

## Why the Third Day? The Promise of Resurrection in All of Scripture

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We are two decades into the twenty-first century, and Christians all over the world are still hoping in the resurrection. This hope is not new. God awakened such longing in some of the earliest Old Testament (OT) saints. Equally, rebels who have persisted in unbelief throughout the ages should have dreaded resurrection, for after it comes the judgment.

Next to God's original creation of humanity, Jesus's resurrection unto glory is the most decisive event in the history of mankind, for it brings the dawning of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and validates that those in Christ are no longer imprisoned under sin, the payment for which is death (Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:17). The OT Scriptures foresaw "that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead" (Luke 24:46; cf. 24:7; John 20:9; Acts 17:2-3; 1 Cor 15:4) and that, "by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light" both to the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23). So, where does the OT anticipate the third-day resurrection? Closely assessing a number of New Testament (NT) texts that cite or allude to specific OT texts gives us an initial clue how those living at the dawn of the new creation were seeing anticipations of the resurrection in their Bible.

### **New Testament Citations and Allusions of Old Testament Resurrection Texts<sup>1</sup>**

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. In contrast, Jesus argued that God "is not God of the dead, but of the living," since that is

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what God implied when he proclaimed to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Mark 12:26–27; cf. Exod 3:6). Similarly, when Jesus asserted his God-given authority to judge, he alluded to Daniel 12:2: “An hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28–29). Later, when Paul defended himself before Felix in Caesarea, he alluded to the same OT text when he claimed that those of the Way (i.e., Christians) have “hope in God ... that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:14–15).

In Acts, both Peter and Paul identify that Psalm 16:10–11 foretold Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:25–31; 13:34–35). Peter cites Psalm 16:10–“you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption”—and explains that David “foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:27, 31). Paul speaks similarly, adding to Psalm 16:10 citations from Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 55:3:

We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.” Therefore he says also in another psalm, “You will not let your Holy One see corruption.” For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. (Acts 13:32–37) Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:54–58 recalls both Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 to argue how God must transform the perishable, mortal bodies of dead and living believers into imperishable, immortal bodies to triumphantly defeat death:

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

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Theology of Resurrection?” in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology* by Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 291–300. I thank my research assistant Brian Verrett for his feedback and edits on this essay.

<sup>1</sup> For further development, see Mitchell L. Chase, “The Genesis of Resurrection Hope: Exploring Its Early Presence and Deep Roots,” *JETS* 57 (2014): 467–71.

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Whereas Isaiah had declared that Yahweh would “swallow up death forever” and thus identify himself as the anticipated Savior (Isa 25:8–9), the immediate context of God’s original queries through Hosea offered little hope: “Shall I ransom them [i.e., Ephraim] from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes” (Hos 13:14, ESV footnote). God would not remain distant forever, however, for he tore them that he could ultimately heal them (6:1). He would move them to seek Yahweh their God and David their king (3:5) and would heal their apostasy as they would find shelter under the shadow of their royal representative (14:4–8). Thus, the victory of our Lord Christ would overcome the sting of death, just as Paul declared.

Finally, in Philippians 1:19 Paul appears to allude to the LXX of Job 13:16 with 19:25 in order to stress his confidence that, like Job, he too will experience eternal (even messianic) salvation from his suffering, “whether by life or by death” (1:20). The apostle writes, “Yes, I will rejoice, *for I know that* through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ *this will turn out for my deliverance.*” In Job 13:15–16 Job declares, “Though [God] slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, *this will turn out for my deliverance*” (NIV). The Greek clauses rendered in the italicized portions are found only in these two places in Scripture. Job retained his hope in God, anticipating that after his own death he would plead his cause face-to-face before the Lord and that the result would be his salvation. He, thus, queries, “If a man dies, shall he live again?” He believes that he will, for he adds, “All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come” (14:14). Then in 19:25–26 we find the second potential allusion: “*For I know that* my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.” The Greek phrase rendered “for I know that” occurs elsewhere only five other places, three of which

are in Job (Deut 31:29; Job 9:28; 19:25; 30:23; Rom 7:18). The likelihood that Paul alludes to Job's resurrection hope in Job 13:16 heightens the probability that he also has 19:25 in mind and melds the two together in his allusion in Phil 1:19.<sup>2</sup>

### **Potential Third-day Resurrection Typologies in the Old Testament<sup>3</sup>**

None of the above OT texts that the NT authors explicitly cite includes any mention of a *third-day* resurrection, yet both Jesus (Luke 24:46) and Paul (1 Cor 15:4) stress that the prediction of Christ's being raised on the third day was "written" and was "in accordance with the Scriptures." It seems likely, therefore, that we should look for typologies that foreshadow a third-day resurrection event, and when we broaden our perspective here, a number of further texts become possible sources for the NT claims. We will look at them by moving from back to front through the canon.

First, Jesus paralleled his own coming resurrection with Jonah's resurrection-like deliverance from the belly of the fish: "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt 12:40; cf. Jon 1:17–2:10[2:1–11]).<sup>4</sup> Jesus appears to read the Jonah story typologically, seeing it as both pointing to his exaltation through trial and clarifying how his resurrection would signal salvation through judgment.

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<sup>2</sup>

I am grateful to my research assistant Brian Verrett for pointing me to this NT use of the OT. Cf. Moisés Silva, who equally affirms that Paul is citing Job 13:16 but gives no thought to 19:25: "Philippians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 836.

<sup>3</sup>

See Nicholas P. Lunn, "Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures': Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Creation Narrative," *JETS* 57 (2014): 523–35; Stephen G. Dempster, "From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone: The Resurrection of Christ on 'the Third Day' According to the Scriptures," *WTJ* 76 (2014): 371–409; Joel R. White, "'He Was Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:4): A Typological Interpretation Based on the Cultic Calendar in Leviticus 23," *TynBul* 66 (2015): 103–19.

<sup>4</sup>

Throughout, Scripture citations in brackets refer to the Hebrew Bible, whose verse numbers sometimes differ from English translations.

Second, building off what was already noted, Hosea declared that the end of Israel's exile would be like a resurrection after three days: "Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth" (Hos 6:1–3). Significantly, the prophets are clear that the Christ would represent Israel, bearing the people's name and saving representatives from both Israel and the other nations (Isa 49:3, 6). At the end of his book, Hosea himself appears to make this connection between the one and the many when he relates a plural people with a singular "Israel," under whose shadow they will find refuge (Hos 14:4–8 in the Hebrew, seen in the ESV footnotes; cf. Zech 3:7–9). Thus, in Christ's resurrection on the third day, the true Israel in him rises to life.<sup>5</sup>

Third, in the NT, Christ portrays his death as a baptism (Luke 12:50), and the NT authors portray the judgments of both the flood (1 Pet 3:20–21) and the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:2) as baptisms. Because the initial Passover sacrifice marks Israel's birth as a nation, and because Moses highlights only three stopping points en route to the parting of the Red Sea (Num 33:3–8; cf. Exod 12:37; 13:20; 14:2), some propose that the Red Sea crossing likely happened three days after this new creation.<sup>6</sup> While the evidence that Israel crossed the Red Sea only three days after the Passover is questionable, the great exodus event still points typologically to Christ's resurrection as a new creation.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, on the mount of

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<sup>5</sup> For the significance of this text in the backdrop of the NT's assertion that the third-day resurrection of Jesus was "according to the Scriptures," see esp. Dempster, "From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone," 404–9.

<sup>6</sup> See Lunn, "Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures," 527–30.

<sup>7</sup> While the exodus clearly anticipates Christ's resurrection, I question that this saving event anticipates his *third-day* resurrection. This is because Moses appears to portray the journey to the Red Sea (= *Yam Suph*) as being much more extensive. First, he actually notes that Israel set out "the day after the Passover" (Num 33:3), which supplies only two more days to get in three camping spots. Second, we know that "God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea [= *Yam Suph*]" (Exod 13:18). "The way of the wilderness" is best identified as the caravan road stretching eastward across the middle of the Sinai Peninsula from the base of the Nile Delta to the Gulf of Aqaba. If this Gulf

Jesus's transfiguration, Moses and Elijah identified Jesus's coming work in Jerusalem as an "exodus" (Luke 9:30–31, ESV = "departure"), thus signaling the fulfillment of the second exodus anticipated throughout the prophets (e.g., Isa 11:10–12:6; Jer 23:7–8; Zeph 3:19–20).<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, it was "on the third day" of his journey to sacrifice his son that Abraham promised his servants, "I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you" (Gen 22:4–5). Reflecting on this story, the writer of Hebrews declares of the patriarch, "He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back" (Heb 11:19). Yahweh had promised, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named" (Gen 21:12), and this offspring, who was distinct from Isaac, would be the one who would multiply like the stars, who would possess his enemies' gate, and who would be the channel of divine blessing to the nations (22:17–18). Thus, the substitutionary sacrifice that saved Isaac's life (22:13) and the youth's own deliverance pointed ahead to the greater offspring who would triumph only through great tribulation.

Fifth, the NT portrays both baptism (e.g., Rom 6:4–5; Col 2:12) and sprouting seeds (e.g., 1 Cor 15:35–38) as images of resurrection. As such, we may see the earliest anticipations of Jesus's third-day resurrection in the fact that the first sprouts came forth out of the watery chaos on the third day following the original creation (Gen 1:11–13).<sup>9</sup> Jesus is the

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is indeed the location of *Yam Suph* and the place of the Sea crossing (which seems likely from texts like Exod 23:21; Deut 21:1; 1 Kgs 9:26; Jer 49:20–21), then the journey was probably closer to two weeks than three days. While a well-known travel route, "the way of the wilderness" was still through the wilderness, and the only specific reason that Moses would need to list specific camping sites was (1) if something important happened there or (2) if the campsite was in close proximity to a known location. In all likelihood, the three camp sites were *not* Israel's only three respite points en route to the Sea. For more on the Gulf of Aqaba as the place of the Red Sea crossing, see Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 104–35.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Jason S. DeRouchie, "How Does Isaiah 12:2 Use Exodus 15:2?" and "How Does Matthew 2:15 use Hosea 11:1" in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology* by Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 303–20.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Mitchell L. Chase, "'From Dust You Shall Arise': Resurrection Hope in the Old Testament," *SBJT* 18.4 (2014): 11; Lunn, "Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures," 532–34.

“seed” that first dies and then bears much fruit (Gen 3:15; John 12:23–24).

### **Other Old Testament Resurrection Texts<sup>10</sup>**

Other passages in the OT predict both directly and indirectly future resurrection. First, there are three examples of nonpermanent resurrections—that is, types of resuscitations wherein God temporarily revives a person who has recently died. Elijah, for example, brings to life the son of the widow from Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:17–23), and the act validates his prophetic role (17:24). Similarly, God uses Elisha to restore the woman’s son in Shunem (2 Kgs 4:18–37), and after Elisha dies, a man’s corpse is revived when it touches Elisha’s own corpse in a tomb (13:20–21). The author of Hebrews wrote that some prophets were agents of resurrection (Heb 11:35), and by this he identifies how all these OT events foreshadow and give hope for the more ultimate resurrection that will include permanent glorified bodies.

Next, with Israel’s exile and following restoration in view, Yahweh declared through Moses, “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand” (Deut 32:39; cf. 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7). Because “healing” always *follows* “wounding,” God’s “making alive” *after* “killing” envisions that he would resurrect his people from the curse of death. Kenneth Turner has noted that, by using words like “perish,” “destroy,” “annihilate,” and the like, Moses in Deuteronomy portrays Israel’s exile as a “death,” by which the nation as Yahweh’s elect son and servant “loses her identity, history, and covenant relationship with Yahweh. Restoration from exile, then, is a resurrection from death to life.”<sup>11</sup> And because Jesus Christ, as *Israel the person*, represents *Israel the*

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<sup>10</sup> See Chase, “From Dust You Shall Arise,” 9–29; Chase, “The Genesis of Resurrection Hope,” 467–80; Lunn, “Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures,” 523–35; Dempster, “From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone,” 371–409.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth J. Turner, “Deuteronomy’s Theology of Exile,” in *For Our Good Always: Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block*, ed. Jason S. DeRouchie, Jason Gile, and Kenneth J. Turner (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 190, 194. He further notes, “The people will continue to exist physically in exile; yet, as a single entity, Israel is said to ‘perish’ or ‘be destroyed.’ So, it is not Israel as an historical or socio-religious people, but Israel as Yahweh’s

people (Isa 49:3, 6), his bodily resurrection following his bearing the curse-judgment (Gal 3:13) inaugurates the fulfilling of this promise.

Living in the midst of exile, Ezekiel envisioned how Yahweh would fulfill the resurrection he predicted through Moses. Whereas covenant obedience could have led to life (Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21), Israel's covenant rebellion had resulted in the nation's exilic death, so that God portrays them as dried up bones filling a field (Ezek 37:1; cf. Jer 8:1–2).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Yahweh promises, "Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live" (Ezek 37:5). This resulted in his supplying them with human form and breathing into them the breath of life, so that "they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army" (37:10). The vision anticipated how God would "raise you from your graves," putting "my Spirit within you"; they would not only live but be Yahweh's very temple (37:13–14; cf. 36:27). Thus, "My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (37:27; cf. 2 Cor 6:16).

Earlier, building on his claim that Yahweh would "swallow up death forever" (Isa 25:8; cf. 1 Cor 15:54), Isaiah declared, "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy!" (Isa 26:19). The Fourth Servant Song unpacks how God awakens those bodies and enables them to exult. Isaiah first highlighted the servant-person's resurrection when he identified his seeing offspring *after* his substitutionary sacrifice: "It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (53:10). We then hear Yahweh declare, "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous,

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elect son and servant (Deut 1:31, 7:6, 14:1) that is put to death. Exile constitutes the death of Israel as a nation in covenant—a covenant comprised of a dynamic relationship between Yahweh, the nation, and the land. Whatever existence continues, it is discontinuous with the past." Turner, "Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile," 194; cf. Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> See Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12: A Redemptive-Historical Reassessment," *Them* 45.2 (2020): 251–53; cf. Preston M. Sprinkle, "Law and Life: Leviticus 18:5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel," *JSOT* 31 (2007): 275–93.



and he shall bear their iniquities” (53:11). Because Yahweh declared his servant-person righteous (cf. 50:8), this righteous one would be able to bear the sins of many in death, and through his victorious resurrection all those in him—his spiritual progeny—would be declared righteous. Yahweh’s servant person was “Israel” (49:3), and “in the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory” (45:25).

Beyond Psalms 2:7 and 16:9–11 noted above (cf. Acts 2:25–31; 13:32–35), the Psalter points to the resurrection a number of times. For example, we learn that “the upright shall behold [Yahweh’s] face” (Ps 11:7), and the psalmist declares in hope, “When I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness” (17:15). Similarly, the very one forsaken of God and afflicted to the point of death (22:1–21[2–22]) promises to proclaim God’s name to his brothers (22:22[23]), which implies resurrection (cf. Matt 28:10; Rom 8:29; Heb 2:12). Furthermore, before Yahweh “shall bow all who go down to the dust,” which highlights a future beyond the grave for those who die (Ps 22:29[30]). The sons of Korah end Psalm 48 with the testimony of the faithful that God “will guide us beyond death” (ESV footnote). They then assert in Psalm 49 that the proud “are appointed for Sheol” but that “the upright [ones] shall rule over them in the morning” (49:14[15]). With the voice of the royal representative, they declare, “God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me” (49:15[16]). At the very least, such assertions point to a spiritual resurrection. Similarly, the psalmist points to life after death when he writes, “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” (71:20). And Asaph contrasts the terrifying end of the proud (73:17–22) with God’s commitment to bring the humble to glory and to be their strength and portion *forever* (73:24–26).

Finally, as already noted by Paul’s allusion to Job 13:16 and 19:25 in Philippians 1:19, the wisdom books testify to the hope of resurrection. At the end of Job’s trial-filled life, which included the death of his ten children (1:2, 18–19), he had another “seven sons and three daughters” (42:13). But because we are told earlier that “the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before” (42:10), the text may imply the spiritual resurrection of his earlier kids, similar to the way Jesus spoke of Yahweh’s declaring, “I am the God of Abraham”—not “of the dead, but of

the living” (Matt 22:32).<sup>13</sup> The preacher known as Qoheleth was convinced that death would come to all, both those who are good and those who are evil (Eccl 9:2–3), and that “there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing” (7:15). Nevertheless, “Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him” (8:12). Qoheleth was certain in a future hope beyond the grave for the righteous (cf. 12:7), just as he and the narrator were certain that for all “God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (12:14; cf. 11:9).

### **Resurrection in the New Testament<sup>14</sup>**

To highlight that Jesus fulfills what the OT anticipates (cf. Luke 24:46–47; Acts 10:43; 26:22–23; Rom 3:21; 1 Cor 15:3–4; 1 Pet 1:10–11), each of the four Gospels concludes with stories of Jesus’s bodily resurrection from the dead (Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–10), and the rest of the NT portrays this as the watershed event that alters the course of world history. Jesus’s resurrection happens on the first day of the week (John 20:1, 19), thus symbolizing the inauguration of the new creation (1 Cor 15:20, 23; 2 Cor 5:17). It establishes Jesus Christ as the Righteous One (1 Tim 3:16; cf. Isa. 50:8; 53:11; 1 John 2:1) and Lord and Judge of the universe (Matt 28:18; Acts 2:36; 17:31; Rom 1:4; 14:9). Jesus’s resurrection secures justification for

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<sup>13</sup> On this proposal, see, e.g., Franz Delitzsch, *Job*, trans. Francis Bolton, Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), s.v. Job 42:13; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 542; Robert L. Alden, *Job*, NAC 11 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 413.

<sup>14</sup> See esp. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 3 (London: SPCK, 2003). For a brief synthesis of his view, see N. T. Wright, “Resurrection Narratives,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 675–76; N. T. Wright, “Resurrection of the Dead,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 676–78. For more on the doctrine of resurrection, see the entire issue of *SBJT* 18.4 (2014):

<https://equip.sbts.edu/category/publications/journals/journal-of-theology/sbjt-184-winter-2014/>.

all who believe (Rom 4:25; 6:8–11; 1 Cor 15:17), initiates the spread of the good news (Rom. 1:16–17; Gal. 1:11–12) and a Spirit-empowered global mission of salvation (Matt. 28:19–20; John 20:19–22; Acts 1:8), and supplies the necessary lens for understanding the OT (John 2:20–22; 12:13–16; 20:9).

Jesus's resurrection creates for all in him a living hope for "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (1 Pet 1:3–5), and it provides hope for the entire created order that it will be renewed (Rom 8:18–25; cf. Col 1:20)—"Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor 15:23). In his resurrected body, Jesus retained physical signs of his execution so as to validate his identity (Luke 24:39; John 20:20, 25, 27; Acts 1:3), but he could remain unrecognized until Scripture or other revelation supplied spiritual knowledge of who he was (Luke 24:16, 31; cf. John 20:14, 16; 21:4, 12). He could walk and dialogue with others (Luke 24:15–17; John 20:15), vanish and appear at will (Luke 24:31, 36–37; John 20:19, 26), be touched (Luke 24:39; John 20:17, 27), and eat and drink (Luke 24:30, 42–43; Acts 10:41). He was rightfully worshiped and visibly ascended to heaven (Luke 24:51–52; Acts 1:9).

Jesus compared God's power to raise the dead (e.g., Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7) with his power to overcome spiritual death by presently giving people eternal life (John 3:16; 5:21, 24–26); such initial "resurrection" gives certainty of consummate resurrection following physical death, first spiritually and then bodily (5:28–29; 11:25–26; 14:2–3). Paul, too, notes that, although "we were dead in our trespasses," God has already "made us alive together with Christ ... and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:1, 5–7). Believers are, thus, *already* experiencing a spiritual resurrection, and Christians who die before Christ's second appearing enter into a state of conscious rest in the presence of Jesus (Luke 23:43; John 14:2–3; 2 Cor 4:14; Phil 1:23). But when Christ does return, those who already experienced initial spiritual resurrection will then be given new supernatural bodies that will never wear out (Rom 8:11; Phil 3:20–21; 1 Thess 4:16–17).

In the pattern of Elijah and Elisha, in the NT God uses prophetic figures to revive individuals who recently died in order to identify Jesus's power over death. But whereas Elijah asked God to act (1 Kgs 17:21–22),

Jesus, acting as God, simply commands, as in his resuscitation of a synagogue ruler's daughter in Galilee (Mark 5:35–43), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17), and Lazarus (John 11:1–53). Working under the power of Christ, Peter, too, re-enlivens a young girl in Joppa (Acts 9:36–43), and in Ephesus Paul revives Eutychus after he fell from a window and died (20:7–12). In each of these examples, God's temporary resurrection of a person who recently died both validated the prophet's authority and foreshadowed the power of Jesus to lastingly raise the dead (John 11:25–26; cf. Luke 7:16–17; John 9:32–33).

As noted above, Scripture anticipates “a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15; cf. Dan 12:2; Matt 25:46; John 5:28–29). This is what Revelation 20:12 refers to when it asserts, “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done” (cf. Matt 25:31–32; 2 Cor 5:10). Scholars continue to disagree on the meaning and proper temporal referents of Revelation 20:1–6, which mentions “the first resurrection” and “the second death” (20:5–6). While the text is not explicit, the ordinals “first” and “second” imply at least a “second” and “first” for both resurrection and death. Furthermore, “the first resurrection” likely applies only to believers (“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!” 20:6) and refers to the spiritual life already enjoyed by believers who die (cf. Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23).<sup>15</sup> In contrast, “the second death” will apply only to nonbelievers (“over such [i.e., those who experience the first resurrection] the second death has no power,” Rev 20:6) and relates to the eternal state of the unregenerate in the lake of fire (20:14).<sup>16</sup> The note that “the rest of the dead did not come to life” (Rev 20:5) refers to the unbelievers who, after

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<sup>15</sup> See Meredith G. Kline, “The First Resurrection,” *WTJ* 37 (1975): 366–75; Meredith G. Kline, “The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation,” *WTJ* 39 (1976): 110–19. As noted above, both John and Paul identify that the “first resurrection” is actually inaugurated at conversion (John 5:21, 24; Eph 2:6; Col 3:1) and consummated when, following physical death, persons presently exiled enter their heavenly citizenship, awaiting the reunion with their bodies at the “second resurrection” (John 5:28–29; Phil 3:20–21).

<sup>16</sup> See G. K. Beale, “The Millennium in Revelation 20:1–10: An Amillennial Perspective,” *CTR* 11.1 (2013): 29–62.

physical death, remain “dead in [their] trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1) but who will rise at the final judgment.<sup>17</sup>

<b>Death and Resurrection in Revelation 20</b>		
	<b><i>Believers</i></b>	<b><i>Non-believers</i></b>
<b>First death</b>	Physical	Physical
<b>First resurrection</b>	Spiritual (immediate)	—
<b>Second resurrection</b>	Physical	Physical
<b>Second death</b>	—	Spiritual (immediate)

Christ’s resurrection impacts the Christian’s present ethics and future hope. As for ethics, Paul says, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1). Similarly, the apostle notes, “We were buried ... with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ” and must not let “sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Rom 6:4, 11–12; cf. 1 Cor 6:12–20; 2 Cor 5:15). Our identification with Christ in his resurrection demands that we live as part of the new creation.

Related to this, God’s reconciling us should move us to help others be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:17–19), for Christ’s resurrection now gives our preaching, faith, and labors eternal purpose (1 Cor 15:14, 58). Jesus’s resurrection awakens confidence in the life to come (15:23), and what we hope for tomorrow changes who we are today (2 Pet 1:4). We are empowered to radical mission and radical joy amid a world of chaos and suffering because we know that when Christ returns, our new body will be raised in glory and power, bearing the very image of the man of

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<sup>17</sup> Both John and Paul identify that physical death is merely the consummation of the “first death” that was already inaugurated at conception through a person’s identification with Adam (Rom 5:12, 18–19) and the spiritual death lived out in the land of the living (John 3:18, 36; 5:24–26; Eph 2:1, 5).

heaven, the divine Son (1 Cor 15:43–44, 49; cf. Phil 3:20–21). Come, Lord Jesus!

### **The Nature of Resurrection Hope**

What is resurrection hope? It is not only resurrection itself but the joy that follows it. Recall, for example, what David proclaimed prophetically concerning the resurrection of Christ (so Acts 2:25–32). He begins by asserting, “My heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption” (Ps 16:9–10). He then proclaims: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (16:11). Christ’s joy on the other side of his resurrection included his reigning at the Father’s right hand (110:1), which is exactly how Peter interpreted this passage when he celebrated Christ’s resurrection from death and ascension to reign over all (Acts 2:25–36). This same pleasure will be equally realized for all who are in Christ when we, upon our future resurrection, see God’s face (Matt 25:34; Rev 22:3–5).

Similarly, Isaiah 53:10–11 links Christ’s resurrection with satisfaction.

It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Through direct prophecy, both verses 10–11 begin by detailing Christ’s brutal suffering unto death, and then they highlight his resurrection unto joy. First, the prophet notes that God’s delight was to “crush” his servant-person, to “put him to grief,” the manner of which would be a penal substitutionary death as “an offering for guilt” that would include the deepest “anguish.” In this one act, God’s righteous servant would “bear [the people’s] iniquities.”

But there is more. Three specific, all-motivating elements would rise on the other side of this atoning sacrifice—“he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” Seeing, prolonging, prospering! Over seven hundred years before Jesus’s

appearing, Isaiah implies the reality of resurrection because he foresaw that the wrath-bearer, whom God identifies as “the righteous one,” would continue to carry out God’s will by lastingly saving “many” blood-bought “offspring” from the peoples of the world (cf. 54:3). His atoning work would “sprinkle many nations” (52:15) and “make many to be accounted righteous” (53:11).

Yahweh’s words identify what this reality would bring to the servant: “Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied” (53:11). The Hebrew in verse 11 actually lacks a conjunction between the verbs, which suggests that God was equating the servant’s “seeing” with his “being satisfied.” And in verse 10 we already learned what it is that he sees: many “offspring,” whom now we are told he accounts righteous and bears their iniquity. Part of “the joy that was set before [Jesus],” by which he “endured the cross” (Heb 12:2), was the “many” whom he set out to redeem (Isa 53:11; Rom 5:19) ... “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev 5:9). These were the “great cloud of witnesses” to his worth (Heb 12:1) that we are in turn called to join as we “consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that we will not grow weary or faint hearted” (12:3).

His mission to save motivated Christ to carry his cross, and it should motivate us as we carry ours (Mark 8:34; Heb 12:2–3). And having already been united with Christ and raised with him in an inaugurated way, we are already tasting the joys of Christian community with every new soul that is saved.

### **All Will Meet Him**

The OT anticipates the (third day) resurrection of God’s people following an exilic death (e.g., Deut 32:39; Hos 6:2; Dan 12:2), and it clarifies that the new life of the community will be multiethnic in nature and will result from the representative suffering servant’s own triumph over death (Isa. 53:10–11; Ps. 16:10). Jesus Christ’s resurrection on the third day fulfills OT predictions (Luke 24:46–47; 1 Cor 15:4), establishes him as the reigning King (Rom 1:4; Matt 28:18), inaugurates the new creation (1 Cor 15:20, 23; 2 Cor 5:17), justifies the many (Rom 4:25), calls believers to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4; Col 3:1), births a global mission (Matt 28:19–20; John 20:19–22; Acts 1:8; Rom 1:16–17; Gal 1:11–12), and supplies hope to all believers of their own resurrection (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:43–44, 49; Phil 3:20–21; Heb 9:27–28). It also

should stress to nonbelievers that they will indeed meet the heavenly Judge face-to-face (Dan 12:2; Matt 25:46; John 5:28–29).