

From Thoughts About God

... To The Afterlife

(parts 5 & 7 ... of 8)

# The “Afterlife”

Introduction

The fear of death ...

Rejection of “non-existence”

# Existence

---

I exist now ... therefore ... in some form ... I shall always exist.

Primitive man saw death all around ... but from very early on it seems that primitive man could not conceive ... did not want it to be true ... that there would be some future time of ... non-existence.

Non existence is a fearful thing ... even though evidence suggests that we did not always exist.

Many believe that they and all other human beings are “ensouled” and the majority of soul-believers endorse the idea that souls are released from the body when that body ceases to function.

- soul ... self ... consciousness

# The Afterlife

---

For many people, the entrance of the soul into afterlife existence is taken to be a fact;

a life-sustaining ... life-guiding ... fear-reducing ... mind-calming ... unquestioned ... reassuring ... sometimes terrifying ... “it’s going to happen” ... fact.

But ... a “fact” ... with numerous interpretations.

# Ancient Examples

---

- Ancient Egypt ... the soul separates from the body at death. But the soul cannot survive for long without the body.
  - The soul is judged ... if it is found worthy ... it is reunited with the body.
  - This “reuniting” results in life in the Underworld (Netherworld).
  - Life is permanent, endless, eternal, in the Underworld.
- Ancient Greece ...The Greek word associated with the soul was *psyche*, a word linked with the word *psychein*, meaning to blow or breathe.
  - Psyche is breathed into the body at birth and is breathed out at death.
  - The Greek psyche of Homer’s era travels directly to Hades ... where it exists as a shadow.
  - Hades is a dull, drab, joyless place where there is no hope for a better day ... the common end for the righteous, the wicked, the kind-hearted, and the scoundrel.
  - Shadows have no personalities, they don’t talk ... they cease to exist when they are forgotten by the living.

# The Root of the Problem

---

The “New Atheists” ... ridicule thoughts of life after death.

- Sam Harris (born 1967)

... received a Ph.D. in neuroscience from UCLA, and is a graduate in philosophy from Stanford University. He is the author of *The End of Faith* (2004) and *Letter To A Christian Nation* (2006).

“What one believes happens after death dictates much of what one believes about life ...

A single proposition - *you will not die* – once believed, determines a response to life that would be otherwise unthinkable.”

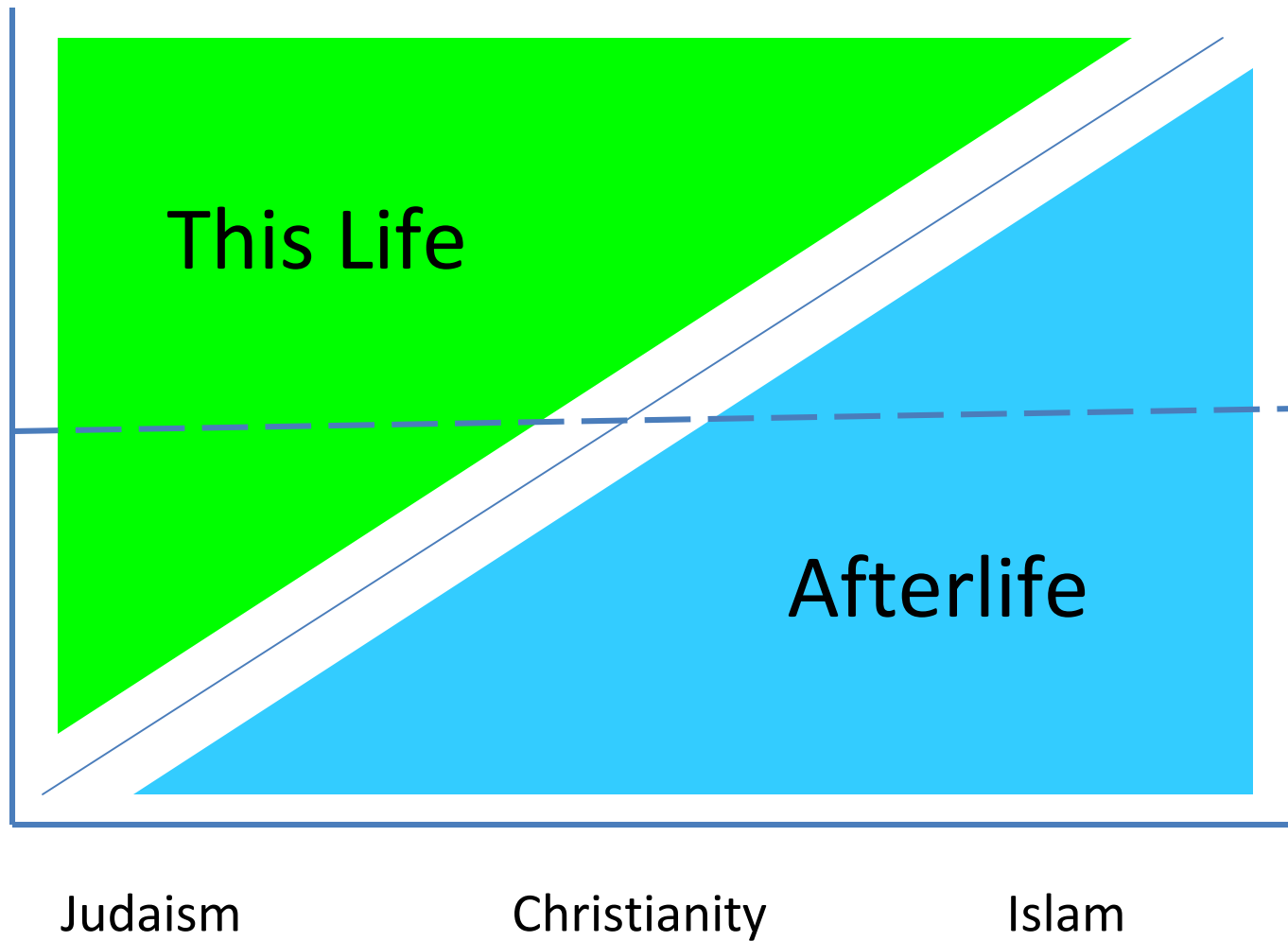
“Religion is a crutch for those who cannot conceive of their own non-existence.”

Judaism ... Christianity ...  
Islam

Thoughts on the Afterlife

# Concerns

---





# Thoughts on the Afterlife



Judaism

# Life after Death

---

Writing about early and contemporary Judaic beliefs about death and afterlife is a challenge because **there is no universally agreed-upon “Jewish” position on the topic.**

One reason for the vagueness of Jewish positions on immortality and its partner ... life after death ... is that these **matters are not dealt with in the Hebrew scriptures (TaNaKh).**

What matters most is ***this life***, the life currently being lived.

Jews who serve their people ... Jews who fulfill their duties to God do so ***not*** to assure themselves of a comfortable afterlife ... but to preserve a tradition that they consider to be more important than their personal fate in an afterlife.

# *Torah*

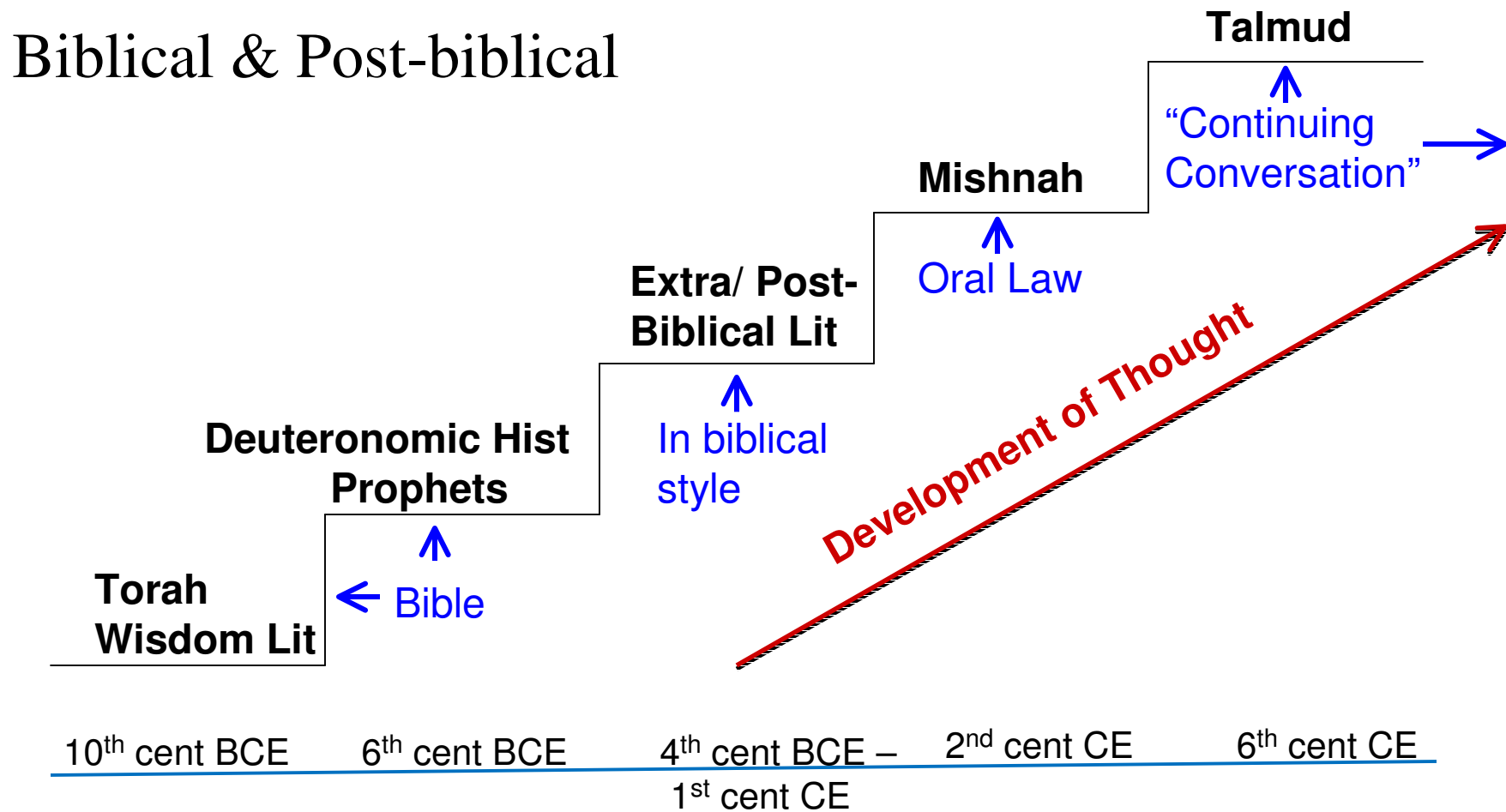
---

The Torah provides no formal teaching concerning an afterlife ...

... if God did not provide this information to Moses than details concerning an afterlife should not be of concern.

Judaism is about this life ... and how to live it in accordance with God's intentions.

# Development of Jewish Thought



# Resurrection as Restoration

---

In traditional ... scriptural ... Judaism ... “salvation is closely related to the idea of **redemption, a saving from the states or circumstances that destroy the value of human existence.**” Salvation ... is social.

*“Then He said unto me: 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.*

*Therefore prophesy, and say unto them: Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.” (Ezekiel 37:11-12 ... see Ezekiel 37:1-14)*

This is the promise of restoration ... the end of exile (Babylonian Exile) ... the end of persecution ... the realization of Israel’s purpose.

“Saved” for a purpose ... to bring the world to God.

# *Sheol*

The abode of the dead

# *Sheol*

---

**Sheol:** Word used within Hebrew Scriptures ~ 66 times.

Definition:

Place of departed dead in (some) ancient Hebrew thought, **without reference to punishments and rewards.**

The place where those who had died were believed to be congregated.

Etymology: pit, abyss.

Greek ... *Hades*

# Ancient Jewish Concepts

---

- Death sent one to *Sheol*, a dreary abode without any promise of renewal.
  - Retribution, or hope, is not an issue.
  - Religion is an affair of the earth, of life, where one is rewarded or punished for actions/deeds.
- Here the dead meet without distinction of rank or condition ... the rich and the poor, the pious and the wicked, the old and young, the master and slave.
  - Existence as “mere shadow.”
  - Existence without knowledge or feeling.
  - Silence reigns supreme.
  - Return is not expected.
  - The “eternal house.”



# Rewards and Punishments

---

Commitment to Torah as a way to wisdom may bring distress but ultimately reward, “at the appointed time.”

- Rewards and punishments were to be realized here ... upon this earth ... during one’s own lifetime.
- Rewards ... health, long life, peace, plenty, dominion ...
- Punishments ... disease, premature death, war, famine, want, subjugation, captivity ...
- Wisdom itself is the reward of wisdom.
- The reward of a good deed is the good deed ... the punishment of sin is the sin.

# The Source

---

From the TORAH ... Deuteronomy.

*“And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love HaShem your G-d, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your oil. And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied.”* (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

Rewards will be realized in the life of those who “hearken diligently unto My commandments ...”

Earthly rewards will be plentiful for those that “keep My commandments, and do them ...” (Leviticus 22:31)

# The Source

---

Deuteronomy ... continued

*“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and **serve other gods**, and worship them; and the anger of HaShem be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which HaShem giveth you. (Deuteronomy 11:16-17)*

**Punishments ... if the people serve other gods ... idolatry**

# The Source

---

From the TORAH ... Leviticus.

*“If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; then I will give your rains in their season, and the land shall yield her produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and you shall eat your bread until you have enough, and dwell in your land safely.*

*And I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.*

*And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. And I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you; and will establish My covenant with you. (Leviticus 26:3-9)*

Earthly rewards will be plentiful for those that “keep My commandments, and do them ...”

# Deuteronomic Theology

---

Be good ... obey ... and things will go well for you.

Disobey ... put your other desires before Me ... put other god's before Me ... and things will not go well with you.

“While the theory that peoples fate is determined by their behavior is appealing, the examples of suffering that we often see – entire populations going hungry, or innocent children dying of diseases they certainly do not ‘deserve’ – often suggest that some other explanation is necessary.”

Rabbi Daniel Gordis – *God Was Not In The Fire*

# Development of Thought

---

The [book of Job](#) ... perhaps the earliest written book of the scripture ... deals specifically with the issue rewards and punishments in this life.

- Job's closest "friends" "knew" that he must be a terrible sinner because of the fate that had befallen him.

*"... the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine." (18:5)*

*"His roots shall dry up beneath, and above shall his branch wither. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name abroad. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world." (18:16-18)*

[If you die ... before your time ... this is a punishment.](#)

# Development of Thought

---

But Job has a response ... from simple observation.

*“Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yes, wax mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe, without fear, neither is the rod of G-d upon them.” (21:7-9)*

*“They spend their days in prosperity, and peacefully they go down to **sheol** (the grave). Yet they said unto G-d: ‘Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?’” (21:13-15)*

I see that the wicked prosper and fear nothing of God.

# *Sheol*

---

In Genesis (37) , when Jacob sees Joseph's coat of many colors that had been dipped in blood after Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers ... Jacob responds ...

“It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.' And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said: 'Nay, but I will go down to *sheol* to my son mourning.' And his father wept for him.”

KJV ... grave

NRSV ... sheol

LXX ... hades

NKJ ... grave

NIV ... grave

JPS ... grave



# The Problem

---

The contradiction here is clear ...

- The good are obviously not always rewarded in this life ... and the persecutors of the Jewish way of life are obviously not all punished in this life.
- The promise of reward, of satisfaction, of Divine justice **must extend beyond the here and now.**

Then where exactly did the idea of rewards and punishments in this life come from ?

How did this develop ?

An examination of some Hebrew Wisdom Literature shows a clear development of concepts of rewards and punishments in an afterlife because the earlier belief ... by simple observation ... did not appear to be true.

# Development of Thought

---

But ...

*“ ... and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence.”*

(Daniel 12:1-2)

*“For it is easy with the Lord on the day of death to repay man according to his deeds.”* (Sirach 11:26)

# Developments

---

- In Isaiah and Daniel we see the hope of resurrection
  - **Isaiah** (8<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... “your dead shall live, my dead bodies shall rise again. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust...”
  - **Daniel** (7<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... “and many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto everlasting life, and others to everlasting shame and contempt.”
- This all occurs on “the day of the Lord.”
- During the late Second Temple period (1<sup>st</sup> cent BCE – 1<sup>st</sup> cent CE) a major controversy between Jewish sects was concerned with the resurrection from the dead.
  - Pharisees ... believed
  - Sadducees ... rejected

# Developments

---

During the period of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Hellenism gave rise to speculation about life after death, and brought with it beliefs which came to be discussed and considered at length in Jewish circles. Speculation reached fever pitch during time of Maccabees and became increasingly apocalyptic during Roman period.”

- “How can God's callous disregard for the righteous be justified?”
- “... it solves the eternal problem of theodicy: God's justice.”

“While rabbinic Judaism subscribed to a notion of life after death and resurrection, it tolerated a great deal of speculation concerning the particulars ...”

- “... the concept of hell was never extensively developed in Judaism.”

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman

# Developments

---

- “The post-biblical texts of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha open a window onto Second Temple thinking about death and afterlife, which began to include influences from cultures in which Jews of the period lived. One such influence, imported from the Greeks, was the addition of a concept of the **immortality of the soul to the already-established belief in bodily resurrection.**”

(Leila Leah Bronner ... *Journey to Heaven*)

# 4 Maccabees

Eleazar ... the mother ... seven sons

from 2 Maccabees

6:18 – 7:42

# 4 Maccabees

---

Immortality ... and acceptance of sacrifice

- You ... and your sons “... stand in honor before God and are firmly set in heaven with them.” (17:5)
  - “They vindicated their nation ...” (17:10)
  - “The prize was immortality in endless life.” (17:12)
  - “Reverence for God was the victor ...” (17:15)
  - “... they now stand before the divine throne and live through blessed eternity.” (17:18)
  - “... they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sins of the nation.” (17:21)
  - “... through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an expiation, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been afflicted.’ (17:22)
  - “... those who gave over their bodies in suffering ... were not only admired by men, but also were deemed worthy to share in a divine inheritance.” (18:3)

# Theological Implications

---

- Torah speaks of rewards and punishments for the righteous.
  - Health, long life, many children, fertile crops.
- In the days of Antiochus, however, the righteous suffered for the sake of the Covenant.
- Presents Jewish theological development.
  - Celebrates deeds of martyrs.
  - Saints in heaven intercede for men on earth.
  - The living might pray and offer sacrifices for the dead.
  - The righteous will live in a perfected world ... the souls of the righteous will be in the presence of the Patriarchs and God.
  - The wicked will be punished ... will endure Gehenna.



# ***Rewards and Punishments in the Talmud***

The Life of the World to Come

# In the Talmud ... The Afterlife

---

## **The place of reward:**

The place of spiritual reward for the righteous is often referred to in Hebrew as *Gan Eden* ... the Garden of Eden. This is not the same place mentioned in the book of Genesis; it is a place of spiritual perfection.

Ultimately, though, the living can no more understand the nature of this place than the blind can understand color.

## **The place of punishment:**

The name given to the place of punishment after death in the Rabbinic literature is *Gehinnom*.

The word Gehinnom is derived from the two Hebrew words "*gei*" ... meaning "valley" and "*Hinnom*" ... was a man's name.

*Gei-Hinnom*, therefore, is the "Valley of Hinnom"

# *Gehinnom*

---

## In Hebrew Scriptures

- After the Babylonian exile (6<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... A garbage dump in a deep narrow valley outside the wall of Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the refuse. It is also the location where bodies of executed criminals, or individuals denied a proper burial, and animals would be dumped. Sulfur (brimstone) was added to keep the fires burning.
- In the Greek Hebrew Scriptures (Septuagint) the word is not used except to describe the actual place outside of Jerusalem.
- A place ... *Tophet* (fire stove) where children were sacrificed to Baal and Molech.
  - 2 Chronicles

# Punishment in the “World to Come”

---

## ***Gehinnom* ...**

- The average person descends to a place of punishment and/or purification, generally referred to as Gehinnom ...
- Some views see Gehinnom as one of severe punishment ... Other sources merely see it as a time when we can see the actions of our lives objectively, see the harm that we have done and the opportunities we missed, and experience remorse for our actions. The period of time in Gehinnom does not exceed 12 months, and then (one) ascends to take his place on Olam Ha-Ba.
- Only the utterly wicked do not ascend at the end of this period; their souls are punished for the entire 12 months. Sources differ on what happens at the end of those 12 months: some say that the wicked soul is utterly destroyed and ceases to exist while others say that the soul continues to exist in a state of consciousness of remorse.

# Developments

---

“Despite the many views recorded, certain general features stand out: that there is judgment after death; that righteous souls are rewarded in *Gan Eden* and wicked ones punished in *Gehinnom*; that the dead will be resurrected in the days of the Messiah; and that the righteous will live on in *olam ha-ba*, ‘the World to Come.’

The sequence of these events, however, is that knowledge to be a mystery filled with unanswerable questions and openings for speculation.”

(Leila Leah

Bronner ... *Journey to Heaven*)

# Developments

---

## Modern Times:

Is it **resurrection** ... as alluded to in the Hebrew scripture ... or is it the **immortality of the soul** ... as depicted primarily in the post-biblical texts? Or ... is it both?

- Abraham Geiger (1810 – 1874), the leading ideologue of Reform Judaism in Germany, stated that some ideas that had been incorporated into Judaism “have become entirely foreign to our time ... in fact have been strongly rejected by it.”

Geiger gave the example of the hope for an afterlife, which he said “should not be expressed in terms which suggest a future revival, a resurrection of the body; rather they must stress the immortality of the soul.”

# Developments

---

- For Orthodox Jews, Samson Hirsch (1808-1888) has said, “there can hardly be another thought that can so inspire man firmly to resolve to live a life so vigorous, unwavering, fearless and unswervingly dutiful than the belief in the revival of the dead.

This is the firm conviction that to God not even the dead are lost forever, and that, even for the physical body, death is not the end but only a transition period from one life to the next.”

- “... but as for the World to Come, ‘no eye has seen, O God, besides yours.’” (*Berakhot* 34b)

# Torah ... Covenant

---

**Rabbi Jacob Neusner (*A Rabbi Talks with Jesus ... 1993*):**

“The Torah always speaks to the community and concerns itself with the formation of a social order worthy of God who called Israel into being.”

“We who try to obey the Torah and do the mitzvot believe that that is **how we carry out the covenant that joins us to God**: it is what the Torah tells us God wants us to do as our part of the covenanted relationship between us and God. **When I keep the commandments of the Torah, I serve God.**”

The rest ... is left to God.



# *Transition*

Judaism → Christianity

# Lost in Translation

---

By the time the Hebrew scriptures became the “Old Testament” of the Christian scriptures, the development of concepts for “places” of Divine punishment and reward had been speculated upon ... and written about by Jews themselves.

By the time the Hebrew scriptures ... as the Old Testament ... was being translated into English ... beginning in the very late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christians had developed a detailed theology of Heaven and Hell that were read into the earlier Hebrew writings.

# Origin of the Word

---

- The word *heaven* comes to English through Low German and Saxon.

Low German  $\longrightarrow$  Saxon  $\longrightarrow$  Old English  $\longrightarrow$  Middle English  
*heben* *heofon* *heven*

- In Old English *heaven* meant ... *sky or firmament*. (8<sup>th</sup> century)
- By the 11<sup>th</sup> century the term was “Christianized” to represent the “home of God.”

*“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ...”* (Genesis 1:1a)

- God creates everything ... the things that are down here (the earth) and up there (the sky). Originally “heaven” does not refer to the “home of God” ... but the sky ... where the clouds are ... where the heavenly bodies are ...

# Origin of the Word

---

- *Hell* comes directly from Old English *hel*.
- In Old English *hel* is a black and fiery place of eternal torment for the damned.
- The Old Norse *hel*, from the same source as Old English *hel*, retained its earlier pagan senses as both a place and a person. As a place, *hel* is the abode of oathbreakers, other evil persons, and those unlucky enough **not** to have died in battle. It contrasts sharply with *Valhalla*, the hall of slain heroes.

The Old Norse *hel* is very cold.

*Hel* is also the name of the goddess or giantess who presides in *hel*, the half blue-black, half white daughter of Loki and the giantess Angrbotha.

- The Indo-European root behind these Germanic words is *kel*, - “to cover, conceal” (so *hell* is the “concealed place”).

# *Sheol*

---

The word *sheol* appears in the Hebrew scriptures 66 times.

<i>Sheol</i>	KJV	NKJV	NIV	NRSV	LXX
Grave	31	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	1	
Hell	<b>32</b>	18			
Pit	3	2			
Death			7		
Depths			1		
Sheol		18		<b>65</b>	
Hades					<b>66</b>

# Thoughts on the Afterlife

Christianity

# Beliefs in Afterlife

---

The essential features of Christian afterlife beliefs cannot be found in the New Testament.

“... the New Testament contains not a single chapter that summarizes the Christian view”

The concepts of heaven and hell ... for many Christians ... are more of a difficulty for faith ... than an aide to faith.

# ***The Parables***

Lazarus and the Rich Man

The Last Judgment



# Parables

---

There are only two parables ... teaching stories ... that Jesus uses in the Gospels that allude to the afterlife. Interestingly ... each only has a single attestation ... i.e., the story appears in only a single Gospel.

Neither is exclusively about the afterlife ... but uses the promise of an afterlife as a setting to discuss how one is **to respond to others ... one's duties to humanity** ... in order to enjoy the undescribed promises of an afterlife ... or the Kingdom of God.

**Lazarus and the Rich Man** (Luke 16:19-31 )

– A “particular judgment” at death ...

**The Last Judgment** (Matthew 25:31-46)

– When all are judged ... “a general judgment.”

# Parables

---

## **Lazarus and the Rich Man** (Luke 16:19-31 )

"There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Laz'arus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table ...

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to [Abraham's bosom](#). The rich man also died and was buried; and in [Hades](#), being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Laz'arus in his bosom.

And he called out, `Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Laz'arus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.'

# Parables

---

But Abraham said, `Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now **he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.** And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and **none may cross from there to us.**'

And he said, `Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

But Abraham said, `They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, `No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

He said to him, **'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'**"

# Lazarus and the Rich Man

---

Luke 16:19-31

- The rich Man has no name ... he is only what he wanted to be ...
- “The poor man died and was carried by the angels to [Abraham's bosom.](#)”

The dialogue ...

- “The rich man also died and was buried; and in [Hades](#), being in torment ...”  
(Hades here ... is associated with torment ...)
- “... have mercy upon me ... for I am in anguish in this flame.”
- “... you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now [he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.](#)”
- “... send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them ...”
- “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them ...”

# Paradise - Today

---

*"One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'*

*But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?*

*And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.'*

*Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'  
He replied, 'Truly I tell you, **today you will be with me in Paradise.**'"*

(Luke 23:39-43)

Some Christian sects argue about whether this "paradise" ... is "heaven."

# Parables

---

## **The Last Judgment** (Matthew 25:31-46)

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, **‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;** for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’

# Parables

---

Then he will say to those at his left hand, **‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;** for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’

Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ And **they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”**

*aion* ... for ever, the worlds, period of time ... complete, fulfilled

... world without end ...

... now and ever and unto ages of ages ...

# The Last Judgment

---

Matt 25:31-46

- "When the Son of man comes in his glory ... he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats ..."
- "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ..."
- "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels ..."
- "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
- "... I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."
- "... as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it (not) to me."



# Resurrection to “This Life”

---

“The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, ‘Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.’ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman herself died. In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her.’

Jesus answered them, ‘You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. **For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.** And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead, but of the living.’” (Matthew 22:23-32)

# Where the Father is ...

---

- *“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.  
And you know the way to the place where I am going.”* (John 14:2-4)
- *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”* (Revelation 21:4)
- *“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”*  
(1 Corinthians 2:9)

# Early Views

---

- Aristides, a pagan Greek wrote in 125 CE about Christians,

“If any righteous man among Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort the body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby.”

- John Chrysostum ...

“When a dear one dies, the unbeliever sees a cadaver, but the Christian sees a body asleep. The unbeliever says that the dead person has ‘gone’. We agree, remember where he has gone. He has gone where the apostle Paul is, where Peter is, where the whole company of the saints are. Remember that he will rise, not with tears of dismay, but with splendor and glory.”

# Interpretation ??

---

From Christian scriptures ...

Immortality of the soul ... originally a Greek philosophical idea ...

- not supported in Hebrew scripture.

Resurrection from the dead ...

- alluded to in Hebrew scripture.
- reinforced by belief in Jesus' resurrection.

But ... resurrection to what ??

- A transcendent Heaven (better supports immortality of the soul)
- A New Life on a New Earth ?? (Kingdom of God ... Messianic Kingdom)

# ***Gehenna in the Christian Scriptures***

A place of abomination ...  
eternal suffering ???

# *Gehenna*

---

Remember:

*Gehenna* is the Greek term for the Hebrew *Gai-Ben-Hinnom* meaning *Valley of the Son of Himmon*.

- It is an actual valley outside of old Jerusalem that was a smoldering garbage dump at the time of Jesus.
- Is Jesus using the **term** only to denote a horrible place ... where in antiquity there were child sacrifices ... abominations against God ... and now there was never ending smoldering stench ... that all residents of Jerusalem would be familiar with ???

In the Christian Scriptures (New Testament) the word *Gehenna* appears 12 times.

- Gospel of Matthew 7
- Gospel of Mark 3
- Gospel of Luke 1
- Epistle of James 1

# Gehenna

---

## In the Christian Scriptures

### Concerning the Law ... Matthew 5:21-24

- "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to *Gehenna*." (*the hell of fire*)
- So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

# *Gehenna*

---

Concerning the Law ... Matthew 5:27-30

- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'  
But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has  
already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it  
is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole  
body be thrown into *Gehenna*.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away;  
it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole  
body go into *Gehenna*.



# Tartaroo

---

- Another word ... *Tartaroo* ... appears one time in the scripture (2 Peter 2:4) and is also translated as [hell](#).
- *Tartaroo* ... the name of the subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds.

*“For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into [Tartaroo \(hell\)](#) and committed them to pits of [nether gloom to be kept until the judgment](#) ...”*

... [nether gloom](#) to be kept [until judgment](#)

... sounds like Sheol !!!

# Apocalypse of Peter

---

Referenced by Clement of Rome (d ~99)

## Visions of Heaven and Hell

Show us the brethren who have gone forth out of the world before us.

- Heaven
  - their raiment was like the sun.
- Hell
  - a lake of flaming mire and punishing angels.
  - blasphemers hung by their tongues above the flames.
  - murderers were afflicted with clouds of worms.
  - the rich rolled around on red-hot pebbles, sharper than swords.
  - those who caused abortion ...
  - those who defiled their bodies ...

# Apocalypse of Peter

---

“I saw another (place), squalid, and it was the place of punishment; and those who were punished there ...”

- “And there were certain there hanging by the tongue: and these were the blasphemers of the way of righteousness; and under them lay fire, burning and punishing them.”
- “And there were also others, women, hanged by their hair over that mire that bubbled up: and these were they who adorned themselves for adultery; and the men who mingled with them in the defilement of adultery, were hanging by the feet and their heads in that mire.”
- “And I saw the murderers and those who conspired with them, cast into a certain strait place, full of evil snakes, and smitten by those beasts, and thus turning to and fro in that punishment; and worms, as it were clouds of darkness, afflicted them. And the souls of the murdered stood and looked upon the punishment of those murderers and said:

O God, thy judgment is just.”

# At Death ...

---

**Particular Judgment:** “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through a purification or immediately, - or immediate and everlasting damnation.”

*Catechism of the Catholic Church 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000*

# At The End ...

---

“At the end of time, the **Kingdom of God will come in its fullness**. After the universal judgment, the righteous will **reign for ever with Christ**, glorified in body and soul. **The universe itself will be renewed ...**”

“Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. **They are like God for ever**, for they ‘see him as he is,’ face to face.”

“**This perfect life with the Most holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed – is called ‘heaven.’**”

*Catechism of the Catholic Church 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000*

These two concepts ... both from the current *Catechism of the Catholic Church* do not seem to have resolved the issue **of resurrection of the body in a “renewed universe” ... and the immortality of the soul in a transcendent “heaven.”**

# N.T. Wright

---

There is no agreement in the church today about what happens to people when they die.

The traditional picture of people going to either heaven or hell as a one-stage, postmortem journey represents a serious distortion and diminution of the Christian hope. Bodily resurrection is not just one odd bit of that hope. It is the element that gives shape and meaning to the rest of the story of God's ultimate purposes. If we squeeze it to the margins, as many have done by implication, or indeed, if we leave it out altogether, as some have done quite explicitly, we don't just lose an extra feature, like buying a car that happens not to have electrically operated mirrors. We lose the central engine, which drives it and gives every other component its reason for working.

N. T. Wright/ MARCH 24, 2008

*Surprised By Hope ... 2008*

# New Earth

---

*“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God ... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:1-5)*

[Kingdom of god on the earth ... a Messianic Kingdom ??](#)

# Universal Restoration

*(apokatastasis)*

---

**“We think that the goodness of God, through the mediation of Christ, will bring all creatures to one and the same end.”**

- Ransom paid for our salvation ...
- In all men some elements of the divine image remain.
- When confronted with the “ultimate truth,” i.e., God ... man, as an intellect, will always choose the good ... God. To not choose the good is not so much sinful as it is ignorant.
- Sin did not brand a man eternally; the pains of Hell are disciplinary and temporary, not everlasting, and Hell fire is no more than the purifying flame which removes the baser elements from the soul’s metal. A fiery purification after death ...
- Not the body as flesh, but the body as spirit will rise again on that eternal morning, of which all the ages of the world are no more than the previous night.
- Ultimately, the “saved” do not rejoice in heaven while the damned suffer in hell ... all souls return to a reunion with God.
- The purpose of the soul (individual) is to ultimately return to its source.