

SALVATION FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

Hosea 6:1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Hosea 6:2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Today we commemorate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ this Easter Sunday. People could not understand how the crucified Lord, who seemed so helpless and defeated, could save them. However, this is precisely what happened: salvation came from beyond the grave. Indeed, this has been a recurring pattern in the Bible from the beginning. What seemed utterly feeble and hopeless, turned out to be the power of God in disguise. “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2Corinthians 12:9). The apostle Paul thought that his weakness would negatively impact his ministry and hence the salvation of souls, but the good Lord made him understand that “his strength is made perfect in weakness” – when we realize we have no more strength, God’s power shines brightest. Let us begin with father Abraham.

Romans 4:19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb.

In reality, his body was dead in terms of procreation; a hundred-year-old man was clearly past the point of siring a child. What do you do when you are Abraham? For one thing, do not look into a mirror – it will confirm the obvious. His white hair and beard, deep wrinkles crisscrossing his face, the weakness and tiredness showing in his eyes – all would confirm his deadness. Praise God that Abraham only looked into the mirror of God’s word and nothing else. The disciples of the Lord Jesus made this mistake: they looked into the mirror of reality – they saw the mighty miracles of the Lord and assumed he would come down from the cross and save himself. They forgot to look into the mirror of God’s word.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Abraham rose up again, so to speak, from the dead. His body was called back from the “grave” to produce Isaac. This pointed prophetically to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ who would bring salvation from beyond the grave. Just as Abraham “died” physically in order for the son of the promise, Isaac, to be born, the Lord Jesus Christ had to depart from the land of the living in order to bring salvation from beyond the grave. Imagine the shock when Eliezer returned to Haran and broke the news of the son of Abraham who was seeking a bride! Abraham had left his family 25 years prior and everyone in Haran must have felt sad for him and Sarah because they were childless. Abraham leaving his country also prefigured Christ leaving this earth – only to return with eternal life. This teaches us about the great lesson of dying to Adam before we can live to Christ.

Romans 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:5 *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

What about Moses? Here was a man whose family thought that he was dead. Forty years had transpired and there was no news about his whereabouts. He had to be silent and keep the lowest of profiles or Pharaoh would have hunted him down. Forty years is sufficient to kill a man’s identity. He spoke the language of the Midianites, he wore the clothes of the Midianites, he worked for a Midianite (Jethro) and he married a Midianite woman. By this time, the Hebrews were a distant memory; the promises of the God of Abraham a dead dream. There may be someone I am speaking to today whose identity may have been altered because you are separated from the people of God. Like the legend of the baby eagle who grew up among chicken and behaved like a chicken, you don’t know who you are anymore. Just when Moses “died” to his great heritage, he heard a voice:

Exodus 3:6 *Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

The voice of God resurrected Moses’ identity as the son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Wherever you may be right now, whatever new and confusing identity the world may have given you, I am here to tell you, “Put off the Midianite clothes!” The Lord Jesus Christ is your Father. He is calling you back from beyond the grave to repent, be baptized in his name and be filled with his Holy Spirit (acts 2:38). Remove the Midianite clothes and put on Christ. “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according

to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24). Suddenly, after 40 years, Moses returned from “beyond the grave” to his people. What a shock it must have been! See the similarity with Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, returning to Haran after 25 years with the shocking news of a son issuing from the body of the “dead” Abram. Hallelujah! Let us say with the prophet Hosea, “After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight” (Hosea 6:2). Only the God who revives and resurrects can be a blessing. Moses, the man who was dead to Israel, returned as their deliverer with the help of God! Are we willing to voluntarily die in baptism in Jesus name so we can become a mighty blessing on this earth?

The Lord Jesus himself grew up in Nazareth of Galilee. The Jews considered this place a pagan, “un-Israeli” kind of place.

John 7:41 *Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?*

John 7:52 *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

Galilee, in other words, was a spiritually “dead place”. What they forgot, however, is that God has a habit of selecting that which is considered “dead” and breathing spiritual life into it. God in flesh, Jesus, chose to speak the language of Galileans, adopt the customs of the Galileans and bestow great honor to Galilee. Those of you who travelled with me to Israel in recent years remember how we divided our time between Galilee and Jerusalem – roughly 6 days each. The Lord Jesus put Galilee on the world map. Millions of tourists travel there every year only because of Jesus. No prophet came out of Galilee, and this is still true. Jesus is not just a prophet – he is the God of the prophets! Glory to his name! It took just one Jesus to make the Galilee equally famous to Jerusalem, where hundreds of prophets ministered and died. Only God can do this! The Lord came from a place “dead” to Israel to save the rest of Israel.

Exodus 12:6 *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

Exodus 12:7 *And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.*

The first death to occur in Egypt the night of the Passover was that of the lamb. Once the Lamb died, it returned from beyond the grave, so to speak, to deliver the children of Israel from slavery for 430 precisely. Pharaoh had no idea that lamb represented the Lord Jesus who would return from the dead with deliverance and salvation. Salvation always comes from

beyond the grave – only the person who has crossed the river of death and returned, can bring salvation to us. No founder of any other religion claims to have done this; only the Lord Jesus Christ. “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). Jesus has crossed the river of death and returned with salvation for us. Have you accepted his sacrifice? Have you acknowledged his victory of death? Have you repented, been baptized in his name and received his Holy Spirit?

1Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

1Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

1Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.