




**“JEWISH VIEWS OF
DEATH AND OUR
RESPONSE”**

“Going, Going, Gone!”

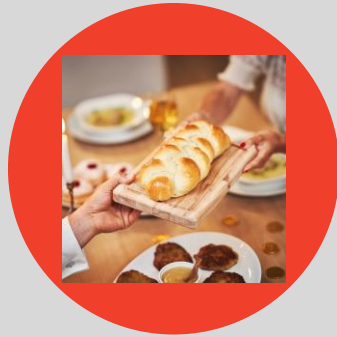
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**“DEATH IS HELL AND NIGHT AND
COLD, IF IT IS NOT TRANSFORMED
BY OUR FAITH. BUT THAT IS WHAT IS
JUST MARVELOUS, THAT WE CAN
TRANSFORM OUR DEATH.”**

-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer --

Presentation Overview...



**TRADITIONS/BELIEFS
AROUND DEATH**



**BECOMING MORE
EFFECTIVE IN
RESPONDING TO
DEATH/DYING**



**HOW TO TEACH
CHRISTIANS &
CHURCHES**



JEWISH TRADITIONS/BELIEFS AROUND DEATH

<https://youtu.be/0N9DNqjuqVk>



Jerusalem Post

(16 December 2021)

**Less than half
of American
Jews believe
in an afterlife.
Less than half
believe in God.**

Biblical Texts about Death/Dying...

- **Sheol Mentioned/Inferred – Job 26:6; Ps. 88:10; 89:48; Pro. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; 27:20; 30:16; Is. 14:9; 26:14, 19; Hab. 2:5**
- **Terms for Sheol**
 - **Cistern (*bôr*) – Ps. 28:1; 30:3; 88:6; Lam 3:53, 5; Ezek. 32:30**
 - **Destruction/Pit (*šahat*) – Job 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30; Ps. 16:10; 30:9; 103:4**
 - **Destruction (*abaddôn*) – Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11**

Biblical Texts about Death/Dying...

- **Adonai Is Aware of Sheol – Job 26:6; Pro. 15:11; Ps. 30:3; 139:8**
- **Is There Praise for Adonai in Sheol? – Ps. 6:5; 88:11; Is. 38:18**
 - **Response – Ps. 16:9-11; 73:23-26; 139:7-10**
 - **Resurrection Texts – Job 19:26; Is. 26:19; Dan. 12:2 (possibly 1 Kgs. 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:31-37; 13-21; Ezek. 37:3-14)**
 - **What about the Intertestamental Texts? – 2 Macc. 7; 2 Bar. 49:1-50:4; 2 Esdr. 7:97; 1 Enoch 91-104**



Jewish Concept of Death...

- **Marked by transitions in Jewish history**
- **Marked by numerous views and the idea of Biblical evolution**

Defining Quotes...

“There is no single, authoritative Jewish position or doctrine on the afterlife.” – Rabbi Barry Leff

**“I don’t want to attain immortality through my work. I want to attain immortality by not dying.” –
Woody Allen**

Defining Quotes...

“Judaism views every death as tragic. That remains part of the Jewish tradition even after Judaism came to affirm that it does not mark the end of our relationship to God, or of God’s power to affect our ultimate destiny... That the later tradition could literally stand these biblical sources on their head is striking testimony to Judaism’s power to unearth new and strikingly original layers of meaning in ancient, that is, to the power of midrash.” – Neil Gillman, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought*

Classical Jewish Positions – Summarized by Rifat Sonsino/Daniel B. Syme

- **After Death ... Perhaps Nothing**
- **Down to Sheol**
- **Resurrection of the Body & Soul (Hell & Paradise)**
- **Immortality**
- **Reincarnation**
- **Living on Through Our Deeds**



Perhaps Nothing...

**“Religious
agnosticism in some
aspects of this whole
area is not only
legitimate but
altogether
desirable...”
(Orthodox Rabbi
Louis Jacobs)**



Resurrection, Hell & Paradise

- **“Cardinal belief of Rabbinic Judaism”**
- **HaOlam Haba, Gan Eden issues of terminology**
- **Who goes to Gehenna? Forever?**
- **What is the soul?**



Kabbalah, Reincarnation and the Zohar

- **Up to 4 lifetimes**
- **Reincarnation not mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures**
- **Sara Yoheved Rigler: Holocaust victims are reborn – even in Christian bodies**



CREATE


What We Leave Behind...

“Our spiritual endurance beyond death, however, is dependent upon what our children do. If they condemn or scorn our values, there is no spiritual immortality through them.”

Roland Gittelsohn

Michael Bloomberg...

“I am telling you if there is a God, when I get to heaven I’m not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It’s not even close.” (2014)



**HOW “WE” MUST BECOME
MORE EFFECTIVE IN
RESPONDING TO THE ISSUE
OF DEATH/DYING**

Personal Views & Thoughts...

- 1) Be honest with ourselves and with the Jewish people we encounter – “Jean Metcalf Condition”**
- 2) Be transparent to those we have been called to reach with the truth of Messiah Jesus – “Sonya Lederer Stubbornness”**
- 3) Be vulnerable to those we love so dearly – “Josef Hausner/Developing a Romans 9:3 Heart”**



Particularists OR Universalists?

**Do we truly
believe & practice
John 14:6 & Acts
4:12 in our
mission life? For
this will influence
how we...**



**HOW TO TEACH
CHRISTIANS & CHURCHES
WITHOUT CONFUSION**

Defining Quote for Many Christians...

“I’ve been afraid since birth. I’m not sure I ever bounced back after reading of young Beth’s death in ‘Little Women.’ I’ve been scared of life and my dying for sixty-some years now.”

Anne LaMott (Christian writer)

Personal Views & Thoughts...

- 1) Share Jewish customs and traditions (i.e., Shiva, Kaddish, Yahrzeit) but do not at the expense of the need of evangelism and outreach – avoid minutiae**
- 2) Note that the Kaddish Prayer is not to be a prayer FOR the dead but a prayer of praise to God**
- 3) Relate that while rabbis do not often talk about death – JCC seminars on the topic are very popular!**

Personal Views & Thoughts...

- 4) Convey the biblical background of two key NT resurrection texts to Christians and churches**
 - **1 Corinthians 15 – earliest Biblical text written around AD 35 – Paul interviewing all Jewish believers**
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:13-14**
- 5) Consider introducing them to Pinchas Lapide**
- 6) Teach them the truth of Romans 11:26!!!**

Selected Bibliography...

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