



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#175)

Resurrection and eternal life – what the Old Testament teaches.



CONSEQUENCES

↔ Some happen *immediately*.

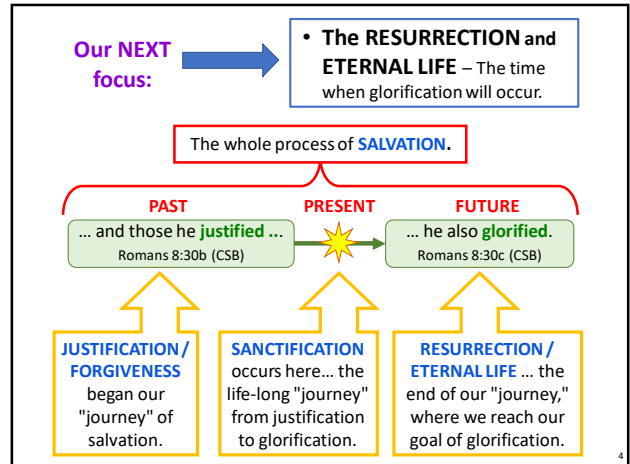
NOW Some are *future* (perhaps even after death). ↔ **FUTURE**

↔ Many have *both present* and *future* effects. ↔

★ **BUT ALL OF THEM HAPPEN.** ★

Concepts looked at so far...

- SALVATION / BEING SAVED – Overview of the concept.
- JUSTIFICATION AND FORGIVENESS – Occurred at the moment of salvation; has ongoing effects.
- SANCTIFICATION AND HOLINESS – The lifelong process that occurs between justification and glorification.



Glorification ↔ ? ↔ **Resurrection & eternal life**

THOUGH RELATED, THEY AREN'T THE SAME THING.

- ✓ **Glorification** involves the final change of "becoming like Jesus." It will occur at (or immediately after) the resurrection.
 - [Jesus] will change our humble bodies and make them **like his glorified body**. Philippians 3:21b (GW)
 - Dear friends, now we are God's children. What we will be isn't completely clear yet. We do know that when Christ appears **we will be like him** because we will see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 (GW)
- ✓ **Eternal life** actually begins *at* salvation! (The resurrection is just a continuing of it, but in a glorified condition.)
 - Whoever believes in the Son **has eternal life**, ... John 3:36a (GW)

Resurrection / Eternal Life.

These are predominantly **New Testament** themes.

WHY? Because:

- (1) Jesus hadn't come yet.
 - ✓ Jesus is the one who makes eternal life possible. Until Jesus came, there wasn't much reason to emphasize his accomplishment. *He hadn't accomplished it yet!*
- (2) God revealed to the people what they needed.
 - ✓ For most of the Old Testament era, there isn't much emphasis on what would happen *after* death. The main focus is on a *much more important issue*: how to live *before* death.
 - From *eternity*, God knew what he was going to do.
 - But in *time and space*, the things necessary for eternal life (Jesus' death, burial and resurrection) hadn't happened yet.

Knowledge about the resurrection and eternal life ...

- ✓ It can be a great encouragement for us – since we know that Jesus has overcome sin and death. (Through him, we *also* overcome!)
- ✓ It is **NOT** a righteous person's motivation for following God. Our motivation isn't for getting "eternal rewards"; but because:
 - God is worthy of it.
 - It is our duty to do it.
 - Also because of *his* heart-changing love for us (1 John 4:19).
- ✓ It does **NOT** guarantee a person will want to be saved.*
 - When people are unwilling to pay attention to the message of the Bible, even seeing a resurrected person will not change them.

"... 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Luke 16:31b (NLT)

* (They might want "eternal fun," but have no desire to "serve God.")

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Death and the afterlife in the Old Testament.

What did they know – clear statements from the Bible.

- ✓ **Dead people went somewhere.** The Hebrew word "**Sheol**" refers to "the place of the dead"; but it has no clear definition.
 - Sometimes it means nothing more than the grave.
 - At other times, it seems to indicate a place where departed *spirits* reside – both the righteous and the unrighteous.
 - At other times, the emphasis is specifically on the place where the *unrighteous dead* reside (implying judgment or punishment).
 - Many passages describe Sheol as being "away from God's presence." Yet in some way, God is there!

Where can I go to escape your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

Ps 139:7-8 (CSB)

Context is *always* important – especially when studying words like this!

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- ✓ **Dead people could become alive** again. This happened three times, during the the days of the kings. (These resurrections were *temporary*. Later, these people would have to die a *second* time.)
 - The widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17:17-24).
 - The Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:18-37).
 - The man raised out of Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:20-21).
 (Hebrews 11:35)
 - Even though these were *temporary* resurrections, they still showed that dead people could come back to life.
- ✓ Two **individuals did not die**. They were taken directly to heaven.
 - Enoch (Genesis 5:23-24; Hebrews 11:5).
 - Elijah (2 Kings 2:1, 11).
- ✓ The prophet **Samuel came up out of the earth** (temporarily) and pronounced judgment on King Saul (1 Samuel 28:7-19).
 - Though his body was dead, he was still visible in some way, and able to communicate.

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- ✓ **Direct references to the resurrection and eternal life.**

- This was during the times of the prophets, *in preparation for Jesus' coming*.
- *This corresponded to the time when the prophets started focusing on the future New Covenant that would replace the Old Covenant given to Moses.*

But your dead will **live**, Lord;
their bodies will **rise**—
let those who dwell in the dust
wake up and shout for joy—
your dew is like the dew of the morning;
the earth will give **birth** to her dead.

Isaiah 26:19 (NIV)

And many who sleep in
the dust of the earth
will **awake**, some to
everlasting life, but
others to shame and
everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:2 (BSB)

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- ✓ **Death is sometimes described as "sleep" or "rest." Returning to life is sometimes described as "waking up" or "standing."**

And many who **sleep** in the dust of the earth will **awake** ...

Daniel 12:2a (BSB)

"But as for you [= Daniel], go on your way to the end; you will **rest**, and then you will **stand** to receive your allotted inheritance at the end of the days."

Daniel 12:13 (CSB)

- ✓ The New Testament also mentions many of these concepts.
 - Sheol, called "Hades" in the N. T. (It also mentions a place of *permanent* separation from God: the lake of fire.)
 - Dead people temporarily coming back to life.
 - The use of words like "sleep," "awake," etc.

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Some verses have been traditionally interpreted as referring to the resurrection and eternity, but may actually have a different focus.

- ✓ **The Old Testament concept of "forever."** is not quite the same as ours. It does *not* emphasize the "eternity" aspect (though it does not reject it, either).
 - At times, it can refer to the *indefinite future*, without any indication of how long (or when) it will be. Or it may refer to a period of time *before* the person's death, instead of *after* it.
- ✓ In some cases, it may be a **question of how to translate** a passage. (This may be obvious, when we look at different Bible translations.)
 - We may be uncertain about it says, but none of these translation issues are serious enough to lead us into error.
- ✓ **Interpreting from different perspectives.** We may interpret a passage based on what we know today, instead of what they knew when it was first written.

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[Here are some examples.]

- ✓ We know that the following statement is true "for all eternity." But the Psalmist may have been referring to "as long as I live."

My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion **forever**.

Psalm 73:26 (NIV)

- ✓ In Psalm 23, a comparison of Bible translations illustrates this issue. Some use the word "forever"; others use a phrase similar to "for the rest of my life."

... and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Psalm 23:6b (ESV)

... and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
as long as I live.

Psalm 23:6b (CSB)

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- ✓ Job anticipates being vindicated by God, even though the painful sores (Job 2:7) were destroying his skin. The question is *when*.
 - Was he expecting vindication during this present life? (*This did happen – chapter 42.*)
 - Did he expect it to happen after this present life – being convinced that such an injustice must be resolved *sometime*?
 - (Or maybe he wasn't focusing on the time element?)

I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:25-27 (NIV)

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- ✓ Here are two passages that mention *not* remaining in Sheol.
 - Does this verse refer to protection from wicked people... or is it an anticipation of a future resurrection? Translated two ways:

But God will rescue my life from the power of **Sheol**;
certainly he will pull me to safety.

Psalm 49:15 (NET)

But God will redeem me from the **realm of the dead**;
he will surely take me to himself.

Psalm 49:15 (NIV)

- The following verse could happen to David *only* in a figurative way (since he eventually *did* die and decay). But it was also a messianic prophecy, and applied *literally* to Jesus (who's body *did not* decay). (See Acts 2:27-32; 13:35-37.)

For you will not abandon my soul to **Sheol**,
or let your holy one see corruption.

Psalm 16:10 (ESV)

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Some things point to death and afterlife issues,
even though they do not directly state it.

- ✓ **Some things are known by all people**, even without the influence of the Bible.
 - God has embedded within people's hearts an awareness that they deserve judgment. (People try to *suppress* this awareness.)
 - This doesn't necessarily *prove* the future judgment; but combined with an awareness of God's existence and his nature (Romans 1:18-23+), judgment is something people should anticipate.
- ✓ **Some things require careful, serious thinking** about the nature of God, Scripture, etc.
 - There are things that God has said, or done, that *imply* certain conclusions about death and resurrection.
 - Only those who are devoted to God and his Word can reach such conclusions.

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Awareness of potential judgment, even *without* the Bible.

- ✓ **People's consciences testify that they deserve to be judged.**
 - ALL people – saved and unsaved – know the need for some type of "final" justice. There is just too much injustice in the world!
 - This is because God has revealed his righteous nature in creation (Romans 1:20), and a has embedded a basic perception of right and wrong in our consciences (Romans 2:14-16). [Unsaved people may *suppress* this awareness, but *it was originally there.*]
- They know God's justice requires that those who do these [sins listed in v. 29-31] deserve to die, yet they do them anyway.
... their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.
- Romans 1:32a; 2:15b (NLT)
- **All people*** have (or had) an awareness that "something" needs to be done. * (To whatever degree they have an ability to think.)
 - **God's people** can trust God to accomplish that "something."

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Conclusions that can be reached *only* by those who are loyal to God and his Word. [Here are two EXAMPLES.]

- ✓ **An event in ABRAHAM's life.** God's seemingly "contradictory" command led Abraham to conclude that God could raise the dead.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

 - Every Jew since that time could (at least potentially) reach the same conclusion, if they took time to think about this event.


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GOD HAS PROMISED, WITH A BINDING OATH, TO GIVE ME DESCENDANTS THROUGH ISAAC. GOD CANNOT LIE

YET GOD HAS TOLD ME TO SACRIFICE ISAAC ON THE ALTAR!

IF I DO IT, THE ONLY WAY GOD CAN KEEP HIS PROMISE IS BY RAISING ISAAC FROM THE DEAD!

I TRUST YOU, GOD, TO RAISE ISAAC FROM THE DEAD!



[See Genesis 22:1-19.]

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✓ **What God said to MOSES.** Moses could have concluded, based on God's own words, that his forefathers, though dead, continued to exist. (In reality, Moses was probably more concerned about the terrifying experience of being face-to-face with God!)

"But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Luke 20:37-38 (NIV)

- This passage is about God revealing himself to Moses. Here, God identifies himself as being the God of Moses' ancestors.
- If *dead* people no longer exist, they cannot have a God. Only *living* beings can have (and serve) God!
- The conclusion is that these people continued to exist (though dead). Otherwise, there was no point in claiming to be their God!

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DID ISRAEL MISS OUT, BECAUSE OF NOT KNOWING ALL THAT WE DO?

⇒ **THEY always had what they needed** for life and godliness! They didn't need to know everything that we now know about the future. *Too many things had to happen before then!*

- God revealed to ABRAHAM *what he needed*, when he called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and travel to the land of Canaan.
- God revealed to ISRAEL *what they needed* ...
 - > When he told them to leave Egypt and travel to Canaan.
 - > When they were living in the land God had given them.
 - > When it was time for them to anticipate the coming of the Messiah (Jesus). [This included both of Jesus' comings.]

⇒ **God gave them what they needed. The rest was still secret.**

The **secret things** belong to the Lord our God, but the **things revealed** belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)

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WHAT ABOUT US? ARE WE BETTER OFF?

⇒ **WE have more revelation than they did.** But we have *not* been told everything that we will know in the future – when Jesus returns!

See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are!

Dear friends, we are God's children now, and **what we will be has not yet been revealed.** We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is.

1 John 3:1a, 2 (CSB)

⇒ But just like God's people in the Old Testament, **we have all we need** to spur us on to life and godliness! (2 Peter 1:3-4.)

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.

1 John 3:3 (CSB)

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OUR MISSION!

When Jesus came, he fulfilled much of what he had revealed to Israel. At the same time, he revealed to us *more* about the future – the *next* things on the prophetic timetable!

★ **Let us rejoice** ★
in the greater revelation that God has given us ... and live by it!

After all, the more we have, the more we are *required* to live by.

"Whoever has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the one who has been given more."

Luke 12:48b (ERV)

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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