

RESURRECTION

The background of the image is a serene landscape. In the foreground, a winding river flows through a valley, its surface reflecting the light from the sky. The river is surrounded by dark, silhouetted hills and mountains. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible against the horizon. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange, with wispy white clouds scattered across it. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a soft glow.

PART TWO: WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

VAGUE, BUT THERE

- In our first lesson on the subject, we explored what the Old Testament had to say about resurrection. While most of the references are vague, there is a strong resurrection theme that runs throughout the scriptures.
- The fall of Adam and Eve clearly points to a problem – death – and the need for a solution. This predicament drives the tension of the rest of the Bible.
- Great figures in Israel's story held some elementary understanding of God's incredible power over life and death, and the reality of resurrection hope (Abraham, Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc.).
- At some point between the testaments, Jewish thinking on the resurrection came to a broad consensus based on the scriptures. The hope of a general resurrection, as well as belief in the eternal soul and spiritual realm, 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."

GOD OF THE LIVING

- Matthew 22:23-34 – This was probably their standard “gotcha” question on the subject. Nobody had foiled it before, they thought, so how will Jesus of Nazareth deal with it?
- Cutting straight through the cynicism and party-ism that had gripped His audience, Jesus clarifies that the resurrection is an undeniable truth. While it will be a different existence in many ways functionally, fundamentally we will all be raised up. It goes hand-in-hand with understanding the “power of God.”
- “You” will still be “you” – Pointing out a small detail from Exodus 3:6, Jesus states that God is the God of the living, not the dead. Abraham, though physically dead and absent from this world, nevertheless still exists.



Jesus directly addressed His resurrection – Matthew 12:40, 17:9, John 2:19, Luke 9:18-22. Not surprisingly, His seemingly straightforward statements were not always received warmly. Jesus' disciples, for example, balked at the idea of His death and resurrection, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you!" (Matthew 16:22). Others used His teaching as evidence of blasphemy (Matthew 26:61, Mark 14:58) or insanity (John 10:17-21). Why so much resistance?



PUSHING THEIR THINKING

- As we have already observed, the Jews believed in some of the basic elements of the resurrection by the First Century. This was rooted in the scriptures, but was not fully fleshed out – which is why there was so much resistance to Jesus' teaching on the subject.
- There are several examples of Jesus "tightening the braces" and moving resurrection knowledge forward. Most notable is the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the conversations that surrounded that pivotal event in John 11...





A GRAIN OF WHEAT DYING

- John 12:23-33 – Shortly after the raising of Lazarus, Jesus knows His time has come. Yet there is hope built into the anticipated death. See also John 14:1ff.
- By Jesus' death, great victory is brought about. The "Man of sorrows" from Isaiah 53 looks forward to the reward. In other words, Jesus "despised the shame" as He looked just past the cross to the glorification (Hebrews 12:1-2).



*"For as yet they did not understand the Scripture,
that He must rise again from the dead"*

John 20:10