

# Resurrection 1



*Afterlife in the Bible*



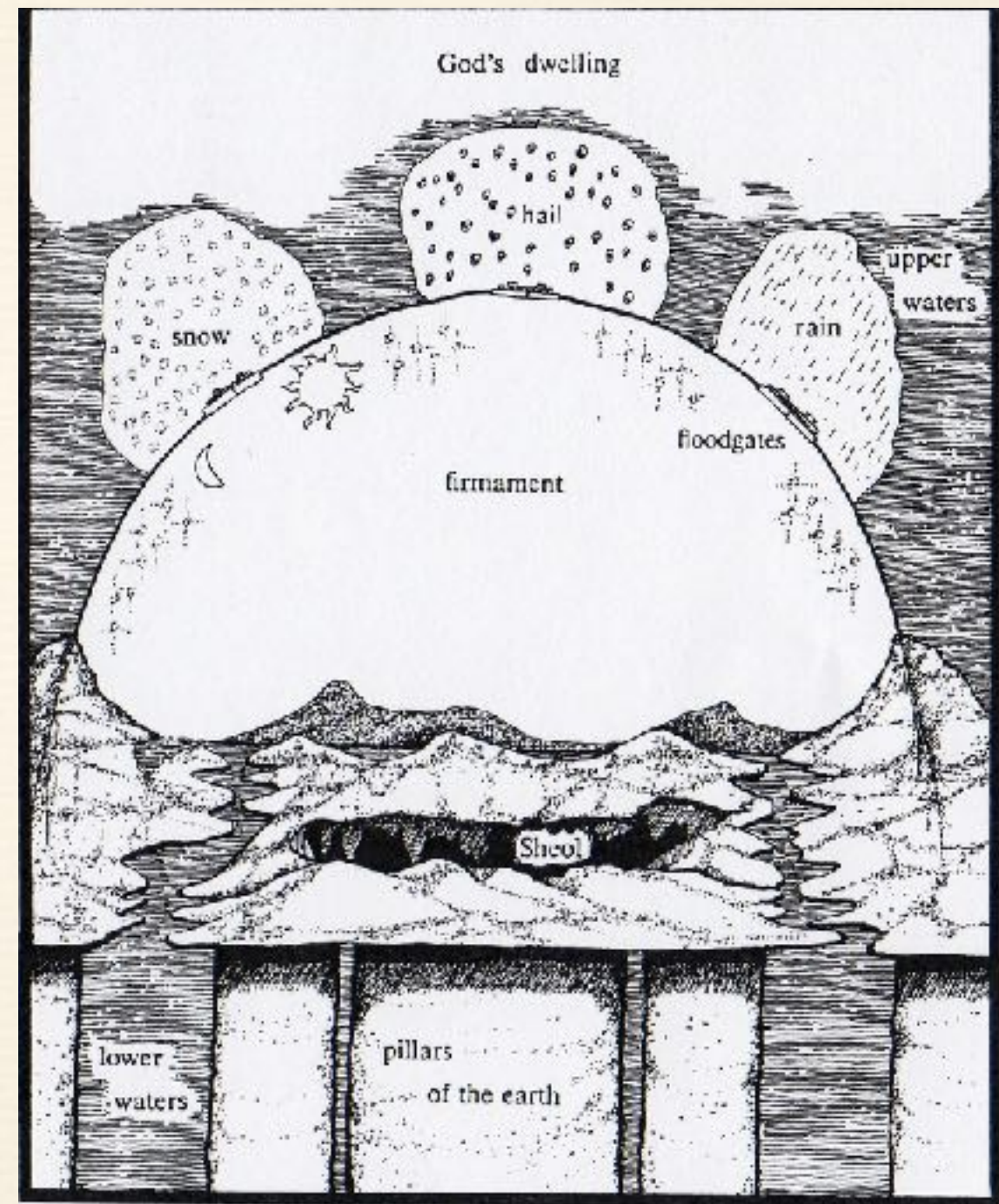
# Sequence

- ★ Life after death in the Bible
- ★ The general picture
- ★ Exceptions apparent and real
- ★ A language change
- ★ A doctrinal evolution



# Life after death in the Bible

- ★ Death was natural.
- ★ Not a problem if you lived to old age - problematic if you died young.
- ★ Not a problem, if you have children - childlessness was a problem.
- ★ They had a kind of “cosmology”.



A reconstruction of Ancient Hebrew Cosmology



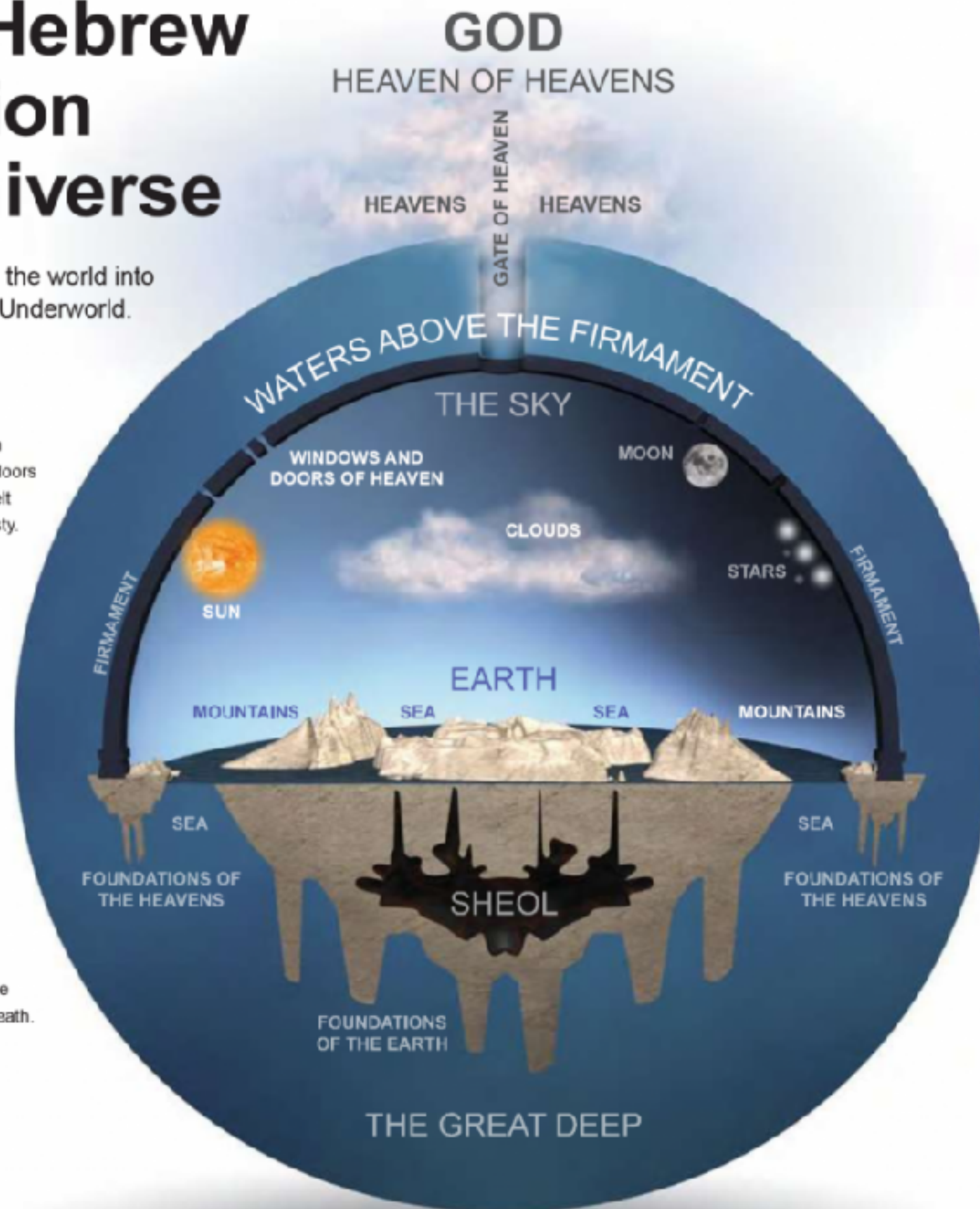
# Ancient Hebrew Conception of the Universe

The ancient Israelites divided the world into Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the Underworld.

They viewed the sky as a vault resting on foundations—perhaps mountains—with doors and windows that let in the rain. God dwelt above the sky, hidden in cloud and majesty.

The world was viewed as a disk floating on the waters, secured or moored by pillars. The earth was the only known domain—the realm beyond it was considered unknowable.

The Underworld (Sheol) was a watery or dusty prison from which no one returned. Regarded as a physical place beneath the earth, it could be reached only through death.



# Life after death in the Bible

Psa. 115:16      The heavens are the LORD'S heavens,  
but the earth he has given to human beings.

17 The dead do not praise the LORD,  
nor do any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD  
from this time on and forevermore.

Praise the LORD!



# General picture

- ★ Death as such is natural and unproblematic
- ★ Burial customs
- ★ Under “there” somewhat
- ★ Sheol: location, inhabitants, reachability

# Exceptions apparent and real

- ★ When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him. (Gen 5:21–24)
- ★ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. (2 Kings 2:11)



# Exceptions apparent and real

Psa. 16:9      Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.

10   For you do not give me up to Sheol,  
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

Psa. 16:11      You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.



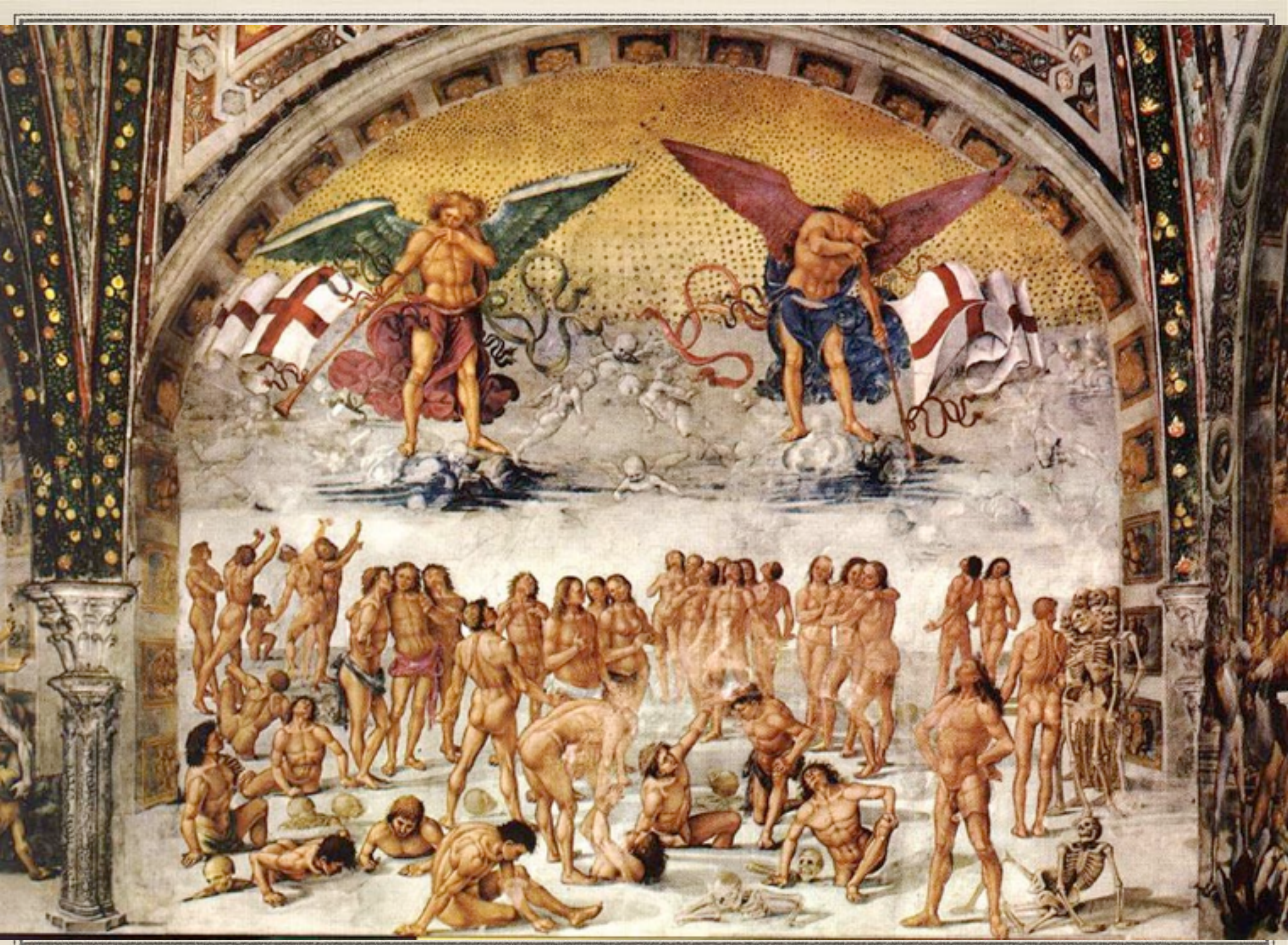
# Key passages

- ★ Isaiah 25 - “on this mountain”
- ★ Ezekiel 37 - the valley of the dry bones
- ★ Daniel 12 - awakening to everlasting life
- ★ 2 Maccabees 7 - the mother with seven sons
- ★ Wisdom 3 - the souls of the just are in the hands of God
- ★ 4Q521 f2ii+4:1 - He shall raise the dead

# A language change

- ★ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. (Ezek 37:7–10)
- ★ Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act,” says the LORD. (Ezek 37:11–14)







# Retribution

- ★ Retribution means that God gives to individuals and communities a degree of suffering that somehow corresponds to their sin or offense. The idea of retribution serves as a corner-stone for the central theological claim that God governs the world with justice.



# Daniel 12

- ★ Limit case of the traditional doctrine
- ★ Psalms 37 and 73
- ★ Apocalyptic literature
- ★ The political context
- ★ The nature of the speculation


# Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- ★ Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–64 bce) was the son of Antiochus III.
- ★ This figure is infamous in history, because of his attempt to suppress Judaism in Judah, and features prominently in Jewish literature.



# Alexander the Great

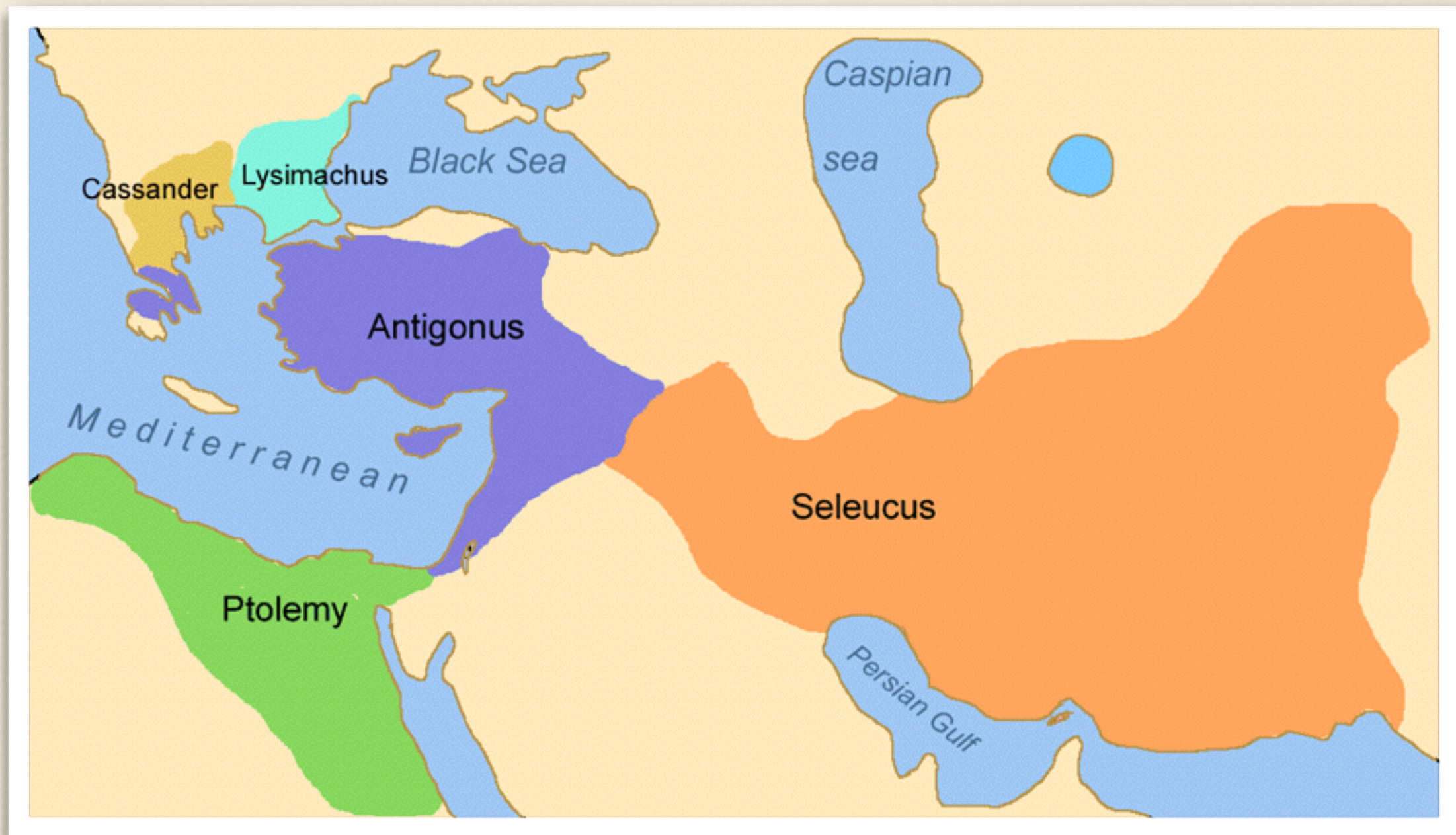


 The Empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander's conquests united Eurasia from Greece to India into a cultural and, briefly, a political unity.

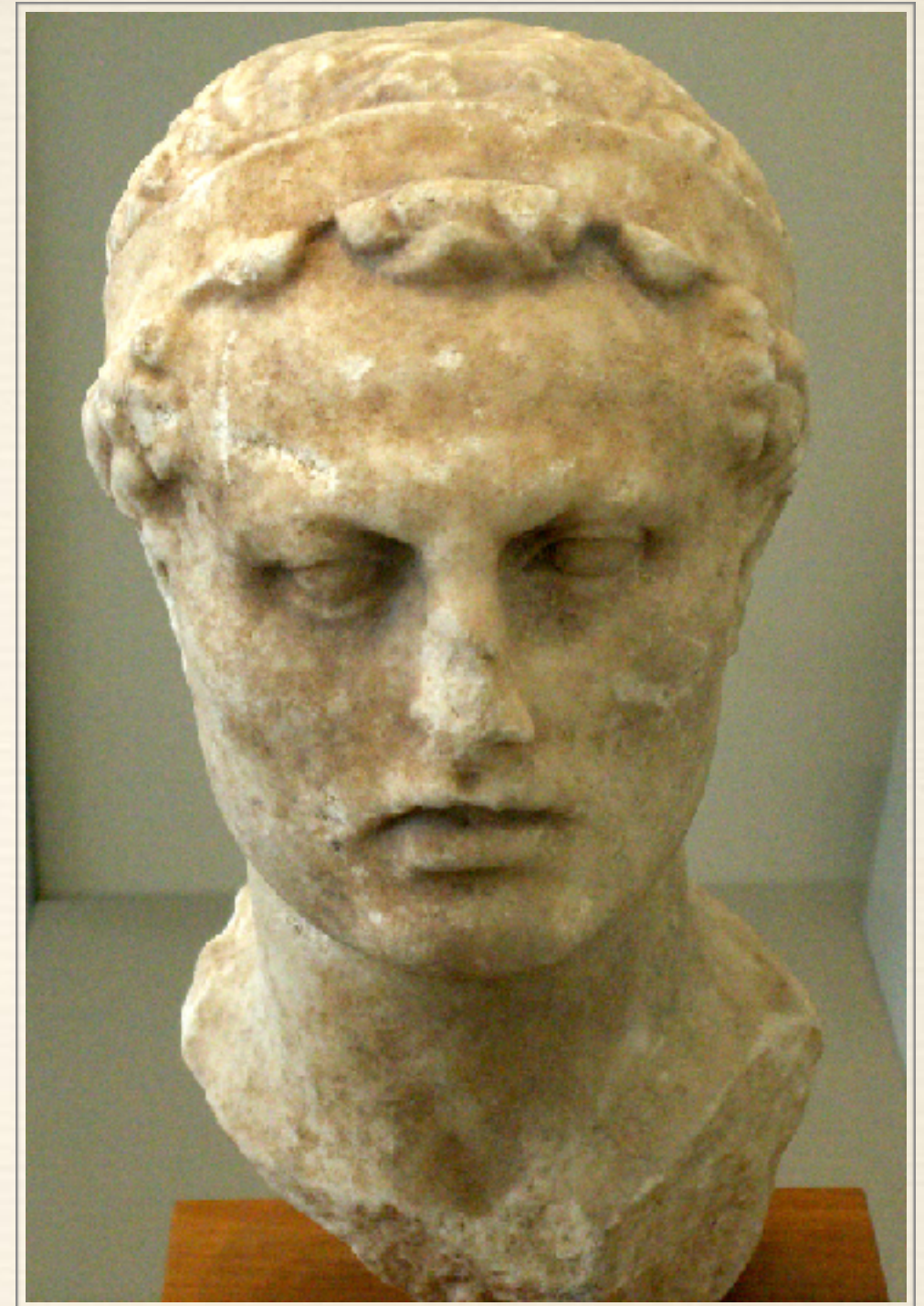




# After Alexander









# Dan 12

★ Dan. 12:1 “At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, and evil shall increase.”



# 2 Macc 7

★ 2Mac. 7:20 The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory. Although she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. 21 She encouraged each of them in the language of their ancestors. Filled with a noble spirit, she reinforced her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, 22 "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. 23 Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws."



# 2 Macc 7

27 But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native language as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant: “My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. 28 I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being. 29 Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God’s mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers.”



# Wisdom

- Wis. 3:1 But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.
- 2 In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,  
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
- 3 and their going from us to be their destruction;  
but they are at peace.
- 4 For though in the sight of others they were punished,  
their hope is full of immortality.
- 5 Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,  
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;
- 6 like gold in the furnace he tried them,  
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.
- 7 In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,  
and will run like sparks through the stubble.



# Wisdom

Wis. 7:1        I also am mortal, like everyone else,  
a descendant of the first-formed child of earth;  
and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh,  
2        within the period of ten months, compacted with blood,  
from the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage.  
3        And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air,  
and fell upon the kindred earth;  
my first sound was a cry, as is true of all.  
4        I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths.

Wis. 8:19        As a child I was naturally gifted,  
and a good soul fell to my lot;



# 1 Enoch 20-36

★ Chapters 20–36 of 1 Enoch (ca. 225 B.C.E.) recount Enoch's journeys across the face of the earth. In chap. 22 he sees the equivalent of Sheol, a mountain with three or four caves that contain the souls or spirits of all the dead, sorted according to kind until the final judgment. The righteous dwell in a bright place, refreshed by a fountain of water. Another compartment contains the spirits of persons (epitomized by Abel) who were murdered and cry out for divine vengeance. Their ultimate fate is not mentioned. The sinners are of two kinds. Those who were not

recompensed for their sins during their lives suffer torment and will be resurrected and dispatched to everlasting torment. Other sinners will remain where they presently are. In Enoch's vision of Jerusalem (chaps. 26–27), the righteous, including presumably those in the first compartment who will have been raised, will live incredibly long lives, finding nourishment for their bodies in the fruit of the tree of life next to the sanctuary. The sinners who have blasphemed the divine glory will be pitched into the cursed Valley of Hinnom.



# 1 Enoch 92-105

Chapters 92–105 of 1 Enoch (second century B.C.E.) reflect the perceived absence of divine justice. Rich and powerful “sinners” prosper although they oppress the righteous, who think they are suffering the curses of the covenant. The author promises the souls of the righteous dead in Sheol and their friends who are still alive that God’s judgment will reverse the situation. Their sinful oppressors will receive the just

recompense they have thus far eluded, when they descend into the dark and fiery regions of Sheol, now turned into hell. The souls of the righteous dead, however, will come to life and ascend to heaven, where they will shine like the luminaries and enjoy the company of the angels. The imagery of Dan. 12:3 has been democratized to include all the righteous and not just their leaders.



# Other texts

Most of the texts discussed above depict resurrection or its equivalent as God's act of judgment in the context of persecution or suffering. Other texts from the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. posit such postmortem retribution regardless of whether or not a person has been recompensed during that person's life (Psalms of Solomon 3, 13, 14, 15; 1 Enoch 51:1; Ps.-Philo, Bib. Ant. 3:10; 4 Ezra 7:32–37; 2 Baruch 49–51). Thus, resurrection

is becoming a standard topic in Jewish texts, cut off from its roots in times of persecution and oppression.

E.g. This is the portion of sinners forever. But they that fear the Lord will rise to life eternal. And their life (shall be) in the light of the Lord, and will come to an end no more. (Ps\_Sol 3:12)



# Dead Sea Scrolls

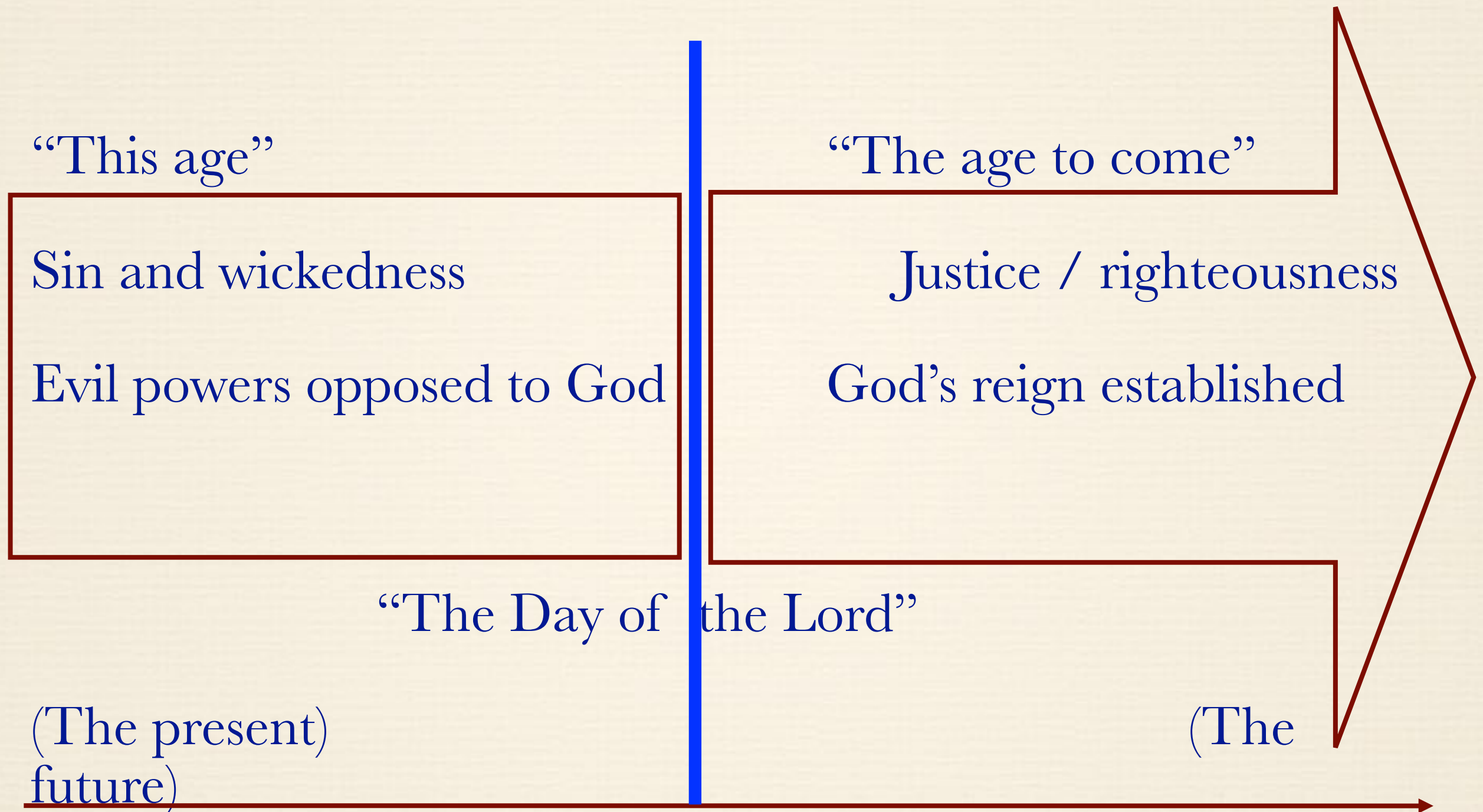
- ★ 4Q521 2 II, 11–12: “And the Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed, just as he sa[id], [for] he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the poor” (DSSSE).
- ★ In this passage, Ps 146 is reinterpreted in order to bring in a reference to resurrection, just as the rabbis did (below).

# Summary

- ★ In general, no life after death
- ★ Plus the doctrine of retribution
- ★ Martyrdom
- ★ Seeds of a future evolution
- ★ Key: theodicy



# The Early Jewish View



# Resurrection - a Jewish view





# Resurrection - a Jewish view

