



from the Egyptian Book of the Dead

I also said to myself, “As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath ; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”  
Ecclesiastes 3:18-21 NIV

“All Israel have a share in ‘*olam ha-ba*, the world-to-come, as it is said: ‘Your people all will be righteous, and they will inherit the land forever’ (Is. 60:21).”  
(*Sanhedrin* 90a)



## Deuteronomy 34:5-6

The Message

Moses died there in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of God, just as God said. God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor. No one knows his burial site to this very day.

TODAY  
I HAVE GIVEN YOU  
THE CHOICE BETWEEN  
*Life*  
AND  
death  
BETWEEN  
*Blessings*  
AND  
curses  
*Oh*  
that you  
would  
choose  
*Life*  
THAT  
YOU  
and your  
descendants  
descendants  
descendants  
*might*  
*live*

Deuteronomy 30:16

**Judaism has relentlessly sought God in the here-and-now of life on earth. Yes, we believe in life after death, but it is in life before death that we truly find human greatness.**

Rabbi Sacks



**God is close. God is here.  
God is life. Therefore celebrate life.  
Sanctify life. Turn life into a blessing  
and make a blessing over life.  
That is Judaism in 25 words.**

#ReflectionsOnLife





Magnified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world that God created and governs by divine will. May the Kingdom of God be established during your lifetime, and during your days, and during the days of all the house of Israel, yea speedily and in the near future, and let us say, Amen.

**Congregation and mourners**

May God's great name be blessed for ever and ever.

**Mourners**

Exalted, glorified and honored be the name of the blessed Holy One whose glory is beyond all blessings, hymns and praises that people render, and let us say, Amen.

May great peace emanate from Heaven with good life for us and for all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens, make peace for us and for all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

Do not be like servants who serve  
their masters expecting to receive  
a reward be rather like servants  
who serve their master  
unconditionally, with no thought of  
reward.

Antigonus of Sokho

Pirkei Avot 1:3

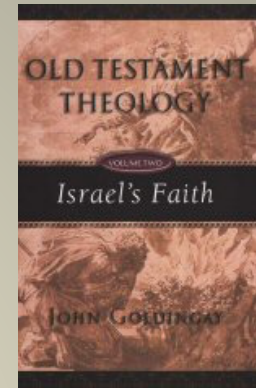
## Why Do You Serve God?

- *Would you still be faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if there were no “heaven and hell”?*
- *Would you still want to be a disciple of Jesus?*
- *Do you think “the way of the Lord” taught in the Scriptures is the best possible way of life, regardless of what the future might bring?*

# The Problem with the Resurrection

“It was a risky business revealing the resurrection. It risks discouraging people from taking our earthly life as seriously as it deserves as God’s gift. It risks our not experiencing life’s pains or its joys and thus squandering them. Christians’ frequent failure to take this life seriously shows God’s wisdom in delaying the revealing of the resurrection.”

John Goldingay



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister. Raised in Berlin, Bonhoeffer was one of the few clergymen who opposed Adolph Hitler and the rise of Nazism in 1930's Germany.



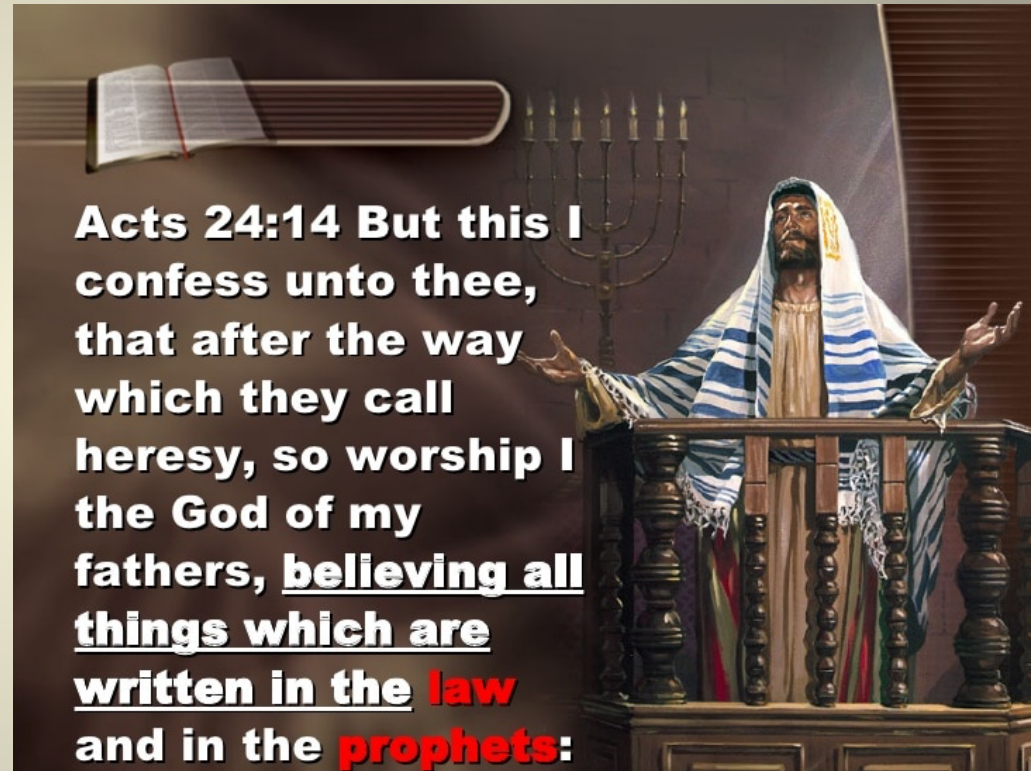
“It is only when one loves life and the earth so much that without them everything would be gone, that one can believe in the resurrection and a new world.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“There is almost no injustice that cannot be justified by reference to life after death. Terrorist suicide bombing is the latest example. When Karl Marx called religion ‘the opium of the people,’ this is what he had in mind: that the promise of bliss in an afterlife makes people accept chains and injustices in this life.”

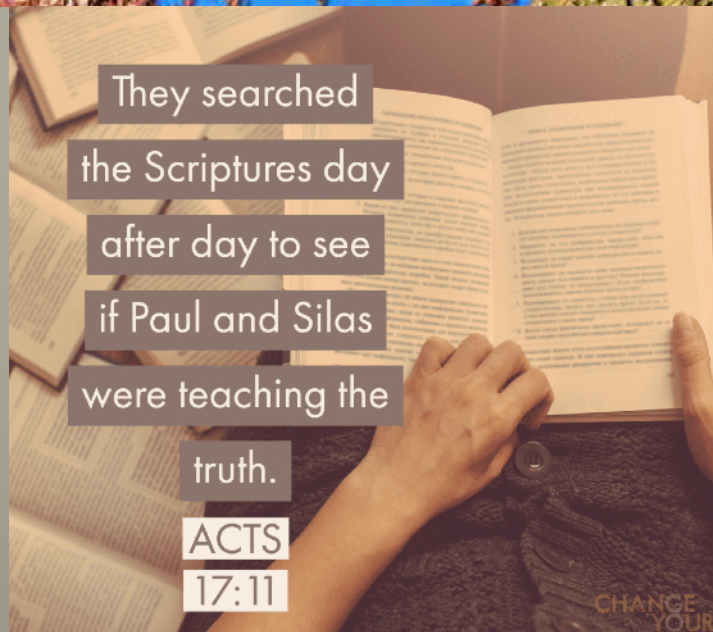
Rabbi Sacks

# Searching the Scriptures



**Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the **prophets**:**

SHA'UL OF TARSUS



They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.

ACTS  
17:11

# Where To Begin

***“Only when people have learned to take the Old Testament really seriously can they be entrusted with the story of Jesus. The church has reversed that argument and turned Christian faith into a faith that is itself truncated.”***

“The Old Testament is more interested in creation, in the world of the nations and politics; it is more accepting of death and of the ambiguities of human life; it lacks a ‘positive’ picture of life after death or a stress on the Messiah; it understands human sinfulness differently; it stresses reverence for God; it sees us as free to complain at God and to express doubt; it emphasizes enjoyment of everyday family life and food and drink; it values sacramental worship; and it enjoins detailed outward obedience to divine commands.

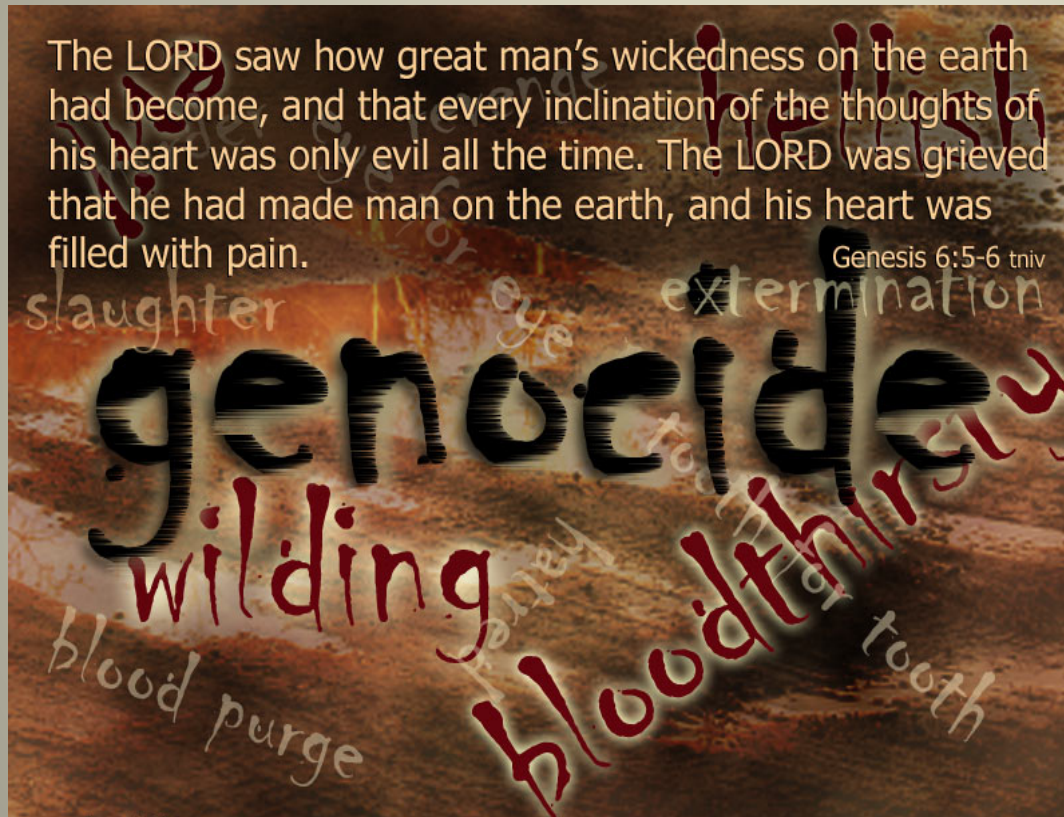
My attitude to such differences is to see them not as points where the New Testament surpasses the Old, but as points where Christians are especially likely to have something to learn.”

John Goldingay



# The Divine Pathos

*“Pathos:” from the Greek word denoting emotion, feeling, passion*



*“The Holy and Blessed One is a partner in the suffering of His creatures; He is involved in the lot of His people, wounded by their sufferings and redeemed by their liberation.”*

Rabbi Heschel

# WHAT IS GOD'S PROMISE?



“The promise to Abraham and his family that he would inherit the world...depends on faith in order that the promise should be sure for all his family, not only those who are of the law but also those who are of the faith of Abraham.” (Rom. 4:13, 16)

“If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s family, heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29)

“You Gentiles...were without Christ, aliens from citizenship in Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world....This mystery has now been revealed, that the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, joint partakers in the promise through Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:11-12, 3:6)

# *Is Your Faith Selfish?*

“If man was created to seek the purity of his soul, then his entire worship [is] for his own benefit.”

“The essence of religion does not lie in the satisfaction of a human need. As long as man sees religion as a source of satisfaction for his own needs, it is not God whom he serves but his own self.”

Rabbi Heschel

## **Mark 8: 34, 35 CEB**

**“All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me.**

**<sup>35</sup> All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me and because of the good news will save them.”**



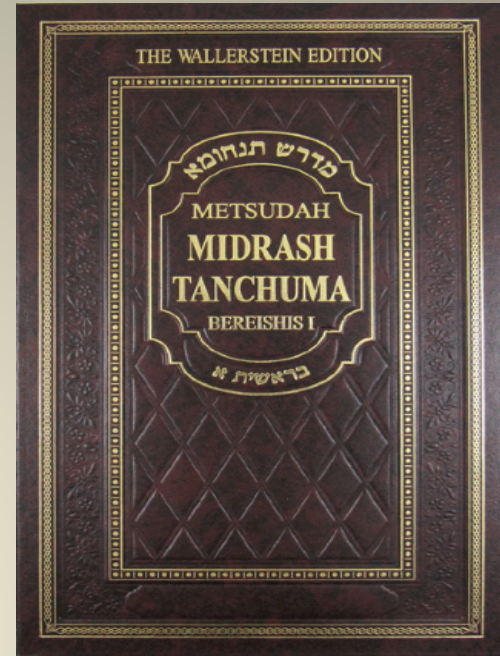
And Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and exposed himself within his tent. And Ham the father of Canaan saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. And Shem and Japheth took a cloak and put it over both their shoulders and walked backward and covered their father's nakedness, their faces turned backward so they did not see their father's nakedness. (Gen. 9:20-23)

*Once the waters had abated, Noah should have left the ark. However, Noah said to himself, “I entered with God’s permission, as it says, ‘Go into the ark’ (Gen. 7:1). Shall I now leave without permission?” The Holy One, blessed be he, said to him, “Is it permission, then, that you are seeking? Very well, then, here is permission, as it is said ‘Come out of the ark’” (8:16).*

*Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai said: “If I had been there, I would have broken down the ark and taken myself out.”*

*(Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 13-14)*

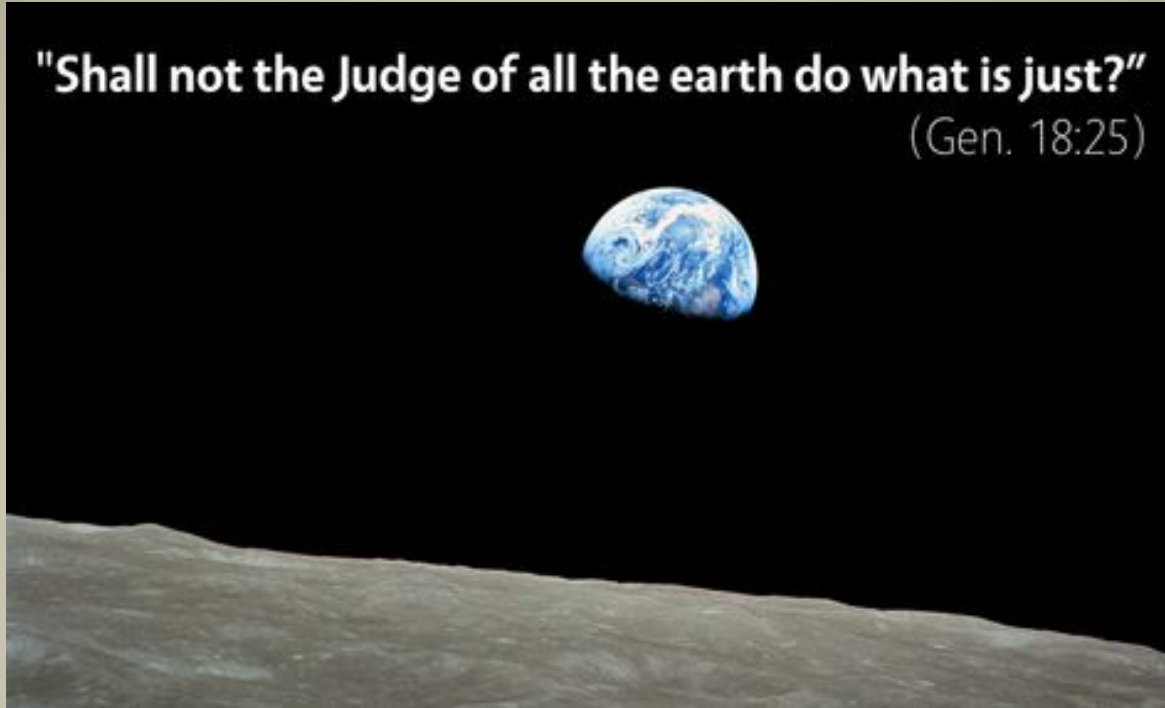
“When it comes to rebuilding a shattered world, you do not wait for permission.” Rabbi Jonathan Sacks



## ABRAHAM'S FAITH

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

(Gen. 18:25)



## NOAH'S FAILURE

“Noah’s end—drunk, disheveled, an embarrassment to his children—eloquently tells us that if you save yourself while doing nothing to save the world, you do not even save yourself. Noah, so the narrative seems to suggest, could not live with the guilt of survival.” Rabbi Sacks

Noah walked with God.  
(Genesis 6:9)

The Lord said to Abraham,  
“Walk before me.” (Genesis  
17:1)

*“The meaning of this phrase can be understood by a parable. A king had two sons, one grown up, the other a child. To the child he said, ‘Walk with me.’ But to the adult son he said: ‘Walk before me.’”*

Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.)



Tomb of R. Yehuda in Galilee



# The Danger of the Messianic Hope

“For centuries, Jews were suspended between a remote miraculous past (the biblical era) and an equally remote miraculous future (the messianic age).”

Rabbi Sacks

Rabbinic midrash on *Lamentations* “maintains a prudent resistance to focusing on a messianic future. Messianism is often rooted in a negative attitude towards the present, which results in an undue focus on the future.”

Prof. Yael Ziegler

“If you are holding a sapling in your hand and someone tells you, 'The Messiah is coming!', first finish planting the tree and then go greet the Messiah.”

R. Yochanan ben Zakkai

Matthew 24:36

*“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in **heaven**, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Acts 1:7



“God’s blessings are material as well as spiritual—good crops, fine harvests, a land of plenty, and a politics of peace....To be a Jew is to celebrate life, to see God in life, and to make a blessing over life.”

Rabbi Sacks



Mobile shower for the homeless

***Ezekiel 34:26–27***

“...I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land.”