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from beyond the grave. In 1700 a Polish Jew named Judah Hasid took several followers to the Holy Land to witness Zvi's return, but the group was disappointed and many of its followers converted to Islam. In 1669 and 1671 Jewish authorities in Poland officially excommunicated Sabbatians. Another Polish religious leader related to the Sabbatian movement, Jacob Frank (1726–91), led many of his followers to convert to Catholicism in the 1750s.

In Salonika in 1683, a group of 200–300 families converted to Islam, where they became known as the Doenmeh (converts), leading crypto-Jewish lives and marrying only among themselves. This group split into several subgroups, the most notorious of which developed in the early eighteenth century around Baruchiah Russo, who claimed to be the reincarnation of Sabbatai Zvi. His followers practiced extreme antinomian acts such as ritually eating forbidden foods and engaging in forbidden sexual activities. The reasoning behind this behavior was based on the idea that a new Torah with new commandments would be received in the messianic age, while the old Torah of the pre-redemptive era would no longer be valid. Forbidden acts were ritually practiced in solidarity with the Torah of the new era. This particular Sabbatian group existed in Salonika until the 1920s.

Ironically, although most Sabbatians remained normative Jews in their exterior behavior, all Sabbatian thought came to be associated with extreme antinomian acts, and Sabbatians gained a radical reputation that was not always deserved. Moderate Sabbatians existed throughout the diaspora during the eighteenth century, confusing religious authorities concerned with eradicating the movement. This proved especially difficult since great emphasis was often placed on the secrecy of Sabbatian beliefs. Eventually, however, Sabbatian fervor declined, and Sabbatian theology has not played a major role in Jewish thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## Conclusions

The Sabbatian movement was the largest Jewish messianic movement since the second century CE. Sabbatians were found among Jews of diverse socioeconomic stations throughout the diaspora, giving the movement an astonishing sphere of influence. The charismatic person of Sabbatai Zvi, along with the prophetic leader Nathan of Gaza, provided ample material for the development of a unique Sabbatian theology with roots in sixteenth-century Jewish mysticism. The converted Messiah and the doctrine of theological secrecy, or crypto-Sabbatianism, played important roles in the movement's thought after 1666. Radical followers of the movement willingly converted to Christianity and Islam, living secretly Jewish lives. Some of these groups, but not all, practiced antinomian acts in the tradition of Sabbatai Zvi.

There have been several smaller Jewish messianic groups. A notable group to observe at the end of the current millennium is that of the Lubavitch Hasidim, who are developing a messianic theology around the figure of their recently deceased rabbi. It is also interesting to contrast the Sabbatian movement and its converted messiah with the martyred messiah of early Christianity. Still, the Sabbatian movement is unique among messianic groups that remained within the sphere of Judaism, both in terms of geographic area and the vast scale of its theological repercussions.

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See also Judaism Messianism

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## Salvation

Salvation, as understood in the Hebrew Bible (OT), the New Testament, as well within ancient Jewish and early Christian tradition, involves several related concepts. It can refer to a blessed state of an individual after death, usually involving eternal life in a spiritual realm beyond this physical world. Or, it can describe a transformed world at the end of history in which dead are resurrected, and along with those living in that time, enjoy a perfected existence forever. To be saved is to be liberated or rescued from death, injustice, tragedy, evil, and suffering. Whether such salvation comes immediately at the death of an individual, or at the end of history in a millennial transformation, or in a combination of both ideas, the essential hope remains the same.

## Life after Death in the Hebrew Bible

The ancient Hebrews pictured the universe divided into three parts or realms, as did most other ancient civilizations

(including the Babylonians, Egyptians). There was the upper realm of the Firmament (Sky) or Heavens, the dwelling place of God and his angelic court, as well as the place of the sun, moon, planets, and stars. Here no mortal belonged. Then there was the realm of earth below, what the first chapter of Genesis calls “the dry land.” This was seen as the proper human place, shared with all the other forms of plant and animal life—a thoroughly mortal realm. The earth was seen as a flat disk; at the edges were the threatening waters of chaos, held back by the command of God (Genesis 1:9–10; Psalms 104:5–9). Finally, below the earth was the dark realm of the dead, which was called Sheol by the Hebrews and Hades by the Greeks. Psalms 115:16–18 puts it succinctly: “The heavens are Yahweh’s heavens, but the earth he has given to the sons of men. The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor do any that go down into silence. But we [the living] will bless Yahweh from this time forth and for evermore.” The ancient Hebrews had no idea of an immortal soul living a full and vital life beyond death, nor of any resurrection or return from death. Human beings, like the beasts of the field, are made of “dust of the earth,” and at death they return to that dust (Genesis 2:7, 3:19). The Hebrew word *nephesh*, traditionally translated “living soul” but more properly understood as “living creature,” is the same word used for all breathing creatures and refers to nothing immortal. The same holds true for the expression translated as “the breath of life” (see Genesis 1:24, 7:21–22). It is physical, “animal life.” For all practical purposes, death was the *end*. As Psalms 115:17 says, the dead go down into “silence”; they do not participate, as do the living, in praising God (seen then as the most vital human activity). Psalms 146:4 is like an exact reverse replay of Genesis 2:7: “When his breath departs he returns to his earth; on that very day his thoughts [plans] perish.” Death is a one-way street; there is no return. As Job laments: “till the heavens be no more he will not awake” (Job 14:10–12).

All the dead go down to Sheol, and there they lie in sleep together—whether good or evil, rich or poor, slave or free (Job 3:11–19). It is described as a region “dark and deep,” “the Pit,” “the land of forgetfulness,” cut off from both God and human life above (Psalms 6:5; 88:3–12). Though in some texts Yahweh’s power can reach down to Sheol (Psalms 139:8), the dominant idea is that the dead are abandoned forever. This idea of Sheol is negative in contrast to the world of life and light above, but there is no idea of judgment, or of reward and punishment. If one faces extreme circumstances of suffering in the realm of the living above, as did Job, it can even be seen as a welcome relief from pain—see the third chapter of Job. But basically it is a kind of “nothingness,” an existence that is barely existence at all, in which a “shadow” or “shade” of the former self survives (Psalms 88:10).

This rather bleak picture of death is one that prevails throughout most of the Hebrew Bible. It is found throughout the Pentateuch (the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), and it runs through the books of history, poetry, and prophecy (from Joshua through Malachi) with few exceptions. Rather than recording the death of Enoch, the genealogy of Genesis 5:24 simply says, “He was not, for God took him.” Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2). Generally speaking, however, in ancient Hebrew thinking there is no concept of the salvation for the individual human person after death.

Daniel 12:2–3 is the earliest text in the Bible to speak clearly and absolutely about a resurrection of the dead, both wicked and righteous. His reference to the dead as “those who sleep in the earth” shows that he does not yet know, or share an interest in, their so called “interim” state (i.e., before the resurrection at the end). 2 Maccabees (written sometime between the first century BCE and the first century CE) reflects an interesting state of development in this regard. Not only does the author believe in the resurrection (at least of the righteous martyrs), but he advocates prayer and sacrifice for the dead and believes that they can intercede for those on earth and vice versa (2 Maccabees 12:43–45, 15:11–16). Likewise, in 2 Esdras the dead are fully conscious, already suffering either punishment or comfort in various levels and compartments of the heavenly realms, awaiting the final day of judgment (2 Esdras 7). Wisdom of Solomon upholds this view of salvation a necessary part of proper faith in Yahweh (3:14). Here the view of the immortal soul that departs the body at death is combined with a view of final and future resurrection of the dead. We know from later texts, like the Ethiopic Enoch (third century BCE to first century CE), and now the Dead Sea Scrolls, that such views were becoming common among various Jewish groups during this period.

### The End of History in the Hebrew Bible

Scholars use the term “eschatology” to refer to what they call the “last things,” i.e., the events and realities at the end of history or, more popularly speaking, “the end of the world.” However, this idea of the “end of the world” does not necessarily mean the destruction of the planet. More often it refers to the end of an “age,” following which history takes a dramatic turn for the better. Eschatology addresses these questions: Where is history headed? And what will be its final determination and meaning?

The idea of a good future for the nation of Israel begins with texts in Genesis, which promise such to Abraham and his descendants. God tells Abraham, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great,

## MILLENNIAL HUMOR

**Jesus and Satan argue about who is the better programmer. This goes on for a few hours until they agree to hold a contest, with God as the judge. They set themselves before their computers and begin. They type furiously, lines of code streaming up the screen, for several hours straight. Seconds before the end of the competition, a bolt of lightning strikes, knocking out the electricity. Moments later, the power is restored, and God announces that the contest is over. He asks Satan to show what he has come up with.**

**Satan is visibly upset, and cries, “I have nothing! I lost it all when the power went out!”**

**“Very well, then,” says God, “let us see if Jesus fared any better.”**

**Jesus enters a command, and the screen comes to life in vivid display, the voices of an angelic choir pour forth from the speakers. Satan is astonished. He stutters, “B-b-but how? I lost everything, yet Jesus’ program is intact. How did he do it?” God smiled all-knowingly, “Jesus saves.”**

so that you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2). Later he is told “to your descendants I will give this land [i.e., Palestine]” (Genesis 15:18). These elements of “chosen people,” covenant, land, and blessings form the foundation of later views of collective salvation.

Beginning in the eighth century, and well down into the sixth century BCE, the nation of Israel suffered through political, social, and military catastrophes. First under the Assyrians, then successively under the Babylonians and Persians, large parts of the population were exiled and their land was occupied. This is the time of the Hebrew Prophets—whose books comprise Isaiah through Malachi. It is primarily in these texts—written before, during, and after this period of exile—that we find the beginnings of a new view of the salvation (Isaiah 2:2–4, 11–12, 27:12–13, 35, and 66:18–24; Jeremiah 3:15–25, 16:14–21, 23:1–8, 30:31; Ezekiel 11:14–21, 34:11–31, 36:8–38, 37, 40–48; Hosea 1:10–11, 2:16–23, 3:1–5; Joel 3; Amos 9:9–15; Micah 5; Zephaniah 3; Haggai 2; Zechariah 10:6–12, 12–14). It seems to develop over time from a rather simple hope for the ultimate restoration of the national fortunes of the tribes of Israel, to a fantastic vision of total cosmic renewal and transformation. Isaiah describes a time when even the violence of nature, “red in tooth and claw,” will end: “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. . . . They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6–9).

This transformed state of things is so dramatic, it is like a new or second creation. A “new heavens and new earth,” Isa-

iah terms it (Isaiah 65:17–25, 66:22–24). It is inaugurated by a highly idealized Davidic King (Isaiah 11:1–5; Micah 5:2–4). Total peace reigns among all nations (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3). The suffering and toils of life are eliminated as “Yahweh wipes away tears from all faces,” and death itself is “swallowed up forever” (Isaiah 25:8). This apparently includes the “resurrection” of the righteous dead of the past (Isaiah 26:19). This era of complete justice and righteousness is ushered in by the terrible Day of Yahweh’s wrath in which all wicked sinners are utterly destroyed. The topography of the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem is drastically altered: The deserts bloom like a rose; fresh water flows into the Dead Sea; and the whole Jerusalem area is elevated (Isaiah 35; Zechariah 14:8–11; Ezekiel 47–48). Some few texts seem to imply that wicked angelic powers are also disposed of in this overthrow of all evil by Yahweh (Isaiah 24:21–22, 27:1). Late texts like Daniel (second century BCE) clearly envision the resurrection of the dead, the punishment of the wicked, and the arrival of the utopian kingdom of God (see the Dream Visions of chapters 2, 7, and 11–12). Salvation here is eschatological. It comes *at the end* of history, through God’s dramatic intervention in the affairs of this world, as the new transformed age is inaugurated.

### Life after Death in the New Testament

As we move to the period of Greek and Roman domination of the eastern Mediterranean world (the fourth century BCE, to the first century CE), the biblical materials reflect drastic development with regard to the view of salvation. Two views dominate: the hope of an eschatological transformation of

the cosmos and the notion that an immortal soul escapes the body at death to enter the heavenly world. Both are closely tied to a deep despair regarding the course of history and the possibility of things ever changing. How and when might the many dreamlike promises of salvation for God's faithful people, which I have just surveyed, ever be realized?

The general view of the future found throughout the New Testament incorporates and builds upon most of these developments and changes. Jesus clearly takes his stand for belief in the resurrection of the dead, in contrast to Jewish groups such as the Pharisees who denied such ideas (Luke 20:27–40). Paul expounds the idea of some kind of a “spiritual body,” definitely *not* “flesh and blood,” but immortal and glorified. What connection this “spiritual body” is supposed to have with the body put in the tomb is not clear (1 Corinthians 15:42–54). As for the “state of the dead” before the end, Paul prefers the image of “sleep” (1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, 5:9–10). But he also believed that the “spirit” of a departed Christian went to “be with Christ” (Philippians 1:19–26; 2 Corinthians 5:6–10; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). Several places in the New Testament we clearly find the notion that the dead are conscious, dwelling somewhere in the heavenly realms beyond, and awaiting, either in torment or comfort, the final judgment (Luke 16:19–31, 23:43; 1 Peter 3:18–20, 4:6; Revelation 6:9–11, 7:9–12). The New Testament book of Revelation closes with two resurrections, one before and the other after the millennium, involving all humans who have ever lived (Revelation 20).

### The End of History in the New Testament

The early Christians believed in the “close of the age”—and also what might properly be called the “end of the world.” They looked to a future, following the return (*parousia*) of Jesus in the clouds of heaven, in which the physical world would “pass away,” replaced by a new creation (Romans 8:21; 2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 21–22). Here, it is difficult to lay out a single eschatological scheme for all the New Testament documents. Revelation, chapter 20, speaks of a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth before the “new creation” (see Revelation 1:6, 2:25–26, 3:21, 5:10, 11:15–18). Paul seems to anticipate such a time, between the coming of Christ and the final “end,” when the elect group will “judge the world . . . and angels” and reign as kings in the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:23–28, 4:8, 6:2–3). The author of Luke through Acts speaks of Christ coming back to “restore” all the things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:20–21), and Jesus chooses twelve disciples to rule over the regathered twelve tribes of Israel in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:28–30). This rather “literal” or concrete view of the Kingdom of God on

earth, drawn from the Hebrew Prophets, appears often in the Synoptic tradition. Jesus will return to earth and sit on his glorious throne, surrounded by his twelve apostles ruling over the twelve tribes (Matthew 19:28–30). All the Old Testament patriarchs will be resurrected and participate in this Messianic kingdom (Matthew 8:11–12). The nations will be gathered before this throne of Christ and judged (Matthew 25:31–46). Whether all this can be fully systematized or not, Revelation, chapters 19–22, does contain the key elements of this overall vision of future salvation in some kind of rough order: the return of Christ, the utter defeat of Satan and his agents; the resurrection of the dead and the reign with the saints on earth; a return of Satan to lead the nations against Jerusalem; their defeat and the immersion of the Devil and the false prophet in a lake of burning sulfur for eternal torment; a final resurrection and judgment; and the new creation and final perfection. Most New Testament passages on future salvation fit somewhere into this general scheme. And most of the themes cited earlier from the Hebrew Prophets anticipate one part or another of this New Testament view of salvation.

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### Science Fiction Literature

Science fiction (SF) is a genre of science-oriented literature that emerged with the first SF magazine *Amazing Stories* published in 1926 by Hugo Gernsback (1884–1967) who later coined the term “science fiction.” Although SF publishing is dominated by novels, the subculture is anchored in professional magazines, fan magazines called “fanzines,”