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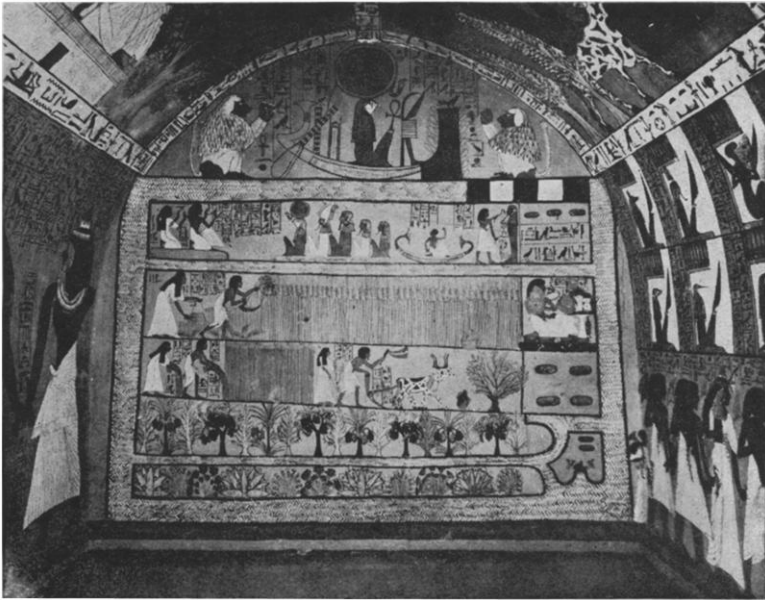


Fig. 1. An Egyptian view of the hereafter. The painting from a tomb at Deir el-Medina (c. 1200-1100 B.C.) shows, in the top rectangular panel, the deceased and his wife before a council of gods. At the right is the mortuary ceremony "opening of the mouth." In the second row grain is harvested, and at the right the man sits before a well-laden table. The third row shows the pair gathering another crop and plowing. At the bottom are orchard and garden to provide food for the deceased. (*Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*)

ISRAELITE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

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It is well, when we start to discuss what the ancient Israelites thought

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about immortality, to have a reasonably clear idea of what we mean when we say "immortality." Though the semanticists warn us against the peril of being bound by overweening desire for exact definition, in this case some defining of our term is essential. It is not uncommon to hear the assertion that the ancient Israelites had no belief in immortality and that we must look to the rabbinic literature or the New Testament for any teaching on the subject. The truth of this statement depends on what the speaker means; for "immortality" in common usage may have quite different meanings. By etymology the word means "not mortal," hence "not subject to death." But this brings up the question of what we mean by death.

If we take death in its ordinary sense, the cessation of functioning of the individual organism, there would be very little immortality in the Old Testament. In classical literature the striking example is Tithonus, the handsome Trojan hero of whom the goddess Eos became so enamored that she secured for him immortality. She overlooked, however, the matter of securing for him perpetual youth, so that his undying body shriveled and grew feeble until eventually he became a grasshopper. In the Old Testament there are two characters, Enoch and Elijah, who are presumed to have been exempt from death. The statement about Enoch (Gen. 5:24) is a bit cryptic: "and he was not; for God took him." This may be but a figurative way of saying that he died, though the natural and generally accepted interpretation holds that Enoch was translated to be with God and that he did not die as did his forbears and his descendants (Ecclus. 44:16; 49:14; Heb. 11:5). The story about the translation of Elijah (II K 2:1-12) is more explicit. There appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." There is no doubt here that the author meant to present Elijah as one taken up bodily into heaven without enduring the experience of death. But Enoch and Elijah were exceptions; their kind of immortality was not man's normal hope.

An idea of immortality which we need not discuss at great length is one resembling the old principle of the indestructibility of matter. That holds that man is immortal, even though his body dies and decomposes and his individual soul is snuffed out, because he still lives in the lives of his children and their children, in the memory of his friends and those of subsequent generations who hear about him, and in the influence that his actions inevitably exert on society long after he is forgotten. Thus a poet, a composer, or a philosopher is called immortal because of his impact on human thought and conduct, not because of any belief in his persevering individuality. In this sense there is nothing mystical about immortality and most persons would say that this immortality is only figurative. It is true that the Israelite highly desired that his name be held in remembrance

(Ps. 112:6; Pr. 10:7) and to that end formulated the law of levirate marriage (Gen. 38:6-12; Dt. 25:5-10; Ruth 4:5, 10). A most cherished possession was abundance of children (Ps. 127:4, 5; 128:3; Ruth 4:11). But this did not constitute his total conception of immortality.

A third sort of immortality is that in which the body dies but the spirit continues its individual existence. In this concept there are many variations, some positing the possibility of great happiness or of terrible punishment and some consigning the spirit to a shadowy, drear, joyless existence unsusceptible to pleasure or to pain. People who have believed in immortality generally have pictured the life after death as in this category and have represented it in story and song as well as in their theological discussions. These people constitute the great majority of mankind and the Israelites belonged to them.

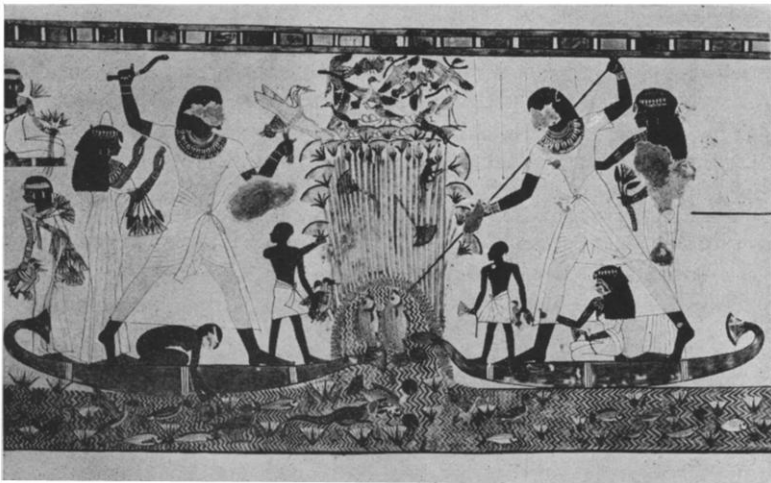


Fig. 2. A wall painting in the tomb of Menna (c. 1420-1411 B.C.) shows the deceased noble, supported by his wife and other members of the household fowling and fishing in the marshes. (Davies and Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Paintings*)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Naturally, the first source from which we seek information regarding a belief of the Israelites is the Old Testament, and this is the source which has been used almost exclusively until recently by scholars who have discussed the subject. Some of them have assumed that like other theological beliefs the concept of immortality among the Hebrews was subject to regular, orderly development. As the Israelites progressed from animism and fetishism through polythism and henotheism to monotheism, so in thinking of the human soul they progressed from no thought of the after life through a belief in the shades of Sheol, the continuing reputation of the good man, and future rewards or punishment to the doctrine of resurrection. To this

schematization there are two obvious objections: (1) we have no evidence of any unity of belief about this question among the Hebrews; the few references that we have are statements by individual authors; and (2) such orderly development in thought among a whole people is highly unlikely. The Israelites, with all their nationalism and particularism, were not an insulated group developing in accord with any rigid formula.

So in studying the Israelite ideas of immortality we must consider the ideas of the surrounding nations, with whom the Israelites had constant commerce, and the concepts held generally by mankind. Today we have a mass of evidence collected by anthropologists in remote places and a vast store of archaeological material unearthed in the Near East.

BELIEFS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

It would be a mistake to think that belief in immortality develops as a people advances in knowledge and civilization. Non-belief in immortality is not a mark of the savage; it comes with the growth of sophistication and skepticism, when man wants to be shown. All over the world there are "backward" peoples using only the most elementary tools and weapons, but with elaborate beliefs about what happens after death.

As a premise to continued existence there is concept of a spirit which is connected with the body but which has possibility of function independently. It is this spirit or breath (Hebrew *ruach* or *neshamah*) which gives life to the body. In Gen. 2:7 God forms man from dust of the ground and blows into his nostrils the breath of life (*nishmath chayyim*) and man becomes a living soul (*nephesh chayyah*). It is a wide-spread belief that this spirit may go about and have experiences while the body is stationary. In dreams the man may engage in enterprises and meet adventures pleasing or terrifying. Among primitive groups and even in some highly sophisticated circles dreams have been considered real experiences apart from the Freudian implications.

That the Hebrews believed in the reality of dream experiences is evident from many narratives in the Old Testament. These dreams could be predictive of future events, as in the cases of Joseph (Gen. 37:5-10), the Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1-24), the Midianite before Gideon's victory (Jg. 7:13-14), and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. Chs. 2, 4). They also could be used by God to communicate promises and commands, as to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:12-17), to Laban (Gen. 31:24), and to Ezekiel. The dream of Solomon at Gibeon (I K 3:4-15), in which he asked for wisdom and God promised him that and riches and honor besides, was considered just as valid as if there had been a real divine appearance. There is wide-spread belief in the reality of the double, like the German *Doppelgänger* or the Egyptian *ka*, which accompanies the individual or has experiences of its own.

It is but natural to believe that the spirit which animates the body can also continue after death. A man dies when his spirit or breath leaves him; but this spirit endures as an entity. The origin of this concept used to be considered the dream. As a sleeping man saw dead friends and relatives walking around and conversed with them, it was held that he came to consider these dream personalities as actual beings who were still alive although

their bodies were dead. This hypothesis of the dream as the basis for belief in immortality has been effectively discounted by Walter F. Otto in a small book *Die Manen oder von den Urformen des Totenglaubens*, Berlin 1923 (to which Professor Henri Frankfort has called my attention). The dead persons whom we encounter in dreams are different from the spirits of the dead as conceived by primitive people as well as by classical authors. In the dream the dead person appears to be as he was in life, with tangible bodily form, while the ghost, though it may be seen and recognized and may speak, eludes all attempts to embrace it and fades away if the living person comes too near. Moreover in the dream the dead person is considered as

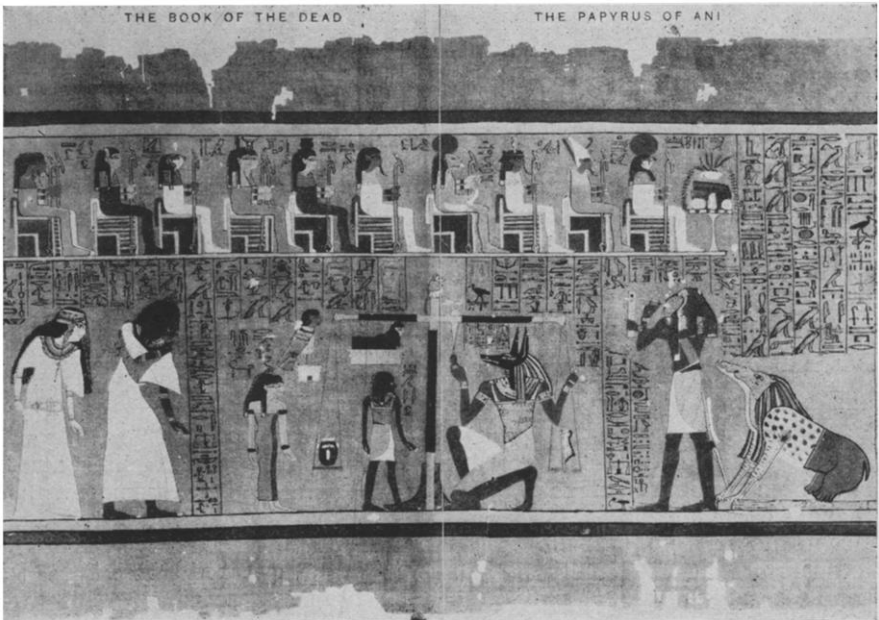


Fig. 3. A judgment scene from The Book of the Dead. The deceased man, Ani, and his wife enter in humble attitude. The jackal-headed god (Anubis) weighs the heart of Ani, represented by the jar, against Truth, represented by the feather. At the right the ibis-headed god (Thoth), pen in hand, is ready to record the verdict, which if unfavorable will condemn the deceased to be eaten by the crocodile-headed monster. At the top, in august stillness, sits the divine jury. (Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, pl. 3)

normal and natural; there is no fear of him; but there is an almost universal fear of ghosts except on the part of the sophisticated and the spiritualists. Even if there had been no dreams it is probable that there would have been the idea that the human personality continued after death. At least all primitive peoples that we know about have a firm belief in immortality.

It is, therefore, most unlikely that the Israelites ever had a preanimistic stage or that there was any time in their history when any great proportion of them thought that for the individual death ended all.

IMMORTALITY AMONG THE EGYPTIANS

According to the Bible and an abundance of archaeological evidence Israel through its history had constant contact with Egypt. From the time of Joseph to the Exodus what then constituted the Israelite nation was in the Nile delta. Moses was educated in the Egyptian court, where he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). When the children of Israel left Egypt "a mixed multitude went up also with them" (Ex. 12:38). Excavations in Palestine have produced quantities of Egyptian objects in all pre-exilic periods. Solomon married an Egyptian princess to whom her father gave Gezer as dowry (I Ki. 3:1; 9:16). Jeroboam on fleeing from Solomon took refuge with Shishak, the Pharaoh, who afterwards invaded Palestine (I Ki. 11:40; 14:25; II Chr. 12:2-11), leaving the stele which the Oriental Institute found at Megiddo. When Israel became engulfed in international politics Egypt, though no longer the great power that it had been in the second millennium B.C., always was a factor. The northern kingdom in its rebellion against Assyria made an ineffectual alliance with Egypt (II Ki. 17:4) and Judah contained a pro-Egyptian party which vainly trusted in the Egyptians to keep off the Assyrians and later the Babylonians (II Ki. 18:21, 24; Jer. 37:5-7). Pharaoh Necho killed Josiah at Megiddo and later deposed Jehoahaz, whom he carried to Egypt (II Ki. 23:29-34). Jeremiah, after the fall of Jerusalem, was taken with the band of Jewish refugees to Egypt, where the Jews aroused the indignation of the prophet by participation in Egyptian religious ceremonies (Jer. 43:4-7; 44:8, 15). There developed in Egypt at Elephantine a considerable colony of Jews, who built a temple and left for us the famous Elephantine papyri.

It is obvious, then, that things Egyptian were not strange to Israel and, since the Egyptians were decidedly religious, the Israelites must have been familiar with many of their beliefs. As is well known, the thought of immortality was the predominant motive in Egyptian religion. From the great pyramids on down the principal monuments were erected to guarantee for the royalty or the nobility happiness in the hereafter. It has been said that the Egyptian spent all his life preparing for his life after death.

Not a simple doctrine was the Egyptian's faith regarding immortality; nobody attempted to systematize his theology. He held widely varying views as to what happened after the death of the body and the inconsistency of his views bothered him none at all. In the age of the pyramids great importance was attached to the preservation of the body. There was the elaborate and lengthy ceremony of mummification, which would keep the body from disintegration, and the ritual of the mortuary priests, who by various acts restored the different bodily functions until the individual became a soul (Egyptian *ba*). The *ka*, or double, had preceded into the hereafter to guide the deceased on his further adventures. Strictly speaking this is not immortality; for presumably the individual would pass into oblivion if the proper ceremonies were omitted. Moreover this sort of life after death was attainable only by kings and those of sufficient influence to provide for the elaborate services. What the common people and slaves thought of their chances in the

hereafter we are not told.

A rather materialistic view of life after death persisted during the career of ancient Egypt even after we find references to more idealistic concepts. The spirit of a dead man could inhabit his body and go out from it for adventure so long as the body remained. He could enjoy the food which was daily offered at his tomb by an endowed priesthood. He could also enter his statue in his tomb and emerge through the false door

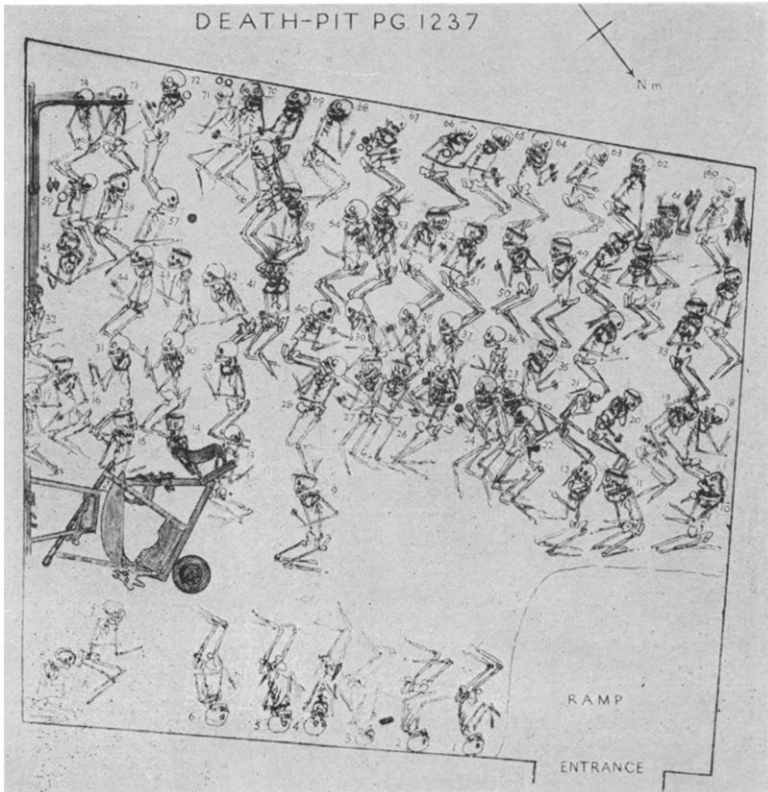


Fig. 4. The retinue of an early Babylonian king is buried, ostensibly to serve him in the after life. From the Royal Cemetery at Ur. (Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, Vol. II, pl. 71; by permission of the University Museum, Philadelphia)

for mundane enjoyment. He could enter his picture on the tomb wall and enjoy the hunting, fishing, sailing, and harvest scenes there portrayed. For him the happy future was the repetition of the pleasant experiences of the present life. Even after the pyramids and other tombs of their predecessors were robbed, statues broken, portraits erased, and names hacked out, the kings and nobles continued to build elaborate tombs,

endow priesthoods, and provide for mummification, blandly hoping that it could not happen to them.

Even in prehistoric times, however, the Egyptian undoubtedly had other ideas of the hereafter. There were certain tests which the dead man must undergo. He would be beset by snakes and other malevolent creatures which would cause him harm if he could not repeat the proper magical formulae. So the later pyramids of the Old Kingdom were provided with these formulae, known to us as the Pyramid Texts, inscribed on the walls. In the Middle Empire these formulae had developed into the Coffin Texts; i.e., they were inscribed on the coffins and hence were not restricted to kings. By the time of the Late Empire they were written on papyrus and available to anyone who could afford them to be placed with his body in the coffin. In this form they are known as the Book of the Dead. Scribes produced copies leaving blank places for the names of prospective purchasers. So eventually immortality of this nature had become possible for anyone who could raise the price.

The Egyptian god most concerned with the hereafter was Osiris, who himself had been killed by his brother Set and then restored to life through the efforts of his wife and sister Isis. As far back as the Pyramid Texts the dead king was identified with Osiris and later the hope of becoming an Osiris was open to all. And even in the Old Kingdom there was a feeling that happiness in the hereafter depended somewhat on the conduct of the individual in his lifetime. In the judgment before the gods the weighing of the heart was an all important ceremony. If a man's life had been ordered on the proper lines the balances would show that his heart was true, but if he had been evil in his life his heart would testify against him. Along with this ethical concept, however, was the belief in the efficacy of magic. In the Book of the Dead there is a chapter containing formulae to prevent the heart from testifying against the man.

Since so much of the literary material of the Egyptians deals with the hereafter, it is possible to trace definite developments in their beliefs. The late James H. Breasted did this effectively in *The Dawn of Conscience*, Chicago 1935. Before the advent of the Hebrews we know that the Egyptians had developed many facets in their thought of the hereafter. The dead man, if lacking the proper mortuary attention, might be assigned to oblivion or, if he could not meet the tests in the judgment, he might be consumed by one of the monsters blocking the way. If he passed the tests, he could repeat his earthly experiences in familiar settings. If his magic were sufficiently powerful he could, like Proteus, assume any form, such as falcon, crocodile, heron, swallow, serpent, lily, or god. He could join the sun god and make the daily journey across the sky; he could become one of the circumpolar stars which never set; he could "go west" to the realm of the dead. Some of the dead, particularly those compelled to walk head downward were considered malevolent spirits who could work harm on other dead or on the living. There were charms to protect children against the dire designs of such demons.

That not all Egyptians believed in the efficacy of the mortuary paraphernalia is certain. There was a healthy skepticism about the details

of the dogma of the future life. In the popular Song of the Harper the blind singer declares :

None cometh from thence
That he may tell us how they fare ;
That he may tell us of their fortunes,
That he may content our heart,
Until we too depart
To the place whither they have gone.

.....

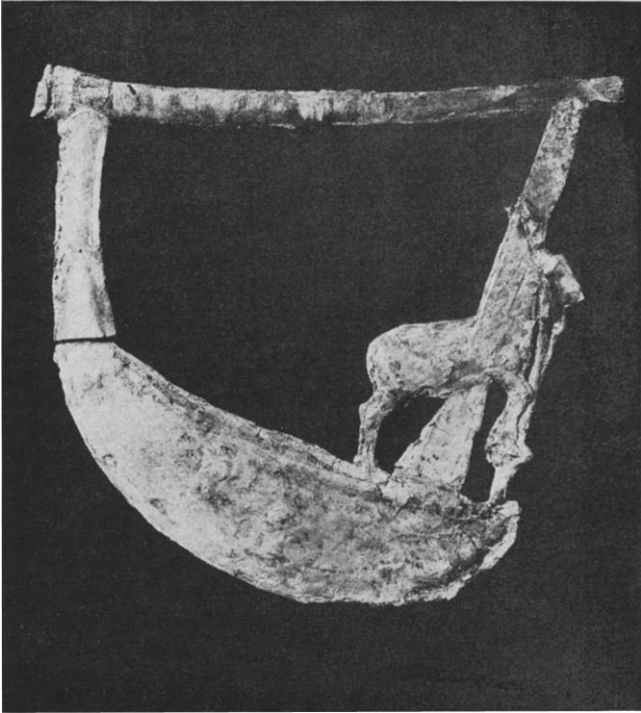


Fig. 5. A silver lyre from the Great Death Pit, Royal Cemetery, Ur. Evidently the deceased king was to enjoy music. (*University Museum Bulletin*, June, 1944, fig. 13)

Lo, no man taketh his goods with him
Yea, none returneth again that is gone hither
(*The Dawn of Conscience*, pp. 163, 164).

And throughout the career of Egypt there have been tomb robbers, who were not in the least afraid of the dead and gleefully despoiled the cemeteries of any valuable objects they could find. We can presume, moreover, that not every nobleman who provided for himself an elaborate tomb was sure that his equipment would help him in the after life. The Song of the Harper was engraved on tomb walls. Probably the skeptical

nobleman thought that there might be something to the teachings of the priests and preferred to take no unnecessary chances.

BABYLONIAN BELIEFS

When we look at the Babylonian literature we find no such elaborate presentations of the hereafter as those from Egypt. We do know that Babylonian thought exerted an influence on Hebrew theology, as can be seen by comparing such Babylonian poems as those dealing with creation and the Flood with the accounts in Genesis, and we should expect to find similarities in views of the hereafter. Many have pointed out the Babylonian's concern with prosperity here and some have assumed that he had no care for the life to come. It would be a mistake, however, to say that he thought that death ended the existence of the individual.

In both the Semitic and the Sumerian versions of the Epic of Gilgamesh, one episode concerns Gilgamesh's quest for immortality or immunity from death. This he is not granted; but when after his death he goes to the underworld he has by no means lost his individuality, and his experiences there are not void of interest. S. N. Kramer in his article "The Death of Gilgamesh" (*Bulletin of the Am. Schs. of Or. Research* 94, April, 1944, pp. 2-12) gives a translation of some hitherto uninterpreted fragments of the Sumerian material. It seems that Gilgamesh has died and descended to the nether world, where he is to become king. To the deities and priests of the underworld he offers gifts not only from himself but also from "his wives, children, musicians, chief valet, and attendants." Kramer thinks the most plausible explanation is that the palace retinue was buried with Gilgamesh and "that Gilgamesh performs the placation rites essential to the comfortable sojourn in the nether world." He offers the suggestion that this passage may explain the mass burials uncovered by Woolley in the tombs of Ur, where actually the whole retinue, including animals, was buried with the man who presumably was the king.

Kramer also calls attention to a poem about Ur-Nammu, who also died and went to the nether world. Ur-Nammu presents gifts to the proper deities, is assigned his habitation, is "greeted by certain of the dead, and made to feel at home." He is not completely satisfied, however, because he is reminded of the unfinished walls that he left, his wife whom he could no longer embrace, and his child whom he could no longer take on his knee. Evidently Gilgamesh and the men buried at Ur were providing for a continuation of family life.

A choice few, who were spared the experience of death, were assigned to quarters in Dilmun, "the place where the sun rises," similar to the Elysian Plains of the Greeks. Ziusudra, the hero of the flood, attained Dilmun; but even so great a hero as Gilgamesh was unable to secure entrance there (*Bulletin*, December, 1944, p. 18).

There are in the Gilgamesh story some passages which present a picture of the underworld as a place where the dead dragged out a weary existence in gloom, eating dust, never seeing light, and clothed in feathers. It was called "the land of no return." But there are other passages which seem to promise a happier hereafter, particularly for a warrior slain in

battle. A proper burial was important; the spirit of an unburied man would wander about tormenting any victim it might encounter. Ashurbanapal, the Assyrian monarch, on conquering Susa desecrated the graves of the kings there, evidently intending to cause them discomfort.

We see, then, that the Babylonian and the Assyrian who followed him believed in immortality of a kind. They certainly did not think that a man's personality was obliterated by his death.

CANAANITE CONCEPTS

The people with whom the Israelites had the closest contact were the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land before the conquest and neighbors for centuries afterwards. The adoption of Canaanite religious practices by the men and women of Israel and Judah constituted the ground for the bitterest denunciations by the pre-exilic prophets. It is well established that the Canaanite literature had a direct influence on some of the poetic portions of the Old Testament. Without doubt

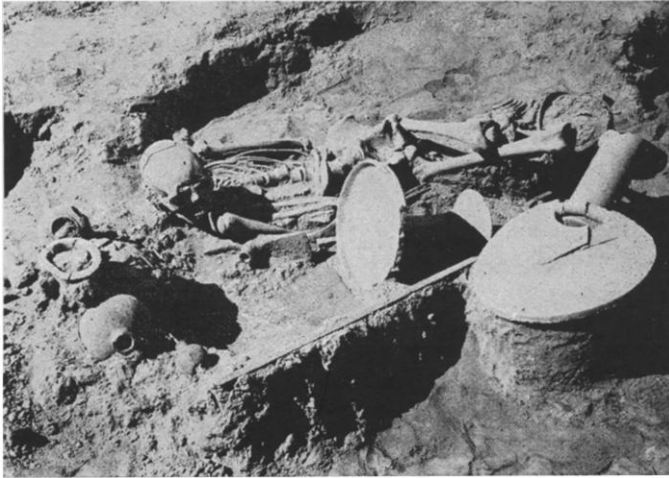


Fig. 6. A warrior's grave from Damghan, Persia (3rd millennium B.C.). The deceased was provided with vessels, weapons, and tools of alabaster, silver, copper, and clay. (Courtesy of the University Museum, Philadelphia)

Canaanite ideas about immortality would have effect among the Hebrews.

One of the most striking of the Ugaritic poems tells of the death and resurrection of Baal, who was slain by the hostile god Mot and later revived by his consort Anat. This reviving was accomplished by her carrying the body to a sacred mountain and performing elaborate sacrifices. The death and resurrection of the god played an important part in the religious observances of the Canaanites, as did the death and resurrection of Osiris among the Egyptians and of Tammuz among the Babylonians.

That the idea of immortality was applied to human beings also is shown by the Canaanite graves, where regularly there were placed vessels

and implements ostensibly to be used by the deceased in the after life. Thus there was always mortuary equipment in a burial of any importance and this would show a belief in the future life of the individual. Again we need not think that all Canaanites had such beliefs. There may have been some skeptics; but they conformed to the general practice, as today people who have no use for religion in daily life will call in a minister for a funeral.

IMMORTALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament there is no extended section dealing with the question of what happens to the spirit of the deceased. The references are only incidental and they express widely varying views of the authors. In the cases of Enoch and Elijah we have men who presumably were fully immortal. There are some instances of the revival of dead persons. Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath (I Ki. 17:17-24) and Elisha the son of the "great woman" of Shunem (II Ki. 4:17-37). The bones of Elisha brought life to a man who was buried in the prophet's sepulchre (II Ki. 13:21). These resurrections, however, had nothing to do with immortality; for we can suppose that the persons concerned finally died when their times arrived. Likewise the vision of Ezekiel (Ezek. 37), in which the dry bones of the valley were brought to life, does not intimate that the revived individuals were destined to eternal life.

The Bible has nothing parallel to the Egyptian idea of the dead man's continuing to inhabit his body or staying in his tomb to enjoy the experiences of his lifetime, though the story of the dead man's being raised by contact with Elisha's body shows a belief on the part of some that the prophet's efficacy remained in his bones. Evidently some Israelites believed that the dead could come back to their earthly habitats. There is the well known instance of Samuel's being called up by the witch of En-dor (I Sam. 28:7-20); and it is striking that the ghost of Samuel followed the pattern of Samuel in life by his unsympathetic censure of Saul, while if the woman had been an imposter she could have earned a good fee by producing a favorable message for her royal customer. Laws against those who had "familiar spirits" (Lv. 19:31; 20:6; Dt. 18:11) and Isaiah's denunciation of them (Is. 8:19; 19:3; 29:4) indicate their popularity. Manasseh encouraged them (II Ki. 21:6). Clearly these spirits were not bound to Sheol.

Sheol was in the popular mind the abode of the dead, called *repha'im* (which may mean "weakness," "shades"). It was much like the Babylonian "land of no return" and the Greek Hades; in fact, the Septuagint has Hades as the translation of Sheol. It was not a desirable habitation; "for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). Apparently all who died went there (Gen. 37:35; I Sam. 2:6), though some could escape from its power (Ps. 16:10; 49:15; 86:13). It should be noted that the translation "grave" for Sheol in the King James Version is misleading. There is quite another word, *qeber*, for grave. It is important to note that God was present in Sheol (Ps. 139:8) and that it was naked before him (Job 26:6; Pr. 15:11). But, though both good and bad were to go to Sheol, it was particularly a place for the wicked (Ps. 9:17; 55:15). An interesting

passage is Is. 14:9-11, where Sheol is pictured as being stirred at the approach of the king of Babylon, with all the kings of the nations rising from their thrones and saying, "Art thou also become weak as we; art thou become like unto us?"

It is apparent that there was no official plan of Sheol and that different Old Testament writers had different conceptions; but it is clear that life in it was not considered desirable.

There are some passages which seem to deny immortality. The well-known statement of Eccl. 12:7, "then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," closes the incident of Gen. 2:7. God had given man life by breathing into the dust-



Fig. 7. A shaft tomb of four chambers from Megiddo. This tomb, though it was dug earlier, was used most extensively by Canaanites during the Late Bronze period, shortly before the coming of the Israelites to Palestine. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

image and at death the spirit (*ruach*) would be taken back. The natural interpretation is that the individual ceases to exist, particularly in view of the next verse, "vanity of vanities." The same concept is in Ps. 104:29. We have like sentiment in Job 14:1-2: "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." Other such passages are: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee. In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead rise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave or thy faithfulness in destruction?" (Ps.

88:10-11). On the other hand there are a few passages which are definite statements of immortality. Job 19:25-26 cannot be used as one of these. In the English versions it seems to be a categorical statement to the effect that after the destruction of his body Job would see God; but the translation is only a guess—the Hebrew is unintelligible. There are, however, three well-known verses clearly based on belief in immortality. (1) "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). This is a late passage, written after contact with the Persians, who had a well-developed belief in different kinds of future life for the good and the evil. (2) "Thy dead shall live; my corpses shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is like the dew of herbs and the earth shall cast forth the dead (*repha'im*)"

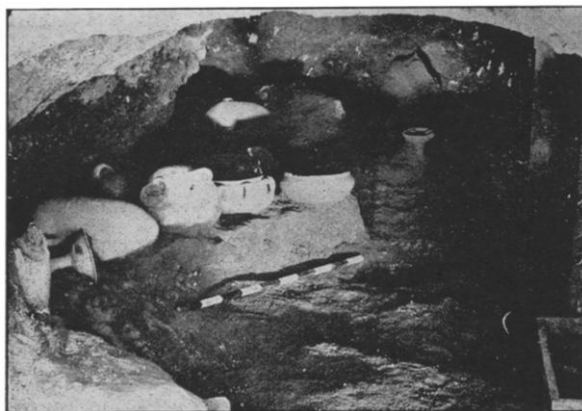


Fig. 8. A shaft tomb at Megiddo with pottery of the first Iron age, before the division of the Israelite monarchy. (*Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*)

(Isa. 26:19). There is a slight corruption of the Hebrew text of this verse and a few commentators have tried to explain it away; but it looks like a definite assertion that there is a resurrection. Some say that because it presents immortality it is post-exilic, as though we could be sure that such a doctrine was absent in the period of the monarchy. (3) "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24). Clearly this is eschatological.

Several other passages (e.g., Ps. 16:10; 49:15; Is. 25:8; Hos. 13:14) can well be taken as declarations of immortality of a much more genial type than life in Sheol.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

There are no pictures showing what the Israelite thought of the career of a soul after death; for such pictures would be a violation

of the Mosaic law. But Hebrew graves, like Canaanite graves, contain vessels and implements which presumably were to be used by the deceased in the after life. These graves, moreover, indicate the importance that was attached to proper burial. There were hurried burials in time of war when the proper tomb equipment could not be provided, but where there was the time the appropriate paraphernalia was included. Well prepared graves without such equipment are late. The Sadducees were accused of denying immortality, and possibly they were not concerned about putting useful objects in the grave.

By itself the archaeological evidence is not conclusive. Possibly the lamps, dishes, jars, and knives were placed in the graves as sym-

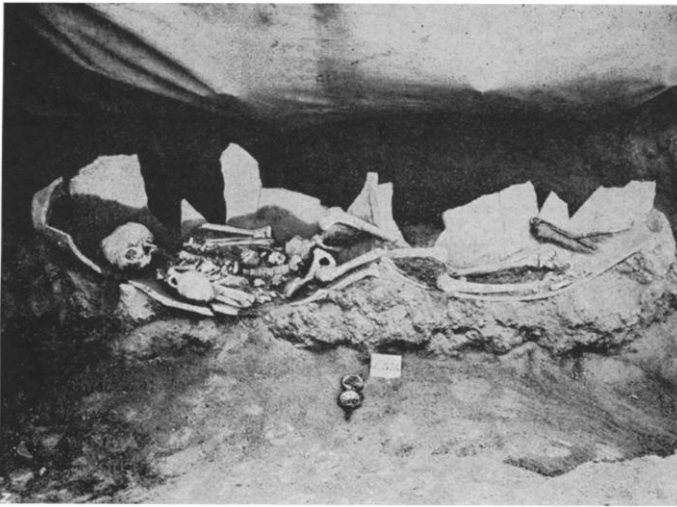


Fig. 9. A jar burial at Tell ej-Judeideh, Syria, tentatively dated 500-300 B.C. With the deceased were placed a pottery vessel, bronze ring, seal, iron ring, bronze dipper, and fragmentary iron knife. (*Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*)

bols or for sentiment (as a man may have a lodge emblem buried with him today), and the deceased may not actually have been expected to use the objects. But the implication is that death was not the end of the individual and that his soul would be benefited by the due respect to his body.

CONCLUSIONS

While there was no logical or systematic statement of what happened after death the Israelites throughout their career as a nation believed in an after life. There were a few skeptics who doubted this after life and probably many others who were not greatly concerned about it; but

the bulk of the population was confident of a personal existence which did not end with death.

There were variations in the belief from a colorless existence in a gloomy Sheol to a resurrection and reception into the presence of God. No Israelite writer, so far as we know, ventured to present any elaborate eschatological plan, as did the rabbis and the New Testament writers; but the Old Testament, together with the literature of the surrounding nations and the archaeological evidence, shows that always the Israelites had a real, though not uniform and not always definite, faith in a life beyond the grave.



Fig. 10. A burial at Beth-zur, 2nd century B.C. There were three such burials at this site and not one showed a trace of any mortuary equipment. The lack of such equipment was not due to hurry; for the graves were carefully dug. These graves show a respect for the dead, but no trust in material objects to help in the hereafter.

Apologies are due for our failure to get the successive issues of this journal distributed during the months when they are supposed to appear. Your patience is requested, not only with the Editor, but with our printer whose hair has grown several degrees grayer during the past year because of the shortage of labor.

Archaeological News and Views



ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON ANCIENT BURIAL CUSTOMS

As Professor Sellers has indicated in the article in this issue, the common method of burial in both Canaanite and Israelite Palestine was to lay the body in a tomb together with many objects used in daily life, particularly pottery dishes, jugs, and jars. The use of coffins was rare and sporadic. One was made for King Ahiiram of Byblos about 1100 B. C., and a number made of clay have been found in deposits of about the 12th century at Beth-shan and Sharuhen (*Tell el-Far'ah*). The latter were made from Egyptian models, and may have been used by the Philistines. Partial cremation was apparently known. According to I Sam. 31:11-13 the men of Jabesh-gilead burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, and then buried the bones. I think there is sufficient evidence to indicate that this was a common practice during the early fourth millennium in the period known as the Ghassulian, but thereafter was rare until the Jewish ossuary period of New Testament times.

As a rule tombs were family sepulchers like the Patriarchal cave of Machpelah (Gen. 49:29-32), so that when opened today they are found filled with a profusion of bones and objects. One such tomb at Jericho, dating c. 2500 B. C., had been used over a long period and some 800 pottery vessels were recovered from it. Two points in connection with such pottery have puzzled me for some time.

1. Taking their cue from Egypt, archaeologists have naturally assumed that these vessels held food and drink which the dead were

thought to need in the after-life. But Egyptian ideas regarding immortality were so different from those in the Fertile Crescent that the parallel does not necessarily hold. The interesting fact is that in the hundreds of Palestinian tombs which have been excavated, not a single clear remnant of food or drink has been found in the vessels, at least so far as I have been able to determine. One would naturally assume, as has been done, that the climate is so different from that in Egypt that food would be expected to disappear. Yet quantities of grain, fragments of bread, etc., have been found preserved in ruined houses; why should they not be in the tombs? Even wine, when evaporated, should leave a sediment. I see no other explanation than that little, if anything, was placed in these vessels.

For what reason, then, was pottery put in the tombs? We know that a feast was provided for the family and friends assembled for the funeral (cf. Jer. 16:7, Hos. 9:4). Perhaps the vessels in the graves were those used by the mourners. But why should they be placed in the tombs? To me the more probable answer is that this custom is an old survival from prehistoric times. Food may once have been placed in the tombs, but from the fourth millennium on in Palestine the vessels are only a symbolic and/or traditional survival of the primitive custom. In any event, this situation indicates that the dominant view of the after-life was not as materialistic as it was in Egypt.

2. During the Persian and Hellenistic periods (5th-1st cents. B.C.) the custom of placing a quantity of pottery in a tomb seems to have be-

come less popular (see Fig. 10). To be sure, few tombs of this period have been unearthed, but when we come to the Byzantine age after the 3rd century A.D., instead of large numbers of bowls and jugs, quantities of lamps are found (together, of course, with jewelry, small glass vessels, etc.). Changing views regarding the after-life are surely reflected in this situation, and the increasing use of lamps may have been due to the connection made between light, life, and immortality.

QUESTIONS SENT TO THE EDITOR

Questions are frequently sent in to the Editor, and they are heartily welcomed. In the list now on hand are the following:

1. *How did the people light fires in those days? I know that they kept fire in some sort of receptacle, brazier perhaps, but I cannot find a word anywhere as to the method of kindling a fire.*

This is a good question; it had never occurred to me to ask it! The answer is probably the fire-drill. While no remains of such drills have been found in Palestinian excavations to my knowledge, Egyptian archaeology has uncovered considerable evidence of them. In fact, Egyptian has a word for "fire-drill" and a hieroglyph representing it. See Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 504, signs U 28 and 29.

2. *In certain types of Sunday School lesson-helps, one frequently finds statements to the effect that the "needle's eye" of Mark 10:25 was really a gate in Jerusalem known by that name, through which a camel could go only if it knelt down and was unloaded. I have never seen any reference to such a gate in a scholarly work. Could you tell us anything about it?*

Since the large gates of walled cities would be difficult to open for each person wishing to enter, smaller gates were cut in them or beside them as a matter of convenience. The theory that one such small gate was the needle's eye of which Jesus spoke was probably originated by a modern tourist in the Near East (perhaps somewhat similar to the way in which Gordon's Calvary became accepted by many). However, we have no evidence to my knowledge that such gates in either ancient or modern times were ever called by such a name. The best commentators seem to believe that the simplest explanation of Jesus' words is the literal one and that it was a deliberate hyperbole. Professor Filson tells me of a rabbinic saying: "You are probably from Pumbeditha where they make an elephant pass through a needle's eye" (i.e., where they do the impossible).

3. *There is a widespread idea that Simon of Cyrene was a Negro. In view of the fact that Cyrene was a Greek colony founded as early as the seventh century B.C., how did this idea arise, and become so well fixed in present-day minds that many writers take it for granted? The obvious answer is that Cyrene is in Africa, but that seems insufficient reason.*

Yet I've been able to learn of no other reason. Many people today believe that Hannibal was a Negro and that the Egyptians were Negroes, their reason evidently being that our popular idea of Africa is that it is and was populated solely by colored people. Figures 1-3 in this issue show that the Egyptians represented themselves as light complexioned. Libyans in ancient Egyptian paintings are similarly represented (see Fig. 16 in the *Westminster Historical Atlas to the*

Bible—for which see below). Of course, the obvious answer to any query about Simon's color is that he was a Jew. Cyrene had a large colony of Jews. Besides the name "Simon" is simply the Greek spelling of the Hebrew name "Simeon."

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIBLE LIFE

A new book has just been published under this title by Madeleine S. and J. Lane Miller (Harper & Brothers, 1944, pp. 493, \$4.95). It is an unusual, interesting, and valuable work, written to provide the ordinary reader with a source-book of facts about the life of Biblical people. It attempts to answer the simple questions which the Biblical scholar and archaeologist ordinarily take for granted: how did the people dress; what were their houses, their cities, and their roads like; how did they live; what did they eat; what were their arts and crafts, their fauna and flora, their literature, fortifications, etc.? The book contains a mine of information not to be found in any other one place.

It is interesting to note that this book succeeds in large measure where most of the popular books on archaeology (e.g., those of Marston, Duncan, Caiger, and even Kenyon except where he deals with manuscripts) have failed. The reason is, in the first place, that they have not tried to write a history or archaeology as such, but have placed their work on a broader base. In the second place, they have tried to go to reliable sources wherever able to do so. Particular attention was paid to the publications of the American Schools of Oriental Research and to the work of the scholars connected therewith. The books of Albright, Burrows, and Glueck, for example, were read with care, and as a result

the authors gained an idea of what the best of modern scholarship is. Even *The Biblical Archaeologist* appears to have been useful. We are grateful for this knowledge, for the test of the success of such a journal as this should here be evident, at least in part.

The authors are to be heartily congratulated upon their work. Of course, one can always find things in such a book with which he does not agree. Most of them, however, are of a minor nature, and at least some have been corrected in the second printing. The volume was prepared primarily for the workers in our churches, and we heartily recommend it.

G. E. W.

THE WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL ATLAS TO THE BIBLE*

The tremendous lag between archaeological discovery and interpretation in the years before the present war is being overcome rapidly by biblical scholars. Basic summarization and evaluation has recently been done in the history and description of excavations (McCown), the religion of Israel (Albright), the inspiration and authority of the Bible (Burrows), and now historical geography (Wright and Filson). An adequate history of Israel yet remains to be written.

Professors Wright and Filson of McCormick Theological Seminary have done for this generation what George Adam Smith in his *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1915) did for the last,

*By G. Ernest Wright and Floyd V. Filson. With an Introductory Chapter by W. F. Albright. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1945. Pp. 114, 18 plates, 77 figures. \$3.50.

and much more besides. Smith's atlas was long on maps (58, including insets) but short on text. Wright and Filson have cut down the number of maps (39, including insets) and have provided a remarkably rich text profusely illustrated with striking photographs of Near Eastern scenes and artifacts. Their atlas includes, as does Smith's, a chronological table and a complete index of biblical sites (more complete than Smith's), but unfortunately they have not followed Smith in providing a bibliography for each historical period. This would compensate in part for the lack of documentation in the text itself.

The text is far more than explanatory notes on the maps. It is a remarkably full survey of Hebrew and Christian history (up to Constantine) in the light of the best in archaeology, linguistics, philology, geography, and historical criticism. Following W. F. Albright's excellent introductory article on "The Rediscovery of the Biblical World" and a chronological table, Chapter I considers "The Geography of Palestine" and Chapters II-VII "The World of the Patriarchs," "The Great Empires During the Sojourn in Egypt," "The Land of Canaan Before the Israelite Conquest," "The Exodus from Egypt," "Palestine During the Period of the Judges," and "The Political History of Israel

and Judah." Chapters VIII-X present a geographical discussion of enlarged section maps of Palestine. Chapter XI deals with "The Great Empires of Israelite Times," and Chapters XII-XVI follow the history down to the time of Constantine, treating successively "Maccabean and Herodian Palestine," "The Roman Empire at the Birth of Jesus," "Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus," "The Journeys of Paul," and "The Expansion of Christianity." Chapter XVII discusses "The History of Jerusalem" and Chapter XVIII "Excavations in Modern Palestine." The book concludes with indices to the maps and to the text, including a topographical concordance to the Bible.

It would be difficult to speak too glowingly of Wright's and Filson's work, of the excellent cartography of G. Barrois and Hal and Jean Arbo, and of the splendid format and printing of the volume. The whole is a thing of beauty and a delight to the inquiring mind. The Atlas has behind it not only the ripe scholarship of the editors but the expert advice and criticisms of Professors Albright, Burrows, and Sellers. This work will remain standard for many years. No biblical student can afford to be without it.

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