

Isaiah 26:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Analysis

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise (יְחִי יְהוָה יְחִי מֵתָיו וְכַאֲבָדָיו שְׁכַנֵּי עָפָר) / מִתְּחִיב נְבָלָתִי וְקָוָמָן—This is the Old Testament's clearest resurrection promise before Daniel 12:2. The verbs חִיָּה (chayah, "to live") and קָם (qum, "to arise, stand up") declare bodily resurrection, not mere spiritual immortality. נְבָלָה (nevelah, "corpse, dead body") emphasizes physical death reversed. The possessive pronouns ("thy dead...my dead body") express intimate covenant relationship—God's people belong to Him even in death.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust (הַקִּיצוּ וְכַאֲבָדָיו שְׁכַנֵּי עָפָר) / haqitzu verannenu shokhney afar—אַיִץ (qitz, "to awake") portrays death as sleep, resurrection as awakening (Daniel 12:2, John 11:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 4:14). רָנָן (ranan, "to sing, shout for joy") shows resurrection not as grim reanimation but glorious celebration. Contrast v. 14—the wicked dead remain in dust; believers arise from dust to sing.

For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead (כִּי תְּשִׁיבֵת אָזְתָּה טַל אֶרֶת טַלְבָת אֶרֶץ רְפָאִים תְּפִילָה) / ki tal orot taleka va'aretz refa'im tappil—טַל (tal, "dew") symbolizes life-giving divine presence. The phrase טַל אֶרֶת (tal orot, "dew of lights") is unique, possibly meaning "dew of dawn" or "dew of the luminaries," suggesting resurrection's radiance. The earth 'giving birth to' (תְּפִילָה / tappil) the dead reverses Genesis 3:19 ("dust you shall return"). Creation itself participates in resurrection.

Historical Context

Written around 700 BC, this predates Greek philosophical notions of afterlife and clearly differs from Egyptian conceptions. Israel's resurrection hope was rooted in YHWH's covenant faithfulness and power as Creator. By Jesus's time, Pharisees affirmed resurrection while Sadducees denied it (Matthew 22:23-33). Jesus cited the Pentateuch to prove resurrection but could have quoted Isaiah 26:19. Paul develops resurrection theology extensively (1 Corinthians 15), and Hebrews 11:35 may allude to this passage. The New Testament sees Christ's resurrection as 'firstfruits' (1 Corinthians 15:20), guaranteeing believers' future resurrection.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the promise that 'thy dead shall live' provide comfort in grief and hope in mortality?
2. What does the command to 'awake and sing' teach about the nature of resurrection—joyful, bodily, celebratory?
3. How should belief in bodily resurrection shape how we view our bodies, suffering, and death today?

Interlinear Text

מֵתִים יְהִי	מֵתִים יְהִי	תְּבִלָת	תְּבִלָת	וְקָם יְהִי	וְקָם יְהִי
men shall live	Thy dead	together with my dead body	shall they arise	Awake	
H2421	H4191	H5038	H6965	H6974	
וְרִבְבָת	וְרִבְבָת	שְׁכָנָת	שְׁכָנָת	אֲוֹרֶת	אֲוֹרֶת
וְרִבְבָת	וְרִבְבָת	רַבְבָת	רַבְבָת	טַלְבָת	טַלְבָת
and sing	ye that dwell	in dust	for thy dew	of herbs	for thy dew
H7442	H7931	H6083	H2919	H219	H2919
אֶרְצָה	רִפְאָה	תְּפִילָה			
and the earth	the dead	shall cast out			
H776	H7496	H5307			

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 12:2 (Parallel theme): And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Ephesians 5:14 (Resurrection): Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Matthew 27:52 (Parallel theme): And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

Hosea 13:14 (Parallel theme): I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Hosea 6:2 (Resurrection): After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Isaiah 25:8 (Parallel theme): He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Psalms 71:20 (Parallel theme): Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Philippians 3:21 (Parallel theme): Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Zechariah 8:12 (Parallel theme): For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

Hosea 14:5 (Parallel theme): I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org