The Foundation for the New Act of God in Christ Found in the Old Testament Scriptures*

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15: 4 that Jesus Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. He focuses for us the idea that the early church found evidences of Christ's resurrection foretold in the Old Testament:

The New Testament also sees Jesus as promised in the Old Testament. . . . The ability to see the Old Testament in this light came through the resurrection of Christ, for it was the risen Christ who opened the eyes of the Emmaus disciples to understand the Old Testament Scriptures as centring in Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the hope and expectation of the Old Testament; that in Christ's life, death and resurrection, *i.e.* in the Christ-event which is the one, great redemptive act of God, "all the powerful deeds of God were climaxed and consummated."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, revised edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> D. P. Fuller, *Easter Faith and History* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> S. Szekszai, "The Place of the Old Testament", *Theology and Life*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring, 1964, p. 30.

The author of the Gospel of John writes that Abraham saw the day of Christ and that the Christ existed before Abraham (John 8: 56-58). These words are the words of Jesus Himself. One of the central figures of the Old Testament then, Abraham, is pictured by the New Testament as participating in his life in the presence of the New Testament Redeemer. Again, Jesus declares that Isaiah saw the glory of the Christ in his own day and thus predicted His coming (John 12: 38-41). The author of Acts (2: 25-31) states that it was the belief of the early church that a physical descendant of David was to partake of the throne. This descendant in the New Testament is the bodily resurrected Christ. Paul writes that it was actually Christ who gave Israel food and drink in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10: 11). Moses is pictured as participating in the sufferings of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11: 26). Finally, Peter states that the Old Testament prophets spoke and wrote under the influence of the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1: 11). This cursory survey shows that the New Testament does find Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Thus there is a Christological unity revealed between the Old Testament and the New Testament. This unity was unassailable for the primitive church. The problem is to find that unity in its distinctive feature or features in order to see if the resurrection in any sense of the New Testament understanding of the concept can be found in the eschatological hope of the Old.

## II. THE CONTROLLING INTERPRETATIVE PRINCIPLE OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The question of the unity of the Testaments drives one to the problem of the nature of the Bible. What is its essence? Can an Old Testament interpretation, presupposing a Christological unity between the Old and New Testaments, find any one concept which will bind the two Testaments together or is the attempt inevitably doomed to failure?

### *A. The History-of-Religions Motif*

This older view emphasized the mythical-speculative nature of the language of the Old Testament through which were manifested the main themes and ideas of the progressive evolutionary unfolding of God who was seen as working within the consciousness of man and the processes of nature.

This school conceived of the development of Israel's religion within the framework of an evolutionary pattern. According to this school, starting from animism and polydemonism, Israel's religion passed through the stages of polytheism and henotheism, until finally—during the Babylonian exile—it arrived at the pinnacle of ethical monotheism.<sup>9</sup>

All other forms of Israel's religious life and thought were made subservient to the natural unfolding of the religious consciousness of man. The current onslaught of archaeological finds, cultural disasters, sober biblical exegesis and sympathy with the uniqueness of the biblical witness has relegated this principle to a secondary level. There is a unique Hebrew cast to the Old Testament, not a general, cultural emphasis.<sup>10</sup>

### B. *The Heilsgeschichte School*

The radical difference between the Israelite mind and that of the nations around it can be seen in the relative emphasis that each placed upon nature and history. God's unveiling in history is the dominant theme of the Bible. In other nations of the Near East, including Greece, the world of nature was the sphere of the divine activity. In Israel, nature is subordinated to the historical mode. In the Old Testament, God's revelation is bound to the history of a specific people.

Redemptive history means that God acts in history, and that behind, beyond, and above all the human aspects of history, it is God who through his saving will gives purpose, good, consistency and meaning to history, but it is nothing else than history.<sup>11</sup>

God invades the normal, linear development of history and chooses a special people in whose history He acts in special deeds and events for their salvation. This series of special acts over the years constitutes the history of redemption. The Old Testament cannot be understood apart from this special view of history, so that in the eyes of this school the common ideas school of comparative religions never reached the heart of the biblical witness.

### C. *The Allegorical School*

The allegorical school early made its appearance in the church in the Epistle of Barnabas. It was an attempt to glean from Scripture spiritual lessons and stimuli through a somewhat fanciful

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> E. W. Ohrenstein, "Immortality In The New Testament", *Encounter*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Winter, 1961, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Szekszai, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

extension of the persons, events, and ideas so that without biblical or historical warrant "truths" were presented for the edification of the spiritual life. "Allegory is not so much concerned with facts as in their assembly, from which it draws out useful and hidden doctrine."<sup>12</sup> Allegory sacrifices the indispensability of the New Testament for the complete understanding of the Old because it turns the Old into a book of timeless, spiritual truths. It misses the cohesive unity in history imbedded in and between the two Testaments.

#### D. *The Typological School*

If the allegorical school does despite to the historical emphasis of the Old Testament due to its unwarranted spiritualizing, the typological interpretative principle attempts to be faithful to the original meaning of the text in its historical context yet pushes beyond the Old Testament meaning due to the eschatological thrust of the historical revelation. A parallel is established between Old and New Testament persons and events without overthrowing the Old Testament meaning itself. There was an older typology, springing from the post-reformation dogmatism which arbitrarily chose the type without deferring to the eschatological continuity between the Testaments. The current typology attempts to be faithful to the inner connectedness between the Testaments that centres in the ongoing redemptive events of God. There is an eschatological parallel between the commencement and the climax.

... we see everywhere in this history brought to pass by God's Word, in acts of judgment and acts of redemption alike, the pre-figuration of the Christ event of the New Testament. ... This renewed recognition of types in the Old Testament is no peddling of secret lore, no digging up of miracles, but is simply correspondent to the belief that the same God who revealed himself in Christ has also left his footprints in the history of the Old Testament covenant people—that we have to do with one divine discourse to the fathers through the prophets, then to us through Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Current typology is more of a temperament of mind than a rigid methodology. It is based upon belief that the biblical events point beyond themselves to *the* event of Jesus Christ. History is not falsified, but is fulfilled. The recognition by the early church of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of the Old Testament undergirds

<sup>12</sup> Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 61

<sup>13</sup> G. Von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament", *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*. Editor: C. Westermann (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 189.

this typological thrust. Hence the typological can be considered, in broad terms, a Christological approach. Once having said this, one must be careful not to degenerate into a severe dogmatism that finds Christ everywhere in the Old Testament handing out advance information about Himself. Rather the redemptive deeds of God in the history of Israel provide the pattern and type of His deed in Christ, who is the final eschatological event because he is the ultimate historical event.

### *E. The Promise-Fulfillment School*

The typological motif leads to this attitude and method. If the type exists in the Old Testament, it exists in the form of a promise which will be fulfilled in a future deed of God. The promises of God certainly meant something to Israel, but there was always a further meaning beyond the contemporary event. The event did not exhaust the plan and purpose of God.

God's promises were often fulfilled in the course of Israel's history—and yet not completely fulfilled. Every time the people were satisfied that they had already received what had been promised, another word from God would make clear that his promise actually has a further, deeper meaning.<sup>14</sup>

That deeper meaning the church found in the historical person and event of Jesus Christ. But there is a dialectical relationship. Just as the Old Testament is unclear apart from its conclusion in Christ, so the final act of Christ is dim unless defined by the preceding events of the Old Testament story. The promise is completed in Christ; Christ is anchored to the eschatological events of the Old Testament which point beyond themselves.

### *F. The Homological-Mystical View*

The writers of the New Testament seem at times to wrench passages of the Old in order to certify the meaning of Christ as the completion of the deeds of God among his people. Yet certainly, a superficial reading of these passages will not yield their deep and rich meaning as they spring out of the experience of the Israel of God. Diligent search and/or study will reveal deeper meanings, not in an esoteric sense, but in the academic sense which bears the fruit of serious study.<sup>15</sup> And certainly the recipients,

<sup>14</sup> A. J. Ehlen, "Old Testament Theology as Heilsgeschichte", *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 25 (1964), p. 543.

<sup>15</sup> R. Rendall, "Quotation in Scripture as an Index of Wider Reference", *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 36 (1964), p. 221.



who for the most part were Jews, would in a much quicker way be able to see the continuity between the old revelation of God and its new counterpart.<sup>16</sup> "We need to be reminded that no New Testament writer felt he was in a position to witness to Jesus Christ without constantly opening and quoting the Old Testament."<sup>17</sup> There was no mere analogy, or picturing of these similarities, existing between the events of the Testaments, but there was already a "givenness", a "sameness" in essence, between the two pairs of redemptive deeds built up in the successive and ascending works of God.

There is not merely an analogy but a real homology, an intimate, creaturely relationship, between them . . . When we observe closely the system of created nature, we find underlying it a principle of co-ordination and interpretation which builds it up through an ascending series of steps into an ordered structure of "wholes" . . .<sup>18</sup>

This interpretation is not the result of a logically ordered series of rational steps which, of course, must be included, but pushes beyond a literal and rational interpretation only, which does not completely fulfil it, to the person of Christ and His Church. The Old Testament can and must be interpreted homologically.

This interpretation . . . sees in our Lord One who sums up in Himself all that is best in human life wherever presented, and in the Christian Church that supernatural People of God to which the divinely chosen nation of Israel led.<sup>19</sup>

There is a rhythm of repeated events forming a pattern whose interpretation is incomplete if it is limited to the historical level. A full or plenary interpretation needs "an additional, deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation."<sup>20</sup> The concern of the Bible is not less than historical but it

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>17</sup> H. W. Wolff, "The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament", *Interpretation*, 15 (1961), p. 462.

<sup>18</sup> W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The People and the Presence: A Study of At-One-Ment* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 255.

<sup>19</sup> A. G. Hebert, *The Throne of David* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1948), pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup> R. E. Brown, quoted by H. Hummel, "Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament", *Dialog*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring, 1963, p. 113.

is more than historical. This means that the historical deed must have happened and must have been God's act, but that the historical points beyond itself and conveys through itself the presence of God in the present. This may be called the sacramental principle of interpretation.

... while the external, sensible aspects of this history are in one sense only symbolic and merely witness ... to the one and ever the same redemptive work of God intruding from an order beyond space and time ... at the same time they dare not be divorced from the particularities of space and time. The connection between the two orders is not merely rational or emotional, but "in, with, and under" the concrete, temporal, and material.<sup>21</sup>

### G. *The Existential Point of View*

Rudolf Bultmann has taken a radical stance towards the Old Testament and its relationship to the resurrection of the Christ. He confesses that the primitive church used the Old Testament to prove the resurrection in the sense of foretelling it, but denies that this approach is possible. God, in the Old Testament, is bound to an historical, particular people, but in Jesus Christ is freed in an existential encounter which is not an historical event but a meeting place between the divine and human. Scriptural proof from the Old Testament for the historicity of the resurrection is impossible. The faith of the early church was expressed in mythical terminology which conveys the existential word of God.

The message of the forgiving grace of God in Jesus Christ is not an historical account of a past event, but rather it is *the Word which the Church proclaims*, which now addresses each person immediately as God's Word, and in which Jesus Christ is present as the "Word".<sup>22</sup>

Bultmann's view has been labelled as a new docetism<sup>23</sup> since it seems to sacrifice the actual flesh of the Word of God (John 1: 14). Yet his call to decision is one that is found in the Old Testament and exalted in the New Testament confession of faith as a major emphasis.

<sup>21</sup> Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>22</sup> R. Bultmann, "The Significance of the Old Testament for Christian Faith", *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*. Editor: B. W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> A. Richardson, "Is The Old Testament Propaedeutic to Christian Faith?" *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*. Editor: B. W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 36-48.

In terms of and yet beyond the above schools, the elements of a proper controlling interpretative principle by which to be faithful to the biblical picture of the resurrection will include basically a two-fold emphasis. The historical as the plane of God's revelation is a necessity, but not in a general sense. Rather the history of the Old Testament which points beyond itself to the resurrection of Christ is a series of events set within the context of human life and in chronological order through which God has specially revealed himself. This does not extend to the general course of history, but to those events singled out in the Israelite confession of faith. The historical, however, as the level of God's redemptive action calls for decision on the part of His people. In this context it points beyond itself to the future and asks for a decision of faith in a coming, eschatological deed of God. The first Christians found that deed in the resurrection of Jesus and found foregleams of it in the Old Testament.

Just as Israel, which knows Yahweh as its God who delivered it from Egypt, found the legitimate explication of its confession of faith in the incorporation of the promise to the fathers into its credo, so the primitive Christian faith, sure of confrontation with the living Christ, found the legitimate explication of the Christ-event upon which it depends by incorporating the Old Testament promise.<sup>24</sup>

The promise of God in the historical event calls for a decision of faith in the presence of that event concerning the previous and future history of God's people.

### III. THE CONSIDERATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PERSONS, EVENTS AND PASSAGES WHICH POINT TO THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

At the foundation of the Old Testament life and the worship of her people is the historical, redemptive act of God in the Exodus. God had redeemed his people from Egypt. This event was the stimulus to a life of worship and obedience which was at times tragically weak. The law recital of the Old Testament is preceded by the phrase, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 20: 3). It is from this salvation viewpoint that Israel viewed the other elements of her life and pushed on to further recognitions of God's saving grace in history. She saw in her history an eschatological stimulus which drove her on and prodded her upward.

<sup>24</sup> W. Zimmerli, "Promise and Fulfilment", *Interpretation*, 15 (1961), pp. 332-333.

With this redemptive eschatology in mind, the early church confessed that the resurrection on the third day according to the Scriptures was feasible. At the outset, it is difficult to find specific passages giving this prediction, but the early church emphasis springs out of the view of Jesus. His emphasis on the third day is mentioned in the Scriptures. His illustration of Jonah (Matthew 12: 40), His instruction of the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24: 46) and the disciples' realization that the triduum was scriptural (John 2: 22) all point to the church recognition of the third-day theme.

This theme is tied into the creation account where on the third day the creation of life is performed.

To the apostles, the resurrection was an act "akin to the creation in the beginning" . . . The purpose of the work of Gen. 1 was to make life possible in a place where previously it did not exist; the third day both saw its emergence and was the *sine qua non* of higher development. . . . Creation of terrestrial life can be judged essentially third day activity and according to the Scriptures this work is continuous.<sup>25</sup>

The Christ of the Church who had been raised from the dead on the third day is declared to be the Creator also (John 1: 1-3). It is His activity at the beginning and climax of redemptive history that is the goal of Old Testament eschatology. Christ's "departure" of Luke 9: 31 can be translated "his exodus" for there are exodus elements involved—the cloud and Moses. There is a homological element that exists between the Old Testament exodus and the exodus of Christ, the Christian's passover. There is the pillar of cloud and the cloud of Divine Presence, the baptism in the Red Sea and the waters of holy baptism, the manna in the wilderness, water from the rock and the Christian's eucharistic food and drink.<sup>26</sup> Israel had been redeemed in the Exodus; the church had been redeemed by the fulfilment of its eschatological thrust. Because of this event of history, Israel was interested in "the movement of history towards its divinely appointed goal."<sup>27</sup> Jer. 30: 10 speaks of future salvation in terms of Exodus (cp. Jer. 31: 31-34); Is. 65: 17-18 speaks of future salvation in terms of new creation.<sup>28</sup> The past act of redemption in the Exodus was made present in one way through the cult.

<sup>25</sup> C. Mackay, "The Third Day", *The Church Quarterly Review*, July-September, 1963, pp. 293, 295.

<sup>26</sup> G. Hebert, "Hope Looking Forward", *Interpretation*, 10 (1956), p. 262.

<sup>27</sup> J. Muilenberg, "The Biblical Understanding of the Future", *The Journal of Religious Thought*, 19 (1962-63), p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> J. K. Zink, "Salvation In The Old Testament", *Encounter*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Autumn, 1964, p. 411.

It was through the cult that the people maintained their relationship with God and his salvation. Through the cult of sacrifice both the national and individual aspects of salvation were celebrated as past events and present realities.<sup>29</sup>

This present experience of the exodus salvation-event pushed beyond itself into a hope concerning the future. There was an eschatological aspect to the salvation history of the Old Testament; salvation was considered relating to the future. The Exodus did, of course, have a meaning for the past, but the present reality and experience looked toward the future. There was to be a second Exodus according to the prophetic word (Jer. 23: 28; 31: 31-34; Is. 40: 3-5; 43: 16; 52: 2). No doubt this hope was expected to be fulfilled in the return from the Exile, but that experience was disappointing. The promised salvation had not occurred. Israel had gone into exile, but had been returned by God. But the new Israel failed to be obedient. Hence there was a tension between what was and what was to be. The eschatological hope of the returned Israel then focused upon a coming resurrection or renewal (Hos. 6: 1-3).<sup>30</sup> The new Exodus did not happen when expected nor in the form expected, but the early church saw in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the second Exodus of redemption.

Is it too much to say that the whole use of the words "redeem" and "redemption" in the Bible has an Exodus-flavour? Certainly the thought of the Exodus as a type of the resurrection of our Lord lies at the heart of the New Testament gospel.<sup>31</sup>

It is the three events of the Exodus, the Exile and Restoration that stand at the centre of Israel's history and proclaim a past, present, and future salvation. The Exodus is the central one for it focuses the redemptive activity of God and centres in the redemption of Christ. However, because of the nature of the Christ who was raised, the other two events are seen as types of the continuing and climactic work of God in Christ.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> G. A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of The Old Testament* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1959), pp. 209-210.

<sup>31</sup> G. Hebert, "Hope Looking Forward", p. 262.

Having seen this, what then is the place of those other Old Testament figures and the events surrounding them? If the Old Testament is eschatological from the beginning (and it is so if the term can be taken fluidly) what can be said of Abraham and the word of promise to him concerning the land of his possession? If that promise is limited to the physical possession of the land in an everlasting sense does not the faith of Abraham descend to a lower level than that of much of the Old Testament? Rather the blessed ending of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph seems to lie in their belief that God had power over their ashes (Gen. 26: 3; 49: 29; 50: 25; Ex. 13: 19; Josh. 24: 32).

The figure of Isaac may be treated in an eschatological way once the New Testament approach is seen. It is significant that Isaac has the wood laid on him on the third day *en route* to the sacrifice (Gen. 22: 4). The restoration of Isaac to his father from the point of death can be treated as a parable or type of the resurrection of Christ (Heb. 11: 17-19). The God who brought life out of death through the womb of Sarah in the birth of Isaac was the God who raised up Jesus (Rom. 4). Genesis 18: 14, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" rings throughout the eschatology of the Old Testament until the Christ in whom God's resurrection power was consummated. The birth and death of Isaac can be treated as typical of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Christ.<sup>32</sup>

The Davidic kingship of Jesus the Christ is pictured in the New Testament under figure of "the Son of God" which refers to God's resurrection and exaltation of Christ "by means of a Davidic or royal title drawn from the Old Testament."<sup>33</sup>

These are the main figures which bear witness to the resurrection foregleam in the Old Testament apart from Moses as the leader in the first Exodus and the prophetic witness that arose beyond the eighth century. Some have tried to see in 1 Samuel 2: 6, "Yahweh killeth and maketh alive . . .", a reference to a resurrection hope and in the sense that the Old Testament is historically eschatological in a general way this is possible. But the point seems to be that God is behind the vicissitudes of life.

Some have tried to see in Job 14: 7-22 and 19: 25-27 a reference to a bodily resurrection<sup>34</sup> or a spiritual one.<sup>35</sup> Job however

<sup>32</sup> G. Hebert, *The Throne of David*, p. 259.

<sup>33</sup> G. E. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>34</sup> L. B. Paton, *Spiritism and the Cult of the Dead in Antiquity* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921), p. 280.

<sup>35</sup> R. M. Grant, "The Place of the Old Testament in Early Christianity", *Interpretation*, 5 (1951), p. 121.

seems to be groping toward a faith like this in the form of a belief that God would vindicate the righteous in the future. Certainly given the redemptive, resurrection history of the Old and New Testaments pointed out above, one can at least say this, if not a bit more, in the sense that the passages suggest a resurrection. "He seems to me to have come to the verge of something to which he was impelled by the dynamic of his own faith in God, but not to have securely reached it."<sup>36</sup> The apostles, of course, do not refer to Job in their proclamation of Christ's resurrection as the fulfilment of Israel's redemptive history, so that a safer conclusion might be that the passages take part in the general eschatological thrust of the Old Testament.

When we turn to the Psalms, we do find that Psalm 16 is included in the apostolic kerygmatic sermon of Peter at Pentecost in Acts 2 and is applied to the resurrection of Christ. Because Psalm 16: 8-11 points to a communion with God far outreaching this life Peter is justified in seeing in it an inner, homological thrust leading to the Christ. These words cannot refer to David for he saw corruption. Rather they look forward to the coming of Christ and his resurrection.<sup>37</sup> The Psalmist points beyond death to a future communion with God. Psalms 49 and 73 teach that the end of man is unbroken communion with God in the future, pointing beyond death. As such, they are taken up into Israel's eschatological hope.

Isaiah 24-27 and especially 26: 1-19 contain language that is rich in meaning for the resurrection eschatology of the Old Testament.<sup>38</sup> The passage partakes of the apostolic kerygma and view in that there may be an echo of it (along with Dan. 12: 2) in John 5: 28-29.<sup>39</sup> A resurrection is taught in Is. 26, but it seems to be, in the least, a restoration of the nation to her promised land and, at the most, a spiritual one. The prophecy however does seem to locate a corporeal resurrection within God's plan of a future messianic kingdom. The righteous of Israel will not be forgotten in the coming triumph of God and his people over death. The nation will be restored, but within this restoration will be the victory of God over death in behalf of all his righteous ones.

<sup>36</sup> H. H. Rowley, "The Future Life in The Old Testament", *The Congregational Quarterly*, 33 (1955), p. 123.

<sup>37</sup> Tasker, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup> R. M. Grant, "The Resurrection of the Body", *The Journal of Religion*, 27 (1948), p. 120. Hereafter referred to as "Future Life".

<sup>39</sup> J. T. Forestell, "Christian Revelation and the Resurrection of the Wicked", *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 19 (1957), p. 183.

In the consummation Jahweh should swallow up death forever—the Kingdom with all its citizens was eternal. But it is also declared that he should not forget the lives which had committed themselves to Him, though they had been mastered by death. This meant two things: that the dead should be raised, and that their reward should be, not a vindication of their righteousness, but the self-revelation of God.<sup>40</sup>

We pass now to the two prophets who can be treated as exilic: Ezekiel and Daniel. Ezekiel 37 is the passage which looms greatly here. If anything, the chapter symbolizes the return of Israel from exile, but we have seen above that this return did not bring about the expected second Exodus or deliverance. The prophetic voice had ended in despair. Some have limited the resurrection of the dry bones to a reference to the return and restoration of the Jews after the exile.<sup>41</sup> However it does involve a change in the people.<sup>42</sup> An emphasis upon the individual is also present and, with the above, may have been a catalyst which catapulted a belief in the resurrection into the foreground.

It may well be that the form of this vision helped to give currency to the idea of personal resurrection, but we have to wait until a much later time before any influence it exercised led to a formulated belief in a resurrection.<sup>43</sup>

Ezekiel 37 is not taken up by the apostolic witness of the resurrection of Christ, but in that it occurs in the exilic context and seems to point beyond the current stage of history to a personal resurrection possibility it contributes toward the eschatological impetus of the people of God.

Daniel 12: 1-2 is the main resurrection passage of the Old Testament in that it clearly sets forth a physical resurrection of some of the righteous and some of the wicked to everlasting communion with God. The earlier spiritual view is transformed into a physical one.<sup>44</sup> The passage serves as the hinge between the Old Testament eschatological resurrection hope and the inter-testamental, apocalyptic development.

<sup>40</sup> N. A. Logan, "The Old Testament and a Future Life", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6 (1953), p. 167.

<sup>41</sup> C. V. Pilcher, *The Hereafter in Jewish and Christian Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1940), p. 138.

<sup>42</sup> R. H. Charles, *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 134.

<sup>43</sup> H. H. Rowley, "Future Life", p. 123.

<sup>44</sup> R. H. Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 137.



Yet in view of the literary affinity of our text with Isa. 26: 19 and Isa. 66: 24 together with the texts of 2 Mac. which reflect the resurrection doctrine of Daniel, we can legitimately suppose that a bodily resurrection is envisaged . . .<sup>45</sup>

Beyond this, it carries over as an influence upon the life of Jesus Christ the resurrected Lord. The passage has a place in the development of the Christian faith as a preparation for the coming of Christ, and much of the New Testament would not be as clear as it is apart from this passage.<sup>46</sup>

In Hosea 6: 1-2, which reads "After two days will he revive us, on the third day he will raise us up . . ." we have a reference to the third day which was central in the life of Israel as "the crucial day bringing decisive events after tension (Gen. 31: 22; 34: 25; 40: 20; 42: 18; Josh. 9: 17; Judg. 20: 30; 1 Sam. 20: 5, 19; 1 Kings 12: 12)."<sup>47</sup> At first sight, there is no connection between this passage and the resurrection of Christ, but once it is seen that Hos. 6: 2 may well have been a resurrection hymn for the cult of the nation as she celebrated the importance of the third day theme, one can discern that the national revival emphasis was seen to be consummated in the resurrection of Christ for the people of God.

On the third day of the third moon after Israel left Egypt they received ordinances by which they should live and become the covenant-nation (Ex. 19). This tradition offers basis for Hosea's expectation of a national third day revival, is linked to Jesus by Matthew's application of Hos. 11: 1, "Out of Egypt have I called my son", and is authoritatively related to his Passion as his "exodus" (Luke 9: 31).<sup>48</sup>

Here is an example of the homological relation between a passage whose surface meaning is not the complete one. The resurrected Christ is the one whose work lays bare the inner structure and relationship of the revival and eschatological hope of the Israel of God.

#### IV. THE CONTINUATION OF THE RESURRECTION HOPE IN THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

The Old Testament ends then with an expectancy that God's grace is pursuing a higher level, yet it is unsure of what the next

<sup>45</sup> Forestell, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>46</sup> H. H. Rowley, "The Meaning of Daniel for Today", *Interpretation*, 15 (1961), p. 388.

<sup>47</sup> C. Mackay, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 291.

step will be. The reader has the feeling that the stage is being prepared for a new thrust. Yet, as the people of God, Israel seems unsure as to what the next step will involve. The disciple of Jesus, almost inescapably, senses this incompleteness and uncertainty in the literature from the final period of Israel's redemptive history. The searching and restlessness resulted on the one hand in the scepticism of Ecclesiastes and the endurance in hope of Malachi and Daniel. With the close of the Old Testament writings one would assume that the development of God's redemptive eschatological history would diminish, but such is not the case. The three centuries before the coming of Christ are the "most fruitful centuries in religious life and thought in the history of Israel."<sup>49</sup> At the end of the Old Testament period, the doctrine of the resurrection crystallizes and during the intertestamental period it gains ground.<sup>50</sup>

The Old Testament view that human history is the arena in which God reveals Himself was preserved and further developed both in intertestamental Judaism (especially in apocalyptic thought) and in the New Testament.<sup>51</sup>

The views of pre-Christian Judaism on the resurrection may be listed as follows:<sup>52</sup> (1) the resurrection of earthly bodies to an earthly kingdom, (2) the resurrection in a spiritual body to a kingdom both spiritual and earthly, (3) the resurrection of a spiritual body to a life merging with that of heaven. The resurrection in the second century B.C. was to eternal life (2 Maccabees 7: 9), of the body (7: 11), and into the community of the righteous: "The departed righteous are raised to an eternal messianic kingdom on earth."<sup>53</sup> 1 Enoch teaches that both the righteous and the evil are raised. The doctrine of retribution is held to firmly; judgment would come with the messianic kingdom. The resurrection is both individual and communal. By 100 B.C., the Old Testament emphasis that the righteous are raised to live on earth in glorified but earthly bodies is changed to the idea that the righteous are raised spiritually to heaven with no mere

<sup>49</sup> R. H. Charles, *Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 115.

<sup>50</sup> Rowley, "Future Life", p. 116.

<sup>51</sup> Ehlen, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

<sup>52</sup> Pilcher, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 276.

bodily resurrection.<sup>54</sup> The Old Testament picture of Sheol as a vague, dreary abode of the departed is transcended and a deep faith that the God who created man for fellowship with him will also provide him with an enduring life of fellowship is developed.<sup>55</sup> The two emphases of the prophetic word of the Old Testament—individualism and eschatological history—are at the base of the Jewish doctrine of the resurrection in the period just previous to the time of Christ. However, by the time that Jesus of Nazareth comes on the scene, the national hope of Israel that God would establish his messianic kingdom with her had been smashed in the Roman débâcles of the previous two centuries, and the resurrection emphasis is upon the individual and his spiritual resurrection in a spiritual body or a garment of glory. At any rate, the pre-Christian Judaism saw a development of the doctrine of the resurrection and an emphasis upon it. The apocalyptic, pseudepigraphic and apocryphal literature depicts this for us. The Roman Catholic Church accepts the apocryphal books into her canon while Protestantism, generally speaking, rejects them. The apostolic witness to apocryphal books concerning our Lord's resurrection is slight, but there are references and allusions to apocryphal teaching. The implications of this resurrection development for the current ecumenical age of the church will have to be explored.

#### V. THE CLIMAX OF THE RESURRECTION HOPE IN JESUS THE CHRIST

With the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, we find in Him essentially the later Old Testament doctrine as held by the Pharisees with whom He disagreed upon other points and upon whom He poured out his rebukes. The Sadducees, of course, did not accept the resurrection; they did not believe in the conscious existence of the soul after death. The Hellenistic mode of thought was essentially that of the immortality of the soul.

However in the person of Christ is located the fulfilment of the expected messianic deliverance. It is in him that the kingdom or rule of God is both present and future. Present it is in the sense that men can be partakers of Christ's resurrection within the fellowship of the Church, and future in the sense that the resurrection of the body will certify the eternal reign of God's kingdom. The church, confronted with the risen Christ, found this central hope in the Old Testament.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., *Religious Development*, p. 120.

<sup>55</sup> E. W. Ohrenstein, "Immortality In The New Testament", *Encounter*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Winter, 1961, p. 29.

In the earliest church, that of the first century, the Old Testament was understood primarily as a prediction of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and of the still unfulfilled coming of the reign of God.<sup>56</sup>

With the failure of the expected salvation in the Exile and the continuing eschatological hope of the Exodus event before Israel, the stage was set for the climactic event of the resurrection of Christ. When confronted with the empty tomb, the disciples realized that THE event was upon them. When confronted with the risen Christ, the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures in their full and complete sense was understood. Jesus believed that His resurrection was to fulfil the messianic hope; the disciples believed that Jesus' resurrection did fulfil it. The combination of the historical fact of the resurrection and the spiritual presence of the Risen One gave to the church that interpretative principle which saw in God's acts of redemption in the Old Testament in their historical and eschatological thrust a foregleam and inter-relatedness that made of both Testaments one cohesive whole. For the church the resurrection had occurred; for Israel, the resurrection was yet to come. With the occurrence of the resurrection, the future eschatology of God's people was certified and assured.

The early church, then, saw in the resurrection of Jesus the fulfilment of the eschatological thrust of the Old Testament, which hope consisted of the historic deeds of God which pointed beyond themselves to a future fulfilment. This eschatological hope was open only to those whose eyes were opened by the Risen Christ in whose presence an inner cohesion, continuity, and climax was seen as portrayed in the Old Testament.

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<sup>56</sup> R. M. Grant, "The Place of the Old Testament in Early Christianity", p. 201.