

18-14-01-The Deep Hope of Resurrection
 resurrection, death, hope, heaven, forgiveness
 Job 14:7-17

The soul's longing for resurrection is a God-given instinct.

INTRODUCTION:

–Death comes to all; death troubles all: Job, in 18:14 referred to it as “the king of terrors.” Shakespeare, in *Hamlet*, describes it as “the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns.” John Donne preached long ago, “Never send to know for whom the bell tolls, It tolls for thee!”

–Job's suffering caused him to wish for death. But in our **text** today, he expressed a longing for resurrection, even if OT theology gave only a shadowy hope for it. Listen to his longing in Job 14:7-17 (NIV)

7 “At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail.	13 “If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me!
8 Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil,	14 If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.
9 yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant.	15 You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made.
10 But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more.	16 Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin.
11 As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,	17 My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.
12 so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.	

I. If “there is hope for a tree,” Why Not Me? (v.7-9)

A. Nature illustrates many spiritual truths:

1. God chose Easter to come in Spring for a reason.
2. Nature's universal voice sows a universal hope in all cultures, all centuries [v.14's central question: “If a man dies, will he live again?” echoes down through history. *Inscriptions on ancient tombs, verses by dead poets, the sayings of the world's sages* all testify to a hope for immortality.]

B. God gave us reason, but, tainted by sin, reason can go astray (*Men don't argue about death; they argue about life after it!*)

1. Materialistic thinkers assume there's no soul, thus no afterlife [a German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach called *life-after-death* “a wishful projection”; Karl Marx called it a consolation for the oppressed; Freud

viewed it as an unrealistic regression of the psychologically immature.]

2. But logic points toward the soul and an afterlife:

- [Scientists say, “Energy is neither created nor destroyed.” What about the energy of an invisible human soul that moves nations and changes history?]
- [The instinct to learn has no meaning, if death dissolves all the knowledge we accumulate. Why not resist it, if our soul doesn’t outlive this life?]
- [What about life’s unfinished business at death? Uncompleted tasks, unfulfilled dreams, larger goals and aspirations than one lifetime could contain? All these point to a an afterlife.]

TRANS: The logic in the human soul’s longing for resurrection is reflected so well in nature. [William Jennings Bryan eloquently defended this idea: “If the Father deigns to touch with divine power, the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of a man made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze the sweet assurance of another spring, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frost of winter comes?” Nature cries out a resounding, “No!”]

II. What Then Happens to the Soul? (vs.10-12)

- Despairing questions often reveal hints of hope– vs.10 (NKJV), “But man dies and is laid away; Indeed he breathes his last And where is he?”
 - Job is on the cutting edge of hopeful theology: “What happens to the person? (His question implies: “We are more than dust!”)
 - The NIV (“he...is no more”) is better turned around (“Is he no more?”). (Job’s question arises from an instinctive feeling that dissolving an individual’s personality is wrong, or would be, if it happens.)
- Poetic impressions can often be prophetic expressions, v.11-12, As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep. (Job unwittingly, I believe, paints a poetic picture of what death is like, as resurrection is anticipated:
 - “Where” does spiritual soul life go? It rises upward, “As the water of a lake dries up”– 2 Cor 5:8 (NKJV), We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
 - “Where” does physical bodily life go? It sinks down the way “a riverbed becomes parched and dry” [often still there, beneath the ground].
 - But what happens at the end of time? (Job’s words can be read as supporting the idea of a resurrection, because of his placement of the phrase, “till the heavens are no more”– “man lies down and does not rise, till the heavens are no more” / “till the heavens are no more, men

will not awake or be roused from their sleep.”)

TRANS: Job, in his despairing, poetic lamentations, anticipated the resurrection. His longing for it was a God-given instinct. But his question also longed for reassurance: “Where is he?” Where does death take the soul? He had no resurrected Messiah to offer him certainty.

III. A Resurrection? Are You Sure, Job? (v.13-15)

- Job’s had two instinctive but conflicting desires– v.13, “If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! (both were God-given):
 - One desire was to hide in death from trouble (but our true hiding place is to be in God– Psa 17:8b, ...hide me in the shadow of your wings. / Col 3:3, ...you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.)
 - His other desire was resurrection (not really wanting death).
- But his question in v.14a (If someone dies, will they live again?) almost stops at a “hope-so” kind of faith (the kind most people have),
- Then he takes a leap of faith in v.14b, I will wait for my renewal to come.
 - “But Job, how is this renewal, this sprouting again, to come about?” This is mortal humanity’s mournful question, echoed even from the lips of Mary at Jesus’ tomb, “Who shall roll away the stone....?”
 - Job’s trust in God’s character hammers out a theological answer in v.15, You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. (God will do it! Job has read God correctly!)

CONCLUSION:

–Atheists ignore all these inborn human longings, saying that after your last breathe, it’s all over. But the soul cries out for an afterlife, with a God-given instinct to believe in it.
 –Job expressed one last instinctive longing in v.16-17, Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin. Job knew that we have nothing to look forward to in an afterlife, if God does not forgive sins.
 –But the faith and hope Job placed in the loving character of God was fulfilled in the death of God’s Son for our sins. Job’s instinctive faith and hope in resurrection, which we also long for, was validated forever on Easter morning! “He is risen!” “He is risen indeed!”