

John 20:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Analysis

For as yet they knew not the scripture (οὐδέπω γὰρ ἤδεισαν τὴν γραφήν, oudepō gar ēdeisan tēn graphēn)—the pluperfect tense looks back from post-resurrection perspective: they had not yet known. 'The scripture' (singular) likely refers to a specific text, perhaps Psalm 16:10 ('thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption') or Isaiah 53:10-12, rather than Scripture generally.

That he must rise again from the dead (ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι, hoti dei auton ek nekrōn anastēnai)—the divine necessity (δεῖ, dei, 'must') shows resurrection wasn't accident but fulfillment. John wrote this verse decades later, after the church had connected resurrection to specific OT prophecies. The disciples' initial ignorance proves resurrection faith wasn't manufactured from proof-texts—they believed first, understood Scripture second, inverting typical apologetic order.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism had varied views on resurrection: Pharisees affirmed it, Sadducees denied it, but none expected Messiah to rise individually before the general resurrection. Jesus had predicted his resurrection repeatedly (2:19-22, 10:17-18), but the disciples couldn't process this until after the event. Luke 24:25-27, 44-47 shows Jesus later explaining these Scriptures, transforming how the church read the OT.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God often bring us to belief through experience before we understand the biblical prophecies?
2. How does the disciples' ignorance of resurrection prophecy actually strengthen the historical case for resurrection?
3. What current experiences of God might you be living through without yet understanding the scriptural framework?

Interlinear Text

οὐδέπω	γὰρ	ήδεισαν	τὴν	γραφὴν	ὅτι	δεῖ	αὐτὸν
as yet	For	they knew	G3588	the scripture	that	he must	G846
G3764	G1063	G1492		G1124	G3754	G1163	
ἐκ	νεκρῶν	ἀναστῆναι					
from	the dead	rise again					
G1537	G3498	G450					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 16:10 (Parallel theme): For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

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.

Isaiah 26:19 (Resurrection): 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.

1 Corinthians 15:4 (Word): And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Matthew 22:29 (Word): Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Luke 24:26 (Parallel theme): Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

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.

Psalms 22:15 (Parallel theme): My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

John 2:22 (Word): When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Luke 9:45 (Parallel theme): But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.