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Selected Scriptures

A Nail in the Holy of Holies

A Resurrection Postlude

Resurrection in Scripture

The idea of the resurrection of life from the dead is more common in the Old Testament than many people realize. The concept of "make alive again" comes from the Hebrew word *hayah*, which means "to live," or "to cause something or someone to live." It is the basis for the New Testament concept of *anazao*, Greek for "to live again," and the Greek *anastasis*, which is resurrection. The word "resurrection" appears thirty-eight times in the New Testament. There are twelve Old Testament passages where the word *hayah* is used and translated "to live," "to cause to live," and "to cause to live again." The following is a synopsis of those passages.

1. **Genesis 42:38; 45:27** - Joseph retained Simeon as a hostage and sent his brothers home to bring Benjamin, his younger brother, to Egypt. When they returned without Simeon and told Jacob they must bring Benjamin to Egypt, his response was, "I will be brought down to my grave with grief." Later, when they returned with the news that Joseph was alive, well, and ruler of Egypt, 45:27 states that Jacob revived, Hebrew *hayah*, literally was brought back to life. The word "revive" is the Hebrew *hayah*, which means "to restore life" and "to cause to live."
2. **1 Kings 17:21-22** - God, through Elijah, restored life, *hayah*, when he raised to life the dead son of the widow of Zarephath. God used Elijah as His instrument to impart the power of the resurrection in the life of the son of the widow. What she perceived to be a judgment from God was actually a wonderful demonstration of God's love and power.
3. **2 Kings 13:21-22** - Elisha died and was buried in a cave, sepulcher, or tomb. Later a group of men were bringing a man for burial when they saw raiders approaching. They quickly let the man down into the grave, and when he touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, *hayah*, or was restored to life and stood on his feet. This was a demonstration of the power of the resurrection that already

was at work in the Old Testament and pointed to the coming resurrection for Jesus and then for all believers.

4. **Nehemiah 4:2** - Sanballat and others who were adversaries of Nehemiah asked, "Will they 'revive,' *hayah*, the stones out of the burned rubble?" Revival and resurrection are not limited to the spiritual world, but also include the physical world, see Rom 8:20-21. This is known as cosmic redemption.
5. **Psalms 85:1-7 (6)** - "Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?" The psalmist's prayer asked God to revive, *hayah*, the nation, i.e. to restore its spiritual life. This is the psalmist's version of 2 Chronicles 7:14.
6. **Psalms 138:7** - "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me." This is very similar to Psalm 23:3, which promises God will restore "my soul," *nephesh*, which in Hebrew means the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. Human beings do not have a soul; we are a soul. This is why God intends to resurrect and glorify the bodies of all believers and unite them with their spirits, see 1 Cor 15:35-58.
7. **Isaiah 57:15** - "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy *place*, With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive, *hayah*, the spirit of the humble, And to revive, *hayah*, the heart of the contrite ones." While this does not specifically focus on resurrection of human life, it does speak of restoring the spiritual life of those who humble themselves before God. The context of this statement is about restoring the "backslider," 57:14-20.
8. **Ezekiel 37:3** - "Son of man, can these bones live (*hayah*)?" Ezekiel 37:1-14 is a vision of the resurrection of scattered bones that became a mighty army. It is a symbol of the resurrection of the nation of Israel based on the idea that if God can raise the dead, He indeed can restore the nation.
9. **Daniel 12:2** - "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life (*hayah*) and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This is one of the most remarkable statements in the Old Testament on the resurrection, see Dan 12:1-13, esp. vv. 1-3.
10. **Hosea 6:1-2** - "Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up." **6:2** - "After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight." This is another remarkable passage that speaks of "return" (repentance) and resurrection. Most amazing is his reference to resurrection on the third day!

Why not two, four, or seven? This is another prophetic picture of Jesus rising on the third day.

11. **Habakkuk 3:2** - "O LORD, I have heard your speech *and* was afraid; O LORD, revive (cause to be alive) Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember mercy." This verse is part of the prayer of the prophet which continues through the chapter in verses 1-13. In his prayer, he is asking God to restore life to His work and it is a wonderful example of what should happen when a believer, a church, a community, or a nation gets right with God. The same power of the resurrection is available to accomplish the spiritual renewal of a person or a nation, see Phil 3:1-11, esp. vv. 10-11.

A Nail in the Holy of Holies

This marvelous passage begins a prophetic Messianic revelation that finds its fulfillment in the person of our Lord Jesus as God's Messiah and His death on the cross for our sins. He came and lived a life as our perfect example and He died to pay the debt of all our unrighteousness that we might have everlasting life.

12. **Ezra 9:8** - There is one additional verse, the only verse in the Bible where the word "revival" is used. It is in a marvelous prayer of Ezra who led the first captives back to Jerusalem after the bondage in Babylon. Upon his return, he discovered that the Jews in the area had not maintained the purity of their race and had intermarried with the pagan tribes in the region, and they had lost their zeal for the work of their God and the sanctity of His temple, see 9:1-5. So, Ezra prays to ask for help in renewing their commitment to God in 9:6-15.

In the midst of this wonderful prayer is an even more wonderful verse that was prophetic of the fulfillment of messianic hope. In Ezra 9:8 is a remarkable statement, "*And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.*" The word translated "reviving" is the infinitive form of the same word, *hayah*, literally "to cause to live" or "to make alive."

The other significant word in this verse is "nail," Hebrew word, *yathed*, that refers to a nail on the wall of the holy of holies that could have been used as a hanger for implements. This "peg" or "nail" also is mentioned in Judges 4:21, 22; 5:26, and it refers to the "nail" or "peg" that Yael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, drove through the temple of Sisera, thus sealing Deborah and Barak's victory.

NOTE: The meaning and usage of the combination of *hayah* and *yathed* in Ezra 9:8 is that the people who came with Ezra established a beachhead. They had not yet built the city or the temple but they had their "foot in the door," or as the text states it, "a nail in the holy place." In this Ezra gave the people assurance that the city and temple would be rebuilt and it would far exceed just having a "place to hang your hat." The Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Zechariah saw this veiled reference in Ezra as a significant and prophetic work of the Messiah.

Isaiah 22:23-25 - Shebna, the palace governor under Hezekiah (v. 15), was overthrown by Eliakim, the scribe (2 Kgs 19:2). As prime minister, he alone would determine who could see the king and make decisions that only the king could overthrow. In so doing, Isaiah described him as a "peg in a secure place," the key to access to the king. The "peg" is a person, Eliakim, Isa 22:20, who here is a type of the coming Messiah. Significantly, verse 22 states that the government of the house of David will be on his shoulders, an echo of the messianic declaration found in Isaiah 9:6, confirming Isaiah 22:23 also to be clearly messianic.

But there is more here than the rise of Shebna. Verses 24 and 25 clearly look beyond the immediate circumstances to a later fulfillment. He will have hung on Him all the glory of his Father's house. But He, the "nail" will be cut down and the burden on Him shall be cut off. Here is a clear prophecy of Jesus, the "peg" on whom is placed the sin of the whole world, and because of this, He gave His life and was cut off because of the burden of the sins of others, v. 25.

Zechariah 10:4 - This marvelous prophecy speaks of the restoration of Judah and Israel. The Lord of Hosts will visit His flock (v. 3) and from Him comes One who is called by four names: the "cornerstone," "the tent peg," "battle bow," and "ruler," see Gen 49:10; Ps 45:5; Isa 28:16; Mic 5:2; 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6-8. This passage is clearly messianic in scope and looks forward to the coming of the messianic King and Kingdom that will come out of the re-gathering of Israel to the land. When the nation is re-gathered, He, the Messiah, will be like a nail in the holy place. He will be our Eliakim to give us access to the Father.

Matthew 27:50-51 - At the moment of Jesus' death, Matthew reports that the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, and the rocks were split. Jesus' death opened the way for all of us into the Holy of Holies. When the Romans drove the nails in the hands of Jesus, they weren't just nailing Him to the cross - they were placing a nail in the "Holy of Holies," Heb 9:11-15, 27-28.

Hebrews 7:25-28 - He ever lives to make intercession to the Father for us (Heb 7:25-28). Therefore He is able to "save to the uttermost," *panteles*, meaning, "all, complete, perfect, completely, perfectly, utterly" or fully, finally, and forever. Because He lives, we have life and help eternal!

Colossians 2:14 - "He wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." When the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross they also nailed the requirements of the law by which we are convicted, Rom 7:9-12.

The print of the nails in Jesus' hands and feet were Thomas' test of the reality of the resurrection (John 20:25). In Christ's person "nailed to the cross," the law (Rom 3:21; 7:2-6; Col 2:14) and the old serpent (John 3:14; 12:31,32) were nailed to it. A mode of canceling bonds in ancient Asia was by striking a nail through the writing thereby cancelling the contract.

Conclusion

Our hope of revival is built on our access to God through Jesus, our precious Lord. It is through Him alone that we have a "nail" in the Holy of Holies, the very presence of God Himself - He has access to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is our one and only hope of regeneration, revival, and renewal.