

RESURRECTION

A landscape photograph of a sunset over a lake with islands. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some wispy clouds. The water is dark blue, and the islands are silhouetted against the sunset. The word 'RESURRECTION' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top half of the image.

AS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE

- We take it for granted that the resurrection is a key component of the faith, and for good reason! As the apostle wrote, "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received... that Christ was raised up on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is a scriptural fact (Luke 18:31-33).
- The resurrection theme runs like a thread throughout the New Testament. It was one of the most distinguishing features of the Christian message (Acts 17:31-32), especially in the minds of the Gentiles.
- But an issue faces us as we dig deeper into the broader message of the Bible: where is resurrection in the Old Testament? It is striking how intensely "resurrection-focused" the New Testament is in contrast to the OT, which hardly mentions it (and usually only in vague terms).



3 LESSONS

- Resurrection In The Old Testament
- Jesus And The Resurrection
- Our Resurrection Hope



There are some important questions we have to answer before moving on to the empty tomb of Jesus and what it means for our own hope in the resurrection. Why isn't the theme featured more prominently (or obviously) in the OT? Did the Israelites believe in the resurrection of the dead? How did this eventually lead to the context of Jesus' resurrection-focused ministry?

GENESIS 3

- While the story of Adam and Eve does not include any direct reference to resurrection, it does set the stage for the great struggle, tragedy, and hope of the rest of the Bible.
- It was clearly God's intention to share perfect communion with His creation. He cared about Adam and Eve. He desired their companionship. Death is not portrayed as a natural part of that relationship – in fact, it is part of a curse. Death is an interruption, a disruption, an unnatural by-product of the infiltration of sin into a good environment (called an "enemy" later in 1 Cor. 15:26, and something that needs to be defeated in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14).
- So, moving forward in the scriptures, the reader is already being subtly setup with an expectation that the failure of Genesis 3 will be resolved by God.

- It's impossible to know everything that went through Abraham's head in the achingly long journey up the mountain. What is certain, however, is that he held steady in his faith – but in what?
- Some might say Abraham trusted that God would eventually stop him and “provide a lamb” in Isaac's place. This misses the significance of the sacrifice, though. Abraham wasn't merely going through the motions or “playing chicken” with God. He was actually going to kill Isaac!
- Hebrews offers commentary in 11:17-19, asserting that it was faith in God's power to raise the dead that drove him to obey the shocking command.

GENESIS 22





EZEKIEL 37



OTHER REFERENCES

- JOB 19:25-27
- 2 KINGS 4:8-37 & 13:21
- ISAIAH 26:18-19
- HOSEA 13:14
- DANIEL 12:1-3

WHY WASN'T IT PROMINENT?

- The question is certainly worth answering, since Bible skeptics point to the supposed thematic disconnect as evidence of the Bible's human authorship.
- Remember that God reveals things progressively throughout the timeline of the scriptures (Ex. 6:2-4, Jer. 31:31-34, Gal. 3:23-25, Ac. 17:30, Rom. 5:6). So the idea that we would find EVERY Biblical subject fully fleshed out in the first few pages is unreasonable. You see the same progression with other subjects, such as worship (crude altars > tabernacle > temple > spiritual temple), grace (John 1:16-17), and the Messianic expectation (which is vague in Gen. 3 but pronounced in the latter prophets).
- By the end of the intertestamental period (400-0 BCE), the belief in angels, spirits, demons, heaven, hell, and the general resurrection was widely accepted.



Widely accepted, but not universal.

The Sadducees, the powerful majority party in the Sanhedrin and Torah literalists, ridiculed the belief in things like a general resurrection of the dead. Commoners and the admired Pharisees held to an earnest expectation of spiritual things. It was against a backdrop of uneasy and ill feelings that Jesus of Nazareth magnificently pushed His "resurrection agenda."



APPLICATIONS

- We need a solution to our great self-inflicted problem. We can fix most things, but we can't fix death!
- When studying the Bible, look for the way "big ideas" are revealed from age to age. We benefit from having the whole story in one, easy-to-read volume.
- The resurrection challenges secularism. It is bold, uncompromising, and binary. It is either true or not.