

## **The Third Day (Part One)**

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**Given 17-Oct-16; Sermon #FT16-01-AM**

The largest, perhaps most significant battle ever fought in North America played out on the fields, ridges, and hills of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. About 160,000 men—85,000 from the North, 75,000 from the South—battled for three days, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd day of July in 1863. The South, in this particular battle and in many of those battles, were the aggressors; the North were defending. When the dust cleared on July the 3rd, casualties for the Union totaled 23,049. That is 3,155 dead, 14,529 wounded, and 5,365 missing. Confederate casualties were far worse. 28,000 as opposed to 23,000—28,063—3,903 dead, 18,735 wounded, and 5,425 missing. Those casualties for the South were more than one third of Robert E. Lee's army.

And this is an astounding fact: in that battle over those three days, an estimated 569 tons of ammunition was fired, one brother at another.

The battle's first day set the table for the other two days. Skirmishers of both armies found each other just west of Gettysburg and due to the forward Confederate forces' superior numbers, they pushed the Union brigade slowly back toward the town of Gettysburg. And looking at the field, Major General Winfield Scott Hancock determined that the town offered a pretty strong defensive position, so they began an orderly retreat to those hills

Even so, the Union's 11th Corps was driven back through Gettysburg at the cost of 4,000 casualties. And they hustled to entrench on [?] and cemetery hills just south of town. But Dick Ewell, who is the general of the Southern forces on that first day, he had just been promoted to his rank there and he was a little bit uncertain, and the light was fading, and so he decided not to pursue, not to follow up on his advantage. And so the day ended and the South lost the battle. Many people say that if Ewell had just pushed in, that would have been the end.

On the second day, the objective of both armies were two hills farther south of town, the famous Little Round Top and Big Round Top. Anybody looking at the geography would say those were obvious anchor points for the Union's left hand or left part of the line. The Union brass in their confusion had failed to send any troops to secure them. And so on the second day, troops from both sides raced to the south of town to take Little Round Top and Big Round Top, and only because of a Southern blunder (they took the wrong little road that delayed them for some time), only that blunder allowed the Union forces to reach Little Round Top and Big Round Top first.

But you may have heard of the ensuing fighting going on around Little Round Top and Big Round Top. You may have heard the about the fighting at the Devil's Den or at the wheat field or in the peach orchard. They were some of the fiercest and bloodiest skirmishes during those three days. But in the end, the Union left and the very last few men on the line held, just barely thanks to the ingenuity and the quick thinking and the unwilling-to-surrender attitude of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and the 20th Maine. You may have seen that in the movie "Gettysburg" or read the book. It is called *Killer Angels*.

The rebels on that second day also attacked the right flank. General Ewell, now feeling the fire in his belly, poured his men through a gap in the line that opened when a Union company was ordered away to reinforce another part of the line. Just left the whole line open right there and he went through it with authority. It was not until after dark that another two reinforcing companies arrived. They formed up and they charged into the rebels who were fighting with the Union artillery men around the guns and the Confederates fell back and the bloody day ended.

Many men had died. Many, many more were injured and missing. But the relative positions of the armies remained pretty much the same. Nothing was gained, a lot was lost.

The third day though, that was the decisive one, July 3rd. Overall Union commander General George Meade knew that Robert E. Lee was an very aggressive offensive general. He knew that Robert E. Lee would attack the center of his line, an untested part of the army, the only part of the line left to

attack. Despite the arguments, the very passionate arguments of General James Longstreet, this is the Southern general, against such an obvious attack right in the teeth of the strength of the Union army over open ground, Robert E. Lee instructed him to strike directly at the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. Most of you probably know about this by a different name. It is called Pickett's Charge after Major General George Pickett who was the one assigned to lead the assault.

Fifteen thousand Confederate troops had to advance three quarters of a mile across open ground, climb fences along the roads, and charge up a gradual but steep slope to Cemetery Ridge to assault about only 6,500 Union troops, although they were backed by some reinforcements nearby. So what they did in the morning was that the Confederate guns opened up on the Union line. The idea was to soften them up so that they could come up as unmolested as possible. But the artillery barrage that the Confederate sent up to Cemetery Ridge was essentially ineffective. They pointed their guns up that steep slope and the balls went right over the Union lines, falling behind them. So they were pretty much left intact by the time they started the charge.

So the rebels move forward. Disordered by the terrain and the flanking fire, and mauled by Union artillery which had been untouched as well, and other rifle fire, the rebels hit the Union center off the mark, not where they even wanted to hit it, in a spot they felt was weakest. But even so, after all that had gone against them, they broke through for a long moment until the Union reinforcements came up and threw them back. A ragged retreat spelled defeat for the Confederacy. And these men filed past Robert E. Lee who stood there as they came through, and he said, "It's all my fault. It's all my fault."

Although the conflict, the American Civil War, would continue for nearly two more years and witness many other battles, the largely irreplaceable losses to the South's largest army at Gettysburg marked what is widely regarded as a turning point, probably *the* turning point in the Civil War. The Confederates would never again threaten the North and the rebels hopes for victory took a severe blow and dwindled away quickly. On that decisive third day at Gettysburg, one side's hopes were dashed. The other side though, experienced revival, restored hopes, and ultimately a restored Union once the war was over.

Now today and on the eighth day, in my sermons, we are going to explore the Bible's phenomenon of the third day. Enough significant events are recorded as happening in the Bible on the third day that there must be some symbolic lesson that we can learn from them. And there is. I think we are going to see that, like the third day at Gettysburg, the biblical third day points to revival and restoration and we will find other things as well as we go through. What it does is it makes the third day a day of hope and earnest expectation.

So if you would please turn with me back to Leviticus the 23rd chapter, we are going to get in touch here with the Feast of Tabernacles as God commanded it in the Scriptures. Because at first glance, the Feast of Tabernacles does not seem to have much to do with this idea of the third day.

**Leviticus 23:33-43** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of the seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day, you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your free will offerings which you give to the Lord. Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feasts of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest.

And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, the willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your

God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast of the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

As we went through there, we heard nothing about a third day or even three days. We just heard references to the fifteenth day, the first day, the eighth day, but no third day. But the link is there. The link between the third day and the Feast of Tabernacles is there. And the link is in the fact that we believe that this Feast is a type of the 1,000 year reign of Christ, which we call the Millennium, when God restores His government to this earth. And what will make that time so special is it will be the greatest period of revival and restoration this world has ever seen.

That is the link, the link between the third day being a type or a symbol of revival and restoration and the Millennium being the greatest time of revival and restoration.

Now, if you would please go with me to Isaiah the 61st chapter and we will read the first seven verses. Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2 are quoted in Luke, when Jesus stood up to pray in the synagogue on the Sabbath to announce the beginning of His ministry. He read the first verse and the first part of the second verse of Isaiah 61. But He left off the rest, stopping in a very strange place and saying, this day this has been fulfilled. But I want to read all the way through verse 7.

**Isaiah 61:1-3** "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [and that is where Jesus closed the book and stopped speaking but there is more to the prophecy], and the day of vengeance of our God [See, He was speaking about His ministry and between those verses is a long period of time between His ministry and the restoration of His

government and the vengeance of God.]; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

You see in the metaphors that He is using there, that everything changes from bad to good, good times are restored, good feelings are restored, joy instead of mourning, and that sort of thing. It goes from a very negative condition to a very positive one after the day of vengeance. And that is when He begins to comfort the world, revive Israel especially, and restore things to the way they should be.

**Isaiah 61:4-7** And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolation of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowman and your vinedressers. But you shall be named the priests of the Lord, they shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

So what we see here is that the Millennium, the time after Jesus Christ returns, after the vengeance of our God, this Millennium is all about the revival of a people who had turned from God, who had been severely humbled in the Tribulation and brought back to the land of Israel to repent and rebuild their nation in righteousness under the guidance of their King, Jesus Christ. And it mentions us in there too. That we will be priests of the Lord helping Him to help them and to restore them, to rebuild them, to revive them so that they can do the things that they were originally meant to do when God called them His own special people.

But there is another revival that is going to take place. I mentioned that Isaiah 61 refers to us. Let us go to Revelation the 20th chapter and see that a

little bit more clearly. What we are talking about here in Revelation 20 is a literal revival. I mean that seriously. A literal bringing back to life, which we call in our theological terms, our biblical terms, resurrection.

**Revelation 20:4-6** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. [That is kind of a parenthetical phrase there trying to explain this is not all the dead. This is just these that were raised to reign with Christ.] This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

This is a true revival. Those who are dead, no longer living, are brought back to life, and not just to any kind of life, but to eternal life. The second death has no power over these. These are special people, firstfruits of God, who were chosen to be part of the firstfruits to live and reign and serve with Christ for this 1,000 years while Israel is being revived, and eventually the whole world will be restored. Their resurrection at the second coming of Jesus Christ begins the restoration of all things, the true restoration of all things, not only in terms of the immediate fight against the armies of the Beast, but as we know, as we saw there in Isaiah 61, the comforting and teaching of the people of Israel.

As far as I can see, no one has been able to tell me any differently, I think we will be those teachers who say, "This is the way, walk in it," as it says there in Isaiah 30:21. Because when they go to the right hand or to the left hand, we will be there to say, "No, we figured out that that doesn't work. We've been along that route before and we know that it has potholes and you'll probably go off the edge of the cliff. Take this way, this other way is better. It's smoother. It is the way of God. It is much, much to be preferred."

So we will have more than just a hand in the restoration that the Millennium brings. We will be the motivators and governors of that restoration, of the revival of all that is good.

Let us go back to Isaiah, this time in chapter 58. We normally read this on the Day of Atonement or when we are speaking about fasting, but it applies to the Millennium because of the conditions that will be there in the Millennium without the presence of Satan the Devil, when people will have a restored or reconciled relationship with God, and it will be like they have fasted and drawn close to Him. I just want the this last part, starting in verse 6.

**Isaiah 58:6-12** "Is this not the fast that I have chosen [God speaking]: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you should break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' [the epitome of this will take place in the Millennium]

If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noon day. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you [This is the where I was heading the whole time. It speaks first about the restoring of relationships, the restoring of one's attitude and character to what it should be. And then it gets to this.] shall



build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In."

And we can go on to show that even the Sabbath during the Millennium will be restored to those people who rejected it so often during their history. It says here,

**Isaiah 58:14** "Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken."

This is what we are aiming for. This is what we are training for; so that we can do these type of things, we can teach these type of things to the people in the Millennium and restore them to what they should have been, and restore, especially, their relationship with God, with Jesus Christ.

So the Feast of Tabernacles pictures a time of revival and restoration that is also found in this idea of the third day that we see in the Bible.

Now, as we often do, it is good to go back to the beginning. So if you will turn with me back to the very front of the book in Genesis 1, we will see the first mention of the third day in Scripture. We are going to be reading verses 9 to 13. As we have seen in the past, we can learn a great deal by applying what is called the "law of first mention." If you do not know what that is, I will explain it just briefly here. The law of first mention is the principle that the first mention of a word or phrase in the Bible colors how it is to be understood in its other appearances in the Bible. So when you look at the third day here in Genesis 1, you will see what happened on that day and that should color our understanding of this principle.

**Genesis 1:9-13** Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind,

which seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and morning [here it is] were the third day.

There we have the first mention of the third day. Now, its usage here is obviously connected to the acts of creation that God did on this day so we need to look into these acts of creation that God did. There are clearly two of them and we will get to them one by one.

The idea that these were acts of creation that happened on this day is our first clue because we should think of the events linked to the third day, wherever they appear in the Bible, as acts of creation, that God is doing something. He is working something out. Clearly, He also did acts on the first day, the second day, the fourth day, the fifth day, the sixth day, seventh day. He does acts of creation all the time. That is what He is. He is a Creator.

But the third day, certain acts of creation are brought out as being important in what He did on that day. But they telegraph our minds to think of those sorts of things when we come to another situation where there is a third day in the Bible.

So we have to think of them as acts of creation. Third day events are creative. They make something, they are positive rather than negative, even though they may look negative at first, but they are positive and they are beneficial rather than the opposite of being destructive. And we will see that some of these third day events that we will go through (mostly in the next sermon, perhaps one today), but when we look at these third day events, they often seem very negative at first. When you read through them, it looks like something bad has just happened.

Many of them are examples of a term I have used before. I did a whole sermonette on Atonement a few years ago on this term, it is called eucatastrophe. Two Greek words put together. It literally means a good catastrophe. It was coined by my favorite author, J. R. R. Tolkien, and he

used it in terms of literature, obviously, in terms of story. But let me just tell you what its definition is in literature and we can kind of get a good idea of how it applies here in literature.

Eu-catastrophe is when at the end of a story everything looks dark and doomed to fail, yet a sudden turn of events, something comes into the story right at the end to bring victory and joy. And so it is, "Whoa! This is terrible!" "Wow! Look, here it is! Hooray. We win!" That is eu-catastrophe. It is the good catastrophe. Everything looks like it is going down the drain, everybody is going to lose. It is going to be terrible. Dark days are going to continue and suddenly there is a light at the end of the tunnel—and I am just mixing metaphors all over the place. But the clouds open up, light comes down, and everything is well.

So things that happen on the third day tend to follow this pattern. What occurs on the third day are otherwise disturbing events, dark days, bad things, things that you do not want to happen, but light and good are right on their heels. Here we see in chapter 1 of Genesis, what happens right after the third day? God makes the lights—the sun, the moon, the stars—to appear in the heavens. So you have what seems as dark times up until then: first, second, and third day, even though light was made there on the first day, but if you were on earth, it still looked dark. The firmament had not been divided (well, it had been divided, but it was still gloomy) and God had to make it possible for a person on earth to see the lights in the heavens.

And so the third day, things were happening and immediately thereafter, there was the light of the sun and the moon and the stars. Third day imagery throughout the Bible seems to follow this pattern. Bad things happen, but something good is lurking in the shadows just waiting to be revealed. And that is another clue. The word "revealed." It is another detail that we have to note about the third day.

Now, on the third day, as we read here, what did God reveal? Well, first He revealed the dry land. Even though there was a stormy sea covering everything, when God worked on the third day, He divided the waters from the earth. Now, we probably guess that somehow tectonically He raised certain areas of the earth, made them higher and the water then drained off them and went into the lower spots and they became our seas and oceans.

And so He revealed that there was a land mass under there for people to dwell on. From the standpoint of an observer, this would appear as if the land were suddenly revealed as the waters rushed off it. It is like the ocean, the seas, the waters, were a great covering that had to be rolled back. And voila! here is the land where people can live. And just wait a little while, the light will come up and you will be able to see it, you will be able to enjoy it and get the most out of it.

So we have to use this as a principle to understand that events that happen on the third day are revelatory. They reveal something that has been hidden. They make something known that was out of sight or out of mind. And as we go through some of these, we will see that these things are often done with a little bit of a twist. It is unexpected. It is something out of the blue, an event or a circumstance or an intervention that nobody saw coming. It just suddenly happens and that is when the eu-catastrophe, the pivot on the eu-catastrophe happens, when everything was catastrophic and now it is turning toward the good and that is the revelation, that pivot point.

The next event that happened here on the third day in Genesis 1, was the sprouting of grass and herbs and trees, and it emphasizes the fact that they yielded seed or that they had fruit. Why does that need to be said? Why did He not just say it was grass and plants and trees? But He does not. He says, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth." He puts in those little details to give us a little bit more of understanding of what He is trying to get out here.

The first impression that you get from reading that, that they yield seed and that they have fruit there, is that what was happening on the third day was the springing up of life and abundance and reproduction. Think of it this way. This is from Adam Clarke's commentary. He did the math (or somebody did the math for him), but he writes here in his commentary on this particular verse, verse 11, he says that,

An elm tree will produce by itself during its lifetime 1.5 billion seeds. And by the fourth generation subsequent elm trees, all related to the original one, would produce a combined [get this number, if you understand it let me know] 6.3 sextillion seeds.

That is not millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions, that is sextillions. We have a hard time understanding our \$20 trillion debt in this country. How about a \$6.3 sextillion debt? But this is the productivity, the seed yield of one elm tree after four generations! 6.3 sextillion seeds.

So when God creates, when He reveals this life that is springing up, it is an *explosion* of life. It is not just one sprout here and one sprout there. You get the impression that when God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass,"

\*whoosh! an entire plain of grasses sprang up. And when He said, "bring forth plants" up they came, all of them, and then the same with trees.

Millions of trees to cover the entire earth—not just one solitary elm tree, but millions of them all around the earth, all with the potential of bringing forth much, much, much, much more. When God creates life and enables growth and propagation, productivity just engulfs everything.

Now, while the events of the third day in other places may not immediately show this kind of abundance, the events of the day usually make abundance possible. Things have been revealed, things have been started off, God has put all the ingredients together, and they come together on the third day and immediately after that things begin to explode with life and growth.

Abundance follows in short order. And we see things on the third day that you would not expect in a normal sense to be life-giving or productive because they are not the physical life, they are not the physical productivity. God is looking at spiritual life and spiritual productivity, and the third day events make them happen.

I should also mention here that in this particular passage, we have two more first mentions and they are very important. The first is the word *zera* in Hebrew. It is translated into English as seed. So the events on the third day bring out ideas of offspring, progeny, lineage, generations, inheritance, and of course, the other things that you can find within the concept of a seed, of growth, of dying and living again. Paul brings that out in I Corinthians 15, and clearly the most obvious of them all is the seed of the woman, which is in chapter 3, meaning it gets all the way to Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham, and you might talk about Isaac, but that is also a forerunner of Jesus Christ, and it talks about us because we are godly seed.

So, the idea of seed appearing in the third day is very important and a lot of times the seeds that God plants long before start sprouting on the third day. Now, I am not talking literally, I am mostly talking spiritually. God may have started something in His plan way, way back and it has lain in the ground seemingly dead. Nothing has happened. But when He says, "Ok, it's the third day," \*Boom! it springs up and begins to grow. Or some part of His plan just begins, it clicks into place and off we go.

Another idea that is also within the third day here in Genesis 1 is the first occurrence of "after its kind." I will not go into this one. You can think about that. This is also linked with seed because the seed is after its kind, the fruit that is yielded is after its kind. These things are especially important, of course, in the spiritual domain of things. God, of course, gets to verse 26 here and says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." We are after His kind. So a lot of principles that are wrapped up within the third day, and seed and after its kind are just two of them.

Another impression we get when we read things about the third day, especially here in Genesis 1. It is a little bit more nuanced, I think, than some of the other ones but it is very important that we understand it. And that is that God makes life spring out of what is dead or nonliving or what *appears* to be dead. Now, here we have that at His word here, plants grow out of something seemingly lifeless, soil that is waterlogged and bare and it just looks like glop. And it does not seem like it is worth much or it could produce anything. And of course, it could not produce anything on its own without God's help, but it just looks dead and lifeless.

But what we see here is that He made the herb, the grass, the fruit tree spring out of it with great life, overwhelming life, abundant life. And of course, this is a metaphor of life from the dead, or resurrection. Things may look dead, look hopeless—the hero slain, the heir brought low—but God is far stronger than death. He breaks the bands of death and raises the dead to life and not just to life, but also to abundant blessing and growth and reproduction. And His way, in taking this to an extreme, goes on forever and ever and ever. That is the way God is. He takes something that looks like it is defunct and He makes it the best thing ever.

Let us go to Job 14, if you will. This goes with my last point about God making life spring out of death or non-life or however you want to put it. We will start all the way in verse 7, and I want you to see His train of thought here because he is looking at human life and he thinks there is no way that there could be anything more. He knows that there is something more because he gets to that conclusion. But on the outside it looks like it is hopeless.

**Job 14:7-15** "For there is hope for a tree [he says], if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth branches like a plant. But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he? [it looks hopeless] As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. [That is what people who are without God must conclude. There is no evidence to the contrary. But Job says] Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands."

So God takes a man, a woman, who has been dead for who knows how many years, and there is no hope. It is dried up, just a sack of bones. Maybe even not at that anymore. Maybe they have all disintegrated and gone. There is nothing left. But God is stronger than entropy. God is stronger than any kind of disintegration, any kind of dispersal. God is stronger than any of the forces that He has made to cause this to happen. And He says, "Live!" and that person will live again. And in our case, in the first resurrection, and ultimately, many, many, many, many, many billions more will have the opportunity to live, not just as a physical person again, but as a spirit being so that it says in I John 3:2 that "we will be like Him, we will see Him as He is."

Since we have a few minutes, let us go to II Samuel 24 and see one of these third day things. This episode is kind of typical and I purposely did not get one that was particularly spiritual in nature. I wanted to pull one out that was just normal. There is some spiritual aspects to this, obviously. But I wanted to make sure that we did not think that it was all spiritual or whatever. The third day events happened all through the Scriptures and some of them are not as "wow" as others. This is kind of a normal one, but it is still pretty good. So let us read verses 1 through 4. This is when David tried to take the census of Israel.

**II Samuel 24:1-4** Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people." And Joab [of all people] said to the king, "Now may the Lord your God add to the people a hundredfold more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. So Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

Now this is a common thing that nations do. They go out and count the people. But David wanted to know how big his army was. He probably had imperial ambitions. He wanted to spread Israel far and wide and put all those other nations under his rule. And God did not want that. And so he, if you see in the other example in I Chronicles 27, God got Satan to work on David. So here we have Joab and the captains of the army going out and counting the people.

**II Samuel 24:10-19** And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly." [So he realizes that he had made a wrong move. This is not the thing that God wanted him to do.] Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,



"Go and tell David, 'Thus says the Lord, 'I offer you three things [three choices]; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.'"" [That does not sound good. When God says, "I'm going to do something to you," you want Him to do things *for* you or or even *with* you, that would be good. But "to you" is not so good.]

So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him [now these are the choices], "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me." And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. [It was all those extra soldiers that he was hoping he was going to have.]

And when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house." And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.

**II Samuel 24:25** David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

You did not see the third day, that particular phrase pop up, but it was there, just hidden, because the plague that was sent over Israel was to occur for three days. So on the third day, the plague was stopped. What happened on

the third day? The plague was stopped and that was good. And we see then light springing out of darkness that at least the plague was over. So that was a good thing. But what was more important that happened on the third day?

There are several things. 1) we saw at the beginning that David's heart condemned him and he asked God's forgiveness for this. But it was not till the third day when he saw the destruction and how terrible it was that you could see a real change in him, in the way that he spoke here. He says, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?" It is a little different wording than what he had said earlier.

Let us just compare for a second. He said (verse 10), I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." That was before the plague. Now after the plague, he says, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but the sheep, what have they done?" Interesting. It changed from, "God, I want forgiveness" to "Please God, have mercy on the people." Bit of a change of attitude there because he saw that what he had done was so terrible and it affected so many people. Seventy thousand men died from a bad decision and his ambition.

What else happened on the third day? Well, he made the sacrifice. But where did he make that sacrifice? On the threshing floor of Araunah. Where in the world is that? Well, that is where the Temple was built. He bought the threshing floor of Araunah, built an altar there, and made a sacrifice; and he saved that place for the Temple. So what clicked into place on the third day? Another part of God's plan. And out of the plague, out of David's great sin, came a wonderful new part of God's way of dealing with the people and providing a centerpoint for the worship of Him. And so out of this black episode in David's history came a good thing, came some light—the Temple. Of course, the Temple was not built until Solomon. It still had to wait some time. But things were being laid in the earth so that they could spring forth at the right time.

And so you see some of these coming together here. I forgot to mention this. Another thing that happened on the third day is that David's relationship with God was restored, was truly restored. So we have another example of restoration and he was able to rebuild, then, his relationship with God.

That is all I have for today. I just want to summarize very quickly what we have seen in the third day. Just some quick words so that you can have these in your mind when we go through the next sermon.

The big words that we should be remembering about the third day are these: Revival. It is a big one. Revival includes resurrection and life from the dead. Another one is Restoration, Rebuilding, and that includes both reproduction and you could add to that the idea of abundance. That once you start rebuilding under God and restoring what He wants, things get built up and things start spreading out and things begin to really move. And then there is the idea of Revelation, that God unveils something, whatever it is that has been hidden.