

# Resurrection in the Old Testament

## IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The concept of the **resurrection of the dead** although not made effective until the resurrection of Christ, the "First fruits" (1Cor 15:20 "*now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep*"), was clearly alluded to in the Old Testament. (see Christ the First Fruits)

**Job** (the oldest book in the Bible) testifies ...

And as for me, I **know** that **my** Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God Whom I myself shall behold, and Whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me. (Job 19:25-27)

**Comment:** After he was dead, Job then would see God. He would continue in a conscious existence; he would not be annihilated or sink into soul sleep. But how could he say he would see the Lord in his flesh after he had just said he would die? Either he meant he would receive a resurrection body (in which case the Heb. preposition *min*, here trans. "in," would be trans. "from the vantage point of"; in 36:25 *min* is used in that sense) or he meant he would see God "apart from" any physical flesh at all (*min* normally means "without"; cf. 11:15b), that is, in his conscious existence after death but before the resurrection. Favoring the first view is the point that whereas *min* normally means "without," it takes on the meaning of "from the vantage point of" when it occurs with the verb "to see" (*hāzāh*). Favoring the second view is the fact that since 19:26a speaks of his condition in death, one would expect that verse 26b in Hebrew parallelism would also refer to death rather than to an after-death resurrected condition. (BORROW [The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. page 741](#))

**Moody Bible Commentary** - As for the second area of contention, Job's anticipation of resurrection, it seems that Job was also confident that "in" his flesh, even if he died, he would see his Redeemer (v. 26). This suggests a solid belief and "awareness of the bodily resurrection that awaits all redeemed believers in the Resurrection" (Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, 240-41). Archer's statement points to a key issue in v. 26, the meaning of *from* in the phrase, *from my flesh*. The word translated "from" may mean from the perspective of Job's flesh, that is, from the vantage point of his present life on earth. Or it could suggest "apart from" his flesh, signifying that Job expected to have conscious communion with the eternal God after his death without reference to a bodily resurrection (Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, 99). However, "from" could also be rendered "in," suggesting that Job would see God in a resurrected body. Translated in this way, the word virtually demands that Job have a resurrected body when he sees God, since he had already stated in v. 26a that his expectation of seeing God was after his physical death. This early belief in the future resurrection is exhibited in Job's belief system that existed at the time of or before the patriarchs (Ge 12-35), when this book was written. (BORROW [The Moody Bible Commentary](#))

**NET NOTE** - "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God" (Job 19:26NET) - The Hebrew phrase is "**and from my flesh.**" This could mean "**without my flesh,**" i.e., separated from my flesh, or "**from my flesh,**" i.e., in or with my flesh. The former view is taken by those who think Job's vindication will come in this life, and who find the idea of a resurrection unlikely to be in Job's mind. The latter view is taken by those who interpret the preceding line as meaning death and the next verse underscoring that it will be his eye that will see. This would indicate that Job's faith rises to an unparalleled level at this point.

**Gleason Archer - Does Job 19:26 envision a resurrection body or not?** Job 19:25–27 was uttered by Job in an exalted moment of faith, as he turned away from his wretched circumstances and fastened his gaze on God: "But as for me, I know my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand on the earth [lit., 'dust']; and after they [i.e., the worms] have consumed away my skin, yet from my flesh I shall behold God—whom I shall behold and my eyes shall see—I and not another, [when] my inward parts have been consumed within me." The passage is highly poetic and capable of minor variations in rendering here and there. But the most discussed matter of interpretation concerns the word-cluster *ûmibbešârî* (composed of

the waw-connective—"and" or "yet," the preposition min—"from" or "away from," and bāsār—"body" or "flesh," plus -i, meaning "my."

The question at issue is the real significance of min: does it mean "in [my flesh]" as KJV and NIV render it? Or does it mean "from [my flesh]" as RSV and JB have it? Or does it mean "without [my flesh]" as ASV and NASB have rendered it? If Job intends here to say that his soul or spirit will behold God in the Last Day, then the min should perhaps be rendered "without." But no other passage uses min to mean "without" in connection with a verb of seeing; rather it is only used in combinations such as Job 11:15—"Then you will lift up your face without spot [mimmûm]"; Proverbs 1:33—"when they are at peace without fear [mippaḥad]"; Jeremiah 45:48—"They stand without strength [mikkōah]" (cf. Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 578b).

It is poor exegetical procedure to prefer a rare or unusual meaning for a word when a common and frequent meaning will agree perfectly well with the context. Therefore, it is far better to take min here in its usual sense of the point of reference from which an observation is taken, a vantage point from which the spectator may view the object of his interest. (Thus min is often used in specifying a compass direction or a relative location of one person in reference to another.)

In this case, then, it is hard to believe that the Hebrew listener would gain any other impression from mibbešārî 'eḥezeh 'elôah than "from [the vantage point of] my flesh [or 'body'] I shall behold God." Taken in this sense, the passage indicates Job's conviction that even after his body has moldered away in the grave, there will come a time in the Last Day—when his divine Redeemer stands on the soil ('āpār) of this earth—that from the vantage point of a postresurrection body he will behold God. It is for this reason that the rendering of RSV and JB ("from") and of KJV and NIV ("in," which expresses the same idea with the preposition more agreeable to our idiom) is much to be preferred over the "without" of ASV and NASB. Construed as "from" or "in," this passage strongly suggests an awareness of the bodily resurrection that awaits all redeemed believers in the Resurrection (See [Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, page 244](#))

**J Vernon McGee** - When Job became ill and was in the shock of all his troubles, he said he wanted to die. He was not speaking of annihilation. He was speaking of the death which would get him away from his troubles. I think that is obvious. He knew he would be raised again. He knew that in his flesh he would see God. He knew that even if the worms destroyed his body after death, yet in his flesh he would see God. He believed in the resurrection of the dead. (J. Vernon McGee's *Thru the Bible*)

**Spurgeon's Devotional Thought** - The marrow of Job's comfort lies in that little word "**My**"—"My Redeemer," and in the fact that the Redeemer lives. Oh! to get hold of a living Christ. We must get a property in Him before we can enjoy Him... So a Redeemer who does not redeem me, an avenger who will never stand up for my blood, of what avail were such? Rest not content until by faith you can say, "Yes, I cast myself upon my living Lord; and He is mine." It may be you hold Him with a feeble hand; you half think it presumption to say, "He lives as my Redeemer;" yet, remember if you have but faith as a grain of mustard seed, that little faith entitles you to say it. But there is also another word here, expressive of Job's strong confidence, "I know." To say, "I hope so, I trust so," is comfortable; and there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who hardly ever get much further. But to reach the essence of consolation you must say, "I know." (*Morning and Evening*)

**Isaiah** issues a prophecy that applies to corporate redeemed Israel (only those Jews who believe in Messiah, of the concept of the **remnant**) that...

Your dead will live. Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (Isaiah 26:19)

**Comment: Arnold Fruchtenbaum** - This is a statement of resurrection, specifically, the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. The Old Testament saints will not be resurrected at the Rapture along with the Church saints, rather, their resurrection comes after the Tribulation, in preparation for the Kingdom. The resurrection of the Old Testament saints is found in Daniel 12:2 and Hosea 13:14. When they are resurrected, it will be as the dew of the morning. (*Footsteps of the Messiah*)

**Daniel** unambiguously affirms a belief in an individual future resurrection of the "living (believers = everlasting life) and the dead (unbelievers = everlasting contempt)" writing that...

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. (Daniel 12:2)

**Comment:** This verse predicts 2 resurrections which parallels Jesus' prophecy in John 5:28, 29, but in neither it 1000 year interval between the "first" and "second" resurrection mentioned. See study of The Two Resurrections

**Comment by John Phillips** - In this case, it was a reminder to Daniel that death is not the end. There is a resurrection from the dead in which everyone will have a share. Some people will be raised to enjoy everlasting life; others will be raised to everlasting "contempt" (the word refers literally to a "thrusting away"). The New Testament pours its greater light on this issue (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:5-6). (Exploring the Book of Daniel)

Then in Daniel 12:13+ we read

"But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and **rise again** for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

**Comment:** **Rise again** is clearly a promise to Daniel that he will be resurrected at the end of this **age** and beginning of the next age which is the Messianic Age (aka "The Millennium").

Jeremiah 30:9+ describes the resurrection of King David...

'But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

One other point is worth noting in support of the fact that the resurrection was taught in the Old Testament. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham believed in the resurrection writing that...

He (Abraham) considered (logizomai = thought about this truth in a detailed and logical manner = bookkeeping term = Abraham "made an entry" in his "spiritual ledger" so that he would have a permanent record that could be consulted whenever needed! **Are you doing the same with the precious and magnificent promises of God, beloved?**) that God is able (dunatos = has the inherent ability to perform what He promises) to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him (Isaac, the son whom he loved, Genesis 22+) back as a type (parabole = illustration thrown alongside truth to make latter easier to understand). (Hebrews 11:16+)

### **Hampton Keathley III** writes the following on the topic of **The Judgment and Reward of Resurrected Old Testament and Tribulation Saints**

While many would place the resurrection and reward of Old Testament saints with that of the church at the rapture, a number of factors favor this at the conclusion of the tribulation at the same time as the resurrection and reward of tribulation saints mentioned in Revelation 20:4. )

(1) Daniel, who wrote concerning the termination of God's program for Israel in chapter 9, places the resurrection of the righteous in Israel as occurring after "a time of distress such as never occurred ..." Clearly this is the Tribulation, Daniel's Seventieth Week, or "the time of Jacob's Distress" mentioned by Jeremiah (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27).

(2) Resurrection is viewed in Scripture as an event that terminates one program and initiates another, and one would not expect Israel's resurrection could come until God had finished the seventy years decreed for His people, the Jews, according to Daniel 9:24-27. ) Since the events mentioned in Daniel 9:26 (the cutting off of Messiah and the destruction of city and sanctuary) had to occur after the 69 weeks of years had run their course but before the seventieth week begins, there has to be a space of time, the parenthesis of the church age, between the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week and the beginning of the seventieth.

(3) The resurrection (rapture) and Bema of the church concludes this parenthesis, the church age, but Old Testament saints (the righteous dead) are not resurrected and rewarded until after the seventieth week when God concludes His program with Israel as far as the seventy weeks of Daniel are concerned.

The order of God's resurrection program which includes the judgment of rewards would seem to be: (1) the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of the resurrection program (1 Cor. 15:23); (2) the resurrection of the church age saints at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:16); (3) the resurrection of tribulation period saints (Rev. 20:3-5), together with (4) the resurrection of Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19). (Pentecost - Things to Come) (Source: [The Judgments - Past, Present, and Future](#))

### **Related Resources:**

- [Does the Old Testament Teach Resurrection Hope?](#) - **Mitch Chase** writes "The dead are dust-dwelling sleepers, and

resurrection will wake them up. Shifting metaphors, Isaiah depicts the earth giving birth. The tomb is a womb, and one day the dead will emerge in renewed bodily life. Future bodily life isn't just a truth to be spoken, but also a hope to be sung. The psalmist notes that while the wise and foolish both perish (Ps. 49:10), God "will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me" (Ps. 49:15). Ransoming the soul from Sheol is receiving the whole person back from death (see Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:24–29). Moreover, for the author of Psalm 71, resurrection is a comfort. Reflecting on past calamities and future deliverance, he declares: "You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again" (Ps. 71:20). God will revive us by raising us. These statements about resurrection hope are like flowers that grow from seeds sown in garden ground. Indeed, resurrection hope makes sense when we consider the life for which we were made. In Genesis 2, we don't read about a disembodied Adam and Eve who eventually received bodies from the Lord. No, God made the man from the ground and then the woman from the man (Gen. 2:7, 21–22). Embodied people—that was the pattern disrupted by death."

- [Resurrection In The Old Testament](#)
- [Where did Old Testament believers/saints go when they died?](#)
- [What is the first resurrection? What is the second resurrection?](#)