

# Journey INTO THE Bible

## Supplemental Material

Genesis, Part Two: Lesson Six

Genesis 42—50

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## The Land of the Dead

**F**or most of the Old Testament period, there is no belief in an afterlife. When one died, one went down to Sheol. This abode of the dead is described in a variety of water images. For example, Jonah 2:3-6 speaks of seas, flood, waves, and billows. Several texts, for example Job 38:17 and Isaiah 38:10, speak of the gates of Sheol—a metaphor that conjures up its power to incarcerate and restrain its occupants. (For such power in the New Testament, see Matthew 16:18). It should be noted, however, that God still retains sovereignty over Sheol (1 Samuel 2:6). Darkness (Job 17:13), dust (Job 17:16), and silence (Psalm 94:17) also characterize this abode of the dead. Sheol is more a place of shadowy existence than punishment. What contributes to this rather depressing atmosphere is the fact that one cannot worship God there (Psalm 6:6).