

I. Other Prophecies About the Resurrection, Seen by Early Christian Writers

- a. We saw that the expressions “to go to sleep” and “wake up” sometimes are used to refer to death and resurrection. Perhaps we should take another look at a few other places in the Old Testament Scriptures where it says someone is going to go to sleep and then wake up! The early Christian writers saw prophecies about the resurrection of Christ in two other “sleep/ wake up” statements in the Scriptures.
- b. *Many early Christian writers* point to one particular psalm (that I have never heard modern Christian preachers or teachers use in this sense) as a prophecy about the resurrection of Jesus: **Psalm 3**.
 - i. Irenaeus, discussing prophecies about the resurrection of Christ, wrote:
 - ii. “...David says thus concerning the death and resurrection of Christ: ‘I laid down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord received me.’ David said not this of himself, for he was not raised after death: but the Spirit of Christ, who (spoke) also in other prophets concerning Him, says here by David: ‘I laid down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord received me.’ By *sleep he means death*; for He arose again.”
 1. (Source: Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, chapter 73)
 2. Note: This writing of Irenaeus is not included in the Ante-Nicene Fathers collection; it was rediscovered in an Armenian translation in 1904. This may have been written originally c. 180 AD.
 - iii. Here, Irenaeus is quoting from **Psalm 3**. Let’s take another look at this psalm, reading from a translation based on the Septuagint, and ask if it sounds like it could apply to Christ and what He went through.
 1. “(A psalm. Pertaining to David, when he was running away from his son Absalom.)
 2. “O Lord, why did those who afflict me multiply? Many are rising against me; many are saying to my soul, ‘There is no deliverance for him in his God.’ But you, O Lord, you are my supporter, my glory, and one who lifts up my head. With my voice I cried to the Lord, and he hearkened to me from his holy mountain.
 3. “I lay down and slept; I woke again, because the Lord will support me.
 4. “I shall not be afraid of ten thousands of people who are setting themselves against me all around. Rise up, O Lord! Save me, O

my God, because you are the one who struck all who are hostile to me for nothing; the teeth of sinners you shattered. Deliverance is the Lord's, and may your blessing be on your people!" (**Psalm 3**, LXX, NETS)

iv. Consider the parallels between **Psalm 3** and the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1. He was attacked by many powerful enemies, even though he had done nothing wrong.
2. His enemies are taunting him that God will not deliver him.
 - a. Recall what they said to Jesus on the cross.
 - b. "Likewise, the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him...'" (**Matthew 27:41-43**, NKJV)
3. It says "I lay down and slept; I woke again because the Lord will *support* me"
 - a. The phrase in the LXX containing Greek word used in the LXX that is translated "*support*" here (ἀντιλαμβάνω, antilambano) can also be translated "because the Lord *helped* me" or "*laid hold of* me".
 - b. David is fleeing from Absalom. Why would he be talking about going to sleep (natural sleep) and then waking up again? But if he is speaking about dying and being resurrected, it could not have applied to David.
 - i. Regarding the **Psalm 16** statement "you will not leave my soul in Hades," Peter makes the case logically that this *could not have applied to the man David*. Therefore, it must have applied to *the seed of David*, one who would come from David's body: the Christ.
 - ii. That is very similar to the point Irenaeus was making here, regarding the statement in **Psalm 3** about laying down to sleep and then waking up (dying and being resurrected). It *could not have applied to David* (who was not resurrected from the dead). Therefore, this promise also must

have been referring to *the seed of David*, the Christ.

- v. Including Irenaeus, I found six early Christian writers who mention this psalm as a prophecy about the resurrection of Christ:
 - 1. Irenaeus (prior quote from Proof of the Apostolic Preaching; also discussed in ANF vol. 1, p. 510)
 - 2. Justin Martyr (ANF vol, 1, p. 175)
 - 3. Clement of Alexandria (ANF vol. 2, p. 469)
 - 4. Hippolytus (ANF v. 5, p. 206)
 - 5. Cyprian (ANF vol. 5, p. 525)
 - 6. Lactantius (ANF vol. 7, p. 122)
- c. Several early Christians saw the resurrection of Jesus foretold in another reference (in addition to those we just discussed, from **Psalm 41** and **Psalm 3**) to someone who would *sleep*, and then be *woken up*. This was in the famous prophecy Jacob made on his deathbed, when blessing each of his sons, in **Genesis 49**.
 - i. After addressing each of his first three sons, who are rebuked rather than blessed by their father, for serious sins they had committed, Jacob turns his attention to his fourth son, Judah.
 - ii. This prophecy would have been given by Jacob either about 1860 BC or about 1645 BC.
 - 1. The earlier date would be appropriate if we assume chronology based on 430 years of bondage in Egypt; the later date if we assume the 430 years breaks down into 215 years in Egypt plus 215 in Canaan (in view of what Paul says in **Galatians 3:17**; consider also **Exodus 12:40-41** in the LXX).
 - 2. Either way, this prophecy from **Genesis** would have been *written down by Moses* roughly around 1400 BC.
 - iii. “Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck (*also has been translated “on the back” – CP*) of your enemies; Your father’s sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s cub; from being a shoot, my son, you have grown up. He bows down and sleeps as a lion and a cub; and who shall rouse him?”

- iv. “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his loins, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the expectation of the nations.
- v. “Binding his colt to a vine, and his donkey’s colt to a branch, He will wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.
- vi. “His eyes are gladdened from the wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk.” (**Genesis 49:8-12**, LXX, OSB)
 - 1. We know that this reference to a “lion from the tribe of Judah” refers to Jesus, based on what it says in **Revelation 5**.
 - a. “But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.’” (**Revelation 5:5**, NKJV)
 - b. This “lion” is then equated with the “root of David” and “a lamb” (on the throne) that appeared “as though it had been slain”, clearly referring to Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The part of this prophecy about a lion that lies down to sleep is repeated in Balaam’s third oracle, in **Numbers 24**. It says:
 - a. “A Man shall come forth from his seed (*referring to the seed of Jacob / Israel*), and He shall rule many nations...
 - b. “...He lies down and rests like a lion, and like a lion’s cub, who shall rouse Him? Those who bless You are blessed, and those who curse You are cursed.” (from **Numbers 24:7-9**, LXX, OSB)
 - 3. Both speak of this person who will lie down as a lion and as a lion’s cub; and both ask the unanswered question, “Who will rouse him (or raise him up)?”
 - a. In the passage in **Numbers 24:9**, the Greek word in the LXX that is translated “rouse” or “raise up” is ἀνίστημι. This is the same word we have seen in several other prophecies relating to the resurrection of Jesus.
 - b. In the passage in **Genesis 49:9**, the Greek word in the LXX that is translated “rouse” or “raise up” is ἐγείρω (egeiro). This word has very similar meaning to ἀνίστημι; it can mean to awaken, rouse up, raise up, etc.
 - 4. Notable places in the New Testament where the Greek word ἐγείρω is used in referring to the resurrection of Jesus include:

- a. When Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (**John 2:19**, NKJV)
- b. The angel at the empty tomb told the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (**Matthew 28:5-6**, NKJV)
- c. In **Matthew 12:41-42**.
 - i. Jesus says the *men of Nineveh* will “rise up” with that generation and condemn it, using the word ἀνίστημι (anistami) for “rise up”;
 - ii. He immediately follows up by saying that the *Queen of the South* will “rise up” with that generation and condemn it... but here He uses ἐγείρω (egeiro) for “rise up”!
 1. From this example we can see that these two Greek words are largely interchangeable; both are used to refer to someone being *raised from the dead*.
- d. In **Luke 11**, in Jesus’ teaching on prayer, both terms for “raise up” (ἀνίστημι/anistami and ἐγείρω/egeiro) are used interchangeably, there referring to someone from a bed.
 - i. (*The man in bed says to the one knocking on his door*) ““Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’?” (*and Jesus continues*) “I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.” (from **Luke 11:7-8**, NKJV)
- vii. Hippolytus, an elder in the church in Rome, writing c. 200 AD:
 1. “The prophet, in using the expression, *a lion’s whelp* (= *lion’s cub*), means him who sprang from Judah and David according to the flesh, who was not made indeed of the seed of David, but was conceived by the (power of the) Holy Ghost...

2. "...And the expression, 'he stooped down, he *lay down* as a lion, and as a lion's whelp,' refers to the three days' sleep (death) of Christ;
3. "...And David says to the same effect, 'I laid down and slept; I awaked: for the Lord will sustain me;' (*Psalms 3:5, which we discussed earlier – CP*) in which words he points to the fact of his sleep and rising again.
4. "And Jacob says, 'Who shall rouse him up?' (**Genesis 49:9**) And that is just what David and Paul both refer to, as when Paul says, 'and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.' (**Galatians 1:1**)"
 - a. (Source: Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, p. 206)

viii. Eusebius, bishop of the church in Caesarea, writing perhaps c. 320 AD:

1. "But as it was necessary for the mysteries of both His birth and death to be included in the prophecy concerning Him, Jacob rightly proceeds to add to what has gone before:
2. "'Judah is a lion's whelp. From a seed, my son, you have ascended, falling down you have slept as a lion and a lion's whelp: who shall arouse you?' (**Genesis 49:9**)
3. "He calls Him then a lion's whelp because of His being born of the royal tribe. For He was of the seed of David according to the flesh. 'From a shoot you have grown, my son,' (**Genesis 49:9**) he says, because He was born of the seed and root of Jacob who foretold it, being primarily God the Word, and becoming secondarily the Son of man, through the dispensation He undertook for us.
4. "And the words, 'Falling down you slept as a lion and a whelp,' (**Genesis 49:9**) are significant of His death, because Scripture is accustomed, as is shown in many other places, based on their kinship, to call death a sleep. And 'Who shall awake him?' is a wonderful reference to His resurrection from the dead. For he who said, 'Who will awake him?' (**Genesis 49:9**) knew quite well that He would be awaked.
5. "And it is remarkable that he should add, 'Who then shall do this and raise him up? (**Genesis 49:9**)', so as to impel us to ask who it was that raised up our Lord Who died on our behalf. For Who else was it, but the God of the Universe, His Father, to Whom the Savior's resurrection is solely to be attributed,

according to the Scripture which says, 'Whom the Father raised from the dead' (**Galatians 1:1**)?"

- a. (Source: Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, book 8, chapter 1)

d. Elements of the prophecy of **Genesis 49:8-12**

- i. "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise...your father's sons shall bow down before you."
 1. The Greek word in the LXX for "bow down" is προσκυνέω (proskuneo).
 2. This word generally means to fall down and worship (for example, to worship: God, another 'god', an idol or a king)
 3. Examples where this word is used, to appreciate its significance:
 - a. In **Matthew 4**, when Satan tempted Jesus three times, Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" (**Matthew 4:9-10**, NKJV)
 - i. Here Jesus is quoting the Second Commandment, where the word προσκυνέω also is used in the LXX.
 - b. In the **Revelation 22**, when John mistakenly attempts to fall down and worship an angel, he writes: "Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, 'See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'" (**Revelation 22:8-9**, NKJV)
 - c. In **Hebrews 1**, establishing the divinity of Christ, it says: "But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'" (**Hebrews 1:6**, NKJV)
 4. While it may say in some English translations, "your father's sons will *bow down* to you", keep in mind the meaning of the

word in the LXX means the same as *worship* (something *we can't give even to an angel*; only to God).

5. This reference to his brothers bowing down to him points to both the *humanity* (“*his brothers will...*”) and the *divinity* (“...bow down and worship him”) of the One promised, Who will come from the line of Judah.
 - ii. He is the lion’s cub who will “couch” or bow down (voluntarily) and “sleep” (die).
 - iii. **The mysterious question:** “Who will raise him up?” (referring to his resurrection from the dead).
 1. **The answer:** God Himself!
 - iv. The Ruler’s staff not departing from Judah “until the one comes to whom it belongs”.
 1. **Question:** What does this statement refer to?
 2. **Answer:** Eusebius and other early Christian writers saw in Herod, a foreigner (a non-Jew) who became king shortly before the birth of Jesus, as fulfilling this prophecy. Herod was an Idumean, descended from Esau; therefore although Herod was king over the Jews, he was not Jewish himself. (See Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, book 3, chapter 2)
 - v. He would be “the expectation of the nations” (a/k/a, the Gentiles); not just the Jews.
 - vi. He would bind his colt to a vine and his donkey to its branch.
 1. This was fulfilled as Jesus makes his Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey and the foal of a donkey, in **Matthew 21:1-7**, also fulfilling **Zechariah 9:9**.
- e. Cyprian, writing (c. 250) about the significance of the Lord’s Supper (communion), captures many of these insights:
 - i. “In the blessing of Judah also this same thing is signified, where there also is expressed a figure of Christ,
 - ii. “that He should have praise and worship from his brethren;
 - iii. “that He should press down the back of His enemies yielding and fleeing, with the hands with which He bore the cross and conquered death;

- iv. “and that He Himself is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and should couch sleeping in His passion, and should rise up,
- v. “and should Himself be the hope of the Gentiles.
- vi. “To which things divine Scripture adds, and says, ‘He shall wash His garment in wine, and His clothing in the blood of the grape.’ But when the blood of the grape is mentioned, what else is set forth than the wine of the cup of the blood of the Lord?”
 - 1. (Source: Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian, Epistle No. 62*; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, p. 360)