

The King's Prediction

Matthew 17:22-23

Introduction

The Lord Jesus predicts His impending betrayal, death and resurrection for the second time.

One third of the New Testament is devoted to the final week of the life of Jesus. The subject and meaning of His death and resurrection are the most important issues in human history. All of human existence from the creation of the universe to its final consummation will have as its centerpiece this critical, pivotal event.

The death of Jesus was pondered in the Old Testament; “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied the grace that should come unto you: searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:10-11).

The King Predicts His Betrayal (v.22a)

Matthew 17:22 (NKJV) Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed

The disciples have once again returned to the Galilee. Jesus repeats the prophecy and promise he made earlier “he must suffer. . .and be killed” (see Matt.16:21, 17:12).

In the phrase “while they were staying” in the Galilee (*anastrephomenon*) we find an interesting nugget. The word means ‘to and fro’. The idea seems to include “here and there” or “to and fro” in the sense of making rounds. Some Bible teachers suggest this might include the idea that when Jesus says “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed” it is not some off-handed statement injected in the course of more pleasant conversation. One commentary reads; “*He was drilling into them the fact that He was to be killed and raised from the dead*” (*The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible; Matthew 2; p.26*).

If that is the case then it means this was not simply a single statement dropped in casual conversation but a repeated concern. “*Apparently He just kept moving about rather secretly so that He could indoctrinate His disciples to the fact of His impending death and resurrection. . . Interestingly, this fact is referred to by the angels in announcing His resurrection: “Remember how he spake unto you when He was yet in the Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:6-7)(ibid).*

It makes perfect sense that Jesus would have to repeat over and over again what was about to happen. Why? I think there are several reasons. Clearly a death and resurrection from the dead was not on the either the religious leader’s radar or the disciples radar. Once again the deeply held opinion was that the Messiah would come—overthrow Israel’s enemies and establish God’s righteous Kingdom. Jesus speaks of a death and resurrection. Is this figurative language or

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literal language? We know that it is literal language because we will walk with Jesus to that inevitable outcome. **Were the disciples tempted to believe the statements of Jesus were figurative, spiritual, metaphorical or something else? After all a dying Messiah makes no sense and a resurrected Messiah seems impossible!** Did the disciples sign up for a suffering and dying Messiah for sin or a powerful and sovereign Messiah who would return the Jews to a state of autonomy and even glory?

The Lord adds another element to the prophecy; His betrayal (by Judas). I am quite sure Judas heard the statement. The word betrayal translates *paradidosthai*. Literally it means 'delivered up'. **This means His death is ordained, predetermined—that is in the determined counsel and plan of God.**

Our Heavenly Father will deliver up Christ to be betrayed. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;" (Acts 2:23); "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give all things?" (Romans 8:32). "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

Jesus will voluntarily surrender Himself up to be crucified. ". . .who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal.1:4). ". . .who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14).

Betrayal can only be accomplished by people we care about. Betrayal by its very nature means to be unfaithful in guarding or keeping a confidence or trust. The source of the betrayal will not be the religious leaders or the Romans but a trusted follower.

The repeated testimony of the Scriptures is that Judas betrayed and delivered up Jesus to be crucified (see Matt. 26:21-25; 27:3-5). "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them" (Mark 14:10). The Lord Jesus says that even this was predicted; "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He." (John 13:18-19).

Predictive prophecy is meant to persuade.

The King Predicts The Guilty Party (v.22b)

(v.22b) ". . .into the hands of men,

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The betrayal will result in Jesus being handed over ‘ . . . into the hands of men.’ Human beings by nature hate God!

The Lord has already revealed the identity of the men who would kill him; priests and Scribes would hand Him over to the Gentiles or Romans for execution (see Matt. 20:19).

Who killed Jesus?

Peter in preaching to the Jews after Pentecost accused the Jews; “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).

The men who plotted and caused His death were Jews. They were His own people—“he came into His own and His own received Him not” (see John 1:11). They weren’t interested in the kind of Messiah Jesus claimed to be—they wanted a Messiah who would provide power, advantage, liberation, freedom, glory, autonomy. The men who carried out His death were Romans. Jesus came to save sinners—Jews and Gentiles.

Humans require a Savior. The irony is that the ones who need Him—needed a Savior they would be the ones who kill Him.

The King Predicts His Death (v.23a)

23and they will kill Him,

Why did He die?

If we speak from a purely historical and factual perspective we might say that Jesus posed a threat to the religious hierarchy; the social, the political, the institutional structure.

In John’s gospel (10:31-33); Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father, For which of these works do you stone me?” The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

Acts 2:22-24; “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, having crucified and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

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The death of Jesus is described as a sinful act (taken by lawless hands, having crucified and put to death"). But is also described as a saving act; "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

The death of Jesus was both a sinful act of rebellion against God and a saving atonement by God.

The Bible teaches that Jesus died for the world (John 3:16); for the elect (Ephesians 1:4); for each man (1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; "a ransom for all" Titus 2:11 "salvation has appeared for all men"). We see the death of Jesus pictured in the coats of skin in Genesis 3:21; in the Passover lamb (Ex.12); in the Levitical offerings (see Lev.1-12).

Henry Thiessen writes; "The death of Christ has a prominent place in the New Testament. The last three days of our Lord's life occupy about one-fifth of the narratives in the four Gospels. If all the three and a half years of His public ministry had been written out as fully as the last three days, we would have a 'Life of Christ' of some 8400 pages! . . . Torrey claims that the death of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament more than 175 times. Since there are 7,959 verses in the New Testament, this would mean that one out of every 53 verses refers to this theme" (Lectures in Systematic Theology p. 313).

Jesus spoke often of His death; "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:13). "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again" (John 10:17). Jesus frequently mentions both His death and resurrection in a single sentence.

Because the death of Jesus is so important it has given rise to several false theories about its meaning. This would include the false idea that Jesus died to repay Satan—that is that man has sold his immortal soul to Satan through sin and that Christ's death was repayment. The only thing God owes Satan is a permanent place in hell.

Dr. John Walvoord writes; "Christ in His death fully satisfied the demands of a righteous God for judgment on sinners and, as their infinite sacrifice, provided a ground not only for the believer's forgiveness, but for his justification and sanctification" (Jesus Our Lord p.162).

It is true that the death of Jesus was necessary because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness (Rom.3:10-20)—and accomplishes the redemption of sinners, sanctification of saints—and destruction of Satan!

The King Predicts His Resurrection (v.23b)

(v.23b) . . .and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

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Again Jesus points to a resurrection.

The resurrection will bring vindication and victory. But the statement seems to go largely unnoticed by the disciples.

The resurrection is denied by skeptics and hated by Satan. Satan invites the skeptic to simply say it never happened. But what about the evidence? Even Christ's most bitter enemies concede He died. Some suggest His resurrection was part of an elaborate hoax, a fraud perpetrated on naive peasants. Or they suggest it was the product of a mass hallucination, or a suspect vision. Other's suggest that perhaps Jesus rose in spirit but not in fact. In that case Jesus 'rose' in the memories of friends and families. Paul calls this nonsense and admits that if Jesus has not really risen from the dead we are of men most miserable.

David predicted it; "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption." These verses are cited by Peter in Acts 2:25-28; 31 and cited by Paul in Acts 13:35 as a reference to the resurrection of Christ. Isaiah predicted it—"And he made his grave with the wicked, and the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed **(come back to life and see); he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.**

Jesus predicted it (Matt. 12:38-40; Matt. 17:19, 22-23; Matt. 20:18-19).

Ironically the enemies of Jesus remembered and repeated his threat (Sir, we remember that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure—until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matt.27:62-64). The women did not remember (Mk 16:1-3); Mary Magdalene did not remember (John 20:13); Peter and John did not remember (Luke 24:12; John 20:9); the apostles did not remember (Luke 24:9-11); the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not remember (Luke 24:13-31) and Thomas did not remember (John 20:24-29).

But then Jesus does come back to life! The tomb empty—the Roman soldiers witnessed angels; the religious leaders tried to suppress their information—but could not effectively refute the facts. Empty tomb. No body. Angelic appearances. Resurrection appearances—17 times—to at least 500 people. Mary Magdalene saw the risen Lord, the several apostles saw the risen Lord, the disciples on the road to Emmaus saw the risen Lord, seven disciples by the sea of Galilee, by a multitude at His ascension from the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:44-53). He is seen by Stephen while being stoned and by Paul as one born out of due time.

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The resurrection of Jesus is our Declaration of Independence from sin; Our Bill of Rights, Our Constitution—our sign is not so much a Cross—but a Cross and an Empty tomb. If you deny the resurrection you must come to six sickening conclusions;

1. All gospel preaching is a waste of time—useless.
2. The past the present and the future is absurd, meaningless, pointless fruitless.
3. All preachers are frauds and liars.
4. All living Christians remain in their sin.
4. All past Christians are in hell.
5. All reason and purpose for living is extinguished.
6. Jesus was a liar and a fraud.

But if its true—if Jesus rose from the dead—then there is hope.

One Bible scholar has translated this passage “deeply distressed.” The news brought more resistance shock and sorrow. Mark’s gospel tells us the disciples were afraid to ask what it means (9:32).

We must be impressed with the raw honesty of the Scriptures. The disciples are ‘exceedingly sorrowful’ because at this point they see no redemptive value in suffering or death (see Bruner p. 629). The disciples are slow to understand and slow to comprehend a literal resurrection from the dead.

Doubt. Sorrow. Slow to understand.

Conclusion

Betrayed. Killed. Risen.