

To Know Him and Make Him Known

Most of us are used to thinking about resurrection as a New Testament doctrine rather than an Old Testament one.

But would it surprise you to find out that the resurrection is well established in the Old Testament?

Not only is resurrection taught in the Old, but the theology it teaches us is incredibly profound.

There are many books throughout the Old Testament that shed light on the doctrine of the resurrection.

A careful examination of them will draw out a powerful message about resurrection that speaks to our lives today.

Job Says, “Resurrection Is the Solution to All Evil”

Job is the book of the Bible that was written first, and as such it asks important questions that the rest of the Bible will answer.

One of those questions comes from Job himself in Job 14:14, “If a man dies, will he live again?” Job knows that death is permanent (14:10–11) and that once he passes, he will be unable to plead with God that he did nothing wrong (14:3–4).

His sin will keep him endlessly trapped in the grave, because the only currency that can pay for sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Therefore, Job recognized early on that the only possible resolution to sin and its deadly consequence is a resurrection.

For this reason, in Job 19:26 he declares with the utmost confidence, “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God.”

Job does not know how God is going to do it, but he believes in his heart that somehow God will raise him from the dead.

Through it all, Job maintains that God is right, even though He seems to be allowing Job to suffer for no reason.

But the only way for God to be right that makes sense to Job is that there must be a resurrection.

Elihu agrees with him later in Job 33:29–30, “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life.”

Elihu too recognizes that resurrection must be real, and they both believed against all odds that it is the solution to all evil.

The Psalms Say, “Resurrection Is Dependent on the Messiah”

If resurrection is the solution to all evil, it will require a heroic individual with the right credentials to make it happen.

The book of Psalms introduces the Messiah as this person.

In Psalm 17:15, David expresses confidence that God will satisfy him as well with a resurrection, “As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.”

How does David know this will happen?

He explains in Psalm 16:10, “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

David is sure that his own resurrection is secure, because he knows that God will not allow the Messiah, God’s Holy One, to undergo decay.

The Messiah’s resurrection is the basis for David’s resurrection

All resurrection is dependent on the Messiah.

Hosea Says, “Resurrection Is the Proof of God’s Love”

Now that a resurrection is anchored by a future Messiah, the book of Hosea submits resurrection as prime evidence that God loves His people.

Hosea 6:2 announces, “He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him.”

God allowed Israel to die because of their sin (5:14; 10:13–15; 13:1), but He also promises to raise them from the dead by returning them from exile (7:2; 8:13; 11:1, 11).

The promise of a resurrection demonstrates that God still loves His people.

But Hosea 13:14 takes it a step further, “Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting?”

Not only does God ensure that His people will overcome the grave; He also promises to give death a taste of its own medicine.

Not even death can separate God's people from His love. Death will forever be silent as the grave. The eternality of resurrection is the ultimate proof of God's love.

Isaiah Says, "Resurrection Is the Key to a New Creation"

Isaiah builds on Hosea's claim that resurrection is proof of God's love by putting its incredible benefits on display.

Isaiah 25:8 says, "He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces."

Isaiah reiterates the eternal nature of the resurrection, but then adds a wonderful blessing to it: God will wipe away every tear.

Isaiah focuses on the beautiful ramifications of the resurrection.

It will be a time of joy, not sorrow.

It will be a time of hope, not despair.

It will be a new creation.

Not only will the earth be a new creation, but also each person, for they will all "shout for joy" once they "awake."

According to Isaiah 53:10, all this will happen because the Messiah will rise from the dead, "But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand."

Isaiah leaves no doubt that a resurrection is the key to a new creation.

Ezekiel Says, "Resurrection Is Inaugurated by the New Covenant"

Up to this point, the time that the resurrection will take place is unclear.

But the book of Ezekiel finally gives it a deadline by assigning it to the New Covenant.

God's people will become new creations, because Ezekiel 36:26 promises that they will be given new hearts and a new Spirit. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

A heart of stone signifies a dead heart, but a heart of flesh symbolizes a heart that is alive.

A resurrection will first take place inside the hearts of God's people when He offers them the transforming power of His New Covenant

But a spiritual resurrection also serves as the basis for a physical resurrection.

The following chapter is the famous passage about the resurrection of dry bones:

He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." Again He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life.'"" . . . So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army." (Ezekiel 37:3–5, 10)

An internal resurrection will one day turn into an external resurrection, so that everyone will be made alive, both inside and out.

But neither of these resurrections can take place until the New Covenant arrives.

Jesus instituted the New Covenant in Luke 22:20 and made its official release the time of His death and resurrection, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Jesus confirmed that the resurrection was inaugurated by the New Covenant.

Daniel Says, "Resurrection Is the Culmination of Human History"

While the spiritual resurrection now has a date on the calendar, the physical resurrection still does not.

The book of Daniel adds this final piece to the puzzle in order to demonstrate that the resurrection will mark the end of human history.

The book revolves around a prophecy about the Messiah that signals the end of time.

Daniel 7:13–14 describes:

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

The revolving door of nation overthrowing nation comes to a permanent halt when the Son of Man takes the kingdom of the earth for Himself. His reign means the end of history itself, and it ushers in the time of the new creation. It is at this time that Daniel 12:2 says, "Many of those

who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”

Everyone will receive a resurrection, but not everyone will possess everlasting life

The exhaustive and eternal nature of this resurrection indicates that it is the culmination of human history and all its theology will finally come to fruition.

The New Testament Agrees, “Resurrection Is the Cornerstone of Our Hope”

1 Cor. 15:3-4