

*“Will Justice Be Done?”*

Why does justice-in-the-afterlife matter to us at all? How much does Christian conversion and life depend on that justice?

What is Plato’s “notion of postmortem justice”? What does he say about distinctions between body and soul? What constitutes a soul?

If a soul is entirely spirit, without physical qualities, how does it see, hear, taste, or feel either pain or pleasure in the afterlife? So, then, how can reward or punishment even matter?

Describe how the Myth of Er contributes to our ideas about an afterlife.

What happens in the River Lethe? Why is that necessary?

What is the main idea in Aristophanes’s comedy *Frogs*? What punishments do we discover in the afterlife? What is the “unforgivable” sin amongst the Hellenic Greeks?

What are mystery cults, and what did they offer initiates?

What does Epicurus say about the soul, the body, the afterlife?

Explore the quotation from Diogenes Laertius at the bottom of page 72: what do you think about what he says?

How does Lucretius influence Western thought with his notion of atoms in *On the Nature of Things*? What happens to bodies and to souls?

What do we learn from grave goods? Why do we pour libations on graves?

What does *RIP* mean? What about *nffnsnc*?

*“Death after Death in the Hebrew Bible”*

How final is death? What is *nephesh*? How do the Hebrews regard body and soul?

What and where is Sheol? How does synonymous parallelism help us understand the Hebrews’ notions about death?

What happens to those in Sheol? Who is present? Who acts or is acted upon? Where is God?

“The Old Testament says no word about either eternal bliss for the righteous dead or everlasting punishment for the wicked,” says Ehrman on page 87. Is that what you believed before reading this book? Elaborate.

The Ecclesiastes writer says, “The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost” (p. 88). What do you think about that statement?

What do we learn from Saul’s experience with the medium (or witch) of Endor? Where is Samuel? How does Saul summon him—and to what end? In this story, how does Samuel respond to Saul’s summons and requests? What does he reveal about the afterlife?

What is the Hebrews’ concern with their nation’s afterlife? What prophets particularly address Israel’s or Judah’s resurrection? And when do they do so?

What do we learn from Amos? Be specific. What do we learn from Isaiah? Be specific. What do we learn from Ezekiel? Be specific. For these prophets, why is there no punishment in the afterlife of individuals? Why would they not ask, “What will happen to me when I die?”

*“Dead Bodies That Return to Life: The Resurrection in Ancient Israel”*

After the classical prophets, there arose an idea about an “end of time,” a perfect world for those returned to life. Whose idea was that? Who believed it? What was that promise? How has it influenced Christianity?

According to the Hebrews, to their prophets, why do they suffer?

Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer—particularly if God is good and controls the universe?

What is apocalypsis? (From Greek: *apo kalupto* = to uncover, to reveal). How does that etymology help us understand the notion of apocalypse? What happens in an apocalypse? And what is apocalyptic literature?

What are the biblical roots for the idea of resurrection? How do we know “the suffering servant” is not Jesus? Is not a singular messiah?

What is the Book of Watchers? Who was Semyaza, and what does he have to do with an afterlife?

When was the book of Daniel actually written? What makes part of it apocalyptic literature? How does it contribute to our ideas about resurrection and immortality?

In Greek tradition, why or how is a person immortal? In Hebrew tradition, why or how is a person immortal? Why does this difference matter?