

The Promise of Life on the Third Day

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[0 : 00] So we're looking at Easter from the promise of prophecies. If you missed Friday, you can get the talk.

It's an excellent talk on a prophecy that we saw from Isaiah 53. We're still in Isaiah, and Isaiah was written 700 years, give or take, before Christ arrived.

And then we saw how we've got this historical scroll that they discovered that was written, produced, before Jesus was even born. And so you've got these books and people saying, telling about things that will happen in the future, things that have come true.

That's not normal in our experience, is it? Maybe it is in yours. Maybe you can tell the future. Most of us can't.

How would you respond to a person that could tell the future? If I said last week, I was, I led the service on Friday.

[1 : 06] Let's take it last week. If I said last week, I was going to be standing here holding three Easter eggs. And I showed you the three Easter eggs, and you knew last week that I said I was going to do that.

You may be impressed. I know it's not that impressive. I could organize it. But imagine you had a log in the St. Mark's counting book.

Anton, you've got the counting book there? So just, Anton, just stand up quickly. All right, everyone just, sorry about this, Anton, but just hold up the log book for us.

Okay, so that's an account of everyone who comes to the church. Don't write your names, don't worry. But we count and see who's here. And we record what the sermon is about.

But let's say there was a log in that book that dated from, I don't know, 1984. 2014, 10 years ago, before I came to this church.

[2 : 14] And it said that on this, it said there, on the 31st, it is the 31st of March 2024, a rather rugged and handsome, good-looking young man will produce three eggs at Easter time.

And they are going to be red, green, and blue. And I came here, and I held up those three Easter eggs. And you went and checked that log book out, and you saw it.

That would be pretty impressive. That should freak you out. If it happened like that, would you agree with me? That would be amazing. Okay, I'm not sure about the rugged-looking young guy.

We might have to have that replaced. But at least some of it's true. You'd want to look into whoever wrote that. Like, who? You know, we could prove it. It was there.

Everyone knew it was there. And you'd be like, how did they? How? On earth did they do that?

You'd want to look into whoever wrote that, whoever the author was. But you'd also want to find out more about this person who seems to be able to make time warp around him.

[3 : 24] If you can tell the future, you can control time. Something none of us can do. So we're going to spend our time this morning looking at how the Bible prophesies in detail about Jesus' resurrection.

We'll see that we've got undeniable proof of the power of God to overcome death and bring new life into the world. We're going to start in a kind of a strange place.

We're going to look at something that is very precise about Jesus' death and resurrection. And that is the fact that Jesus went around saying that, if you kill me, I'll come back from the dead in three days.

It's a very specific thing to say. He didn't just say it once or twice, but he said it a number of times.

Now, we don't have time to go and page through the Gospels, through the Gospel accounts.

But in fact, he said it a significant number of times. He said it 21 times. 21 times it's recorded in three different places where Jesus says, if you kill me, I'm going to come back from the dead and it

will be in three days.

[4 : 48] And he said it more than once so that everyone knew that that's what he had said. Now, when he said it, they didn't quite understand what he was saying. If you've got friends that walk around saying, hey man, if you kill me, don't worry, I'm coming back in a couple of days' time, you'd be like, okay, right, okay.

Good luck with that. But I want to spend a bit of time looking at this thing of why three days? It's mentioned throughout the New Testament. In that 1 Corinthians 15 passage, it actually starts by Paul saying, you guys need to know this, this is the most important thing I can tell you, and that Christ died according to the Scriptures, and on the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

The Old Testament Scriptures. So what's the deal with the three days? Where's Jesus getting this from? Why not five days, or 17 days, or one day, or why die at all?

Why didn't he be like, you know, if you're going to beat death, if you're going to be the death defater, why don't you be like, well, you guys are going to try and kill me, and don't worry, it's not going to work. I'm just going to live forever.

Why, if he's going to defeat death, why is he dead for three days? Well, it turns out that the Old Testament has a number of important references to events orchestrated by God where something climactic happens on the third day.

[6 : 26] And so what we're going to do is just take a quick look through the Old Testament and see this little, this, this, well, it's an unassuming little thing, but it's there in the Old Testament constantly.

And not many people have picked it up. Not to say that I'm the only one that's done it at all. What I mean is, I knew Jesus, you know, grew up a Christian, you know that Jesus died and rose again on the third day, but no one ever showed me from the Old Testament where these ideas come from. It's fascinating. And it shows incredible detail, prophetic detail about Jesus' ministry. The first place to stop is in Genesis 1.

Don't worry, we're not going to crawl our way through the Bible. The first three-day life-giving event happens at creation. It's recorded in Genesis 1, where life first appears on the third day.

That's not a coincidence. God makes the universe, the cosmos, separates land and sea, and then on the third day, plants arrive.

[7 : 36] That's the first third day. Vegetation comes up from dry land. The next third day is still in Genesis. It's an even more significant day, because that's when animals, real life, comes out of the ground, but not just animals.

We come out of the ground on the second, third day, which is the sixth day. Life comes out from the dust.

From a place where no life exists, this dusty, earthy place, and the Scriptures talk about how God takes man and forms him from the dust, just takes a handful of dust, breathes into it, and a human springs up.

Life is made to stand up, out of the dirt, out of a place that's dead, by the life-giving power of God. Just by God saying, I want you to be a man now. And the dust goes, okay, and it becomes a man. It's a bit more difficult to make the woman. It's a rib. It's a joke. It's a joke. Moving swiftly along.

[8 : 56] What's noteworthy is that this life-giving event takes place in the Garden of Eden, which in Genesis terms is described as a mountain. So there's a mountain, there's a place of death, and then on this mountain, life springs up, just by God speaking.

That's the first sort of third day event. It doesn't say, hey, this is the third day, and you won't find in the New Testament saying, hey, look at Genesis 1, that's a three-day thing. We're sort of, we're just gathering some strands of information here to make up a sort of a mosaic of where this third day idea comes from.

The second important third day is with Abraham and Isaac. It's also in the account of Genesis, but it's only 12 chapters on from Genesis 1, but we've moved, gosh, a couple of thousand years in world history.

It's a famous account in Genesis 22, where Abraham is told to sacrifice Isaac and to kill him, his only son, the son that God said, hey, I'm going to give you, Abraham, I'm going to give you everything.

I'm going to give you this land, Canaan, you're going to have this huge family. Abraham is ancient, he's old, he can't, Sarah, his wife, can't conceive, she's in his 90s, Abraham is about 100, and then

they finally get their firstborn son and then God says, cool, well, I want you to go kill him now because I just want to test whether you trust me.

[10:14] And there's one little feature that's often overlooked in this account of Abraham having to kill his son and that it was on the third day that Abraham receives his son back from the dead.

So I should have the quote up on the screen. Genesis 22, on the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance, the place where he was going to sacrifice his son.

He said to his servants, stay here while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you. That wasn't wishful thinking. Abraham trusted God.

He didn't know how he was going to get his son back. Hebrews, the New Testament book, tells us that Abraham reckoned that, well, if Isaac is his promised son and he's got to go and kill him and God said, this is the kid that's going to inherit everything, God is going to have to bring him back from the dead.

That was his thinking. But what God does is, he gives Isaac back from the dead, but he provides a substitute on this mountain on the third day.

[11:19] Not an insignificant mountain. In that part of Genesis, it's called Mount Moriah. that becomes Mount Zion, the place where 2,000 years later, another substitute is killed.

Jesus. For everyone else. For the sins of the world. There's another third day.

I'm just going to mention them because it's so important that we understand, well, it's just that we trace this idea of the third day. It's fascinating. And it helps us, I think, to trust God more because it's rife through the scriptures.

There's another third day at Mount Sinai. We saw this in our Exodus account. If you're with us, we did Exodus last year. And God meets with the Israelites on Mount Sinai and what's important about that meeting, it constitutes the whole covenant with God and his people, Israel.

after he's saved them out of Egypt and they become his people. It's a place of freedom. It's a place of new life. It's a place of new hope. And what's interesting, tucked away in the text, Exodus chapter 19, they get to meet God on the third day on top of a mountain.

[12:40] On the morning of the third day, there was thunder and lightning with a thick cloud over the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast. everyone in the camp trembled.

Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God. Three significant three-day events that would have sort of rumbled around in the minds of the Jewish minds at the time of Christ, but they couldn't, you know, they didn't quite get it in Jesus' time.

I just want to show you that there's more. There's way more texts about this third day thing that happens in the Bible. I'm not going to, I'm not going to go through them all because we don't have the time, but I just want to put up on the screen and if you've got a pen or if you're taking notes, then just take a note and I'll just run through them.

Genesis 42 verse 18, Joseph releases his brothers on the third day. That's restoration of covenant relationships within the covenant family. Exodus 15 verse 2, the Israelites in the wilderness found water on the third day.

They saved from death. Joshua 2 verse 16, Rahab tells the spies to hide for three days. So that Israel's enemies get defeated. 2 Samuel 1 verse 2, David gets news that Saul is dead on the third day.

[13:57] The enemies of God's king are killed on the third day. Well, that's when he gets the news. Esther 5 verse 1, Esther pleads with King Xerxes on the third day.

She goes in and saves God's people from death, from their evil enemy, Haman. And then an interesting quote in Isaiah 6 verse 2, God promises to restore his people from exile on the third day. Isn't that amazing? A whole bunch of third day events scattered throughout the whole Old Testament where something programmatic, something climactic happens.

If you put them all together, so what happens on the third day? Life is created. God provides substitution. He enters into covenant relationship.

His people's enemies are defeated. And he saves his people from death. How can that be a coincidence? How can that be a coincidence?

[15:01] It's not. There's no way. That book was, the Old Testament is written, those are multiple books written over multiple years by multiple people. And this little third day thing weaves all the way through scripture and connects with Christ.

Isn't that amazing? Friends, this kind of series of events can only be orchestrated by a mind of intelligence that we cannot understand, who's got the ability to move things in history and make things happen exactly like he wants it to, at exactly the right time, with exactly the right people in place, writing it down.

And recording it and then making it happen in the future. Who of you can promise anything and get it done in the near future? Very few of us.

We all break our promises. Oh, I'll see you next week for a bri. Oh, I can't. I just can't. We can't make these things happen. We don't have control over time and space and people.

But obviously there's a being that can and does. He's got all the power, intelligence, and wisdom to make this happen.

[16:13] Okay, so this is why Paul and the New Testament goes out the way to make the point that the gospel is about Jesus rising again to life on the third day. I should have this quote up on the screen, 1 Corinthians 15, so that's the thing that starts at 1 Corinthians passage.

For what I received, this is Paul writing to the church, what I, Paul the Apostle, received, I'm going to pass on to you as of first importance.

He wants, this is very important for the church to get. Not second or third. The first thing I want you to get as a church, Paul is saying, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures and that He appeared to Kephas, that's Peter, and then to the twelve.

How's that? How's that possible? Well, it's possible if you're God and you can control time and space and history and people. So here's a question for you.

What is the right way to respond to a being that can do this? And you know what it is. You know that the only correct response to someone that can do stuff like that is to fall down and worship and admire and wonder and praise and humble yourself and say, I don't know, you know, I trust you.

[17:49] Does that make sense? I would do that. This is a being you want to listen to, the God of the universe and His Son who went around saying, kill me and in three days I'll get up.

you want to listen to that person and you want to have that person as your friend. One thing is for sure, you don't want to have that person as your enemy.

Can you imagine making that guy mad? A guy that can defeat death and you're going to play silly fools.

Oh, that's not important. Oh, I don't need that kind of guy in my life. No, I'm fine. Oh, he defeated death. Oh, I'm sure it'll be okay. I've got a plan for death. You've got a plan for death.

Let me tell you, my friend, death has a plan for you. You can't ignore that level of planning, wisdom or intelligence. God makes life-changing and life-giving events happen on the third day.

[19:03] Isn't that cool for us? Whew, if you trust in Christ. And anyway, you want to have the things that he offers on the third day. The third day offers up this smorgasbord of life-giving power.

If something is happening on the third day that is organized by God, you want it. You want it. And you want it because the alternative, if you don't, is that you don't get to have anything.

Because believing these things, believing in that person is the only hope you have of surviving death. Now, that's the first point I wanted to make. That the Bible prophesies about life on the third day.

Christ fulfills that. That should blow your mind. There's no other book that does this. There's no other being that does this. It's only Christ, only God, and only the Bible that can do that. What is your relationship with God, and with Christ, and with the Scriptures?

Well, thankfully, the Bible doesn't just prophesy about life, as good as that is, but there's also prophecies about what will happen to death. death. So, the Bible promises that death will die.

[20:21] And this is, this is amazing news. The Bible promises that death will die. Kind of the negative of having life, isn't it?

You might be surprised what people think about death and life. death. But death, as the Bible sees it, as God sees it, and as Jesus sees it, is one of the biggest problems that you will face in your life.

The only thing bigger than the problem of death is the problem of sin, which causes death. But sin and death go together, and existentially, most of us worry more about death than our sin.

And death is a massive problem. It's a massive problem. Hands up. Who would love, who can't wait to die? Who can't wait to go to a funeral?

Oh, you know, you get those spiritual Christians, yeah, I can't wait. I'm going to go with Jesus. It's going to be happy times. Well, I did have a Christian friend who was having some troubles, and she's like, yeah, I'm saved.

[21 : 34] You know what, if I just kill myself, I'll go and be with Jesus. It'll be, you know, then I'm happy again. It's not a good way of thinking about death. Many people, oh, death is just a change of address.

I'm still here. I'm just changing my address. It's a doorway to a better place. That's not how the Bible sees it. Death is a major problem for God as well, not just for us.

Death is a major problem for God in the Bible. not a problem that he can't fix, but it's a problem that he has to fix in his world. Death has run rampant, and it's not something that he wants.

It's not something that he created initially. Death is this terrible invader that comes into the world and just spoils everything. anyone who's been to a funeral, and the bitterness and the pain.

You want death to be over. You want to promise that death will die. We need it, and the Bible promises it.

[22 : 40] So, Isaiah 25. Now, I've got a quote up. This is God's... This is why death is a big problem for God, and he makes it this focus in his prophecy in Isaiah 25.

And, he says, I will swallow up on this mountain. Which mountain? He's talking about Jerusalem. He's talking about Mount Zion.

Isaiah is written 700 years before a cross appeared on that hill in Golgotha with the Son of the Living God dying. God says, I'm going to swallow up on this mountain this thing that causes devastation in my world.

I'm going to swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples. All peoples.

None of us can escape death. The veil that is spread over all nations. Here's the bad news.

We're all going to die. It's terrible news. And it's nothing you can do about it. None of us is strong enough to bat death off. We can do it for a short while if you eat well.

[23 : 57] And if you exercise. Whatever. Live a healthy lifestyle. Now, what's God going to do?

What's God's answer? I'm going to swallow up death forever. I'm going to swallow it up. The way the Bible speaks about death is like this giant creature lurking under the surface of the world.

what the what many translations have is the word hell but it's in the newer translations it's the word shield. It's the place of the dead.

It's just underneath the surface of the world. The whole world. And it's hungry. And it's gnawing away at people's lives. Day by day. Hour by hour. It's sucking down every human on planet earth. Everyone who dies goes down into the dust. And death is feeding on them. And God sees us. And he hates it. Because he didn't create us to die.

[24 : 58] He created us to live. But there's this problem. It's a problem only God can fix. It's a problem that we created.

Because our stupid rebellion against his words. Thinking we know better. And God says okay I'll fix it. You know when a child does something silly in your home.

You say listen. Give some laws. Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't do something silly. And then they do it. The dinner goes flying. Or the car gets pranked. The car gets pranked.

And every dad says okay now your problem you fix it. I didn't do it. You do it. You fix it. And here's a problem that can't be fixed by you that have created it. And the God of the universe out of his loving kindness says okay I'll fix it for you.

No one is able to overcome the power of death from the time of Adam on.

[25 : 59] Death enters the world because of our ancestor Adam. But here's a prophecy of someone who can overcome death in the Old Testament. it culminates in Christ but it first of all points to the first king that God sent into the world to do stuff for him and for his kingdom King David.

So have a look at Psalm 16. It's an incredible psalm. Incredible promise really. And David starts a psalm. He says keep me safe oh God for in you I take refuge.

David's in trouble in the psalm. He's like help me. I need to be kept safe. I can't do it on my own. I'm the great king of God's people but I need your help Lord. Why does he need God's help?

He says I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand I won't be shaken and my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body will also rest secure because you won't abandon me to the realm of the dead.

Now that translation realm of the dead depending on your translation the Hebrew word behind that is shield. This place where dead people go. Where everyone goes. This thing sucks us down. You're not going to David says abandon me to this place.

[27 : 17] You won't let your faithful one see decay. We all know what happens to a human body after a few days. No. You make known to me the path of life. You fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

God. It's incredible promise. But what the Old Testament is searching for but never actually achieves never happens to David.

David does go down into the dirt. David does stay there. He's been dead for a thousand years and yet he said no but you're not going to let me stay there. Even though he does have faith he doesn't actually come back to life.

He dies. He stays dead. But what the New Testament does is take promises like this and trumpets it out with this clear clarion call and says that's about Jesus.

Because Jesus actually died and Jesus actually came back to life again. Not in any weird spiritual way. The dead body that they carried into that tomb on Friday is a living body that walked out.

[28 : 31] not a spiritual body, not a ghost, didn't go and float off in heaven. The gospel accounts end with him eating, calling these disciples when they couldn't believe that he'd come back from the dead.

Hey man, Thomas, unless I see him I won't believe. So Jesus says alright, come. Feel you. Do you see the mark that they nails?

Do you see it? Do you feel it? Put your hand here on my side. It's an open wound. Ghosts don't have flesh and bone like you see I have.

Give me some fish. Give me some fish. Just let me eat. And then their eyes begin to be opened.

Hey man, this. They all know what happens to a guy on the Roman cross. This guy came back.

Woo! And now they believe because they can see it and feel it and touch it. And then Jesus makes this amazing promise in that section. You guys believed. And you blessed because you believe.

How much more blessed are people going to be who don't see me and believe?

[29 : 35] And friends, that's us. Two thousand years later, none of us have seen Jesus. I believe he came back from the dead. Many of you do too. And you're blessed because of that.

That Psalm 16 is picked up in Acts 2. It should come up on the screen. Peter's giving a sermon and he wants everyone to know that that thing that David wrote about that didn't happen to him has happened to Jesus.

Seeing what was to come, he, David, spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the grave, to the realm of the dead, to Sheol, to the dead place, nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life and we're all witnesses of it. Friends, this is the hope of the scriptures.

This is the hope of God. Christ coming back from the dead and then making that same offer to you if you trust him. Not in some weird spiritual place, not in some weird spiritual way.

[30 : 47] We're all going to go to the same place David did. The bad news, I'm afraid. unless Christ returns. But it's very likely that our lives are going to end on this earth at some point.

And we will go down. Death will feed on us. We'll return to the dust and we'll become just nothing again. It's appalling to God that that happens and it's appalling to people that that happens.

That's why we don't like funerals. It's a shock when you see a dead person. You go through post-traumatic stress because we're not used to it. It's a horror. It's not natural.

We think it's natural. It's not. But the promise of God that you won't stay dead if you trust in Christ.

Here's what 1 Corinthians picks up for us and we'll end shortly. Christ has Paul writing in Corinthians again. Has indeed been raised from the dead.

[31 : 54] The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. The first fruits of the harvest. His first guarantees the rest of the harvest is coming. That's us. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

That's why God had to send Jesus. we did create the problem and we kind of fixed it but it took a heavenly man to fix the problem. For as in Adam all dies so in Christ all will be made alive.

As in Adam everyone dies in the same way if you're in Christ you'll be made alive. Physically alive. But each in his turn, the next slide, which is reading on from Corinthians, the first fruits, then when

he comes those who belong to him.

And here's the kicker. He's going to make it impossible for people who trust in him to die again because he's going to kill death.

Then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. That's all rival authority, all rival dominion, all rival power.

[33 : 05] There's going to be only one source of power in the universe and that's God and Christ. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Man, that is, isn't that cool news? I mean, that's the best news. That's why Christians, that's why the Christian church, that's why ministers should be declaring this thing all the time.

That you know that your life is not going to end in death, that it's going to end in life, if you hold on to Christ and if you stay true to him. So friends, just as we close, is the resurrection, if you're a Christian, is resurrection at the center of your faith?

Or is it dying, some vague idea about going to heaven, floating with the angels, looking down, staying there, being dead, because in that way you stay dead, in that scheme of things, you stay dead.

The Christian hope is that you don't stay dead. The same eyeballs, the same mouth, the same everything, just in a resurrected state, comes back, the same brain, the same memories, you, here, on a renewed earth, enjoying your friends and family, enjoying everything that was difficult to enjoy in this life.

[34 : 30] Do you explain your faith using future resurrection? Or do you, especially at funerals, go around mumbling about, they're in a better place, they're happy, they're with the angels.

Jesus didn't say, kill me and then in three days I'll go away to be with the angels. That's not the hope. Kill me and I'll come back to life is the hope. So talk about it.

It's the coolest thing ever. And when you do, people will be amazed because no one else thinks about resurrection. They'll take note about what you're speaking about. Whether they believe you or not is up to God. If you're not a Christian, why continue to believe in something vague and uncertain?

Oh, I'm sure you don't know about death, oh, God, I'm sure it'll be fine. And we all say, you hear this all the time at funerals, oh, they've gone to be at a better place.

They've gone to be at a better place. You don't know. How do you know? You haven't made that promise. You don't know where they are. Is it better or not or what?

[35 : 42] Why be uncertain? Why be unclear? At the most important thing in your life, which is your life, continuing forever or not. You know when you buy a car and you give someone a hundred thousand bucks, you go on where do you buy cars online?

Well, Facebook, Gumtree, whatever. Cars. Where's that? We buy cars. You put your hundred thousand rand down and you're like, ah, you know what?

I don't care what car you give me. Well, I thought I was going to get a red one. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how many wheels. No. When you put a hundred thousand bucks down, you're like, that car that I saw, I want that car.

Don't give me another car. And then so many people wonder about death like it doesn't matter, like it's so vague. Ah, I'm sure it'll be fine. Are you mad? The one thing you want to be crystal clear on is what happens to you after you die.

And reaching out into eternity. It makes sense, doesn't it? To think clearly about that. And to, now I, I think the scriptures are the clearest.

[36 : 56] They can't be more clearer. So, friends, these prophecies about Jesus and his resurrection should give you confidence that you can predict your own future, just like Jesus did.

If you kill me in a short while, I'll get back up again. Isn't that good news? Yeah, let's pray. Lord Christ, you are the Lord, the giver of life, the first born from among the dead, the keeper of the keys of death and Hades.

You control life and history, all nations come under your authority because you have been raised up from the dead and seated at God's right hand. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Give us your life, Lord. We're sorry for not believing or trusting in you like we should. We're sorry for not living like we should.

Help us, Lord. Have mercy. raise us up to life in the goodness and care of your holy name for your kingdom and your name and all things that are good and holy.
[38 : 22] Bless us in Jesus' name. Amen.