

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 152

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

Sheol, the Ruach, and the Covenant Hope of Resurrection:

A Covenant Study in the Written Tanakh

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REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☩ ISLAM
<i>Sheol</i> (שְׁאוֹל) is the universal destination of the dead in the Written Tanakh — righteous and wicked alike. The Pharisees upheld resurrection against the Sadducees. Tanakh's own witness (Daniel 12:2) is the foundation.	The resurrection hope of Christianity derives from the Written Tanakh itself — Yeshayahu 26:19, Iyov 19:25-27, and Daniel 12:2 — before any New Testament elaboration. The Tanakh speaks for itself.	Kohelet 12:7 — 'the ruach returns to Elohim who gave it' — directly parallels the Quranic teaching that the soul (ruh) returns to Allah at death. Resurrection (Qiyama) is consistent with Daniel 12:2.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the Written Tanakh — the Torah (Instruction), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings) — interpreted by the evidentiary standard of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15: no charge shall be established except by two or three independent witnesses. Rabbinic tradition, Church councils, and hadith are consulted as historical record only and carry no binding doctrinal authority. Josephus is cited only when corroborated and with awareness of his pro-Roman editorial bias. Scholars and lexicons provide linguistic orientation; the Written Tanakh speaks for itself at the plumb line.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This study uses Hebrew book names throughout. English equivalents appear in bold parentheses on first use. Yahweh (יהוה) and Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) are used throughout — never 'God' or 'LORD.' All scripture citations follow the two-or-three witness standard of Devarim 19:15. The three-religion audience — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — is addressed simultaneously. Hebrew transliterations appear in *bold italic* with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Lexical references draw from BDB, HALOT, Strong's Concordance, and TWOT.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Hebrew Name	English Name	Hebrew Name	English Name
Bereishit	Genesis	Shemot	Exodus
Bemidbar	Numbers	Devarim	Deuteronomy
Shemuel Alef	1 Samuel	Melakhim Bet	2 Kings
Iyov	Job	Tehillim	Psalms
Mishlei	Proverbs	Kohelet	Ecclesiastes
Yeshayahu	Isaiah	Yechezkel	Ezekiel
Daniel	Daniel	Vayikra	Leviticus

INTRODUCTION

The question of what happens after death is among the most universal in human experience. Every religious tradition, every culture, every era has asked for it to be answered. The question before this covenant document is precise: What does the Written Tanakh reveal about the state of the dead, and is there a covenant basis for life after death?

This document does not import answers from the New Testament, the Quran, Talmudic speculation, or Greek philosophy. It applies the Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard strictly to the Written Tanakh — the only binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution. What emerges is a coherent, documented Tanakh theology of death that stands on its own without external scaffolding, and that speaks simultaneously and honestly to all three Abrahamic traditions.

Three primary questions are examined:

(1) What is *Sheol*? שְׁאוֹל

(2) What does the Tanakh say about the human spirit — *ruach* (רוּחַ) and *neshamah* (נְשָׁמָה) — at death?

(3) Does the Written Tanakh witness resurrection and life beyond death?

The answers are tested at **Devarim 19:15** and documented with precision.

PART I — THE HEBREW SOUL: WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE

I.A — Hebrew Lexical Foundation: Three Soul-Words of the Tanakh

Before examining what happens at death, the Tanakh requires us to understand what the living human being is composed of. Three Hebrew terms bear lexical authority:

Term	Strong 's	Root	BDB / HALOT	Tanakh Significance
נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh)	H5315	נָפַשׁ (nafash)	'soul, living being, life, self' — the animating life-force	Primary: the whole living person, life-force bound to the body. In Bereishit 2:7, Adam became a living <i>nefesh</i> when Elohim breathed into him.
רוּחַ (ruach)	H7307	Wind, breath, movement	'spirit, wind, breath' — the breath-force from Elohim	At death, the ruach departs (Kohelet 12:7). Yahweh is called 'the Elohim of the spirits (ruchot) of all flesh' (Bemidbar 16:22).
נְשָׁמָה (neshamah)	H5397	נָשַׁם (nasham)	'breath, spirit, divine inbreathing' — the breath Yahweh breathed	Bereishit 2:7: Yahweh breathed the <i>nishmat chayyim</i> (breath of life) into Adam's nostrils. Uniquely divine; distinguishes man from animals.

I.B — The Creation Formula: Bereishit 2:7

Bereishit (Genesis) 2:7 — *And Yahweh Elohim formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (nishmat chayyim), and the man became a living being (nefesh chayyah).*

BDB defines *nishmat (breath)* (H5397) as the divine inbreathing — the specific act by which Yahweh imparted life.

The formula is: dust + divine breath = living *nefesh*. The human being in Tanakh anthropology is a unified whole — body and breath together constitute life. When the breath is withdrawn, the *nefesh* ceases to live. This foundational statement governs everything that follows about death.

Bereishit (Genesis) 3:19 — *By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

This is Yahweh's own pronouncement on human mortality. The decree stands in the Written Tanakh without revision or qualification within the Torah. Human beings return to dust. This sets the question squarely: Is there anything in the Written Tanakh that speaks beyond this decree?

PART II — SHEOL: THE TANAKH'S PORTRAIT OF THE REALM OF THE DEAD

II.A — Lexical Foundation

The primary Tanakh term for the state or place of the dead is *Sheol* (לִּישׁוֹן, H7585). Strong defines it as 'Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates.' BDB provides the following semantic range:

BDB Category	Definition
1a	The underworld — realm below the earth
1b.1	Place of no return
1b.2	Without praise of Elohim
1b.3	Wicked sent there for punishment
1b.4	Righteous not abandoned to it (the covenant exception)
1b.5	Used figuratively for extreme exile or degradation in sin

Sheol (לִּישׁוֹן) occurs **66 times** in the Written Tanakh across 64 verses. The KJV translates it inconsistently as 'hell' (31×), 'grave' (31×), and 'pit' (3×) — a critical translation error that has distorted three religions' understanding of the Tanakh's teaching on death. This document renders it *Sheol* throughout.

II.B — The Tanakh's Witness: What Sheol Is

#	Passage	Key Element	Tanakh Declaration
1	Bereishit (Genesis) 37:35	Place of mourning descent	Ya'akov (Jacob) says: 'I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.' Sheol is the place all the dead go, including the righteous patriarch.
2	Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:30,33	Below the earth	Korah and his company go down alive into Sheol — 'the earth closed over them.' The physical picture: below the ground.
3	Iyov (Job) 3:13-19	Place of equality	In Sheol: kings, counselors, princes, stillborn infants, slaves, and masters are together — 'the small and the great are there.' No class distinction in death.

4	Iyov (Job) 7:7-10	Place of no return	'He who goes down to Sheol does not come up; he returns no more to his house.' The primary Tanakh declaration: <u>Sheol is one-way.</u>
5	Tehillim (Psalms) 6:5	No praise of Yahweh	'In Sheol, who will give You thanks?' (David). In Sheol, the dead cannot praise Yahweh — <u>the Tanakh's most explicit statement about the state of consciousness in Sheol.</u>
6	Tehillim (Psalms) 88:3-12	Darkness, isolation, forgetting	'The pit... the dark... the land of forgetting.' Yahweh's wonders are not known in Sheol; His loving-kindness is not declared there (v.11-12).
7	Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10	Yahweh does not abandon the faithful to Sheol	'For You will not abandon my nefesh to Sheol, or let Your faithful one see the Pit.' The first covenant exception — key to Part IV.
8	Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 9:5,10	The dead know nothing	'The dead know nothing... there is no work, thought, knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.'
9	Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:9-11	Sheol stirs up the shade-kings	Yeshayahu pictures the shade-kings of Sheol rising to greet the fallen king of Bavel (Babylon) — a poetic use, but establishing continuing shade-existence.
10	Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 38:18	No hope from Sheol	King Hizkiyahu (Hezekiah): 'Sheol does not thank You... those who go down to the Pit do not hope for Your faithfulness.'

II.C — What the Portrait Establishes

Under Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15, ten independent Tanakh witnesses have established the following:

- (1) Sheol is below the earth and physically real in Tanakh cosmology.
- (2) All who die — righteous and wicked — go there.
- (3) It is a place of darkness, silence, and forgetting.
- (4) The dead in Sheol do not praise **Yahweh** and do not know what happens on earth.
- (5) There is one covenant exception: the righteous are not abandoned to *Sheol* permanently — established in Tehillim (Psalm) 16:10 and 49:15, which becomes the basis of the resurrection witness in Part IV.

The KJV's inconsistent rendering of *Sheol* as 'hell' (with its later Christian association with fire and punishment) has introduced severe theological distortion. The Tanakh's *Sheol* is not primarily a place of torment — it is the universal destination of the dead where shade-existence resides in silence and darkness. The element of moral differentiation (the process of distinguishing between things or creating distinct parts) emerges in the resurrection witness (Daniel 12:2), not in the portrait of *Sheol* itself.

PART III — THE RUACH AT DEATH: KOHELET (ECCLESIASTES) 12:7 AND THE RETURN TO YAHWEH

Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:7 — **And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit (ruach) returns to Elohim who gave it.**

This is the Tanakh's most explicit statement about what happens to the *ruach* at death. The verse operates in binary: **Body (dust)** → returns to earth as it was (**Bereishit (Genesis) 3:19** fulfilled). **Spirit (ruach)** → returns to **Elohim** who gave it. The phrase '*asher netano (who gave it)*' — '*who gave it*' — is theologically significant. The *ruach* was a gift of **Elohim** from life's beginning. At death, it is returned — not annihilated, not destroyed, but returned to its Giver. **Yahweh** is called '*El Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (Elohim of the spirits of all flesh)*' — the **Elohim** of the spirits of all flesh (Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22). Every ruach that ever lived is known to Yahweh and rests with Him.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22 — *And they fell on their faces and said, O El (God), Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh), shall one man sin, and will You be angry with the entire congregation?*

This is one of the most concentrated theological titles for **Yahweh** in the entire Written Tanakh — and it appears in one of the most dramatic moments recorded in Bemidbar (Numbers). Mosheh (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron) have just watched Korach (Korah) and 250 leaders of Israel mount a full rebellion against the covenant authority **Yahweh** established. The glory of **Yahweh** appears at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and **Yahweh** commands Mosheh (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron) to separate themselves from the congregation so He can consume the entire assembly in a moment. Rather than stepping aside, both men fall on their faces in intercession — and the title they invoke in that instant is not a generic prayer address. It is a precise covenant claim: *O El (God), Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh).*

The Title Word by Word

Hebrew	Strong's	Root / Form	BDB / HALOT Definition and Covenant Significance
אֵל (El)	H410	Singular divine name	The singular, concentrated form of divine power — used here in direct address, personal and urgent. Not the plural Elohim but El: the immediate, sovereign God addressed face to face.
אֱלֹהֵי (Elohe)	H430 construct	Plural construct — the God of	Establishes possession and relationship. The construct form binds Yahweh to what follows as its owner and keeper: the God specifically identified as the possessor of the spirits named.
רוּחֹת (ha-ruchot)	H7307 plural	ruach (spirit/breath/	The plural of ruach with the definite article: the spirits — every one of them, all together. H7307 occurs 378 times in Tanakh. BDB gives its primary senses as:

		wind) — definite plural	breath, wind, spirit. Here in plural it encompasses every spirit-breath Yahweh has ever given to human flesh.
לְכֹל (le-khol)	H3605	kol (all, every, the totality of)	Not some flesh, not most flesh — all. The prepositional lamed (ל) makes it possessive: belonging to all. This is the broadest possible claim. No human spirit falls outside it.
בָּשָׂר (basar)	H1320	flesh, body, humankind	BDB confirms: in the phrase kol basar (all flesh) this means all mankind — every person who has ever lived. Not animals alone, not Israel alone. All humanity, without exception, in every era, of every nation.

What the Title Actually Claims

The phrase *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh) is a title of absolute divine ownership and intimate knowledge. It appears in the Written Tanakh only twice — Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22 and Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:16 — and both occurrences are on the lips of Mosheh (Moses) in moments of life-or-death intercession. That is not a coincidence. Mosheh (Moses) chose this title precisely because of what it declares about **Yahweh's** relationship to every human spirit. Biblical scholars confirm this unusual title speaks of **Yahweh's** omniscient understanding of every person — **the El who knows every individual, whose spirits belong to Him, and who can therefore be relied upon to make no mistake.**

Ha-ruchot (the spirits) is the plural of *ruach* (H7307) — the same word used in **Bereishit (Genesis) 2:7** when **Yahweh** breathed the *nishmat chayyim* (breath of life) into Adam, and the same word in **Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:7** when the *ruach* (spirit/breath) returns to **Elohim** who gave it at death. **The lexical thread is continuous: Yahweh gives the ruach (spirit/breath) to each person at life's beginning — retains sovereign ownership while the person lives — and receives it back at death.** The title in Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22 names that ownership explicitly and permanently.

The Covenant Implication for Death

If **Yahweh** is the *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* — the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh — then not a single human *ruach* (spirit/breath) falls outside His knowledge or authority. Not one. Every person who has ever drawn breath is known to **Yahweh**. **Every spirit that has ever returned to Elohim at death (Kohelet 12:7) rests in the hands of the One who holds the title Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (Elohim of the spirits of all flesh). The title itself is the answer to every fear about what happens to the ruach (spirit/breath) after death: it returns to the One who owns it.**

The second occurrence in Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:16 drives the point even deeper. Mosheh (Moses), told he is about to die, does not argue for his life — he falls before **Yahweh** and invokes the same title: ***Let Yahweh, the Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh), appoint a man over the congregation.*** Mosheh (Moses), standing at the door of his own death, addresses **Yahweh as the One who holds every ruach (spirit/breath) of every person who has ever lived. Not the Elohim of Israel only. Not the Elohim of the living only. The Elohim of all spirits, of all flesh. This is the broadest possible covenant claim a**

human being can make at the door of death: Yahweh is sovereign over every ruach (spirit/breath) that has ever animated human basar (flesh).

Three-Religion Witness to This Title “*The Elohim of the Spirits of all Flesh*”

All three Abrahamic traditions must hear this title carefully. Judaism’s *Mechayye ha-meitim* (**Resurrector of the dead**) — the central blessing of the Amidah prayer — rests on precisely this claim: **Yahweh** owns the *ruchot* (**spirits**) of the dead as He owned them in life, and resurrection is therefore within His authority. Christianity’s doctrine that **Yahweh** has authority over death rests on the same Written Tanakh foundation established here in Bemidbar (Numbers). Islam’s Quranic declaration that the spirit belongs to **Yahweh** alone — *ar-ruh* (**the spirit**) is from the command of your Lord — is directly parallel to *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* (**the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh**). The Written Tanakh established this truth first, in Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22. It requires no supplement. **Yahweh** is the *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* — **the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh** — and that title is the covenant foundation on which every doctrine of the afterlife, in all three traditions, ultimately stands.

III.A — The Witness of 1 Shemuel 28: Samuel After Death

The account in Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel) 28 is the most theologically complex passage in the Tanakh concerning the state of the dead. King Sha’ul (Saul) sought out a woman practicing *’ov* (אֹוֹב, H178) — a practice forbidden under **Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:31; 20:6; 20:27 and Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:10-12** with the death penalty. The Hebrew word *’ov* is more precisely rendered as a **'ghost pit'** — a prescribed pagan site from which practitioners claimed to summon the dead, not merely a **'familiar spirit'** as the KJV renders it. The practice was explicitly forbidden by **Yahweh** because it bypassed His established prophetic channel and constituted covenant rebellion.

Three covenant observations from this account:

- (1) **Yahweh's** prohibition of necromancy was never on the grounds that the dead have no existence — if the dead were simply annihilated, there would be nothing to summon and no prohibition needed.
- (2) The shade of Shemuel came **'up from the earth'** — consistent with *Sheol* as below ground.
- (3) The dead in Sheol exist as *refa'im* (departed spirits/shades) — a diminished but real form of continued existence. This is what shade-existence means.

What Shade-Existence Means: The Refa'im in the Written Tanakh

The Hebrew word translated ‘**shades**’ in the Written Tanakh is *refa'im* (H7496, singular: *rapha*). The root *raphah* (H7503) means to be slack, weak, feeble, to sink down. Strong defines H7496 as: "properly lax, that is, figuratively a ghost (as dead) — dead, deceased." BDB identifies the *refa'im* (**shades/departed spirits**) as the dead who dwell in *Sheol* — **a weakened, diminished form of the person that persists after physical death.** The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia confirms the same Hebrew word is rendered ‘**the dead**’ or ‘**the shades**’ in Iyov (Job) 26:5; Tehillim (Psalms) 88:10; Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; and Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:9; 26:14,19.

The Tanakh portrait of *refa'im* (shades/departed spirits) is consistent across all three sections of the Written Tanakh — Torah, **Nevi'im** (Prophets), and **Ketuvim** (Writings). **Shade-existence in Sheol means:**

1. Real but diminished. The *refa'im* (shades/departed spirits) are not nothing. They are not annihilated. They are the identifiable remains of persons who lived — weakened (*raphah*, slack, feeble), stripped of the full vitality they had in life, but present in *Sheol*.

Iyov (Job) 26:5 declares: *The refa'im (shades/departed spirits) tremble below the waters.*

They exist. They tremble. They respond to the presence of **Yahweh's** power even in death.

2. Aware but silenced. In Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:9-10, *Sheol* is stirred up to receive the fallen king of Bavel (Babylon). The *refa'im* (shade-kings of departed spirits) rise from their thrones, recognize the descending king, and taunt him: *You too have become weak as we! You have become like us!* They recognize. They speak. They know who has arrived and why. Yet this awareness is shadowed — the same Written Tanakh establishes in Tehillim (Psalms) 88:12 that **Yahweh's** wonders are not known in *Sheol*, and in Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 9:5 that the dead know nothing of what happens on earth.

Shade-existence is existence cut off from the living world and from the full knowledge and praise of Yahweh.

3. Identifiable but powerless. When Shemuel (Samuel) appeared from *Sheol* in Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel) 28, the woman of 'ov (**ghost pit**) immediately recognized him and described his appearance to Sha'ul (Saul): *an old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.* Sha'ul (Saul) recognized him as Shemuel (Samuel) — the same person, identifiable, clothed in the same robe associated with him in life (compare Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel) 15:27). The shade is not a formless void. It retains identity. But it is powerless in the sense the root *raphah* declares: slack, weakened, no longer possessing the full life-force of the living.

4. Under Yahweh's authority. **Shade-existence** in *Sheol* is not outside **Yahweh's** reach.

Tehillim (Psalms) 139:8: *If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there.* **Mishlei (Proverbs) 15:11:** *Sheol and Abaddon (destruction/the abyss) lie open before Yahweh.* **Amos (Amos) 9:2:** *Though they dig into Sheol, from there My hand will take them.*

The *refa'im* (shades/departed spirits) in *Sheol* are always within the sight and sovereignty of **Yahweh** — which is precisely why the covenant hope of resurrection (**Daniel 12:2**) is not impossible! **Yahweh** is the *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh).* He knows where every shade rests. He can call them back.

5. Illustrated by shadow: form and motion without substance. A contemporary picture sharpens what the *refa'im* (shades/departed spirits) are. Imagine a video of a man playing guitar in a dim room, filmed so that only his shadow is visible on the wall — no body, no face, no instrument in frame, only the moving outline cast by a light source behind him. A person watching that video sees real movement: the shadow's hand strums, its arm shifts chord positions, its outline sways with the music. The motion is genuine and identifiable. Anyone who knows the man would recognize him by the shadow alone — by the way he holds the guitar, the rhythm of his motion. Yet there is no substance on the wall. The shadow cannot exist apart from the light and the body that casts it; it has no independent vitality, no flesh, no weight. It is entirely dependent on a source outside itself for its continued appearance.

This is a fitting picture of shade-existence in *Sheol*. The *refa'im* retain identity and motion — Shemuel (Samuel) is recognized by his robe (Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel) 28); the shade-kings of Bavel (Babylon) rise, recognize, and speak (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:9-10); the *refa'im* tremble before **Yahweh's** power (Iyov (Job) 26:5). But none of this activity is self-sustained. The shade has no independent vitality — it persists only because **Yahweh**, the *Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* (the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh), continues to hold the *ruach* (spirit/breath) that once animated it (Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:7).

Just as the man's shadow on the wall depends entirely on the light source he stands before, the *refa'im* in *Sheol* depend entirely on Yahweh, who alone sees them, sustains their continued shade-existence, and — per the covenant hope of Daniel 12:2 — retains the authority to call them back into full, embodied life.

Shade-existence, then, is not the final answer the Written Tanakh gives to death. It is the intermediate condition — real, recognized, and under **Yahweh's** authority — that the *refa'im* (departed spirits/shades) occupy between physical death and the resurrection declared in **Daniel 12:2**. It explains why necromancy is forbidden: the shades exist and could theoretically be reached through pagan channels. And it explains why the covenant hope of resurrection is coherent: **Yahweh**, who owns every *ruach* (spirit/breath) that ever lived, has the authority and knowledge to restore what He gave.

(3) The accurate prophecy given came not through **Yahweh's** blessing of the practice, but despite it — completing Sha'ul's (Saul's) trajectory of disobedience. The account does not authorize necromancy. It witnesses shade-existence in *Sheol* as real.

PART IV — THE COVENANT HOPE: RESURRECTION AND REDEMPTION FROM SHEOL

Does the Written Tanakh itself — not the New Testament, not rabbinic development, not the Quran — witness to a resurrection of the dead? The answer, applied under Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15, is: Yes. Multiple independent witnesses establish a covenant hope of resurrection in the Written Tanakh.

IV.A — Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10

Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10 — *For You will not abandon my nefesh to Sheol, nor will You allow Your faithful one (chasic) to see the Pit (shachat).*

David declares a distinction: while all the dead go to *Sheol*, **Yahweh** does not permanently abandon His covenant-faithful (*chasic*, H2623) there. The word *shachat* (H7845) — 'pit, grave, corruption' — parallels *Sheol*. The faithful one will not 'see corruption.' This is the Tanakh's first explicit covenant exception to the finality of death.

IV.B — Tehillim (Psalms) 49:15

Tehillim (Psalms) 49:14-15 — *Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd... But Elohim will ransom my nefesh from the power of Sheol, for He will receive me.*

The verb *yifdeh* (H6299 — 'to ransom, to redeem') is a covenant-legal term used for redeeming slaves and firstborn. **Yahweh is here described as redeeming the *nefesh* from *Sheol* — treating death as a bondage from which He can free the righteous.** The concluding phrase '*ki yikkacheni (for He will receive me)*' — 'for He will receive me' — uses the same verb (*laqach*, H3947) used of Chanokh in **Bereishit (Genesis) 5:24**: 'Elohim took him.' The lexical echo is not accidental.

IV.C — Chanokh (Enoch) and Eliyahu (Elijah): Two Tanakh Exceptions to Death

Bereishit (Genesis) 5:24 — *Chanokh (Enoch) walked with Elohim, and he was not, for Elohim took him.*

Melakhim Bet (2 Kings) 2:11 — *A chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Eliyahu went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

Both Chanokh (Enoch) and Eliyahu departed this life through a direct divine action rather than ordinary death and *Sheol*. The verb *laqach* (H3947, 'to take') is used for Chanokh (Enoch) — **Elohim** took him. Two witnesses in the Written Tanakh establish that Yahweh is not bound by ordinary mortality when He chooses to act otherwise. These are not metaphors — they are testimony to His sovereignty over death itself.

IV.D — Iyov (Job) 19:25-27 — The Living Redeemer

Iyov (Job) 19:25-27 — *For I know that my Redeemer (Go'el) lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see Elohim, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.*

The term *Go'el* (H1350 — 'kinsman-redeemer') is the covenantal term for the one with legal obligation to restore what was lost. **Iyov** declares: his *Go'el* is living (*chai*), will stand on the earth at the last moment, and — even after the destruction of the body — Iyov himself will see **Elohim** in his own flesh. This is a bodily, personal, post-mortem encounter with **Elohim**. The witness stands.

IV.E — Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 26:19 — Your Dead Will Live

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 26:19 — *Your dead shall live; their corpses shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For Your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to those long dead.*

Within the '*Apocalypse of Yeshayahu (Isaiah)*' (chapters 24-27) — a prophetic declaration about the end of days — this verse is a direct prophetic announcement: those who dwell in dust will awake. The language is physical and personal — 'their corpses shall rise.' The metaphor of **Yahweh's** dew — *tal orot (dew of light)* (dew of light) — is the agent of resurrection. The earth will 'give birth' (*tappil (give birth/cast forth)*) to the departed spirits (*refa'im (departed spirits/shades)*). This is somatic resurrection: bodies rising from the dust at **Yahweh's** command.

IV.F — Daniel 12:2 — The Clearest Tanakh Resurrection Declaration

Daniel 12:1-2 — *And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

The most explicit resurrection passage in the entire Written Tanakh. Key elements: (1) 'Those who sleep in the dust of the earth' — those who have died and returned to dust per Bereishit (Genesis) 3:19. (2) 'Shall awake' — the resurrection verb. (3) Two differentiated destinations: *chayyei olam* (everlasting life) and *deraon olam* (everlasting contempt). (4) A Book of the Written Names — covenant accountability. Scholar John Collins acknowledges this as the most explicit resurrection statement in the Hebrew Bible. The Written Tanakh's own eschatology, requiring no external supplement.

IV.F.1 — The Wake-Verb: *Yakitzu Yakitzu* (they shall awake) is built on the root *qutz* (to wake from sleep), and the choice is deliberate. This is not a specialized or symbolic resurrection-word; it is the ordinary Hebrew verb for waking up. The same root appears in Tehillim (Psalms) 3:6 — David: “I lay down and slept; I awoke (*va'ikitzah*), for Yahweh sustains me” — and in ordinary narrative, as when Pharaoh “awoke (*yikatz*)” from his dream (Bereishit (Genesis) 41:4). Daniel pairs this everyday wake-verb with “those who sleep (*yshenei*) in the dust of the earth” — a matched sleep/wake, dust/arise pair that frames death as sleep and resurrection as ordinary waking, in ordinary Hebrew, not in special apocalyptic vocabulary. Grammatically, *yakitzu* is third-person plural imperfect — a real future event involving real, plural people, not a poetic singular standing for a nation.

IV.F.2 — Rabbim, Not Kol: “Many,” Not “All” Daniel 12:2 specifies that “*rabbim*” (many) of those who sleep shall awake — not “*kol*” (all). The Written Tanakh’s word choice is deliberate and raises a genuine exegetical question that this document states plainly rather than smoothing over. Two readings are possible.

The first treats *rabbim* as a literal subset: only some of the dead are in view, leaving the resurrection of others to a different time or a separate question the verse does not address.

The second reads *rabbim* as idiomatic for an encompassing multitude, the way Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 53:11-12 uses *rabbim* for the servant “justifying many” in a sense most read as encompassing scope rather than a literal minority. This covenant document holds the honest middle: Daniel 12:2 guarantees resurrection for those in view — with two opposite destinies — without itself settling the fate of every person who has ever died. That is a question the verse does not claim to answer, not a contradiction within it.

IV.F.3 — The Book of Names: Daniel 12:1, Shemot 32:32-33, and Tehillim 69:28 Daniel 12:1 ties deliverance to a written record — “everyone whose name shall be found written in the book” — and this is not an isolated image. Two earlier Tanakh witnesses establish the same book as a real, recurring covenant motif. In Shemot (Exodus) 32:32-33, Mosheh (Moses) pleads for Israel after the golden calf and offers to be blotted out of **Yahweh’s** book himself rather than let the people be destroyed; **Yahweh** answers that whoever has sinned, He will blot out of His book — establishing, as early as the Torah, that the book is a real covenant record with the power to remove a name. In Tehillim (Psalms) 69:28, David prays against his enemies: “let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” — confirming a “book of the living” distinct from mere biological existence. Being alive does not itself guarantee a name remains written; covenant standing does. By the time Daniel 12:1-2 draws on this same

book, the Written Tanakh has already established it across Torah and Ketuvim: a real record, kept by Yahweh, in which inclusion or exclusion is tied to covenant faithfulness — and the awakening of Daniel 12:2 is explicitly for “everyone whose name shall be found written” in it.

PART V — DEVARIM (DEUTERONOMY) 19:15 WITNESS TABLE: THE COVENANT CASE FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH

The following table applies the two-or-three-witness standard of **Devarim 19:15** to the covenant declaration: **Yahweh holds sovereign authority over death; the faithful are not permanently abandoned to Sheol; and the Written Tanakh witnesses explicitly to a resurrection of the dead at Yahweh's appointed time.**

#	Passage	Key Phrase	Covenant Declaration
1	Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10	Lo ta'azov nafshi l'sheol (He will not abandon my soul to Sheol)	Yahweh does not abandon His faithful one (chasic) to Sheol — death is not the final word for the covenant-keeper.
2	Tehillim 49:15	Yifdeh Elohim nafshi mi-yad sheol (Elohim will ransom my soul from the hand of Sheol)	Elohim will ransom the nefesh from the power of Sheol — covenant-legal redemption from death.
3	Iyov 19:25-27	Go'eli chai / uvasar'i erehh Eloah (My Redeemer lives / in my flesh I will see Elohim)	Even after bodily destruction, Iyov will see Elohim in his own flesh. The living Go'el will stand on the earth at the last.
4	Bereishit (Genesis) 5:24	Va-yithalekh Chanokh et ha-Elohim ve-einenu (Chanokh walked with Elohim and was not)	Chanokh walked with Elohim and was not — Elohim took him. First Tanakh precedent for divine transfer beyond ordinary death.
5	Yeshayahu 26:19	Yichyu metekha / tal orot tallekha (Your dead shall live / Your dew is a dew of light)	Your dead shall live; their corpses shall rise. Dew of light — Yahweh's resurrection agency. Earth gives birth to the long dead.
6	Daniel 12:2	Yikitzu... chayyei olam / l'deraon olam (They shall awake... to everlasting life / to everlasting contempt)	Many who sleep in dust will awake — some to everlasting life, some to everlasting contempt. Two destinations confirmed. The clearest Tanakh resurrection text.
V E R D I	SIX WITNESSE S — Devarim 19:15		The Written Tanakh declares: All human beings go to Sheol at death. The ruach returns to Elohim who gave it. Yahweh does not permanently abandon the covenant-faithful to Sheol. The Tanakh explicitly witnesses bodily resurrection at Yahweh's appointed

C T	standard exceeded.	time, with two differentiated outcomes — everlasting life for the righteous, everlasting contempt for the wicked.
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PART VI — THREE-RELIGION AUDIT: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

Tradition	What the Tradition Holds Correctly	Where Post-Biblical Overlay Distorts	Covenant Correction
JUDAISM	Resurrection of the dead (<i>techiyat ha-meitim</i> (resurrection of the dead) is declared a core dogma by Maimonides (Principle 13). The Amidah blesses Yahweh as Mechayye ha-meitim (Resurrector of the dead). The Pharisees upheld this against the Sadducees.	The Sadducees pointed to the Written Tanakh itself, arguing resurrection is not present — they were wrong, as Daniel 12:2 and Yeshayahu 26:19 are canonical. Later rabbinic elaborations exceed the Written Tanakh's witness.	The Written Tanakh's resurrection doctrine requires no rabbinic supplement. Daniel 12:2 is the definitive text. Six independent witnesses are established above under Devarim 19:15.
CHRISTIANITY	The resurrection of the dead is affirmed. The NT's own use of Tanakh resurrection texts (Daniel 12:2; Yeshayahu 26:19; Tehillim 16:10) acknowledges the Written Tanakh as the foundation. Bodily resurrection is consistent with the Tanakh witness.	Rendering Sheol as 'hell' (with fire and punishment) goes beyond the Written Tanakh's portrait. The Tanakh's Sheol is a place of darkness and silence, not the lake of fire of later Christian theology.	Let the Written Tanakh define its own terms. Sheol is the universal destination of the dead. The resurrection passages establish two outcomes — Yahweh's own words are sufficient without additional theological overlay.
ISLAM	Islam affirms resurrection (Qiyama) and final judgment as core doctrine. Kohelet 12:7 — the ruach returns to Elohim — directly parallels the Quranic teaching that the soul returns to Allah at death.	Islam's Barzakh (intermediate state between death and resurrection) is a Quranic theological development beyond the Written Tanakh. Detailed descriptions of Jannah and Jahannam exceed the Tanakh's witness.	The Written Tanakh's witness stands prior to and independently of any post-Tanakh elaboration. Resurrection at Yahweh's appointed time, as declared in Daniel 12, is the shared foundation.

PART VII — COVENANT DECLARATIONS: WHAT THE WRITTEN TANAKH DECLARES

COVENANT DECLARATION 1 — Death Returns the Body to Dust

Bereishit (Genesis) 2:7 + 3:19 establish the Tanakh baseline: the human being is formed from dust and breathed into life by **Yahweh's *neshamah* (the divine breath)**. At death, the dust returns to earth. This is the covenant framework's starting point — not its conclusion.

COVENANT DECLARATION 2 — The Ruach Returns to Yahweh Who Gave It

Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:7 declares that the *ruach* — the spirit Yahweh gave at life's beginning — returns to Elohim at death. Not annihilated. Returned. Yahweh is the *El Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar* (Elohim of the spirits of all flesh) — the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh (Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22). Every ruach that ever lived is known to Yahweh and rests with Him.

COVENANT DECLARATION 3 — Sheol Is Real, Universal, and Temporary for the Faithful

Sheol is the universal destination of the dead in the Written Tanakh. But Sheol is not the final word for those in covenant relationship with Yahweh. Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10 and 49:15 establish the covenant exception: **Yahweh** will redeem the faithful from *Sheol*. Tehillim (Psalms) 139:8: 'If I make my bed in *Sheol*, You are there.' The power of *Sheol* is not beyond **Yahweh's** reach.

COVENANT DECLARATION 4 — The Written Tanakh Witnesses to Bodily Resurrection

Six independent witnesses from Tehillim, Iyov, Bereishit, Yeshayahu, and Daniel establish that the Written Tanakh itself — without reference to any later text — contains an explicit doctrine of bodily resurrection. The fullest statement is Daniel 12:2: those who sleep in the dust will awake to two differentiated destinies — *chayyei olam* (everlasting life) or *deraon olam* (everlasting contempt). This is Tanakh's own eschatology.

COVENANT DECLARATION 5 — Necromancy Is Forbidden Because the Dead Exist

The Torah's prohibition of communication with the dead (Devarim 18:10-12) is not on the grounds that the dead have no existence. If the dead were simply annihilated, no prohibition would be necessary. The prohibition is a covenant-boundary ruling: Yahweh has established prophetic revelation as the authorized channel. Necromancy bypasses that channel and constitutes covenant rebellion — but it implicitly witnesses to the reality of shade-existence in *Sheol*.

COVENANT DECLARATION 6 — The Covenant Hope Is Personal, Embodied, and Future

Iyov 19:26 — '**in my flesh I shall see Elohim**' — establishes that the Tanakh's resurrection hope is personal and bodily. Daniel 12:2 — those '**who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**' — uses the same language of the body returning from dust. **The resurrection of the Written Tanakh is not a disembodied immortality of the soul (a Greek philosophical concept). It is a**

bodily awakening — the dust returns to life by the power of Yahweh, the *Go'el* who lives, the *Mechayye ha-meitim* (Resurrector of the dead) — the Resurrector of the dead.

PART VIII — SCRIPTURE INDEX

Reference	Usage in This Document
Bereishit (Genesis) 2:7	Creation formula — dust + divine breath = living nefesh
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:19	The dust-return decree — foundational mortality covenant
Bereishit (Genesis) 5:24	Chanokh taken by Elohim — first Tanakh exception to death
Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:31; 20:6,27	Prohibition of ov-mediums — death penalty for the practitioner
Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:22	Yahweh as El Elohe ha-ruchot — Elohim of the spirits of all flesh
Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:10-12	Prohibition of necromancy — defines the forbidden practices
Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15	Evidentiary standard — two-or-three witnesses for every matter
Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel) 28	Sha'ul and the ov — shade-existence of Samuel witnessed; necromancy rebuked
Melakhim Bet (2 Kings) 2:11	Eliyahu taken to heaven in a whirlwind — second Tanakh exception to death
Iyov (Job) 3:13-19	Sheol as place of equality — all classes together
Iyov (Job) 7:7-10	Sheol as place of no return — primary statement
Iyov (Job) 14:13-14	Iyov's plea: hide me in Sheol until Your wrath passes
Iyov (Job) 19:25-27	Go'eli chai — the living Redeemer; bodily resurrection hope
Tehillim (Psalms) 6:5	No praise of Yahweh in Sheol — state of the dead
Tehillim (Psalms) 16:10	Yahweh does not abandon the faithful to Sheol — Witness 1
Tehillim (Psalms) 49:14-15	Elohim ransoms the nefesh from Sheol — Witness 2
Tehillim (Psalms) 88:3-12	Darkness, isolation, forgetting in Sheol — fuller portrait
Tehillim (Psalms) 139:8	If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there — Yahweh's sovereignty
Mishlei (Proverbs) 15:11	Sheol and Abaddon are before Yahweh — nothing hidden from Him
Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 9:5,10	The dead know nothing; no work or wisdom in Sheol

Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:7	The ruach returns to Elohim who gave it — foundational at-death text
Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:9-11	Sheol stirs up the shade-kings — poetic portrait of the dead
Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 26:19	Your dead shall live; corpses shall rise — Witness 5 (resurrection)
Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 38:18	Hizkiyahu: Sheol does not thank Yahweh — consistent with Tehillim 6:5
Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 37:1-14	Valley of Dry Bones — prophetic vision of national/covenantal resurrection
Daniel 12:1-2	Many who sleep in dust will awake — Witness 6; clearest Tanakh resurrection text
Shemot (Exodus) 32:32-33	Mosheh offers to be blotted from Yahweh's book — first Tanakh witness to the Book of Names (Daniel 12:1 thread)
Tehillim (Psalms) 69:28	"Book of the living" distinct from mere biological existence — second Tanakh witness to the Book of Names
Tehillim (Psalms) 3:6; Bereishit (Genesis) 41:4	Ordinary "awake" usage (qutz root) — lexical parallel establishing yakitzu in Daniel 12:2 as everyday wake-language

CLOSING COVENANT DECLARATION

Iyov (Job) 19:25 — *For I know that my Redeemer (Go'el) lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth.*

The Written Tanakh does not present death as a wall. It presents death as a threshold under the sovereign authority of **Yahweh**, the **Go'el** who lives. The human body returns to dust by the covenant decree of Bereishit (Genesis) 3:19. The **ruach** returns to **Elohim** who gave it by the covenant declaration of Kohelet 12:7. The dead rest in **Sheol** in darkness and silence. But **Yahweh** is the **El Elohe ha-ruchot le-khol basar (Elohim of the spirits of all flesh)** — the **Elohim** of the spirits of all flesh — and **Sheol** is not beyond His reach.

The covenant hope established in six independent witnesses across the Written Tanakh is this: those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to **chayyei olam** — everlasting life. Some to **deraon olam** — everlasting contempt. The differentiation is real. The resurrection is bodily. The authority is **Yahweh's** alone. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam trace their resurrection hope to this same Tanakh witness. The Written Tanakh spoke it first. Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution transmits this witness under the authority of the Written Tanakh alone, applied by the evidentiary standard of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15.

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