

Concerning the Resurrection of the Messiah.

by John Gill

The sermon explores the prophecies and evidence of the Messiah's resurrection from the dead, as predicted in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection.

Scripture: Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:29

Topics: "Resurrection", "Prophecy of the Messiah"

Description

John Gill preaches on the resurrection of the Messiah, emphasizing the prophetic scriptures that foretell this pivotal event. He discusses various Old Testament passages, such as Psalms 16:10 and Isaiah 26:19, which clearly indicate that the Messiah would not see corruption and would rise from the dead. Gill argues that the apostles used these prophecies to affirm Jesus' resurrection, demonstrating that it was a fulfillment of God's promises. He highlights the significance of the resurrection as a cornerstone of Christian faith, providing evidence of Jesus as the true Messiah. The sermon concludes by affirming that belief in the resurrection is essential for salvation.

Transcript

The Prophecies Respecting the Messiah

CHAPTER XI.

Concerning the Resurrection of the Messiah from the dead.

Having considered the several prophecies which regard the Messiah's sufferings, and the several circumstances, which were to attend them, I shall now proceed to consider those which speak of his resurrection from the dead; and shall begin, First, With Psalm 16:10. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. The meaning of which is, be it spoken of who it will, that God would not leave the body of this person in the grave, so long as to be corrupted in it, but would raise him up from thence; by soul, being meant a dead body, as the word *çpn* sometimes signifies; Leviticus 19:28 and chapter 21 and by hell, the grave, which is no unusual sense of the word *lwaç*, for which see Genesis 42:38 Isaiah 38:18.

Now this text is more than once produced by the apostles, to prove the resurrection of Christ from the dead, who argue from it, not in a mystical, enigmatical, and allegorical way, not by mere allusion to it, nor by an accommodation of phrases, but from its strict, literal, and obvious sense; in which sense they prove,

that it cannot be understood of David, for as one of them says (Acts 2:29, 34), David is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us to this day, and is not ascended into the heavens, that is, he died and was buried, and continues in his grave to this day; he never ascended to heaven, therefore cannot be the person intended; and yet still more plainly and nervously, another of them argues, that David (Acts 13:35-37), after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

And now, as there are some things in this Psalm which cannot be true of David, and especially in this text, so every thing in it well agrees with the Messiah; such as his trust in God, as he was man, and Mediator, verse 1, his very great regard to the saints and delight in them, verse 2, 3, his disregard to others who were hastening after another god, or another savior; whose sacrifices, as an high priest, he would not offer up, neither make intercession for them, verse 4 his very exceeding great satisfaction, in having the God of Israel for his portion, and in his lot being cast among his peculiar people, verse 5, 6 his thankfulness for advice and direction in the time of his sorrows, and sufferings, and his dependance upon God's almighty power then to support him, verse 7, 8 and lastly the joy and comfort he was filled with, in the views of his resurrection from the dead, and his enjoyment of the heavenly glory, verse 9-11.

All which well agree with Jesus; and especially what is said in verse 10 where the character of an holy One exactly suits with him, who was so, both in nature and life, as also this holy One's seeing no corruption, was eminently, remarkably, and literally fulfilled in him, who, though he was crucified and laid in the grave, yet was raised from thence the third day, which was before the usual time that dead bodies corrupt and putrefy; see John 11:39. Mr. Sykes observes, [1] "That it is in the original thou wilt not leave me *lwaçl* to the grave, nor suffer thine holy One to see the pit: That in the translation used by the apostle, it is exactly according to the original, *eiv adou*, not *en adou*; and it is impossible to render the word *eiv*, to or into, by *en*, in: That as to the other word corruption, the same word signifies the pit, or grave, in Hebrew; and that so it ought to be rendered, according to the customary way of speaking amongst the Hebrews."

To which I reply, that as to *lwaçl* signifying to and not in the grave, it may be observed, that *l* is frequently put for *b*, and so signifies in, which is a very common acceptation of it, [2] many instances might be produced in proof thereof, and even of it, as affixed to this very word; thus in Psalm 31:17. Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent *lwaçl*, not to, but in the grave. Again, Psalm 49:14 Like sheep they are laid *lwaça*, not to, but in the grave; once more, though as affixed to another word, Isaiah 51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die, *tjçl*, which surely cannot be rendered to, but in the pit.

And as to the translation used by the apostle, *eiv adou* seems plain enough to be put for *en adou*, where there is a manifest ellipsis of the word [3] *domov*, or *oikov*, or *topov*, or some such word; for neither *eiv*, nor *en*, are usually put in construction with a word of the genitive case; and Mr. Sykes cannot be ignorant of *eiv* being frequently put for *en*; of which, instances might be given (see Matthew 2:23; Mark 2:1; 13:16; Luke 11:7). It is true, the Hebrew word *tjç*, here translated corruption, does signify a pit, and is frequently so rendered; on which account the Jews object against the apostle's version of the words, [4] and the application of them to Jesus; but then it ought to be observed, that the word, in its first, proper, and literal sense, signifies corruption; and that a pit, or grave, is only called by this name, because dead bodies, or carcasses, are therein corrupted; now we ought not to depart from the first and literal sense of a word unless some very good reason can be given for it: instances may be produced, where the word cannot be understood in any other sense: Thus, in Leviticus 22:25. it is said, Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these, because *ptjçm* their corruption is in them; and so in Psalm

55:23, But thou, O God, shalt bring them down, תִּצַּח רַבְלִי, into the pit of destruction, or corruption; and that it must be so understood here, is manifest, because, as the Author of The true Grounds and Reasons, etc. well observes, "Whether the Psalmist speaks in his name, or the Messiah's, they were both thrown into the pit of corruption;" so that from the whole, nothing can be concluded from hence, against its being a literal prophecy of the Messiah; nor ought the Jews, especially, to object this, when their own Midrash acknowledges, [5] that the sense of these words is, that the moth and worm should have no power over him; which was not literally true of David, but was of the Messiah Jesus.

Secondly, Another text of scripture, which may be considered as a prophecy of the Messiah's resurrection, and is produced by the apostles, (Acts 13:33.) as a proof thereof, is Psalm 2:7. I will declare the decree. The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. The whole Psalm belongs to the Messiah, and was so understood by the ancient Jewish writers, [6] who have applied several passages in it to the Messiah, and particularly this verse. [7] That the whole Psalm is to be understood of the Messiah, may be easily collected from the mad council, and vain attempts of the kings of the earth against him, verse 1-3 who in verse 2 is expressly called the Lord's anointed, or Messiah; from God's decree and resolution to, make and declare him king of Zion, notwithstanding their utmost efforts against him, verse 4-6 from his having the Gentiles for his inheritance, ver 8, 9. which is true of no other; and especially from that reverence, adoration, and worship, which are to be given to him, and that trust and confidence that is to be placed in him, verse 10-12. which can by no means agree with David, nor with any mere creature whatever; and as for this seventh verse, it is inapplicable to any but the Messiah, for unto which of the angels, said God, at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: (Heb. 1:5) and if not to any of the angels, much less to David, or any other; and is therefore very justly produced by the apostles, as a proof of the Messiah's resurrection, which is very aptly expressed by a begetting, even as the general resurrection of the dead is called paliggenesia, the regeneration, or a begetting again; (Matthew 19:28) and it is upon this account that Jesus is called the first born from the dead (Col. 1:18).

Besides, as there is a very great affinity between the birth and resurrection of a person, so the resurrection of Christ was really natalis imperii, the birthday of his kingdom, or when he was made or declared to be both Lord and Christ; nay, he was thereby declared to be the Son of God with power, so that these words, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, are very pertinently applied by the apostles to this present purpose. Thirdly, Another prophecy, which seems to regard the resurrection of the Messiah, is Isaiah 26:19.

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; which, by many interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, [8] is understood of the resurrection from the dead; now these words are not the words of the prophet, [9] but are an answer to the prophet's complaint, in the preceding verses, where, in he is assured, that though his people should be distressed and diminished by several calamities, as captivity, sword, famine, etc. yet they should live again in the resurrection of the just; and the person speaking, appears to be the Messiah, from the characters of him in the context, who is the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength, verse 4 the desire, the expectation of his people, verses 8, 9 who ordains peace for them, and works all their works in them verse 12 and has the sole dominion over them, verse 13.

Now, at the time of the resurrection of the Messiah's dead body from the grave, others were to arise with him, which was accordingly fulfilled in Jesus, for the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection. (Matthew 27:52, 53) Though these words may be rendered, [10] Thy dead men shall live, as my dead body shall they arise, that is, either in

the same way and manner as my dead body shall they arise; or, as sure as I shall arise, so sure shall they; agreeable hereunto, the resurrection of Jesus is both the exemplar and pledge of ours, for Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20).

Fourthly, As another proof, out of the Old Testament, that the Messiah was to rise from the dead, the apostles produce (Acts 13:34) Isaiah 55:3. I will give you the sure mercies of David. That the Messiah is here intended, appears very manifest from his name David, which name is frequently given to him (see Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23, 24; Hosea 3:5); as also from his several offices in the following verse, where he is said to be given for a witness to the people, a leader and commander of them; which words, as well as the former, are by Aben Ezra and Kimchi understood of the Messiah; but the greatest difficulty is how this appears to be a pertinent proof of the Messiah's resurrection from the dead; and therefore, in order to make it appear to be so, let it be observed, that by the sure mercies of David, are to be understood the blessings of the everlasting covenant, which the Messiah, by his death and sufferings, was to procure for all his people; but had he only died and not been raised from the dead, those blessings had not been ratified or made sure unto them; therefore, when God promises his people, that he will give them the sure mercies of David, or of the Messiah, he promises that the Messiah shall not only die to procure mercies for them, but that he shall rise again from the dead to make them sure to them.

Fifthly, As the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead, was predicted by the prophets, so the very time thereof was fixed by them. Hence the writers of the New Testament, as they declare that Christ rose from the dead, according to the scriptures of the Old Testament, so they likewise declare, that he rose from the dead the third day, which scriptures referred to, according to these scriptures; f (1 Cor. 15:4) are not merely some typical predictions of the Old Testament, as that of Isaac's deliverance on the third day, after he had been given up to death by his father, Genesis 22:4 and that of Jonah's being three days and three nights in the whale's belly, Jonah 1:17 compared with Matthew 12:40 though undoubtedly reference is made to them; but to a real prophecy, which in its literal and obvious sense is to be understood of this affair, The prophecy I have in view is Hosea 6:2.

After two days he will revive us, in the third day he will raise us up; and we shall live in his sight. The Targum understands the words of the resurrection of the dead; for of no other resurrection, but the resurrection of the Messiah, [11] and of his people in him, can they, in their literal sense be understood; because the time, the third day, will agree with no other; whose coming is prophesied of in the following verse, as what would be very glorious in itself, and profitable to God's people; besides it suits best with the scope of the place, which is to animate and encourage sinners to turn to the Lord, where they might expect healing, or pardon, through the promised Messiah, who by dying would obtain life for them, and by rising again the third day, procure their justification and acceptance with God, that so they might live in his sight; and the reason why it is expressed in the plural number, in the third day he will raise us up, was to encourage those persons to hope and believe in God, from the consideration of their sharing in the resurrection of the Messiah, and the several benefits which were to spring from thence, who was to arise from the dead, not as a single, but as a public person, representing all his people; so that when he was raised from the dead, they might be said to be raised up together with him; which is a phrase that the writers of the New Testament more than once make use of; see Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1.

Now that Jesus rose from the dead, according to these prophecies of the Old Testament, as well as his own predictions, we have the most unquestionable evidence; that he really died, the Jews themselves make no doubt of it; that he rose from the dead, his disciples, with one mouth, asserted (Acts 1:3), To whom he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days:

So that they had all the opportunity they could desire, of satisfying themselves in this matter, some of them not being very credulous of it; they were men who perfectly knew him in his life-time, and after his resurrection eat and drank with him, saw the very prints of the nails and spear in his hands, feet, and side, handled his body, had views of him at several times, and a conversation with him for full forty days; and now, upon this ocular demonstration, they published it to the world, in doing of which they could have no sinister end to serve; for upon the score hereof, they were sure to meet with shame and reproach, afflictions and persecutions; nay, death itself, wherever they came.

Besides, as they were men of probity, and integrity, who attested this with such plain evidence, so they were not a few; for it was not only two or three, nay, nor the twelve only, that saw him, but he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; (1 Cor. 15:6.) and besides this human testimony, which in other matters of fact we should no ways scruple, we have that of an angel, Matthew 28:6, nay, of the Holy Ghost himself, for, says the apostle, speaking of Christ's resurrection (Acts 5:32), And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him; which testimony he gave by the very large effusion of his gifts and graces upon men, as Jesus, in his life-time had promised.

Nay, the vile methods which the Jews took to stifle the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, might easily be improved into an evidence of it, who hired the soldiers to say, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept (Matthew 28:13); which shews, that they were under a conviction of the truth of his resurrection, though they were not willing it should obtain in the world; besides, it is very improbable that the disciples, who were but a weak body of men, and now terrified and disheartened at the death of their master, should attempt to remove his body, when they knew there was a guard of soldiers about it; and if they did attempt it, why did not the soldiers hinder them, who certainly had it in their power? and if it should be said, as they did, they were asleep, what credit can be given to such a testimony? for if asleep, how should they know the disciples did it?

Nor have we less evidence of his rising again the third day; it was proper that he should continue in the grave for some time, that it might appear that he was really dead; though it was not convenient he should lie so long, as that his body should corrupt and putrefy; because it was prophesied of him, that he should see no corruption; and whereas the third day was fixed in prophecy for his rising from the dead, and which was the day he gave out he should rise on, so he accordingly did; for though there were but one whole day and two nights, between the death of Christ and his resurrection, yet it was on the third day from his death, that he rose again, the day on which he died being reckoned as one, and that on which he rose again another.

Now this article, of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as it is a grand article of the Christian religion, for if a man believes in his heart (Rom. 10:9), that God hath raised him from the dead, he shall be saved; so it is an unquestionable evidence of Jesus' being the true Messiah; this, Jesus gave as a sign thereof to the Jews, (Matthew 12:38-40.) when they desired one of him, and it should be a satisfactory one to the Deist. ENDNOTES:

[1] Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 277, 278

[2] Ipsa tou I pro in acceptio vulgatissima, Gejer in Psalm 119:38

[3] Vid. Piscator in Act. 2:27. & Psochen. diatrib. de Ling. Graec. N. T. Puritat. n. 76 p. 53, 54

[4] Isaac Chizuk, Emun. p. 2. c. 69.

[5] Midrash Tillim in Pearson on the Creed. art. 4

[6] Vid. Jarchium, Aben Ezram, & Kimchium in hunc Psalm.

[7] Zohar in Numbers fol. 82. 2. Talmud Succah, fol. 52. 1. Maimon. in Tract. Sanhed. c. 10.

[8] See Mede's

[9] Vid. Maji synops, Theolog. Jud. p. 335 336

[10] Vid. Kimchium in loc.

[11] They are applied to the Messiah by R.. Moses Haddarsan in Genesis 22:4 in Galatin. de Arcanis C. V. 1. 3. c. 12. & 1. 8 c. 22. Bereshith Rabba in ibid. 1. 12. c. 3.

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