Here is the second and last part of my summary of the heart of my forthcoming book *Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife*. It’s not an outline of the chapters, but a summing up of the key issues, flow, and the ultimate “point” of the book. As a tip, I’ve called this little essay (in my own mind): “There Is Nothing To Fear.”

The idea of rewards and punishments eventually found its way into Judaism as well, but not until the very end of the Old Testament period. The book of Daniel was the final writing of the Hebrew Bible. This fictitious account of a pious Hebrew young man, Daniel, presents an alternative Jewish understanding of the world, the nature of reality, and of life beyond, quite unlike the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

Scholars have called Daniel’s view “apocalypticism,” from the Greek word “apocalypsis” – which means a “revealing.” Jewish apocalyptic thinkers began to believe that God had “revealed” to them the truth of ultimate reality hidden from all their predecessor, an explanation for the horrible pain and suffering of this world. These do not come from God or even from the harmful assertion of human free will. They are the work of cosmic forces of evil. God had temporarily ceded control of the earth to powers that opposed him and were intent on making his people suffer.

But he will soon intervene in his world to destroy evil and all who side with it. A massive day of judgment is coming, and every human will be caught up in it — not just those living at the time, but all people who have ever lived. Those who have died already will be restored to life either to be rewarded or punished.

Jews in antiquity did not traditionally subscribe to the Greek view that the soul would live on after the body died. For them, a person is ...

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