

Raised according to the Scriptures

Easter in the Old Testament

S. D. ELLISON

Foreword by Jason S. DeRouchie

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Foreword

“MY GOD, MY GOD, why have you forsaken me? . . . You lay me in the dust of death” (Ps 22:1, 15; cf. Matt 27:46). David was a prophet (Acts 2:30–31), and with these words he emphasizes God’s absolute sovereignty in orchestrating the torment and termination of a royal figure (cf. Isa 53:10; Acts 4:27–28) whose hands and feet are pierced by evil mockers that cast lots for his garments (Ps 22:16–18; cf. Matt 27:28–29, 35). Yet through the horror comes healing, and through the terror and tribulation . . . triumph. As Isaiah would later declare, the very one whom God crushes, whose soul makes a substitutionary offering for guilt, will on the other side of slaughter see offspring, prolong his days, and carry out the purposes of God (Isa 53:10). Thus, David notes the slain sufferer crying to God, “You have rescued me. . . . I will tell of your name to my brothers” (Ps 22:21–22; cf. Matt 28:10). It is this foundational resurrection event that “all the ends of the earth shall remember,” moving them to “turn to the LORD” (Ps 22:27). Indeed, “all the families of the nations shall worship” before God as testimony of this suffering but triumphant LORD’s victory is “told . . . to the coming generation” and as his righteousness is proclaimed “to a people yet unborn” (Ps 22:27, 30–31). This man’s resurrection would transform a global people forever. As God would testify through Isaiah, “By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11; cf. Rom 5:19).

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Easter matters, and this is why I celebrate this little book, which unpacks some anticipations of Easter in the Old Testament. “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (1 Cor 15:17–18). Without the resurrection, Jesus remains dead, which means we remain dead in our trespasses, alienated from God—without hope and without life (cf. Eph 2:4–7, 11–12). Every human needs to know and love this story, and this is why Ellison’s *Raised according to the Scriptures* is a gift to Christ’s church.

The resurrection of the dead is one of the fundamental truths of Christian teaching (Heb 6:1–2; cf. Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37). Indeed, Jesus’s resurrection is the most important event in human history. All four Gospels testify to it (Matt 28:6–7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5–7, 34; John 20:8–10, 17–18), and the reality of Jesus’s victory over the powers of darkness dominated all the preaching of the early church (Acts 1:22; 4:10, 33; cf. 1 Cor 1:23–24; 2:2).

In Adam, all humans become sinners (Rom 5:19), and because the wage of sin is death (Rom 6:23), “in Adam all die” (1 Cor 15:22; cf. Rom 5:12, 18). Yet Christ was no mere human, and his virginal conception meant that he was not in Adam, though he could stand as a substitute for those who were (Phil 2:6–8; Heb 2:14; 4:15; 5:2). “For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). He was never a sinner who sinned but was instead perfectly holy, righteous, and obedient (Acts 3:14; Phil 2:8; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 2:1; 3:5). Therefore, although wicked men killed him, “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2:24; cf. 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 13:30, 34, 37).

By his resurrection, Jesus was “vindicated by the Spirit” (1 Tim 3:16; cf. Isa 50:8) and “declared to be the Son of God in power” (Rom 1:4). Because of Jesus’s obedience climaxing in the cross, God “highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Phil 2:8–9), thus giving him “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18; cf. Dan 7:13–14). In his

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death, Jesus received the punishment for our trespasses, but only in his resurrection did he secure our justification (Rom 4:25; cf. 1 Cor 5:21). His “one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men,” for “by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:18–19; cf. Isa 53:11). Because Jesus overcame the grave, believers’ union with him in his death secures our union with him in his resurrection (Rom 6:5; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Eph 2:4–7; Phil 3:10; cf. Acts 4:2; 17:18, 32). Jesus’s resurrection, therefore, gives us hope for lasting life and an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (Acts 23:6; 24:15; Titus 3:7; 1 Pet 1:3–4). Hence, Jesus could declare, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25; cf. 1 Cor 15:22).

The Father is the one who raises the dead (John 5:21; cf. Acts 26:8), yet he does so through Jesus (John 6:39–40, 44, 54; cf. Matt 11:5; Luke 7:22). Out of his resurrection, Jesus proclaims light to the nations (Acts 26:23), and he does so by moving his disciples to declare his identity and work in the world (Acts 1:8; 13:46–47; cf. Matt 17:9; Mark 9:9; John 2:22). Thus, the Messiah’s unparalleled victory leads to a universal mission of proclaiming hope for resurrection.

Leading up to the cross, Jesus stressed to his disciples how he must suffer, be killed, and rise on the third day (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 26:32; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:33; John 2:19–20). We’re told, however, that only after the resurrection did the disciples understand and believe these words *and* “the Scripture” (John 2:22; 12:16; 20:9). Where does the Old Testament speak of the Messiah’s tribulation *and* triumph?

Following his resurrection, Jesus queried two of his disciples, “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then Luke adds, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:26–27, emphasis added). Later, Luke notes that Jesus opened the minds of his disciples “*to understand the Scriptures*, and he said to them, ‘*Thus it is written*, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from

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the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (24:45–47, emphasis added). Is this the message you find when you read the Old Testament? Luke records Paul noting something similar: “I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but *what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass*: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23, emphasis added). According to Paul “the gospel of God . . . concerning his Son” was “promised beforehand *through his prophets in the holy Scriptures*” (Rom 1:1–3, emphasis added). Indeed, it is this gospel that Paul emphasized is of “first importance”:

That Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures*, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day *in accordance with the Scriptures*, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Cor 15:3–8, emphasis added)

The saints of Jesus’s day already had hope in the resurrection (John 11:24; cf. Matt 22:31–32; Mark 12:26; Luke 11:31–32; 14:14; 20:37–38; 24:26; John 5:29), and they associated this hope with the coming Messiah (Matt 11:4–6; Luke 7:22). This conviction grew out of the Old Testament’s teaching. Thus, Paul was continually “testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince [his audience] about Jesus both *from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets*” (Acts 28:23, emphasis added).

The brief volume before you effectively shows many ways that Jesus’s resurrection was indeed *according to the Scriptures* and that Easter is both indirectly foreshadowed and directly predicted in the Old Testament. Numerous precursors, promises, and prophecies of resurrection span the Law, Prophets, and Writings, and Ellison helpfully guides us through many of them. He points to

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several passages in Jesus's only Bible that magnify God's power to raise the dead, display this power in space and time, show righteous people hoping in life after death, and highlight direct prophecies of what can only be called future resurrection. Easter matters! I invite you to revel more in the gospel by considering how Jesus not only "died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures*" but was actually "raised on the third day *in accordance with the Scriptures*" (1 Cor 15:3–4, emphasis added).

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