

The Bible and the Afterlife

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9 NRSA

After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, "Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?"

He replied in the language of his ancestors and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done.

And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws."

2 Maccabees 7:7-9 NRSA

- Where do you see a belief in a resurrection from the dead?
- Who gets resurrected? (Individuals at different times or all the righteous together?)
- When does it take place? (At some point during history or at the end of present history?)

*“Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I take great delight.
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
He will not quarrel or cry out,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.
He will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a smoldering wick,
until he brings justice to victory.
And in his name the Gentiles will hope.”*

Then they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus healed him so that he could speak and see. All the crowds were amazed and said, “Could this one be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this they said, “He does not cast out demons except by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons!” Now when Jesus realized what they were thinking, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and no town or house divided against itself will stand. So if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

Matthew 12: 18-27 NET

- What did the Sadducees believe about the resurrection?
- Why do you think people in Israel arrived at different views?
- What was Jesus’ own view, according to this passage?

Compare also:

I tell you the solemn truth, a time is coming—and is now here—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, thus he has granted the Son to have life in himself, and he has granted the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

“Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out—the ones who have done what is good to the resurrection resulting in life, and the ones who have done what is evil to the resurrection resulting in condemnation.

John 5:25-29 NET