

Psalm 16 the Resurrection

by William MacDonald

The sermon explores the significance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, highlighting its connection to God's power and glory, and its role in demonstrating the Lord's perfection and obedience.

Duration: 40:02

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 1:7

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by praising the Lord for answering prayer and raising Jesus from the dead. The sermon then goes on to describe the events leading up to Jesus' death on the cross, emphasizing the intense suffering he endured. The speaker explains that this suffering was part of a larger spiritual warfare, with God the Father moving into action to defeat the powers that sought to keep Jesus in the grave. The sermon concludes by highlighting the significance of Jesus' resurrection and the victory over his enemies, emphasizing the Lord's deliverance and support for his chosen ones.

Transcript

Brian reminded us that this is Resurrection Sunday. I like that. He didn't say that e-word, Easter.

But I think I'll follow his good example and from now on refer to it as Resurrection Sunday. And so we want to talk about the resurrection, don't we? Would you please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 18? Well, that's interesting. All you dear people meekly turn to Psalm 18 for something about the resurrection.

I think some of you are thinking, poor Brother MacDonald, he's beginning to lose it. But I'm not really as far as that's concerned, because wonderfully enough, this is a great psalm concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In fact, you find out in this psalm things you don't find out in the New Testament about what happened at that time.

So let's read a portion of it. Psalm 18. I will love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies.

The pangs of death encompassed me. The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me.

The snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple, and my cry came before him, even to his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled. The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth.

Colds were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down with darkness under his feet. He rode upon a cherub and flew.

He flew upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place. His canopy around him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

From the brightness before him, this thick cloud passed with hailstones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, Hail stones and coals of fire. He sent out his arrows and scattered the foe, lightnings in abundance, and he vanquished them.

Then the channels of the waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were uncovered at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters, he delivered me from my strong enemies, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support.

He also brought me out into a broad place, he delivered me because he delighted in me." I think we'll just stop at that point. First of all, why do we think this might refer to the Lord Jesus? Do we have any justification in applying it to him? Notice verse 49, please. Verse 49, "...therefore I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name." And then compare that verse with Romans chapter 15 and verse 9. Romans chapter 15 and verse 9. "...and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy as it is written, for this reason I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." So Paul takes that verse from Psalm 18, and he makes it the language of the Lord Jesus, here in Romans 15, the call of the Gentiles, as well as the call of Israel, the call of the Gentiles.

"...for this reason I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." So we are entitled to think of this as a messianic psalm, a psalm concerning the Messiah. Let me just say that because a psalm is a messianic psalm, it doesn't mean that every detail of it has to apply to the Messiah. I think you've come across that in other psalms that are obviously psalms about the Lord Jesus, yet not every detail.

And then as we go through this psalm, we're going to see that David often wrote of experiences that weren't his own. There are things in this psalm that he wrote that really don't apply to David. They could only apply to David's greater son.

With that introduction, let's look at the psalm. First of all, you have a prayer to God by the Lord Jesus in verses 1-3, and it's a prayer thanking the Lord, thanking the Father for answered prayer. In other words, verses 1-3, look forward over the psalm to the end of the psalm, and then just lifting up the Lord's heart to God his Father.

Notice, he says, I will love you, O Lord, my strength. It's wonderful how he piles words upon words to describe God the Father in this passage. I will love you, O Lord, my strength, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my strength, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

It's wonderful, isn't it? It's wonderful how a man living way back before, but he never had a New Testament, obviously. He never had a complete Old Testament, and yet he could open his heart to the Lord and come out with these wonderful outbursts of praise. I'm often convicted by the outbursts of praise by the writers of the Old Testament.

Of course, they did it by inspiration of the Spirit of God. Think of those wonderful statements he makes about God. Notice, especially verse 2, he says, the Lord is my rock.

I think it's very helpful to remember that the word rock, when used in the Old Testament, refers to deity. Even in a verse like this, their rock is not as our rock. It still refers to deity, not to God.

That first their rock means their idols, their deities are not like our God. You say, why do you emphasize that? Because, you remember, the Lord Jesus said to Peter, when Peter said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, he said, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. I want to tell you, friends, today, in spite of what the theologians might say and speculate, in spite of what the Catholic Church teaches about this passage of scripture, not one of those disciples had any thought in his mind that Jesus was referring to Peter when he said rock, not one of them.

They knew. They knew the Old Testament scriptures, and they knew when the Lord Jesus was using that word rock, he was referring to himself, to the testimony of the scriptures concerning himself. The confession, thou art Peter, upon this rock I will build my church.

The confession that Christ is the Son of the living God, that is the rock in this passage of scripture and in all the Old Testament passages of scripture. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust. My shield has to do with safety, has to do with security, has to do with protection.

And, of course, that's what the psalm is all about, isn't it? My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies. So the psalm opens with a marvelous outburst of praise to God, and although it's at the beginning of the psalm, it really looks back over the psalm that we're going to look at.

In verses four through six, death is closing in on the Lord Jesus. He's there on the cross of Calvary, and death is drawing nigh. And by inspiration of God, the psalmist looks forward to that and describes it in living color.

Now, let me just also say here, it really helps in understanding many portions of the Old Testament if you have the soul of a poet, because this is poetry. It's Hebrew poetry, and it uses very figurative language. And it's beautiful once you get used to it, once you get a hold of it and realize much of it is just poetic, figurative language of tremendous literary style.

The pangs of death encompassed me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me. The snares of death confronted me.

Just a word about that word Sheol. Sheol is not the same as hell. Actually, Old Testament saints had very vague and indistinct views of life after death.

And I believe that when they used the word Sheol, it expressed more of ignorance than it did of definite knowledge. Here, it's obviously a synonym for death, Sheol is. Other places, it really means the

disembodied state, which is death.

And when the Lord said, thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, he wasn't referring to some compartment of hell, as is commonly taught. But he was saying, thou wilt not leave my soul in the disembodied condition, neither will thou suffer thy Holy One, that is the body, to see corruption. But here, it's synonymous with death itself.

You say, why? How do you know? Well, because verse five is a form of Hebrew poetry known as parallelism. And it's just two beautiful ways of saying the same thing. That's what it is.

The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me, the snares of death confronted me. The second part of the verse repeats the first part of the verse, but it repeats it in different language. And this is common in the New Testament.

It's helpful. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. It says the same thing.

But what marvelous style it has. The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament, that's the same as the heavens, utters his handiwork.

The glory of God, his handiwork. And it's really true. So I would suggest to you here, the sorrows of Sheol surrounded me, the snares of death confronted me.

In my distress, I cried unto the Lord. I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple, and my cry came before him, even to his throne.

The voice of the Lord Jesus, from the cross of Calvary, goes up to the throne of God, thin and solitary. Heaven is moved into action. I want to tell you, it's really remarkable.

Notice what happens. Verse seven, verses seven through 19, actually, what do you have? Well, if you look carefully, you have war breaking out. That's what it's describing.

It's describing warfare as a very vivid, picturesque statement concerning war. What's that all about? Well, dear friends, I believe it tells that all the forces of hell, all the powers of Satan, of his minions, they were determined that Jesus would not rise from the dead. And they were encamped there by that sepulcher, by that stone tomb in which his body lay.

He had been nailed to the cross by the hands of wicked men. Now his body's in the grave, and they want that to be the end of it. And they're all camped there.

Now, you can't see them. You can't see them there. They're spirit beings.

They're evil spirit beings, fallen angels, principalities, powers. They're encamped there, and they're just absolutely determined that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is not going to rise from the dead. And what you have here is a picture of the warfare between God and those evil hosts.

The earth shook and trembled. The foundations of the hills also shook and were shaken because he was angry. Who was angry? God was angry.

God was angry. He wasn't going to leave the body of the Lord Jesus in that grave. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth, coals were kindled by it.

I love it. I really love the scriptures and the language of the word of God. He bowed the heavens also and came down with darkness under his feet.

Isn't that magnificent? It's something like what you do have in Ezekiel chapter 1, with that throne car coming from the north in judgment. And he rode upon a cherub and flew. He flew upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his secret place. His canopy around him was dark waters, thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before him, his thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire.

The prayer of the Lord Jesus has gone up, has reached the throne of heaven, and God moves into action. And does he ever move into action? Absolutely magnificent. Verse 13, the Lord also thundered in the heavens at the most high, uttered his voice.

That's another illustration of Hebrew poetry, isn't it? Parallelism says the same thing, but how beautifully it says it. He sent out his arrows and scattered the foe. Ah, and scattered the foe.

The foundations, scattered the foe, lightnings in abundance, and he vanquished them. The channels of the waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were uncovered at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. I think it's good at this point if we turn over to Ephesians chapter 1, please.

Ephesians chapter 1, and read a passage there. Chapter 1 of Ephesians. Paul prays concerning the saints to whom the letter was sent.

Verse 15, I'm going to just begin in verse 15. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, this is it, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, get it, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

Now I really think Psalm 18 amplifies that statement. It explains that statement in a way. The working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

You see, the resurrection of Christ is presented in scripture as the greatest display of divine power that has ever taken place. In the Old Testament, it was the parting of the Red Sea, when the Hebrew people came across on dry land. It was wonderful.

And when the Jew thought in those days of the power of God, his mind immediately went to the Red Sea. But there's something greater than that. That was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And speaking of the tremendous power of God in raising him from the dead. I think that the reason for that is here in Psalm 18, it tells us just an unparalleled warfare that went on. When God moved out in mighty

power against the forces of evil and the forces of hell, and he swept them away from that tomb, the Lord Jesus rose from the dead.

That would happen, of course. Read the next verse. Verse 16, you have the resurrection.

You have the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He sent from above. He took me.

He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support.

He also brought me out into a broad place. He delivered me because he delighted in me. Really, the resurrection is wonderful, isn't it? First time it had ever happened.

You say, well, weren't there other resurrections? The son of the widow of Nain, Jairus' daughter, Lazarus. Well, they're really not treated as resurrections in the same sense. I like to speak of them more as resuscitations, and I'll tell you why.

Those people rose to die again, but the Lord Jesus was the first one ever to rise to die no more. He rose in the power of an endless life. Wonderful, wonderful Jesus.

Now, verses 20 through 30 tell us the why of the resurrection, and I think this is wonderful. Why did all of this take place? Well, there was a good reason, and once again, as we read these verses, you'll say, these don't sound too good in David's mouth, but they sound good in the Lord Jesus' mouth. He rewarded me according to my righteousness.

According to the cleanness of my hands he has recompensed me. For I kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

Another parallelism. There are many of them. I'm not mentioning them all.

Judgments and statutes are the same there, aren't they? Judgments is just another word for statutes. His word. I was also blameless before him, and I kept myself by my iniquity.

Therefore, the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. What's he saying there? Well, he's saying, and I say this reverently, God the Father had to raise him from the dead because of the perfection of his life and the perfection of his work at Calvary's cross. In other words, and I think Paul means that in Romans chapter 6 when he says, Raised by the glory of the Father.

The glory, all of the excellences, all of the virtues, all of the righteous attributes of God demanded that God raise the Lord Jesus from the dead. He couldn't leave him in that tomb. Just could not ever be.

And that's what the Lord Jesus is saying here. He's not boasting. He's just stating facts.

Perfect life that was lived down here on earth. And it really was a wonderful life. Really was a wonderful life.

I love it when I hear the Savior say that by himself he could do nothing. He could only do what he saw the Father do. He could only say what he heard the Father say.

So totally obedient and submissive to the Father. I can of my own self do nothing. Didn't mean he was powerless.

It meant he was so morally perfect that what he did could only be in obedience to God the Father. I tell you, that's marvelous. And that's why I say here, God had to raise him from the dead.

And that's what the argument of the psalm in this passage is in verses 20 through 24. The glory of God. And when I say the glory of God, the perfection of God demanded that he raise the Lord Jesus.

And then in verses 25 to 30, he goes on in that same line and talks about the moral government of the Lord, which is called into play here at the tomb. He says, with the merciful, you will show yourself merciful. With a blameless man, you will show yourself blameless.

With the pure, you will show yourself pure. And that all referred to the Lord Jesus. That's what he was.

He was all of those things. And God was responding in kind to his glorious person and to his glorious perfections. The other side of his government is with the devious, you will show yourself shrewd.

You will save the humble people, but bring down haughty looks. And of course, he brought down all the foes of Christ encamped there. And the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

What a tremendous picture it is. Something you don't get in the New Testament, particularly. But it tells us way back there, hundreds of years before the Lord ever appeared on the scene, tells us in vivid detail what was going to happen.

Verse 28, for you will light my lamp. The Lord, my God, will enlighten my darkness. For by you, I can run against a troop and by my God, I can leap over a wall by you, by my God.

And then that lovely verse is so precious to all of us. Verse 30, as for God, his way is perfect. God showed the perfection of his work in raising his beloved son from the dead on that first resurrection morning.

The word of the Lord is proven. He is a shield to all who trust in him. And this is shown by the fact that he vindicated his son who was delivered for our offenses, but raised again for our justification.

And as we all know, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus proved God's absolute satisfaction with the work, the redemptive work of his unique son there on the cross of Calvary. Now, just to go on in verses 31 to 42, we move on from the resurrection to his second advent. This is not the rapture.

This is his coming to reign, his coming to set up his kingdom. Don't look for the rapture in the Old Testament any more than you'd look for the church in the Old Testament. You won't find either of them there.

You might find types, you might find pictures, you might find suggestions, but the truth is not there. So when you read this, just remember it's to that time when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come back to the earth to set up his kingdom upon the earth. For who is God except the Lord, and who is a rock except our God? Get it? Who is a rock except our God? Remember what I said, rock refers to deity as scripture.

Rock in Peter's confession is the great truth that Christ is the son of the living God, absolute deity. It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer and

sets me on high places.

He teaches my hand to make war. You say I thought this was his coming to reign. It is.

Hold on. It is his coming to reign. He teaches my hands to make war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Also given me the shield of your salvation, your right hand has held me up, your gentleness has made me great. You enlarge my path unto me so that my feet did not slip. I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them.

Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them so they were not able to rise. They have fallen under my feet.

For you have armed me with strength for the battle. You have subdued unto me those who rose up against me. You have also given me the necks of my enemies so that I destroyed those who hated me.

They cried out, but there was none to save them, even to the Lord, but he did not answer them. Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the wind. I cast them out like dirt in the street." Why do you say that refers to the second advent of Christ? Because the first thing that happens when he comes again is judgment.

He has to defeat all his enemies so that they do not enter the kingdom. Turn to 2 Thessalonians 1. Here you have, not the rapture, but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to begin in verse 4, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you also suffer, since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angel in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he comes in that day, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed." Now, let me just suggest that verses 8 and 9 in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 correspond with verses 31 through 42, when the Lord Jesus comes back to reign and puts down his enemies and rids from the kingdom all things that offend. The word of God is wonderful, isn't it? It's really a wonderful book. It can really prove the existence of God from the fulfilled prophecies of the word of God.

It can really prove the existence of God. Not that we need it. It has come, you know, the millennium, the thousand-year reign of the Lord Jesus on earth.

You have delivered me from the strivings of the people. You have made me the head of the nations. Now, that's beautiful, isn't it? He's going to be.

We sang that, and Brian had that theme in the hymns that we sang. King, king of kings, and Lord of lords. Not just over Israel, but over the Gentile nations as well.

The people I have not known shall serve me. Isn't that a beautiful picture? The Gentile nations coming up to Jerusalem and paying tribute to the Lord Jesus. And Israel, redeemed Israel, with him there on the

earth.

As soon as they hear of me, they obey me. The foreigners submit to me. The foreigners fade away.

Well, different kinds of foreigners. Some yield obedience and submission to him, and others refuse to do it, and they fade away, come frightened from their hideouts. I think it's magnificent.

What do you think about it? I don't know why I say that, because I think the whole word of God is magnificent. Verses 40-6. In these verses, 46-50, you have praise to God for vindicating the Lord Jesus.

And that's what he did. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ vindicates him. It says he was right after all.

Just think if he had remained in the tomb. I tell you, it would be a gloomy day for us today if the Lord Jesus had remained in the tomb. It's because he arose that we know that redemption is completed.

The work has been done, and God has set his field of approval on it. The Lord lives. Blessed be my rock.

It's interesting how that word recurs in this psalm, isn't it? Always referring to the Lord, to God the Father. Let the God of my salvation be exalted. Notice, it is God who avenges me, and there the thought is who vindicates me, who vindicates me, who shows that I was right after all.

And he accomplished that vindication by raising me from the dead. It is God who avenges me and subdues the people under me. He delivers me from my enemies.

You also lift me up above those who rise against you. You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore, I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name.

And that's beautiful. And as I say, that's a verse that's quoted in Romans chapter 15. Although the Lord came primarily to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the full fruit of his work is going to flow over the wall to the Gentiles.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles. And you and I, most of us here at least today, can be very thankful for that, because we fit into the psalm there, don't we? Gentiles saved by the grace of God and sing praises to your name. Great deliverance he gives to his king.

Well, of course, we've seen that, haven't we? We've seen that in the psalm. The great deliverance he gave to his king shows mercy to his anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore. So, just to go over it briefly and review, in verses 1-3, you have the Lord Jesus praising the Lord for answering prayer by raising him from the dead.

And now, after that, he's going to go over the whole panorama of the history of the event in great detail. But he starts out with praise to the Lord. That's a good thing to do.

You know, the Apostle Paul did that with his letters, too, didn't he? He started out with praise to the Lord. That's the way we should start our letters, too. Then, of course, in verses 4-6, you have death closing in on the Lord Jesus there on the cross of Calvary.

And other psalms give you a very vivid description of that. All thy waves and billows have rolled over me. Very vivid.

Then, in verses 7-19, you have warfare breaking out. And, of course, what it is, is in answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus, God the Father is moving into action. Be careful when he moves into action.

It just shakes the universe. That's what it's saying, in effect. It just shakes the universe.

And, as I suggested to you, comparing this with Ephesians 1, it's a war against every power that sought to keep that blessed body in the grave there at Jerusalem. Then you have the resurrection in verses 16-19. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And then you have, in verses 20-30, why that was necessary. Why it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to be raised. And the answer is because the moral perfections of God demanded that he do it in view of the perfection of the life and service and death of his son there on the cross of Calvary.

Verses 31-42, you have the second advent with the emphasis on his coming in judgment to put down his foes and set up his kingdom of peace and prosperity and reign for a thousand years. And you have those thousand years, without mentioning the number, in verses 43-45, the Lord Jesus reigning. And he's reigning not only over Israel, but over the nations as well, the Gentile nations as well.

And then the psalm closes on a lovely note praising God for vindicating his beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, I think it's just wonderful that you can go back to the Old Testament, hundreds of years before the Lord Jesus ever appeared in the scene, and the Lord, as it were, takes us behind the scenes. He tells us what's going to happen there at that tomb outside the city of Jerusalem two thousand years ago.

What a wonderful word it is. Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Blessed God, we stand in awe of your word. We adore the infinity of scripture.

And most of all today, we thank you for the Lord Jesus, for the perfection of his work for us there at the cross, and for his resurrection from the dead and exaltation at your right hand in heaven. We thank you that the last chapter hasn't been written. He's coming again to take us home to be with himself, and he's coming back again to reign in righteousness in this world that once rejected rejected him.

We would pray this morning, even so, come Lord Jesus, take thy waiting people home. We long for that day when the marriage supper of the Lamb will brighten all our pain. We give you thanks from full hearts today to the Savior's name.

Amen.

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