

# “Where Are the Old Testament Prophecies of Jesus’ Resurrection?”

I was reading [Cruci-fiction and Resuscitation: The Greatest Hoax in the History of Humanity?](#) to learn more about the resurrection of Jesus. When I went to the two Old Testament references he gave (Psalm 34:20, “He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken,” and Zechariah 12:10, “...they will look on Me whom they have pierced...”) as evidence of the prophecy of resurrection, I discovered that these were not prophetic at all but simply words and phrases that were taken out of context. Can you provide me with any Old Testament writing that does speak directly of the resurrection of the messiah?

John 19:36-37

“For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, “NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN.” And again another Scripture says, “THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.”

may cite both of these OT passages. However, the one in v. 36 may actually be citing Exodus 12:46–

“It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.”

or Numbers 9:12–

“They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.”

Thus, it is not clear whether John viewed Psalm 34:20 as having Messianic implications. And certainly it does not refer to Jesus’ resurrection. (But then, we would note, the author

never indicated these verses refer to the resurrection. The article is about the crucifixion as well, which these verses do prophesy.)

The passage in Zechariah 12:10 is Messianic and would at least be consistent with the resurrection of Christ (as it probably refers to His Second Coming). Isaiah 53:10-12 would also seem to be consistent with Jesus' resurrection:

But the LORD was pleased  
To crush Him, putting Him to grief;  
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,  
He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days,  
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.  
As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see it and be satisfied;  
By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify  
the many,  
As He will bear their iniquities.  
Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the booty with the strong;  
Because He poured out Himself to death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors;  
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,  
And interceded for the transgressors.

However, in neither of these passages is Jesus' resurrection specifically predicted.

The only OT texts which specifically teach the doctrine of resurrection are Isaiah 26:19-21;

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.  
Come, my people, enter into your rooms  
And close your doors behind you;

Hide for a little while  
Until indignation runs its course.  
For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place  
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
And the earth will reveal her bloodshed  
And will no longer cover her slain.

Ezekiel 37:12-14;

“Therefore prophesy and say to them,  
‘Thus says the Lord GOD,  
“Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up  
out of your graves, My people;  
and I will bring you into the land of Israel.  
Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened  
your graves and  
caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.  
I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life,  
and I will place you on your own land.  
Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done  
it,” declares the LORD.’”

and Daniel 12:1-3:

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard  
over the sons of your people, will arise.  
And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred  
since there was a nation until that time;  
and at that time your people, everyone who is found written  
in the book, will be rescued.  
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.  
Those who have insight will shine brightly like the  
brightness of the expanse of heaven,  
and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars  
forever and ever.

Job 19:25-27 is another possibility:

“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 will see and not another.  
My heart faints within me!

None of these texts are specifically Messianic. I do not think there are any specific predictions of Jesus' resurrection in the OT. This, I think, is partly why Jesus' disciples had such a difficult time understanding His own predictions of His resurrection. They did not have a category for a dying and rising Messiah (i.e. raised to glory, never to die again) within world history. They only knew of a general resurrection at the end of time.

Shalom,

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*Addendum: April 7, 2021 by Sue Bohlin*

I would respectfully suggest that we can also turn to the powerful words of Peter in Acts 2:24-32, where He unfolds the realization that David had prophesied about the Lord's resurrection in Psalm 16—

“But God raised him up, having released him from the pains of death because it was not possible for him to be held in its power. For David says about him,

‘I saw the Lord always in front of me,  
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced;  
my body also will live in hope,

because you will not leave my soul in Hades,  
nor permit your Holy One to experience decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will make me full of joy with your presence.'

"Brothers, I can speak confidently to you about our forefather David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. So then, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, David by foreseeing this spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his body experience decay. This Jesus God raised up, and we are all witnesses of it."