

When did the Old Testament Jews know about eternal life?

The question about eternal life is mainly a question about the resurrection of each of us as believers in Christ.

1. Why might there be any question about what they understood about eternal life?

Matthew **22:23-28**

Acts **23:6-9**

1 Corinthians **15:12-17**

It is clear that the Sadducees rejected the resurrection as being truly taught by God. During the days of Paul, there were some who came to Christ and yet they also rejected the resurrection of believers. Furthermore it is clear that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead.

2. Where does the Old Testament specifically speak of eternal life?

Genesis **3:22**

Genesis **13:15**

Numbers **10:8**

Leviticus **24:9**

Isaiah **45:15-18**

Daniel **12:1-3**

The Old Testament have many references to “for ever” that we definitely understood later as being a reference to eternal life but some at the time may have understood it in terms of “for a very long time” or “for the duration of that generation or people”. At the same time, we are told about an everlasting salvation as well as being awoken to either everlasting life or to everlasting contempt.

3. Where does the Old Testament strongly imply knowledge about eternal life?

Jeremiah **23:38-40**

Job **19:25-27**

Genesis **1:26-27** cmp Psalm **41:13**

Exodus **3:4-6** cmp Matthew **22:30-33**

While Jeremiah speaks of everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, thus indicating an eternal existence, Job clearly indicates that after his own death, he will once again, in the flesh, look upon God his creator. Since we have been created in the “image and likeness” of God and since God is a naturally eternal being, it follows that in all likelihood we shall also in some for continue into eternity. In particular, when Moses was at the burning bush, God told Moses that “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”. Jesus refers to this passage as the confirmation of the resurrection and thus eternal life.