

According to the Scriptures: The Significance of Paul's Statement in 1 Corinthians 15:4

A Synthesis of Approaches

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Abstract

This study examines the various ways in which scholars have attempted to answer the question regarding which Scriptures Paul had in mind when he wrote that Christ was “raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor 15:4). Scholars have approached the issue from varying angles and have made insightful observations. This study surveys these approaches and synthesizes the findings. It is clear, from this study, that God, in His sovereignty, has incorporated a third day motif, as well as typological passages like Hosea 6:1-3, and even used Jewish cultural concepts to illustrate, from various Scriptures, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

Introduction

1 Corinthians 15:4 and Luke 24:46 are unique verses in that they both seem to indicate that Christ’s resurrection on the third day was in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures. While it is relatively easy to find Old Testament passages referring to Christ’s resurrection, it has proven difficult to discern which texts refer to His resurrection being, specifically, on the third day.¹ Jesus and the New Testament authors, regarding this issue, do not give specific passages. They simply say, “Thus it is written...” and “according to the Scriptures” (Luke 24:46a, 1 Cor 15:4b).² Which passage(s) did Christ and His followers have in mind? Many scholars have made significant contributions towards a clearer understanding of this issue, and their viewpoints will be closely examined. As will be seen, the prevalence of a three days and third day motif throughout the Old Testament and the ancient Near East, typological passages mentioning three days, and the context of Jewish thought during the time of Jesus are all relevant to this discussion. This study does not claim to be a definitive discussion but a synthesis of research. By observing the primary approaches to answering the question, it becomes clear that, in various ways and various levels, the Old Testament points to Christ’s resurrection on the third day. It seems God has, in His sovereignty, inserted a three day/third day motif into the Old Testament, used Jewish thought of Jesus’

¹Martin McNarama, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 206-208; Nicholas P. Lunn, ““Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures”: Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Creation Narrative,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 57, no. 3 (September 2014), 523-524, accessed February 4, 2018, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1565535112/fulltextPDF/EDA679FF98DA42A2PQ/1?accountid=12085>

²Unless otherwise stated, all scriptural quotations are taken from the NASB 1995.

day to emphasize Christ’s fulfillment of Psalm 16:10, and, perhaps, placed passages dealing with the third day that relate to Christ in a typical way.³ This study aims to demonstrate that all of these findings are in harmony. It seems that God, in His sovereignty, has used the third day motif throughout His word, typology, and human culture to make it abundantly clear that Jesus rose on the third day, indicating His identity and fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

Preliminary Consideration

Before beginning to answer the questions put forth in the introduction, however, it is important to consider whether this study is justified. Many scholars seem to take Paul’s statement, “and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,” as indicating that both Christ’s resurrection and the fact that it occurred on the third day are *both* in accordance with the Scriptures.⁴ Is this warranted grammatically? The United Bible Society’s fifth edition of the Greek New Testament states the text as follows: “καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς.”⁵ Nicholas P. Lunn notes the parallel statements, “κατὰ τὰς γραφάς” (“according

³Types in the Old Testament are things which have an immediate, direct referent, but which are also intended to point to something or Someone greater in the future. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 34.

⁴Derek Kidner, *The Message of Hosea: Love to the Loveless, The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. J.A. Motyer, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 66; Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary: NIV 19a, eds. E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Matthews, L. Russ Bush, Duane A. Garrett, Larry L. Walker, and Linda L. Scott (U.S., Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 158; Lunn, 523-524.

⁵Holger Strutwolf (director), *The Greek New Testament*, 5th ed., ed. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger (Munster, Germany: German Bible Society, American Bible Society, United Bible Societies, 2014).

to the Scriptures”) in both verses 3 and 4. This structure, he maintains, indicates that both Christ’s death for believers’ sins (v. 3) *and* the clause, “ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ” (“that He was raised on the third day”) are “according to the Scriptures.” (v. 4).⁶ It is possible, though, for “κατὰ τὰς γραφάς” (“according to the Scriptures”) to modify only ἐγήγερται (“He was raised”) or only “τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ” (“on the third day”). If the former is true, then Paul is claiming the Scriptures predicted Christ’s resurrection, but, regarding the third day, is making a historical claim that is not, necessarily predicted in Scripture. If so, there is no real basis for this study. The latter option, if true, would indicate that Paul is emphasizing the third day as being predicted in Scripture. Why, though, would Paul emphasize the third day and not the resurrection, since Christ’s resurrection is, indeed, predicted in the OT (Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53:12)?⁷ Of course, in this context, it is impossible to separate the third day time-indicator from the event of Christ’s resurrection. So, Paul may have had both in mind, even if “according to the Scriptures” modifies only the third day.

Taking these options into consideration, it is still likely best to take the entire clause, “He was raised on the third day,” as being modified by “according to the Scriptures.” Martin Pickup, for instance, states:

Though it is grammatically possible for the phrase, “according to the Scriptures” in 1 Cor. 15:4 to modify only the words, “he was raised”... it seems best to understand it as modifying “on the third day” or, better still, the entire unit of thought: “He was raised on the third day.” This is because of the grammatical

⁶Lunn, 523-524.

⁷Kaiser, 111-122, 178-181.

parallel with 1 Cor 13b as well as the thematic parallel with Luke 24:46... Thus, “on the third day” is at least a part of what is “according to the Scriptures.”⁸

Pickup notes the parallel with 1 Corinthians 13b but also points out the phrase’s relationship to Luke 24:46-47, which states, “and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’” He also adds that the presence of *δεῖ* (“it is necessary”) when Jesus describes His death and resurrection on the third day in Mark 8:31 implies that Christ viewed even the third day as part of fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies.⁹

The view that “according to the Scriptures” refers to both Christ’s resurrection and the third day is justifiable grammatically and seems to be the most natural interpretation in light of Luke 24:46-47. Of course, all three views mentioned above are plausible, so one cannot be too dogmatic. Standing on its own, the third interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:4 is a plausible and natural reading, but it can only be validated with Old Testament warrant. The key question lies in whether the Old Testament predicts Christ’s resurrection *on the third day*. If not, it may be best to interpret Christ and Paul’s mention of the third day as being a necessary historical event but not a fulfillment of prophecy (Mark 8:31, Luke 24:46, 1 Cor 15:4). If so, then Paul and Christ likely did view the third day as a necessary fulfillment of Old Testament passages dealing with the subject. Since this is the fundamental question, it seems that this study is indeed warranted. As shall be

⁸Martin Pickup, “‘On the Third Day’: The Time Frame of Jesus’ Death and Resurrection,” in *Journal of Evangelical Theology* 56, no. 3 (2013), 518.

⁹Ibid.

examined, there appear to be several legitimate ways in which the Old Testament foreshadows and predicts Christ’s third day resurrection.

Survey of Data and Approaches

Because answering the question regarding which scriptures Paul had in mind is so challenging, there has, unsurprisingly, been a plethora of approaches. This survey is by no means exhaustive but seeks to examine three of the most prevalent methods. Some perceive a third day/three days motif in the Old Testament and try to discern its fundamental meaning as it relates to Christ. These scholars see a general motif in the Old Testament finding its culmination in Christ. Others look into Jewish thought and literature for answers. Finally, there are passages mentioning the third day which may relate typologically to Christ.¹⁰ For an accurate understanding of this issue, it is essential to examine all of these approaches while reflecting on their benefits and weaknesses. As shall be demonstrated, there is value in all of these approaches and, perhaps, harmony between them.

Approach 1: A General “Third Day/Three Days” Motif

There is a recurrence in Ancient Near Eastern thought and throughout the Old Testament regarding the concept of “three days” or “after three days.” The phrases evidently appear, at least, in extra-biblical medical omens and the myth, “Descent of Inanna into the Netherworld.”¹¹ Furthermore, the phrases combined appear at least 69

¹⁰This study is limited to analyzing Hosea 6:1-3, but there may be other passages (e.g. Jonah 1:17).

¹¹George M. Landes, “The Three Days and Three Nights Motif in Jonah 2:1,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 4 (December 1967), 446-450, accessed December 7, 2017,

times in Old Testament, and there is a general emphasis on the number three in the Old Testament.¹² It seems unlikely, then, that the motif is merely a coincidence. These observations raise several questions. Did God emphasize the three days motif to communicate truth about Himself, because ancient Near Eastern cultures viewed it with significance, or did they view it with significance, because, sometime early on, God acted in ways which indicated its importance (ex. Gen 22:4)? Over time, cultures may have gained a warped understanding of the phrase and incorporated it into pagan myths. An example of this type of occurrence would be the fact that most ancient cultures have a flood account, but Genesis gives the accurate and unique account from God’s perspective.¹³ That being said, neither the Bible nor the ancient Near Eastern literature gives enough information to trace the exact origins of the third day motif. It is clear that God often mercifully speaks into a culture in ways they understand to make Himself known (John 1:1, 14, 18) and, on the other hand, is sovereign over history, all events, and all cultures (Acts 17:25-27). The presence of the phrase, at times, in other ancient literature, therefore, is not a problem.¹⁴ The real question is what does God intend the

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/stable/pdf/3262800.pdf>; M.L. Barre, “New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea 6:2,” *Vetus Testamentum* 18, Fasc. 2 (April 1978): 129-141, accessed December 5, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1516963.pdf>.

¹²Michael Russel, “On the Third Day, According to the Scriptures,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 67, no. 1 (April 2008): 1-17, accessed December 7, 2017, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=8&sid=0054d30b-ddf3-4d07-81fa-3bf66effd2eb%40sessionmgr120>; Richard D. Patterson, “3. The Use of Three in the Bible,” Bible.org. (February 26, 2008), accessed December 7, 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-use-three-bible>.

¹³John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 41, 51-52.

¹⁴For a good discussion on the tension regarding the Bible’s similarities with ancient Near Eastern concepts as well as the Bible’s uniqueness, see Walton, 15-40.

phrase to indicate as it occurs in Scripture? Since there are, as of yet, no ancient documents specifically stating the meaning of three days or the third day in ancient Near Eastern thought, scholars are limited to trying to discern the meaning of the motif in Scripture by surveying the various contexts in which it appears. Generally, the approach is an attempt to discern a theme or idea that is common in many of the passages which mention the third day or three days motif. This approach, though limited in some ways, is by no means fruitless. Therefore, it is important to examine some of the findings from this train of thought.

Michael Russel, for example, argues that there is no single Old Testament passage which predicts Christ's third day resurrection but that there is a clear, overall pattern in the Old Testament.¹⁵ In a survey of the views and information available, Russel briefly analyzes some of the views widely held by scholars. These views include the implication that God will not abandon the righteous for over three days, the phrase refers to a longer or shorter time period, a journey is at hand, the period is preparation for an important event, the period is preparation for an ominous event, the period looks ahead to rising action, and the phrase indicates the future day of salvation. There may be truth to these views, but Russel notes a common weakness. In most of them, only a small number of verses surveyed, as opposed to a majority, support the suggested common thread. Russel takes the sixty-nine occurrences of these “three days/third day” phrases and groups them into forty-three episodes. Of these episodes, Russel claims three are inapplicable due to

¹⁵Russel believes that Jonah 1:17 was added later and sees Hosea 6:2 as referring to Israel, not the Christ, Russel, 1-17.

genre or context, twenty-three deal with “three days,” twelve deal with the third day, and five deal with both or a mix. Of the twenty-three, Russel argues that thirteen may imply a time-period necessary to establish certainty.¹⁶ In other words, according to Russel, the individuals in biblical accounts often wait three days to make sure something is certain or established. Regarding the other seventeen units, Russel removes three due to genre differences, and then argues that the remaining fourteen deal with “climactic reversal.”¹⁷ According to Russel, these reversals, more often than not, refer to reversal from death, or a near-death experience, to life or deliverance.

Ultimately, Russel argues that the two patterns, especially the theme of death to life, are fulfilled in Christ’s resurrection on the third day. Christ being dead for three days was enough to establish the certainty of His death, and His resurrection matches the pattern of death to life reversal found in the Old Testament.

Russel is admirable in his attempt to survey all the available information, and he acknowledges the limitations and potential weaknesses of his own work. The patterns he notices may be legitimate. The primary difficulty, it seems, is the subjective nature of such a study. The goal is to understand what impact the phrase “three days” or “third day” would have on the biblical audience in the ancient near east. The means of

¹⁶Ibid., 6, 8-10. These 13 episodes are Gen 30:36, Ex 3:18 (with 5:3 and 8:27), 10:22-23, 15:22 (with Numb 33:8), Josh 2:16 (with 2:22), 9:16, Judg 14:14-15, 1 Sam 9:20, 30:12, 2 Kgs 2:17, Ezra 8:15 (with 8:32), 10:8-9, and Jon 1:17,

¹⁷Ibid., 10, 16. Russel removes Gen 1:13, Lev 7:17, and Numb 19:12, but he includes Gen 22:4, 40:12, 42:17, Exod 19:11, Josh 9:17, Judg 20:30, 1 Sam 30:1, 2 Kgs 20:5, and Esth 4:16. Russell removes Gen 1:13, because he views it as a different genre, it lacks a definite article, and he thinks “day” might be used differently. Likewise, he removes Lev 7:17 and Numb 19:12 for genre differences, but he does not specify what these differences are. Russel does later address Hosea 6:2, adding it to the category of climactic reversal.

discerning its meaning has been to suggest themes that apply to as many three days/third day passages as possible. Russel has done this relatively effectively, but there are still some verses which do not fit the suggested theme of certainty.¹⁸

Still, a theme not being all-encompassing does not mean that it is not prevalent. In an online article studying the use of three in the Old Testament, Michael Travers and Richard Patterson note that good stories often utilize motifs to point to previous episodes and unify the text.¹⁹ Rather than three days/third day having one meaning in every appearance, it may be functioning as a motif which unifies God’s story, emphasizes key themes, and points readers forward to significant events. In Scripture, the number three occurs hundreds of times to denote the quantity of things, people, places, and even time. This is not significant in and of itself, but Patterson notes that its frequent occurrence on a structural level and in significant events is probably no coincidence. According to Patterson, much of the Bible is written with a three-fold division.²⁰ Additionally, time markers such as three days, three months, and even three years, Patterson argues, are often used to describe significant events. With regard to the third day/three days motif, Patterson sees five major uses in Scripture:

¹⁸Ibid., 6, 8-10. Num 10:33, Josh 1:11, 3:2, 19:4, 2 Sam 20:4, 24:13 Neh 2:11, 1 Chr 12:39, 2 Chr 20:25, and Jon 3:3

¹⁹Michael E. Travers, “Literary Motifs,” Bible.org. (February 26, 2008), accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-literary-motifs>; Richard D. Patterson, “3. The Use of Three in the Bible,” Bible.org. (February 26, 2008), accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-use-three-bible>.

²⁰Patterson suggests a three-fold pattern prevalent within the book of Hosea as one of several examples. Richard D. Patterson, “3. The Use of Three in the Bible,” Bible.org. (February 26, 2008).

1. Used in contexts of revelation followed by action (1 Kgs 12:5, 12; 1 Sam 29:1-11, 30:2, 18-19)
2. Used in necessary waiting periods (Josh 2:15-16, Judg 20:29)
3. Used in contexts of spiritual preparation usually followed by deliverance (ex. Esth 4:15-16),
4. Used in the context of purity or healing (Lev 17:7-8, Num 19:11-12, 1 Kgs 20:8)
5. Used to refer to the resurrection (Matt 16:21, Hos 6:2).²¹

Patterson argues that since God is sovereign over historical events and the writing of His word, the third day pattern is God’s motif meant to lead readers to its culmination in Christ.²²

It is easy to see how the two views mentioned above may overlap at various points. For instance, Russel’s suggestion of certainty as a key theme may correspond to Patterson’s suggestion of waiting periods and spiritual preparation, or vice-versa. It may be that the motif appears in these two contexts so often, *because* the third day was connected with the time-period necessary to be certain of something. Additionally, one can see how Russel’s suggestion of “climactic reversal” might overlap with many of Patterson’s points. It seems best not to be dogmatic at this point. It is clear that the third day is a common motif throughout Scripture. As Patterson notes, it is God’s motif. God

²¹Ibid.

²²Richard D. Patterson, “4. Summary and Conclusions of the Third Day Motif,” Bible.org (February 26, 2008), accessed December 9, 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/4-summary-and-conclusions-third-day-motif>.

has placed it throughout His word, at the very least, to emphasize its importance--that is, how it relates to the climax of the story, Christ's resurrection. That being said, many of the observations made are probably legitimate. The motif is often used in the context of significant events, revelation, and deliverance. Thus, one can see how it would set the stage and relate to Christ's resurrection. Therefore, Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:4 may be summarizing a common theme throughout the Old Testament just as Matthew summarizes the message of the prophets rather than directly quoting them in Matthew 2:23.²³

Approach 2: Rabbinical Literature

There are others, however, who, rightly, look at how Jewish thought might play into this topic. In Martin McNarama's book, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, he analyzes the Targums, Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament, and links these understandings to potential references in the New Testament. McNarama argues that the Jewish rabbis viewed the end of the age as consisting of the resurrection of the dead (Dan 12:2), a time of blessing, and a restoration to the peace of the garden of Eden. Regarding Hosea 6:2, one Targum paraphrases the verse, "He will give us life in the days of consolation that will come; and on the day of the resurrection of the dead He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him."²⁴ Clearly, certain Jews, at the time this Targum was

²³J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ: A Study of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 73.

²⁴McNarama, 206. This translation was derived by Cathcart and Gordon using printed editions of the Targum of the prophets and manuscripts whenever possible. Discerning the date of the Targum of the prophets is difficult. While some material may be reminiscent of pre-70 A.D. oral tradition, there are strong evidences to suggest that the final literary product came after 70 A.D. Discerning the precise date(s) regarding when the Targums were written is in-conclusive. In many ways, Targum scholarship is still a

written, understood the verse in eschatological terms. According to McNarama, the rabbis in the centuries following Christ’s death even viewed other occurrences of the phrase “third day” as corresponding to salvation (Gen 22:4, 42:17, Ex 19:6, Josh 2:16, Hos 6:2, Jon 1:17).²⁵ Since Rabbinic Judaism relies heavily on tradition, it *may* give potential insights into Jewish ideas, practices, and culture in the time of or times leading up to the New Testament period. McNarama relates the “consolations” described in the Targum’s paraphrase of this passage to the fact that Simeon was awaiting the “consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). Thus, McNarama infers that an earlier form of the rabbinical expectation *may* have been in the minds of Jews during the 1st century A.D. Ultimately, he maintains the difficulty of discerning, with certainty, which Scripture(s) Paul has in mind in 1 Corinthians 15:4, but he leans toward a midrash of Hosea 6:1-3 being the answer.²⁶

work in progress. Perhaps the greatest value of the Targum(s) is its insight into Rabbinic Judaism in the centuries following Christ’s resurrection. Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), 9-10, 15-19, 41. W. Edward Glenny suggests that the omission of any mention of the third day in the Targum’s paraphrase of this verse *may* represent an effort to prevent Christians from using Hosea 6:2 as a prophecy related to Jesus’ resurrection. W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea: A commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus, Septuagint Commentary Series* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 110.

²⁵It would be unfair to suggest that Russel and Patterson are ignorant of this view. Indeed, they acknowledge it as a viable option. They interact with it and try to account for other uses of the third day motif in Scripture, Russel; Patterson.

²⁶A midrash is a Jewish method of interpretation in which one “interprets ancient passages in a creative way to show their fulfillment in contemporary events.” Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic? NAC Studies in Bible & Theology*, ed. R. Ray Clendenen, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 30-32. McNarama is, therefore, suggesting that Paul may have been appealing to a creative interpretation of Hosea 6:1-3. McNarama, 206-208. This is possible only if Paul applied the text in light of Christ without compromising its intended meaning. Paul would not, though, have been taken captive by any tradition or creative interpretation of his day which contradicted God’s word.

Martin Pickup, approaching the subject from a different, but brilliant, angle, suggests that the phrase “on the third day” signifies Jesus’s perfection and atoning death by the fact that He did not “undergo decay.” (Ps 16:10). He argues that the rabbis, though taking passages like Hosea 6:2 eschatologically, did not, necessarily, indicate a messianic understanding. By carefully reading the excerpts from the Jerusalem Talmud (5th century A.D.), Genesis Rabba (5th century), Leviticus Rabbah (5th century), and the Mishnah (c. 200 A.D.) dealing with death, Pickup concludes that the rabbis viewed three days as the time-period in which a corpse would not yet begin decaying. By the fourth day, in Jewish thought, the body would begin to decay. It was for this reason they taught that the soul still lingered until the fourth day. According to Pickup, contrary to popular understanding, the rabbis taught that the soul would leave *because* of the bodily decay rather than the body decaying because the soul left. He also argues that, technically, the rabbis did not express a belief that the soul could return to the body during this time period or that resurrection was limited to this period. Jews knew that it was not (Dan 12:2). Rather, they merely stated the *soul* longed and hoped to return, but they never expressed a documented occurrence of this. Further, Pickup, countering possible objections to this notion, maintains that *Semahot* (3rd or 8th century A.D.), a rabbinical document prescribing for loved ones to check the grave the first three days in case the deceased was alive, deals with the issue of accidental burial rather than actual death. The document does not express the idea of a soul lingering, as the former does. All of this to

say, according to Pickup, the emphasis on three-day periods in relation to the deceased was because the physical body would start to deteriorate after this period.²⁷

Though these documents came centuries after Christ’s resurrection, they are, in essence, interpretations of far earlier traditions which may have been prevalent in the time of Christ.²⁸ Pickup maintains that the view expressed above was, almost certainly, the view of Jews in the first century A.D. Among other arguments, Pickup points to John 11:1-44. Here, he notes, it is explicitly stated twice that Christ came on the fourth day (11:17, 39), and Martha states, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days” (11:39). Here, Pickup argues, the point is that Christ is powerful enough to raise to life one who has begun to decay. In Christ’s resurrection, however, the point is that He had not yet begun to decay in fulfillment of Psalm 16:10. This is to show that Christ is the Holy One. Pickup notes that the sermons in Acts 2:24-32 and 13:34-37 mention nothing of Christ rising on the third day, but both emphasize that God did not allow Him to see decay (Ps 16:10). The sermon in Acts 10:41, though not mentioning Psalm 16:10, does, however, mention Christ’s resurrection on the third day. Pickup, therefore, argues that the Church’s statement of Christ’s death on the third day was the same as saying He did not see decay and, therefore, was sinless.²⁹

²⁷Pickup, 511-31

²⁸Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature: The Essential Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 2-3. The Jerusalem Talmud, though estimated to have been written around the 5th century, is based on the Mishnah (c. 200 A.D.), the first completed rabbinical document. The Mishnah is based on years of oral tradition. Therefore, it is plausible that the traditions expressed in the rabbinical documents were also present in Jesus’ day.

²⁹Pickup, 531-542.

Pickup’s view is rather compelling and probably demonstrates the most precise standpoint. It seems clear, when viewed in light of 1st century A.D. Jewish thought, that the phrase “on the third day” implies Jesus’ holiness and the fact that God did not let Him decay (Ps 16:10). Another strength of this view is that it is substantiated by the Jewish writings and the New Testament. It is not mere speculation. In the context of Jesus’ day, then, His resurrection on the third day implied God’s approval of Him due to His holiness. Thus, one sees God using cultural ideas to emphasize Christ’s identity, while fulfilling Scripture. That being said, and as Pickup even acknowledges, this does not negate the legitimacy of texts, like Hosea 6:2, which, as typology, may point to Christ’s third day resurrection. The two explanations are probably not in conflict but, rather, harmony.³⁰

Approach 3: Typology

Finally, in light of the previous considerations, it is helpful to examine passages that are fulfilled in Christ as typology. Here, attention is given primarily to Hosea 6:1-3, although other relevant texts are examined. This examination is, by no means, exhaustive. Many more passages could likely be analyzed as typology relating to Christ’s resurrection on the third day; however, it is demonstrated here, that Hosea 6:1-3 is a primary passage for this research. Therefore, it is important to examine the book’s context, themes, and flow of thought. Additionally, after coming to an accurate interpretation, it is necessary to examine how this passage is fulfilled in Christ and how it

³⁰Ibid., 537.

relates to Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments. Hopefully, this process will honor the Lord through gaining a deeper understanding of Christ and His word.

Hosea 6:1-3

Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth.

Context

Hosea was written in the 8th century B.C. by the prophet Hosea, whose name means, “the LORD is salvation.” Hosea prophesied, “during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.” (Hos 1:1). During this time, God greatly expanded the borders of Israel (2 Kgs 14:23-27, 2 Chr 26:6-15). This generous act, however, was due to God’s compassion rather than any merit on the part of Israel’s kings, since Jeroboam, “did evil in the sight of the LORD” (2 Kgs 14:24, 26). Sadly, Israel did not turn to the Lord but, instead, gave credit and thanks to Baal and even engaged in temple prostitution like the pagans (Hos 2:8, 16-17, 4:13-15).³¹ Within Hosea’s ministry, Assyria gained significant power, and Israel under Menahim, the Israelite king in Samaria, began paying tribute to Assyria to delay being conquered (2 Kings 15:17-19). Israel, under Pekah, allied with Syria, and attacked Judah (2 Kings 15:27-16:18). Even though God told Ahaz to trust Him (Isa 7:1-

³¹Andrew E. Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 471; Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, 2nd ed, *Encountering Biblical Studies*, eds. Walter A. Elwell and Eugene H. Merrill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 440-443.

24), Ahaz, instead, sold himself out to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria for help (2 Kings 16:7-18). Israel was defeated and, eventually, utterly absorbed into Assyria by 722 B.C. after Hoshea’s attempt at revolt against Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 17:1-6).³²

Themes

Scholars note several key themes throughout the book of Hosea. First and foremost is the theme of Israel’s spiritual adultery. Throughout the book, one is again and again exposed to the tragic reality that Israel has turned away from God, even though He has been nothing but faithful to them. God’s relationship with Israel is depicted in Hosea’s marriage to the prostitute Gomer. God loves Israel, but they have rejected Him (Hos 1:2, 3:1-5, 2:1-13, 4:1-5:14, 11:1-4).³³ Additionally, the Israelites are chastised, because they do not know the LORD. They are constantly exhorted to seek to know Him, but they do not listen (Hos 4:1-3, 6:3, 6-7).³⁴ Judgement, of course, is a heavy theme throughout the book, given Israel’s apostasy. God rejected that generation as His people and promised devastating destruction, because they were liars, thieves, murderers, sexually immoral, and idolatrous (1:4-1:9, 2:2-13, 4:1-5:14, 6:4-10:15, 11:1-13:16). That being said, God’s compassion, mercy, and faithfulness are prevalent throughout the book. He gives promise after promise pointing to a day when Israel will repent, be cleansed, be

³²Hill and Walton, 464-465; Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 354-356.

³³Arnold and Beyer, 441.

³⁴Ibid.

restored as God’s people, and experience His blessings and love (1:10-2:1, 3:1-5, 5:15-6:3, 11:1-4, 14:1-19).³⁵

Outline

The book begins with a statement introducing Hosea, the fact that the word of the LORD came to Him, and the time period in which this occurred (Hos 1:1). God commands Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman in order to demonstrate God’s love for Israel and Israel’s unfaithfulness (1:2-3). Hosea has three children whose names are all signs of God’s coming judgment and rejection of the current generation of Israelites as His people. Yet, God does express His love for Judah (1:2-1:9). God is still faithful to His covenant to Abraham and will, in time, make the Israelites abundant, restore them, and unite the kingdoms under one leader once again (1:10-2:1). Nevertheless, Israel, at the time of Hosea’s writing, does not turn to the Lord. They take God’s good gifts and, instead of thanking God, turn to idolatry, giving thanks to Baal. Therefore, God is going to punish them by removing His blessings, so that they might return to Him (2:2-13). Yet, the time is coming in which God will bring Israel back to Himself. It will be a kingdom of righteousness, love, and truth, and He will bless them and be their God (2:14-31). Next, God tells Hosea to be reconciled to his wife, even though she is an adulteress, because, in the same way, God loves Israel. God indicates that He will remove the monarchy, sacrificial system, and privileges of the Israelites, so that, “in the last days,” they will finally return to Him and the Messiah, “David their King.” (3:1-5).³⁶

³⁵Dillard and Longman III, 361.

³⁶Kaiser, Jr., 142-144. Kaiser argues that this title refers to none other than Christ.

In 4:1, God, once again, addresses the guilt of the current generation. Arnold and Beyer note that, here, God is bringing a legal charge against the Israelites, because they have broken the covenant.³⁷ The people, including the priests, are liars, murderers, idolaters, and adulterers, and they do not know the Lord. Both Israel and Judah are guilty. They will not be blessed by God, due to their unfaithfulness, *until* “they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” (4:1-5:14, 5:15). Hosea 6:1-3, which follows 5:15, is the passage with which this section is concerned. While scholars have different views on the meaning of this passage, as will be addressed, it is functioning as both a call to repentance and a description of the future day when Israel will return to the Lord, being restored by Him (Hos 6:1-3).

To continue, God addresses the present disloyalty of Israel (6:4-11). The Israelites are fickle, so God sends them prophet after prophet, but they do not repent. God desires their covenant loyalty rather than their pagan sacrifices (6:6). God will punish them severely because, despite God’s willingness to forgive, they have refused to return to Him and are persisting in evil (7:1-10:15). God tells readers that Israel is His son, and He, in love, has raised them as a Father (11:1-4). Yet, they have continuously rebelled against Him, so He will send them into Assyria (11:5-7). Yet, God, in His great compassion, will not utterly abandon them. In His holiness, He promises not to punish Ephraim again but to bring them back into the land (11:8-11). Both Israel and Judah, at the present time, however, are against God even though He is faithful (11:12). Hosea reminds Israel of the

³⁷Arnold and Beyer, 442.

example of its ancestors, Jacob and Moses, but condemns the current generation.³⁸ Their punishment will be incredibly severe, because they have rejected the only Savior and Helper, the LORD (12:1-13:16).³⁹ The final section, however, is a call to repentance with the promise that, when Israel does return, God will graciously receive them, cleanse them, and bless them (14:1-9).⁴⁰

Interpretation

One prevalent interpretation of this passage is that Hosea 6:1-3 describes a feigned repentance. On the other hand, several scholars maintain that the verses genuinely describe the future repentance and restoration of the nation of Israel. Some, examining the fact that Israel is portrayed as disloyal and fickle in the surrounding verses (5:1-14, 6:4-11), argue that here is an example of fake repentance. If this is true, then God is, in verses 4-11, responding to verses 1-3. In support of this view, Elizabeth Achtemeier argues that in 6:1-3, the Israelites are talking to one another but not making a prayer to God. Thus, she argues, they are presuming on God's love. Further, Achtemeier believes there is a play on words in 5:15 and 6:1. In the former, God indicates He will “return” to His place, and Achtemeier believes the mention of returning to the Lord (6:1) is meant to demonstrate the Israelites' presumption that God will easily return to them if they simply

³⁸Thomas E. McComiskey, *Hosea, The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical & Expository Commentary* 1, ed. Thomas McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 200-203, 209-212.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Arnold and Beyer, 440-441; Dillard and Longman III, 359; Hill and Walton, 465; Jerry Falwell (Ex. Ed.), *Liberty Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1972), 1663-1674.

go through their rituals. Additionally, she argues the comparison of God’s actions with nature and weather is due to the Israelites’ wrongful, even pagan, conception of God.⁴¹ David A. Hubbard argues verses 1-3 were crafted by the priests in an effort to appease God but fail due to a lack of acknowledged guilt. He sees connections between the invitation to “come” (6:1) and Israel’s departure to Assyria (5:13), between the description that God had “torn” them (6:1) and had threatened to in 5:14, the expectation that God would heal (6:2) in contrast to Assyria’s failure to provide healing (5:13), between “before Him” (v. 3) and “My face” (5:15), and the fact that “dawn” (v. 3) and “seek” (5:15) have the same roots. Hubbard also maintains that the exhortation to return to God (v. 1) and know Him (v. 3) are the priests’ attempts to make up for the nation’s covenant disloyalty. Finally, Hubbard concludes that all of this is not enough, because the Israelites have not acknowledged their guilt as 5:15 demands. He maintains that there is no mention of true repentance here.⁴²

Though this interpretation is possible, it is not necessitated and is rather unlikely given the context. Yes, the Israelites of Hosea’s day are described as fickle (6:4-11). They are, indeed, told they will seek Him and not find Him in 5:4-8, but it is due to their wickedness. They want the blessings without changing their ways. The principle described in the previous view is correct, that genuine repentance precedes God’s blessing. However, it is very likely that 6:1-3 is describing genuine repentance and

⁴¹Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Minor Prophets I, New International Biblical Commentary: Old Testament Series*, eds. Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and Robert K. Johnston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996), 50-51.

⁴²David A. Hubbard, *Hosea, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* 24, Gen Ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 134-135.

restoration. In 5:15, God states, “I will go away *and* return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” As several scholars note, this marks a clear transition. God promises that when the Israelites *earnestly* seek Him, they will, indeed, be restored to Him. The most natural reading of Hosea 6:1-3 is to take it as the fulfillment of God’s statement in 5:15. This functions as both a call to repentance and also the words of the Israelites in the day that they do repent. Duane A. Garrett adds the point that, at least in Hosea, the word translated “return” when Israel is the subject and God is the object always describes genuine repentance (Hos 2:7, 3:5, 5:4, 7:10, 16, 11:5, 12:6, 14:1-2). Likewise, the passage describes reversals of God’s judgements described in 5:12 and 5:14.⁴³ The context, then, is the strongest argument for this interpretation. That being said, there are other factors which support it. The Septuagint, the Greek translation(s) of the Hebrew Bible completed a few centuries before Christ, for instance, adds “saying” after 5:15.⁴⁴ This addition implies an understanding on the part of the ancient translator(s) that this section is describing the genuine repentance of Israel which God desires.⁴⁵ While this word could have been wrongfully added, it is just as possible that it was added to clarify meaning already implied in the passage’s context. Further, as has been noted previously, the Targum interprets this passage as referring to the eschatological restoration and

⁴³ Garrett, 158-159; Kaiser Jr., 40.

⁴⁴The Targum also adds, “They will say,” Cathcart and Gordon, 41; Glenny, 109.

⁴⁵McComiskey, 88.

resurrection of Israel.⁴⁶ The history of interpretation and, more importantly, the immediate context seem to argue more in favor of the second interpretation. God’s frustration in 6:4-11, then, should be understood as His frustration with the current generation (5:1-14), while 5:15-6:3 describes the repentant generation who experiences restoration. Likewise, the book of Hosea describes Israel’s restoration throughout (1:10-2:1, 2:14-3:5, 5:15-6:3, 14:1-19).

Several scholars note that the phrase, “after two days...on the third day” in Hosea 6:2 may not, in its original context, indicate Israel would be restored in a literal three-day period. Rather, most view the phrase as an instance of numerical escalation found elsewhere in Scripture (Prov 30:15) and other Ancient Near Eastern writings. Scholarly opinion on the function of the rhetorical device in this context differ. Francis Anderson and David Freedman maintain that this device is employed to indicate a climax.⁴⁷ Garrett seems to imply that the phrase, metaphorically, indicates that Israel’s restoration would take place soon.⁴⁸ Douglas Stuart, on the other hand, does not see this as necessarily indicating a quick restoration but rather the certainty of future restoration. In other words, God will surely raise them at some point in the future.⁴⁹ Whichever view one takes, it is here only acknowledged that the phrase in Hosea 6:2 may be more of a rhetorical device

⁴⁶Cathcart and Gordon, 41.

⁴⁷Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible 24* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 421.

⁴⁸Garrett, 159.

⁴⁹Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah, Word Biblical Commentary 31*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, John D. W. Watts, and James W. Watts (Columbia: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1987), 108.

to emphasize the nearness, certainty, or some other quality of restoration rather than the precise duration until restoration.

Finally, it is interesting that the Targum of this passage describes the eschatological resurrection (Dan 12:2).⁵⁰ At first glance, it seems that this understanding goes too far, since the descriptions seem to refer to restoration rather than literal resurrection from the dead.⁵¹ M.L. Barre argues that the phrase translated, “He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him” (6:2) can refer to either resurrection or to healing, and he favors healing.⁵² The writer(s) of the Targum may have simply been wrong to mention the resurrection, but there are some noteworthy considerations in light of Scripture. Zechariah 12:10-14 seems to indicate that Israel’s national repentance will occur only when they look on Christ, presumably, at His second coming.⁵³ Paul describes a resurrection of the dead in Christ followed immediately by living saints being caught up to Christ at His coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Further, when Paul is describing Israel’s hardening, the gospel going to the Gentiles, and God’s continued faithfulness to Israel, he states, “For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:15). Given these considerations, it is very possible that Israel’s repentance will occur at Christ’s second coming followed immediately by the

⁵⁰Cathcart and Gordon, 41.

⁵¹Garrett, 158-159.

⁵²Barre, 129-141.

⁵³Kaiser Jr., 223-226.

resurrection of the dead. So, whether Hosea 6:1-3 is talking about literal resurrection, restoration, or both, it is clear elsewhere that these things are connected.

Meaning in Light of Christ and Scripture

It is clear that, at the very least, Hosea 6:1-3 is talking about the future repentance and restoration of Israel to God. This restoration will likely relate to the resurrection of the dead. It has also been observed that Hosea 6:1-3, in context, might mention the third day as a rhetorical device rather than an exact time-marker. It must be acknowledged that Hosea 6:1-3 *may* not bear any connection with Christ’s resurrection. The New Testament does not appear to cite Hosea 6:1-3 directly. One cannot claim Christ’s resurrection fulfills this passage by appealing to a direct New Testament citation. On the other hand, Nicholas P. Lunn argues that several messianic passages receive no direct reference in the New Testament (e.g. Isaiah 9:6, 11:1-5).⁵⁴ So, the absence of a direct reference to Hosea 6:1-3 in the New Testament does not necessarily mean it bears no connection to Christ. Further, there are still reasons to believe that Christ’s resurrection relates to Hosea 6:1-3 in a typological manner. As will be shown, Scripture seems to present Christ as having solidarity with the nation of Israel. This may have bearing on the significance of Christ’s resurrection on the third day. While Israel’s restoration would not take place within three literal days, Christ’s resurrection on the third day may be designed to demonstrate His identity and relationship to Israel as the One who fulfills the promises. Christ does not negate the promises to the nation of Israel; rather, He, Himself, is Israel’s foundation and

⁵⁴Lunn, 525-526.

the basis for its future restoration. The nation of Israel will only experience the blessings described in Hosea 6:1-3 when they are united to Christ.

In Matthew’s Gospel, for instance, Jesus’ life is presented in close parallel to Israel. For example, Matthew applies Hosea 11:1, a passage describing God’s love for Israel, to Jesus (Matt 2:15). After Jesus flees from Herod into Egypt, Matthew says, “He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”⁵⁵ Likewise, Jesus is portrayed as being in the wilderness for forty days and nights, just as Israel was in the wilderness for forty years (Num 32:13, Matt 4:1-11). Regarding this issue, Garrett states, “Christ in his life and ministry embodied Israel or recapitulated the sojourn of Israel.”⁵⁶

Furthermore, the Messiah, or Seed, in the Old Testament is presented in close parallel with His people. Walter Kaiser emphasizes that understanding the concept of “corporate solidarity” is essential to understanding Old Testament prophecy.⁵⁷ Genesis 3:15, for example, states, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” Here, God passes judgement on the serpent. Regarding this passage, Walter Kaiser Jr. states, “Clearly, the term ‘seed’ is a generic term for the entire race that came from the woman on the one hand, while the ‘seed’ of the serpent embraces all the

⁵⁵Walter Kaiser comments that the emphasis of the verse is on Christ’s solidarity with Israel, Kaiser Jr., 35.

⁵⁶Garrett, 159.

⁵⁷Kaiser Jr., 25.

evil race derived from him. However, the very fact that the noun ‘seed’ is a collective singular deliberately provides for the fact that it may include the one who represents the whole group itself.”⁵⁸ Kaiser goes on to note, furthermore, that the pronoun “he” describing the One who will crush the snake’s head can only be taken as singular, referring to One Man.⁵⁹ Thus, from the very beginning of God’s story, there is a clear solidarity between the Seed (Christ) and the seed (His people). There is, likewise, clear enmity between His people and the children of the devil. Cain kills Abel, because Abel was righteous and Cain was not (1 John 3:12, Gen 4:1-24). Abel was righteous because of His faith in God (Heb 11:4). All the righteous in the Old Testament seem to point to the One in whom their righteousness is rooted, Jesus Christ. When He came, He, too, though perfectly innocent, was murdered by those whom He called children of the devil and descendants of those who murdered the prophets (John 8:44, John 23:31). Further, Hebrews 11:1-12:3 presents the saints of old as those who were declared righteous by their faith, which produced obedience. At the end, however, the author presents Christ as the ultimate example of faith, suffering, and obedience. Therefore, the concept of corporate solidarity, even as early as Genesis 3:15, seems biblical.

One also sees this concept in God’s promises to Abraham. Genesis 22:17-18 states, “indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the

⁵⁸Ibid., 39.

⁵⁹Ibid.

gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” It seems here that the seed is the nation of Israel, especially since God promises to make the seed numerous. In dealing with this issue, Andrew E. Steinman argues that the first reference does, indeed, refer to many, but the second two, grammatically speaking, should be taken as singular. He argues that while “seed” is usually collective, it is singular when accompanied by singular adjectives and pronouns. This is true of the “seed” in 17b. Likewise, he maintains that the verb form shifts after 17a and serves to unify 17b and 18. Further, he notes the same language is used to refer to the King of Israel in Psalm 72:17.⁶⁰ Walter Kaiser, likewise, sees corporate solidarity continuing in all the passages dealing with the Abrahamic covenant and the “seed” (ex. 12:2, 22:17-18).⁶¹ He, again, interprets the “seed” as a collective noun and the singular pronouns as referring to Christ.⁶² These descendants of Abraham, whoever they are, must have some sort of solidarity with the Seed.⁶³

⁶⁰Andrew E. Steinman, “Jesus and Possessing the Gate of His Enemies (Gen 22:17-18; 24:60),” *Bibliotheca sacra* 174, no. 693 (January - March 2017), 13-21, accessed February 4, 2018, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=6988b709-c4d4-4056-809f-6457ac6f7d4c%40sessionmgr120>.

⁶¹Kaiser, 46-50.

⁶²It needs to be stated, however, that Steinman and Kaiser’s approaches are in slight tension with one another. Steinman maintains that “seed” is singular when paired with singular pronouns, while Kaiser maintains that “seed” is a collective noun, connected with but distinct from the singular pronouns. If Steinman is correct, then Genesis 3:15 is referring only to Christ, not corporate solidarity as Kaiser suggests. If Kaiser is correct, both Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 22:17-18 teach corporate solidarity. In either event, both approaches maintain the corporate solidarity between the Seed and seed in Gen 22:17-18. Further, both make points that are well-taken. If Genesis 3:15 does not directly teach corporate solidarity, the idea is still emphasized in later passages that do connect this Seed with a group (Gen 22:17-18). Likewise, if “seed” is a collective noun rather than singular in Genesis 22:18, Steinman’s observation of a singular pronoun, a verb shift, and connection to Psalm 72:17 are still valid. In either event, corporate solidarity between the Seed and the seed is still clear enough in Scripture.

It is also noteworthy that Jesus is Himself “the Resurrection.” When Martha expressed her belief that her brother, Lazarus, would rise in the eschatological resurrection (John 11:24), Jesus assured her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (11:25). This does not mean that there will not be a literal resurrection of all believers in the last day. Paul said that Hymenaeus and Philetus had abandoned the truth when they taught the resurrection had already occurred (2 Tim 2:17-18). No, the resurrection is still yet to occur (Dan 12:2, Rev 20). That being said, Christ has died, been buried, and risen, and believers are united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, sharing in His life now and one day receiving bodies like His (Rom 6:1-11, 1 Cor 15:1-58). Therefore, Christ is the resurrection, and it is only those who share in His resurrection who will experience life in His kingdom (John 3:5, Rom 6:1-10).

In light of these observations, it seems clear that the nation of Israel’s future restoration cannot be divorced from Christ. He is, in fact, the basis for the nation and its restoration. Christ’s resurrection on the third day, then, is likely not a coincidence, nor is it necessarily limited to fulfilling one passage. With regard to Hosea 6:1-3, His physical resurrection on the third day may be a clear, divine acknowledgement that Jesus is the

⁶³Another example of solidarity between Christ and Israel, as Kaiser points out, is found in the book of Isaiah. Kaiser notes that until chapter 53, servant (sing.) occurs 20 times. After 53, servants (pl) appears 11 times. Likewise, Kaiser notes that the servant is often the nation of Israel (41:8-10, 44:1-3, 21, 45:4) but at other times refers to an individual (42:1-4, 49:1-7), Kaiser, 173.

Messiah in Whom the nation of Israel’s resurrection and future restoration is presently guaranteed and will one day come to fruition.

Concluding Remarks

At this stage, it is important to discern what can be gleaned from this study. There is likely truth in all three approaches. God is sovereign over all things. He has written His word in such a way, it seems, that it contains within it a three days/third day motif which finds its culmination in Christ. The fact that rabbis thought the occurrences of the third day were important is also significant. The motif occurs so often, probably, because it is meant to be seen and point readers to an event later down the road, namely, Christ’s resurrection. Further, an understanding of Jewish thought and culture around the time of Christ shows that the phrase “on the third day” implies Christ’s perfection. Thus, the Sovereign Lord has orchestrated history, so that Christ’s resurrection on the third day signifies His fulfillment of Psalm 16:10. Finally, there are passages referencing the third day, which find typological fulfillment in Christ. In the case of Hosea 6:2, God’s raising of Christ on the third day testifies that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises to and restoration of Israel. Though they have not been addressed in this discussion, there are likely many similar passages.

To conclude, then, it seems the Old Testament points to Christ’s resurrection on the third day in many ways and in many degrees. It seems that Christ’s resurrection on the third day is first and foremost a testimony as to His identity. In God’s mercy, He is making it abundantly clear that Christ is the One Whom He claimed to be. He fulfills all God’s promises and plans written in the Scriptures. As Paul says, “For as many as are the

promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us” (2 Cor 1:20).

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