



## **The Resurrection**

**By**

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### **Part I**

#### **Human longing for Life-after-death**

In 1 Corinthians 15: 14-19 St. Paul is so sure of the bodily resurrection of Jesus that he affirms it as the foundation of Christian belief: “If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless; indeed, we are shown up as witnesses who have committed perjury before God...and if Christ has not been raised you are still in your sins. What is more serious, all who have died in Christ have perished.” Earlier in that letter Paul had located the source for this belief (vs. 3-4): “I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” Paul’s appeal is to Scripture and Tradition, not to any Council or Papal definition. This faith, later recorded in the creeds that articulated essential Christian belief is so foundational that nothing that followed has relevance apart from it. This being the case, one would expect unanimous affirmation from all who accept the Scriptures and claim belief based on them. Yet a Harris poll in 2003 found that while 90% of Americans believe in God; only 84% believe in the survival of the soul after death, (82% believe in heaven, 68% in hell); and among Christians only 80% believe in the Resurrection of Christ (reduced to 68% for younger people in their 20s).<sup>i</sup> Such confusion calls for a review of three doctrinal issues: life-after-death; immortality; and resurrection. That will be the purpose of this essay.

#### **Life-after-death in the Pagan World:**

Genesis 1: 27 reveals God’s intention in the creation of the human being: “God made man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” The theology taught here tells us that of all of God’s creation, the human being is special, with a relationship to God and a destiny that exceeds that of any

other creature. Incrementally, the special revelation that will attain its fullness in Christ will spell out the meaning that this imaging of God contains. Those whose good fortune leads to full Christian discipleship will benefit from the revelation of both the Jewish Scriptures and the New Testament. But all of the human family will have some part of the revelation that instinct and reason will lead them to grasp. Hence, we will progress in this examination of the mystery of death and its aftermath diachronically as it is revealed through the course of historical time. In 1977, Joseph Ratzinger published a landmark book on what is a central doctrine of the Christian message entitled *Eschatologie – Tod und ewiges Leben* “Eschatology – Death and Eternal Life”<sup>ii</sup>. He, now Pope Benedict XVI, built the concerns of this important volume into his second encyclical *Spe Salvi* (Saved in Hope) reminding us that “The Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known – it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who has hope is granted the gift of a new life” (par. 2). This insight of the future Holy Father suggested the value of this adventure into the human effort to make sense of life by coming to know its purpose in life after death, immortality and a glorious resurrection.

Archaeological evidence has long attested to the hope held by the ancients that they believed in some form of continued life after death. Their burial practices evidenced this belief by the inclusion of artifacts useful for self-support or protection in the mysterious world beyond death; and their literature, in epic form, often formed a vehicle for speculation about what that future existence might be, or even if there is such a future. This later seems to be the richest trove and may serve as a precursor to the revealed Scriptures raising the questions the later Scriptures answered with increasing depth, detail and certainty.

We may begin with the Babylonian story, perhaps the oldest piece of literature we have, entitled the **Gilgamesh Epic**. It predates the Homeric tales by at least a century and a half. Gilgamesh was the king of the city or Uruk about 2700 BC, less famous to us than a successor in Babylonian history, Hammurabi (ruled 1796-1750 BC), but a figure around whom stories of dramatic exploits developed over generations. The Epic was written in ancient Akkadian around 2000 BC, and what remains of it was discovered in the library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (669-633 BC). On twelve tablets, we are entertained and instructed with the story of a friendship between two titanic figures, Gilgamesh described as two thirds god and one third man; and his wild friend Enkidu who, having met with Gilgamesh becomes civilized in the course of their exploits. The argument of the story is a search for immortality. It becomes more urgent when Enkidu dies and Gilgamesh pines away in despair. Friendly citizens tell him of a survivor of the great flood that nearly wiped out the human race, Utnapishtim (the ‘long-lived-one’ often thought of as the Babylonian Noah). Gilgamesh searches for this figure and, finding him, after hearing the account of the flood, asks the secret of immortality. Utnapishtim tests his sincerity by demanding that he stay awake six days and seven nights. Gilgamesh cannot and is denied the secret of immortality. Utnapishtim’s wife, feeling sorry for her stern husband’s refusal of that gift, intercedes and Gilgamesh receives an offer of renewed life in this world in place of immortality. Its agent, the tree of life, is to be found

as a plant at the bottom of the sea. Gilgamesh finds and uproots the plant only to have it stolen by a giant snake while, again, he is asleep. Fanciful as it is, the Epic attests to the human desire for immortality, that it is recognized as a gift, but a gift that has to be deserved. If the story was known to the authors of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, it may have served as a literary frame for their theology of human beginnings; but of interest to us is that it raises the questions that seem to have concerned humans from the beginning: Is death the end of all? Could there be life after death? Does its attainment depend on decisions made during the course of our mortal journey? This and other pagan stories and later philosophical investigations end in incomplete answers as we shall see. But the questions are real, and God's revelation incrementally brings us to positive answers of life-after-death, immortality and resurrection.

We may continue our story with some of the foundational literature of our western world. Homer deserves the honor of initiating the literary quest for answers to these life-after-death questions. He wrote tellingly of some shadowy continued existence of life after death but could imagine no resurrection (which at the time would have meant a return to this worldly pre-death experience with its requirement of death all over again). In the *Iliad* for instance, Achilles addresses Priam while he is mourning the death of his son Hector, whom Achilles had slain, advising the king: "You must endure, and not be broken hearted. Lamenting your son will do no good at all. You will be dead yourself before you bring him back to life." In a similar way Aeschylus in *Eumenides* has Apollo declare: "Once a man has died, and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection." And Sophocles in *Electra*, as she mourns her dead father Agamemnon, is reminded that lamentation cannot bring him back. In the parallel Roman literary world during the great classical period, Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* scoffs at the whole idea. Some authors rejected any kind of real existence after death. The only kind of immortality they would allow was the reputation one left behind. But their very concern attests to the existence and prominence of the idea that death cannot be the end of the story of life. One may enjoy (or suffer) some form of survival in Hades as Homer attested. This was a place where individuals were recognizable as themselves though diminished somehow. Homer spoke in the *Iliad* of fallen warriors lying in the fields while their souls went to Hades. The philosophical assumption that the soul was the real self and the body its prison had not yet emerged at his time, but the separation of body and soul invited some further thought about the body-soul relationship.

It would be Plato in the dialogues the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* who would establish the mindset that remained prominent at the time of the beginnings of the Church. For him, it was the soul that harbored the clearest knowledge of the really important forms or ideas, the body was often a distraction. The ideal of personal existence was release from the body which death offered and happened when the soul was sufficiently purified to be able to return to the 'world-of-ideas'. This occurred through human action and decision during one or many passages through worldly life: accomplished in the first passage for the best of us; or in repeated reincarnated existences (*metempsychōsis*) for those unsuccessful in the first passage. Here, obviously, the notion of resurrection was again excluded. Only the form, the soul, the idea continued and was immortal.

Aristotle offers a more complicated picture. In his *De Anima* (On the Soul), he defines the soul this way: *The soul is the first actuality of a natural body that is potentially alive* ((412a27). He disagrees with Plato, who thought the soul could exist without the body, saying: . . . *the soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body, and in a body of such-and-such a kind* (414a20ff). The soul is not a material object, but it is not separable from the body in Aristotle's thought. However, there is a passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10, where he investigates the nature of happiness concluding, after eliminating such things as health, wealth, power, riches, fame, etc. (all too vulnerable to be lasting), that happiness must be the contemplation of the Good, he ends his thought on a note of sadness: *But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. This would seem, too, to be each man himself, since it is the authoritative and better part of him. It would be strange, then, if he were to choose not the life of his self but that of something else. And what we said before' will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else is man. This life therefore is also the happiest.* Had Aristotle the advantage of Revelation and the experience of the event of Jesus' resurrection and teaching, could it not be that he, too, would be able to see that there is "something divine" in us (grace) that makes this contemplation of the Good (God) possible?

We may conclude this excursion through the thought in the pagan world by noting that the instinct of the human being, since he/she is the "image-likeness" of God had an inbuilt sense but no clear idea of life-after-death and immortality, but as yet did not accept resurrection. The importance of this brief<sup>iii</sup> presentation is to alert us: 1) to the world into which Christianity introduced itself with a rich doctrine on the after-life including resurrection as a central component, one rejected by those who would hear the message. 2) Apart from Judaism, nobody believed in resurrection and some influential pagan thinkers did not hold immortality to be possible. This is dramatically brought home by Paul's experience at the Areopagus (Acts 17: 32) "At the mention of rising from the dead, some of them burst out laughing; others said, 'We would like to hear you talk about this again.'" There was openness, perhaps instinctual, and in Paul's time possibly prepared by the revelation to the Jews which we will now examine.

### **An Excursus through the Jewish Scriptures:**

While the resurrection of the body had no place in the pagan world (some would claim Zoroastrianism an exception to that statement, but that doctrine had no demonstrable influence on Jewish thinking about life-after-death, or on the early Christian disciples), Second Temple Judaism, shaped by the Scriptures (and in full continuity with First Temple Judaism) and Rabbinic teachings rooted the Christian experience firmly. Unlike the pagan world which was often ambiguous and unclear about post-mortal life, and firmly rejecting of the body as a participant in glory, we will find in the Jewish world an incremental development of doctrinal insight that later theology will call a “development of doctrine”. By this I mean there will be an organic growth from affirmation of continued existence after physical death, to immortality, to resurrection.

Someone reading the Old Testament superficially may see Homer reflected in some of its references regarding the dead, e.g., “In death there is no remembering you [God]; in Sheol who can give you praise?” (Ps. 6:5). An affirmation of continued post-mortal existence in Hades such as one finds in Homer, along with a state of seeming inactivity without honor, purpose or joy, but only misery could appear to be reflected here; and again in Isaiah 14: 9-11 depicting the arrival of the king of Babylon in the underworld, some have seen imagery worthy of Homer:

The nether world below is all astir preparing for your coming; It awakens the shades to greet you, all the leaders of the earth; It has the kings of all nations rise from their thrones.

All of them speak out and say to you, "You too have become weak like us, you are the same as we.

Down to the nether world your pomp is brought, the music of your harps. The couch beneath you is the maggot, your covering, the worm."

This text reduces all to the same estate, and there are no degrees in existence and no degrees of misery. What removes these texts, however, from Homeric and other Greek literary influence, is the context. Death is not seen as release from the prison of the body as Plato held. For the Hebrew, life is God’s gift and therefore inherently good. This being the case, we must first look more carefully at **death**,<sup>iv</sup> as it is the event that raises the issues being examined here. Being an obvious fact of everyone’s experience, it had to be addressed. The logical place to begin is with its Biblical etiology. Genesis 2-3 suggests that the reason for death is sin, Adam and Eve’s disobeying God’s command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the censure for which is death. Yet Adam and Eve did not die immediately but were expelled from the garden to prevent them from eating of the tree of life, i.e. to prevent them from living forever in that state of alienation from God. God promised them a way to salvation. The following chapters in Genesis are an ongoing story of sin’s continued incursion into the human history beginning with fratricide, and through the symbol of the decreasing life-spans for the pre-flood patriarchs signaling God’s wrath for man’s sinfulness leading to destruction, and a new beginning. The post-flood patriarchs hardly proved themselves better, and the story culminates in the dispersal of mankind initiated by the attempt to build the tower of Babel. Death seems not to have been God’s original intention (Gen. 2:17). Rather death appears as an evil power opposed to God (Rev. 6:8; 20: 12f), an instrument of Satan (Heb. 2:14). In Wisdom 2: 24 we learn that “It is the envy of the devil that brought death

into the world". Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 25:24 links sin with man's original fall. In Paul, too, the causal relationship between sin and death is clear (see 1 Cor. 3:22; 4:9; 15: 21, 26, 54-56; Rom. 5:15; 6:23). Yet, death could never be the final victor. In Genesis 3: 15, God condemns the serpent and promises victory through the "seed of the woman." Eventually, Yahwistic faith makes its most potent contribution as it matures to see death in a very different light as a possible instrument by which the suffering just one could impetrate the aid of God for others as in the vicarious suffering of the Fourth Servant of Yahweh poem in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. Paul, in Philippians 2: 5-11 sings the ultimate victory over death in the obedience, "even to the death of the cross" of the Son of God become man for this purpose. If one surveys the entire development of the Old Testament in its struggle to understand the mystery of death, one finds that in the New Testament there is no need to formulate different conclusions. What is new is a *Fact*, the martyrdom of Jesus and his resurrection destroys death. Revelation 20: 13 – 15 tells us that death and Hades are emptied, everyone is judged according to the way he lived. "Then death and Hades were thrown into the burning lake. This burning lake is the second death; and anybody whose name could not be found in the book of life was thrown into the burning lake." Paul, in 1 Corinthians, 15: 26 assures us that "the last enemy to be destroyed is death itself." In the end, there is only life, and those who are obedient to God's call will participate in it.

Given the reality of death, however, its aftermath needed explanation. Among the ancient Jews, at the very beginning of their contemplation of the mystery of death, the souls of the departed were thought to be remanded to a place called *Sheol* " the abode of the dead, the underworld. The etymology of the word is disputed, but its description and other Biblical designations such as "Pit," "Perdition" or "Place of Destruction" makes its meaning perfectly clear. The Psalm quoted above (6:5) removes the Biblical meaning of the place of the dead from the *Hades* of the Greeks, although in the LXX (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible called the Septuagint) the word Hades is used to translate Sheol. In Scripture, the essential negative feature about Sheol is separation from God, from being able to praise God; and removal from his embrace. Sheol is a place to which one "goes down" (Num. 16:30; Job 7:9; Is. 57:9; Ps. 88: 3-4) in contrast to the 'high Heavens" (Amos 9:2; Ps. 139:8; Job 11:8). *Darkness* is its first characteristic (Job 17:13), perhaps cloaking any clear understanding of who goes there – seemingly the good and bad on equal terms: the good Jacob expects nothing other than to go down in sorrow to Sheol (Gen. 37:35); yet there he would have to mingle with the bad (Num. 16:30). Here too, Biblical thought underwent further and deeper development. Authors dispute whether there is such a mixture of good and bad in Sheol (Ps. 89:48). They point to other texts where it is said that good people, upon death, are said to be "gathered to their people" with no mention of Sheol (Gen. 49:33). There can be no doubt that the Jews believed in continued personal existence, life-after-death; and there are veiled beginnings of a consciousness that the final destiny of good and bad would be different, and that the difference would depend on the life lived here on earth. Daniel 12: 2 reveals: "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel's insight is reflected in the psalms where maturing piety, realizing that death is not meaningless, at least not in God's eyes, express a breakthrough. Israel's God is a God of mercy as Hosea 6:6 said eight centuries BC: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (quoted twice by Jesus in Mt. 9:13; 12:7). God's mercy will not abandon the pious, sufferers or martyrs. For them, death has a transforming character. Historical circumstances also play a part in the defining of the meaning of death. The returnees from the Babylonian exile (587-537 BC) could no longer depend on their old tribal structures for support. Now, the pious had to make sense of their spirituality and relationship to God. Perhaps a look at two psalms 16 and 73 will help to move our story forward -- Psalm 16, verses 8-11

"I keep the LORD always before me; with the Lord at my right, I shall never be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure, For you will not abandon me to Sheol, nor let your faithful servant see the pit. You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever."

In the Acts of the Apostles (2:25-32; 13:35-37) first Peter then Paul quote these underlined words as applicable to Christ's resurrection. Scholars argue as to whether these verses refer to an escape from death as is reported of Enoch and Elijah; or to God offering a passage beyond death to a more agreeable destiny. What is clear is that God is stronger than Sheol and benefits those who are faithful to him.

Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) and Job represent a crisis of faith in ancient Jewish theology as they wrestle with the seeming futility of living a virtuous life while both the good and the bad come to the same end in Sheol. Common observation suggested that worldly success and long life signal God's favor; while suffering and a sudden or early death signaled God's rejection, why then live the good life? Psalm 73 addresses the same issue. In verses 2 -12 the poet almost loses his faith as he witnesses the evil flaunting their sin apparently with impunity:

But, as for me, I lost my balance; my feet all but slipped,  
 Because I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.  
 For they suffer no pain; their bodies are healthy and sleek.  
 They are free of the burdens of life; they are not afflicted like others.  
 Thus pride adorns them as a necklace; violence clothes them as a robe.  
 Out of their stupidity comes sin; evil thoughts flood their hearts.  
 They scoff and spout their malice; from on high they utter threats.  
 They set their mouths against the heavens, their tongues roam the earth.  
 So my people turn to them and drink deeply of their words.  
 They say, "Does God really know?" "Does the Most High have any knowledge?"  
 Such, then, are the wicked, always carefree, increasing their wealth.

The psalmist's piety seems pointless or at least unrecognized by God. He feels abandoned in spite of his righteousness, until he feels the presence of God in the Temple and comes to realize that it is the wicked, not he who is deluded – verses 13-20:

Is it in vain that I have kept my heart clean, washed my hands in innocence?  
 For I am afflicted day after day, chastised every morning.  
 Had I thought, "I will speak as they do," I would have betrayed your people.  
 Though I tried to understand all this, it was too difficult for me,

Till I entered the sanctuary of God and came to understand their end.  
 You set them, indeed, on a slippery road; you hurl them down to ruin.  
 How suddenly they are devastated; undone by disasters forever!  
 They are like a dream after waking, Lord, dismissed like shadows when you arise.

Here the mercy of God comes to the psalmist's rescue. God understands the weakness of his devoted servant, and will punish the wicked for their unrepented sins; but his own he will take to himself – verses 21-28:

Since my heart was embittered and my soul deeply wounded,  
 I was stupid and could not understand; I was like a brute beast in your presence.  
 Yet I am always with you; you take hold of my right hand.  
 With your counsel you guide me, and at the end receive me with honor.  
 Whom else have I in the heavens? None beside you delights me on earth.  
 Though my flesh and my heart fail, God is the rock of my heart, my portion forever.  
 But those who are far from you perish; you destroy those unfaithful to you.  
 As for me, to be near God is my good, to make the Lord GOD my refuge. I shall declare all your works in  
 the gates of daughter Zion.

One can sense a kind of “existential anguish, almost despair”<sup>vi</sup> that finds resolution only in a deep personal experience of God. The good fortune and seeming joyousness of the wicked is mere sham; yet the world adulates them and seeks to imitate them. They are the ones thought to ‘make history’ and therefore they are envied by others. Even the good might be tempted to emulate them since one's own goodness and piety seem to be unnoticed even by God. The psalmist wakes up, not through reflection, comparison or observation but through surrender to God. The underlined words “at the end” (*w'acher*) do not refer to place or time but to a way of existing imposed after this life's end; and the being received “with honor” (*kabod* = ‘glory’) offers a glimpse of one's future presence with God. All pomp, posturing and adulation are nothing by comparison.

Both the depth of doctrine and the character of the language of this psalm suggest a late date for its composition. The Persian period suggests itself as probable. After the Babylonian exile when tribal identity no longer held sway and kingship was ended only the Temple liturgy encouraged the returnees to unity of faith through a common belief – or at least a belief struggling to express its essential theology. As yet, however, there is no clear and unambiguous affirmation of bodily resurrection in the after-life. What has been clearly affirmed is that there is “life-after-death” and that it is different depending on the quality of “life-before-death” (see *Wisdom* 3: 1- 12).

### **Resurrection of the Body:**

“Resurrection is *not* what happened to Enoch or Elijah...it is what *will* happen to people who are at present dead, not what *has already* happened to them.”<sup>vii</sup> The Pharisees did not imagine that any of the dead *already* enjoyed bodily resurrection. They postulated an intermediate state where the disembodied spirit (ghost, angel) awaited the end-time determined by God when he would create a new bodily existence, a resurrected ‘life’ *after* ‘life-after-death’ – the step between death and resurrection. This is the state of existence most of us imagine for ourselves and for our loved ones who have died and are

awaiting resurrection at the end of time. The *immediate Resurrection* of Jesus was the unexpected event that took the apostles and disciples so much by such surprise that they, in fright, thought they were seeing a ghost (and it is the wonder of divine power that we celebrate in the Assumption of Mary, body and soul into glory). This point may help to clarify the doctrine of resurrection we meet in *Daniel* 12: 2-3; and the witness of the seven brother martyrs in *2 Maccabees* 7: 1-42, probably the clearest Old Testament texts affirming bodily resurrection.

Two issues pushed the envelope of theological meditation to the affirmation of the resurrection of the body: the justness of God in rewarding the righteous, Job being a famous model for the virtuous; and the willingness of the martyrs of the Old Testament to sacrifice their bodily integrity and even their lives rather than to deny God or abandon his laws. For its presence in funeral liturgies, many will expect the passage from Job 19: 25-27 to be part of the Old Testament witness to bodily resurrection:

But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;  
And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing.  
Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him.

St. Jerome's Latin translation, the Latin Vulgate, has Job expressing belief in bodily resurrection, but the Hebrew and other ancient versions of this popular poem are less specific. The cautious conclusion of Joseph Ratzinger states: "There is a glimmer of hope here for an abiding life to come, but the textual tradition is too uncertain to allow any worthwhile judgment about the form such hopes might have taken. Job and Qoheleth, then, document a crisis."<sup>viii</sup> That crisis may well be the part of the post-exilic theological turmoil that looks for answers to perennial questions like: why do the good suffer? Why evil? Shouldn't the virtuous and martyrs to be treated specially? Job may not be a clear witness to belief in bodily resurrection, but he may have focused these questions more pointedly. Clearly he believed in immortality. Immortality can mean: a) on-going physical life without the interruption of death or some other form of transitional event (the original state of Adam and Eve before the Fall?); b) the possession of an innate principle, the soul, which by definition as spiritual is immortal (Plato's position); c) the intervention of divine power with a gift of on-going life (the position of Second Temple Jewish theology); d) another way of speaking about the resurrection (as emphasized by St. Paul).<sup>ix</sup>

Having arrived at Second Temple Jewish theology we may concentrate on the last two meanings.

*Wisdom* 3: 1-4 may be transitional:

But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them.  
They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction  
and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.  
For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality.

Being in the "hand of God" describes the immortality of the just as a free gift of God. If it entered Jewish thought by way of Plato, it experienced a change in meaning

conforming it in a unique way to Jewish thought, it has taken on the notion of gift rather than that of an innate right. The context of the first five chapters of *Wisdom* resembles the argument found in Job, contrasting the arrogance and fate of the wicked with the hope of the righteous. For the wicked, death ends everything (as described in 1:16-2:9). But the wicked are proved wrong because (2: 21-24):

These were their thoughts, but they erred; for their wickedness blinded them,  
And they knew not the hidden counsels of God; neither did they count on a recompense of holiness nor  
discern the innocent souls' reward.  
For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him.  
But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it.

It is entirely possible that this text is a polemic against the unpopular doctrine of the Sadducees as described by Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Bk. 18, ch. 1, par. 4): “But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies.” Immortality is a position held by the Pharisees who predominated as teachers in Judaism after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem around 70 AD. It was they who helped to carry Second Temple Judaism into the Christian era.

Older authors and apologists often looked to Ezekiel, the prophet of the Babylonian Captivity (587-537 BC) as the first to give clear evidence of personal resurrection of the body. Modern scholars attribute that to Daniel, but to Ezekiel the transitional place of opening the way to resurrection by speaking of the renewed life God would give to his people. Ezekiel’s vision of the “valley of the dried bones” is well known (37: 1-14):

#### **The Vision:**

1 The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he led me out in the spirit of the LORD and set me in the center of the plain, which was now filled with bones.  
2 He made me walk among them in every direction so that I saw how many they were on the surface of the plain. How dry they were!  
3 He asked me: Son of man, can these bones come to life? "Lord GOD," I answered, "you alone know that."  
4 Then he said to me: Prophesy over these bones, and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!  
5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life.  
6 I will put sinews upon you, make flesh grow over you, cover you with skin, and put spirit in you so that you may come to life and know that I am the LORD.  
7 I prophesied as I had been told, and even as I was prophesying I heard a noise; it was a rattling as the bones came together, bone joining bone.  
8 I saw the sinews and the flesh come upon them, and the skin cover them, but there was no spirit in them.  
9 Then he said to me: Prophesy to the spirit, prophesy, son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus says the Lord GOD: From the four winds come, O spirit, and breathe into these slain that they may come to life.  
10 I prophesied as he told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and stood upright, a vast army.

#### **Interpretation of the Vision:**

11 Then he said to me: Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They have been saying, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off."  
12 Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel.

13 Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people!

14 I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the LORD. I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD.

These verses do not intend the doctrine of the individual bodily resurrection that has to wait for Daniel, but under the image of bodily resurrection and in response to their suffering, God promises his people restoration as a nation after the Babylonian exile. The dead bones are the Israelites who have given up hope. The restoration of those bones and the processes of enfleshment and ensoulement indicate that God will open the “grave” of defeat. Decoding this vision enables the resurrection scene to announce an historical restoration that seemed impossible – but nothing is impossible with God.<sup>x</sup> It is important to note that the first 8 verses of Ezekiel use the imagery of human creation. As God created at the beginning, so he creates again and as often as he pleases. There can be no restrictions on the power of God to accomplish his purposes.

Ezekiel offers another insight that will play a significant role in the moral calculus leading to the final judgment that precedes eternal life. It turns the mind to the individual responsibility that will be judged worthy of resurrection to glory or to punishment. This will be long in development, but it begins in chapter 18 where the prophet records:

1 Thus the word of the LORD came to me: Son of man,

2 what is the meaning of this proverb that you recite in the land of Israel: "Fathers have eaten green grapes, thus their children's teeth are on edge"?

3 As I live, says the Lord GOD: I swear that there shall no longer be anyone among you who will repeat this proverb in Israel.

4 For all lives are mine; the life of the father is like the life of the son, both are mine; only the one who sins shall die.....

20 Only the one who sins shall die. The son shall not be charged with the guilt of his father, nor shall the father be charged with the guilt of his son. The virtuous man's virtue shall be his own, as the wicked man's wickedness shall be his own.

The prophet is not denying that sin has social, cultural and corporate implications and effects (what today is often referred to as “structural sin”), but recovers a truth of accountability that often lay dormant. Note it is God who is represented as speaking through the prophet, and calling attention to the fact that social and cultural sin is rooted in personal sin and carries individual responsibility. What is to be noticed here is: 1) that the language is God’s approval or disapproval for the person’s actions and it is the language of eternal life or death. 2) As the prophet moves his attention to the individual, he makes it clear that while alive the wicked can change and be saved by sincere repentance, and the virtuous can lose it all by turning from the path of virtue.<sup>xi</sup>

21 But if the wicked man turns away from all the sins he committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall live because of the virtue he has practiced. ...

24 And if the virtuous man turns from the path of virtue to do evil, the same kind of abominable things that the wicked man does, can he do this and still live? None of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered, because he has broken faith and committed sin; because of this, he shall die.

But it is with **Daniel** that the doctrine of resurrection becomes clear. The imperishable formation of man, made in the image/likeness of God, the ground for his bodily resurrection is announced in *Daniel* 12: 1-3<sup>xii</sup>

"At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.

Here we have the first explicit reference to corporal resurrection. *Daniel* was written around 168 BC (four centuries after Ezekiel in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), the time of the oppression of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, leading to the Maccabean rebellion. The writer reflects an earlier prophecy of Isaiah 26:19 "But your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise; awake and sing, you who lie in the dust. For your dew is a dew of light, and the land of shades gives birth." The Danielic writer sees this text as fulfilled in his own time, but adds critically important elements by identifying the dead to be resurrected as comprising all of the human family, both the righteous and the wicked, each to his own destiny depending on his behavior in this life. Later discussion of the resurrection generally confines itself to the righteous; hence it is important to remember that all rise and receive the appropriate fate divine justice will assign to them. This addition, the specificity of assigned fate, must have been suggested by the author's observation that the suffering of the righteous came precisely because of their observance of God's law; and the converse was true of the wicked – worldly success and ease came from their complicity with the paganizing intentions of Antiochus. This imbalance had to be righted. Note, too, the beginnings of the idea of a distinction made among the righteous. Not only are the "wise" singled out to "shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament"; but those who lead others to justice "shall shine like the stars forever." Jesus may reflect this when he taught: "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places...I am going to prepare a place for you" (Jn. 14: 2). The picture of our final destiny is becoming more precise and complete.

As we noted above, much of the Old Testament revelation is history-specific, that is, it occurs in and out of specific historical circumstances. The war of the Maccabees was a response to persecution that yielded many martyrs faithful to God even to their death. The martyrdom of the elderly Eleazar (2 Macc. 6: 18-31) is a particularly inspiring story. He refused to offend against God's law by eating forbidden pork. And, when friends who had capitulated tried to urge him to eat some substitute that would not offend the law, simulating compliance with the king's order, he refused, saying:

"Even if, for the time being, I avoid the punishment of men, I shall never, whether alive or dead, escape the hands of the Almighty. Therefore, by manfully giving up my life now, I will prove myself worthy of my old age, and I will leave to the young a noble example of how to die willingly and generously for the revered and holy laws." He spoke thus, and went immediately to the instrument of torture....This is how he

died, leaving in his death a model of courage and an unforgettable example of virtue not only for the young but for the whole nation.”

He dies a martyr refusing to make a mockery out of the Laws he lived faithfully all his life. In the very next chapter, Maccabees 7, a mother and her seven sons follow the same path to martyrdom. In the telling of the story, belief in bodily resurrection appears on the lips of a number of the heroes: the second son to die, after excruciating agony said at the point of death: "You accursed fiend, you are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up to live again forever. It is for his laws that we are dying." (7:9). Another attempt was made with another son to same effect: "After him the third suffered their cruel sport. He put out his tongue at once when told to do so, and bravely held out his hands, as he spoke these noble words: 'It was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of his laws I disdain them; from him I hope to receive them again.'" (7:1). After he died, they tortured and maltreated the fourth brother in the same way. "When he was near death, he said, 'It is my choice to die at the hands of men with the God-given hope of being restored to life by him; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.'" (7: 13-14). The Mother of the seven, speaking encouragingly to each of her sons has this said of her:

Most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother, who saw her seven sons perish in a single day, yet bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord. Filled with a noble spirit that stirred her womanly heart with manly courage, she exhorted each of them in the language of their forefathers with these words:

"I do not know how you came into existence in my womb; it was not I who gave you the breath of life, nor was it I who set in order the elements of which each of you is composed. Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shapes each man's beginning, as he brings about the origin of everything, he, in his mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his law. I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that God did not make them out of existing things; and in the same way the human race came into existence. "(7:20-23, 28).

This passage offers the most explicit statement of *creatio ex nihilo* found in Scripture, and it suggests an intimate connection between creation and resurrection, that God who created our bodies out of nothing, in the first place, has the creative power to recreate the bodies of the dead again, from nothing.<sup>xiii</sup>

Second Maccabees was written originally in Greek, but owes nothing of its witness to bodily resurrection to Greek philosophy. It is quintessentially Jewish. Judas Maccabaeus also attests to the resurrection. After finding forbidden amulets on the persons of some of his soldiers who died in battle, he had sacrifices offered for them. The text comments:

He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. (12:43-45).

There can be no doubt that the Scriptures incrementally revealed God's plan for his favored creatures, not only the People of Israel but the whole of the human race: death

was punishment for sin, but death could never be the last word that would defeat God's plan. God promised a divine intervention, a Messiah, whom Christians believe to be Jesus Christ. His resurrection would be the destiny of his uncompromising obedience to the Father, and the instrument of our salvation. God adorned Eden with the "tree-of-life" as a symbol that having created us in his image/likeness he intended immortality; and eternal life would honor the integrity of our nature matter and spirit, body and soul. How this will play out in the era after the destruction of the Jewish nation and its disbursement following its defeat at the hands of the Romans under Vespasian and Titus in 70 AD and the final destruction of Jerusalem under Hadrian in 135 AD is the question we examine now.

### **Rabbinic Judaism:**

Both Christianity and Judaism, in our common era, have roots in Second Temple Judaism and have progressed throughout current history in parallel lines. This suggests a family relationship that alerts us to expect considerable areas of common belief. The earliest Christians were Jews and their Second Temple theology is reflected in many New Testament passages. Christianity does not claim to supplant Judaism, but to witness that what is implied in Judaism has been fulfilled in Jesus' teaching and salvific ministry. This is what is meant when the New Testament affirms that Jesus suffering, death and resurrection were in fulfillment of all that the Scriptures said about him (Lk. 24: 27 "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.")

The rabbis who have guided Judaism in our historical era are descendants of the Pharisees. The Sadducees disappeared from history after the catastrophe of 70 AD. An early effort to form a united statement of Jewish faith for the Diaspora believers was the 'council' of Jamnia (Jabneh) around 90 AD. It grew out of a school of Jewish law founded by Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, and having attracted many followers, was considered the successor to the Great Sanhedrin after the fall of Jerusalem. Under the leadership of Rabbi Johanan and at the Jewish school he founded, rabbis met with the hope to offer guidance regarding the books to be recognized as belonging to the Bible, the laws for authentic Jewish practice and standardizing some practical issues like the use of Hebrew in liturgy to keep the marks of Jewish identity alive among the Jews dispersed among many nations. The development of the canon (official list of Biblical books) of the Old Testament is disputed, but the actions at Jamnia were favored and are followed by most Jews today. At the end of the first century AD there were two canons of the Scriptures: the Palestinian canon which rejected TJWEBB (the books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and the two books of the Maccabees); and the Alexandrian canon which admitted these as authentic parts of the Bible, and are included in the Old Testament in Catholic Bibles. Nevertheless they hold a place of honor with Jews and reflect the theology and practice alive at the time of Jesus and the beginning of the Church. This academy at Jamnia preserved the teachings of the Second Temple and is critical in the foundation of the literary treasures to follow.<sup>xiv</sup>

The earliest example of rabbinic teaching is the Mishnah<sup>xv</sup> which redacts the teaching of many rabbis and the legal formulations of the *Tannaim* (the word means those

who study and teach, hence the rabbis of the first two centuries AD). The names of many of the rabbis mentioned in the Mishnah are identical with those mentioned in the New Testament and in Josephus. Historians urge caution in identifying the Tannaim too closely with the Pharisees on all issues; yet when it comes to the issues of life-after-death, the tradition of the Tannaim reflects what the New Testament and Josephus say about the Pharisees. The witness of the Mishnah can be confidently accepted as an accurate account of Pharisaic doctrine in the first Christian century as it reflects belief in bodily resurrection at the time of Jesus. The Mishnaic tractate Sanhedrin X.I offers this witness: "All Israel have a share in the world to come, as it is written, and thy people are all of them righteous; they shall inherit the earth for ever" (Isaiah. 60. 21). These are they who have no share in the world to come: who say there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in Torah; that the Law is not from Heaven ...."

Of interest is the phrase "prescribed in Torah" since it is precisely their inability to find an affirmation of bodily resurrection in the Torah (Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible, the Books of Moses) that led the Sadducees to deny this doctrine. Yet the Mishnaic statement quoted above makes it clear that resurrection is already a traditional doctrine, not something being newly legislated; and its acceptance is serious enough that its denial prevents salvation for the one who rejects it.

The question arises, how is this doctrine of bodily resurrection found in the Torah? We have already noted that the first clear and explicit statement of this doctrine is found in Daniel 12 and that there are hints in the prophets. Rabbinic exegetical analysis in those early centuries did not have the advantage of modern 'historical criticism'. It relied on the sense of the Scripture behind the words used, a sense of the implication of Jewish faith in its God, a supernatural instinct of faith (*sensus fidei*). The Old Testament is the inspired word of God. Can we not believe that God's People had the aid of the Holy Spirit in penetrating what he wanted them to know? We can offer a typical example of rabbinic exegesis at this point by listening to Jesus answering the objection to resurrection offered by the Sadducees in Matthew 22: 23-33:

On that day Sadducees approached him, saying that there is no resurrection. They put this question to him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up descendants for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died and, having no descendants, left his wife to his brother. The same happened with the second and the third, through all seven. Finally the woman died. Now at the resurrection, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had been married to her."

Jesus said to them in reply, "You are misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven.

And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Jesus' response is twofold: the Sadducees understood: 1) neither resurrection nor 2) the meaning of Torah. They did not understand that the resurrected life will not mimic life in this world but will be entirely different, hence the 'levirate law' regarding the next-of-kin marrying the widow of a man who dies childless and the son of such a marriage

being considered the heir of the dead relative had no force in heaven. Again, the Sadducees did not read the Torah correctly. God depicts himself as continuing his relationship with the dead Patriarchs since he says: "I am (present tense) the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Hence, they must be alive since God cannot be mistaken nor can Torah speak incorrectly. The argument takes on greater force when we remember (see above, Pg 9) that Josephus told us that the Sadducees not only rejected resurrection but also believed that the soul perished with the body. Jesus is rejecting the whole of the Sadducees position. The Pharisees and Jesus agreed with the Second Temple theology of bodily resurrection as central to Christianity and rabbinic Judaism after 70 AD.

Along with rabbinic teaching reflected in the Mishnah, we also have scholarly witnesses who offer evidence of Jewish belief: in immortality (Philo), and the resurrection (Josephus and the Dead Sea Scrolls). Philo (20/40 BCE-40/50 CE) was the quintessential Hellenized Jew whose position on the afterlife was Plato's. Philo wrote: "When we are living, the soul is dead and has been entombed in the body as a sepulcher; when we should die, the soul lives forthwith its own proper life, and is released from the body, the baneful corpse to which it was tied" (Allegory 108). He obviously distained the body and hence had no belief in bodily resurrection. Philo witnesses to the Jewish belief by his rejection of it.

Josephus was born into a priestly family and hence began life as a Sadducee. He tells us in his *Life* 1-12 that he looked into many religious families including the Essenes and at age 19 chose to become a Pharisee. In the *Antiquities* (Bk. 18. ch.1, section 3) he gives us a picture of the Pharisees and their doctrine:

"Now, for the Pharisees, they live meanly, and despise delicacies in diet; and they follow the conduct of reason; and what that prescribes to them as good for them they do; and they think they ought earnestly to strive to observe reason's dictates for practice. They also pay a respect to such as are in years; nor are they so bold as to contradict them in any thing which they have introduced; and when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God to make a temperament, whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of man can act virtuously or viciously. They also believe that souls have an immortal rigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again; on account of which doctrines they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people; and whatsoever they do about Divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction; insomuch that the cities give great attestations to them on account of their entire virtuous conduct, both in the actions of their lives and their discourses also."

Not only does he depict the Pharisees as ascetic and ruled by reason, respectful of the traditions of the elders and of human freedom, all of which he accepts, but he believes, too, as they do in judgment after death that depends on how life is lived and, for the virtuous, bodily resurrection.

The Essenes were an ascetic sect of Jews who established a community at Qumran near the Dead Sea where important scrolls were discovered in 1947 AD. The doctrine of the Essenes on the resurrection was difficult to establish until 1992 when a newly translated document entitled the *Messianic Apocalypse* (4Q 521, fragment 2 ii)

became available. It is important for three features: it speaks of a single Messiah figure; attests to bodily resurrection most clearly; and contains almost exact verbal identity with Matthew and Luke in giving signs of the Messiah.<sup>xvi</sup> Here is an excerpt:

The heavens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones.

Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service!  
All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this?  
For the Lord will consider the pious (*Hasidim*) and call the righteous by name.  
Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power.  
And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom.  
He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the bent  
And forever I will cleave to the hopeful and in His mercy . . .  
And the fruit . . .] will not be delayed for anyone.  
And the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He . . .]  
**For He will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor**  
. . .He will lead the uprooted and knowledge . . . and smoke (?)

One notices certain lacuna in the text, but the teaching it offers is clear. Earlier scholars commenting on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essenes whose doctrine they represent concluded that the Qumran sect had no place for resurrection in their eschatology. This document 4Q521 suggests otherwise.

The doctrine seems to have held over the intervening centuries with little or no challenge until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century when some controversy arose over the interpretation offered by the great Sephardic philosopher Moses Maimonides (1138-1204 AD). His final principle among the thirteen tenets of Jewish faith that one must acknowledge as true to be considered a Jew and to participate in the world to come is stated in perfectly orthodox language:

**The Thirteenth Foundation** is the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead is a foundation from the foundations of Moshe our Teacher, may peace be upon him. There is no faith and no connection to the Jewish religion for one who does not believe this. But the resurrection is only for the righteous. And so we find the Sages teach, "The rains are for the righteous and the wicked, and the resurrection of the dead is for the righteous alone." How could the wicked be brought back to life when they are dead even during their lifetime? And so the Sages teach us, "The wicked, even during their lifetimes they are called dead; the righteous, even during their deaths they are called living."

In explanation, Maimonides advanced the idea that recalls the struggle over immortality apart from resurrection (the Platonic philosophical teaching). This was the age when Europe was being reintroduced to Greek philosophy through the translations of the great Arab philosophers Avicenna (973-1037 AD) and Averroes (1126-1198 AD). Maimonides was influenced by their work as were St. Thomas Aquinas and others in the Thirteenth Century. Maimonides held that it is the soul (*nepeš*) that survives death. This he identified by the philosophical term *agent* intellect – that which is independent of the body, coming directly from God. This ‘soul’ is what Torah refers to in the story of creation where it is revealed that man was made “in the image and likeness of God” the absolutely incorporeal Deity. It is this incorporeal dimension of the human self that continues into eternity. Why, then, did Maimonides list belief in the resurrection among the thirteen basic principles of faith? His critics denounced him as denying the resurrection. Toward the end of his life, Maimonides defended himself in his *Essay on*

*the Resurrection* (which Maimonidean scholars claim to be a forgery). Even there, however, the essay asserts a bodily resurrection is temporary and that there is need for the resurrected to die again. Maimonides seemed incapable of accepting the continuance of a material, even transformed, body into eternity. Only the spiritual soul could be immortal. He ran into trouble with the rabbis for whom the resurrection was a bodily and permanent event. It is one thing to envision the resurrected body free from physical needs and vulnerability; but another to view it as effectively disembodied as Maimonides did. One of his opponents was Moshe Nahmanides (1194-1270 AD) who in his *The Gate of Repompense* opposed the idea that the resurrected body would die again, but held that the resurrected body will be transformed, even etherealized. Neither rabbinic literature nor the philosophers of medieval times ever offer a perfectly coherent picture of the resurrection, nor should we expect that they could. The importance of the issue and its centrality in Jewish faith is what has concerned us here.

### **The Modern Jewish Preference for Immortality:**

The movement away from traditional orthodox teaching on bodily resurrection to the that of the immortality of the spiritual soul having entered Western thought through Moses Maimonides came very much alive since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century has continued in *Reform Judaism* whose formative personalities were Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) in Germany, and Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900) a Rabbi born in Bohemia, emigrated to the United States in 1846 and led the Movement here.

Mendelssohn became a central figure in *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment). His writings (particularly his almost poetic German translation of the Torah) and popular philosophy gave him such great notoriety and fame that Emperor Fredrick the Great honored him with the title *Schutz-Jude* (Protected Jew) in 1763 in light of which he was guaranteed undisturbed residence in Berlin. The success of Haskalah greatly changed German and European Jewry, formerly restricted to the ghetto, now open to the wide world of secular learning. In 1767, Mendelssohn published *Phädon oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (Phädon or about the soul's immortality) based on Plato's dialogue the *Phaedo*. It impressed the German world for its lucidity and style of German writing. It was a powerful force for the renewal of the discussion on immortality vs. bodily resurrection and reversed the traditional Jewish position for all but the determined Orthodox. Mendelsshon's work brought success to efforts to modernize Jewish life as it emerged from the ghetto, reshaping it along more liberal and progressive lines.

*Conservative Judaism* arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in Germany, as a response to the perceived extreme assimilationist tendencies of the Reform Movement. It looked for more moderate means to balance fidelity to the most basic elements of Jewish tradition and yet to adapt to the demands of modern life.

How did this play out with regard to the issues of life-after-death, our concern in this essay? The Orthodox continued to believe in bodily resurrection where the righteous will be with God eternally; the unrighteous will suffer, but there is disagreement over their ultimate destiny. Reformed Judaism generally has no concept of personal life after

death. One lives on in the memory of others or the accomplishments one achieved in life. There is some hint of a belief that departed souls merge into a great impersonal life force (Platonic?). Conservative Judaism tends toward the Reform position, minus the idea of souls merging into a life force.

The motivation behind these widespread and influential positions seems to be the mind-set "...in modern Western culture, the cognitive pressures on Jews and Christians alike [that] militates against the classic Jewish and Christian doctrines of resurrection."<sup>xvii</sup> This is the world-view designated as the *Enlightenment* with its denial of absolutes and spirit of scientism reducing all knowledge to the empirical, an intellectual climate named the "dictatorship of relativism" by Cardinal Ratzinger in the homily he preached at the Mass opening the Conclave that elected him Pope Benedict XVI. The mind-set has come to be invested in every intellectual endeavor, even in Christianity. One may witness, for example, those Christological publications under the banner of 'theological pluralism' that would reduce the figure of Jesus Christ to just one of a number of equally effective savior figures. Such 'pluralism' has attracted many wishing to accommodate traditional doctrine to the *zeit geist* of the current age.

Reform Judaism is now the largest Movement in the family of Judaism. It may, therefore, be the bellwether for assessing the belief of modern Jewry regarding the doctrine of resurrection. And, the instrument for such assessment may be to trace its official prayer books. Until this century, the *Union Prayer Book* published in 1895 was standard. It "rejected such standard notions as peoplehood, chosenness, the personal Messiah, resurrection and the return to the land of Israel...and a reference to priesthood and the sacrificial cult which [was] deemed to be non-rational and unimportant to modern Judaism."<sup>xviii</sup> The Reformed Movement adopted a revised prayer book, the *Gates of Prayer* in 1975 that reflected a tendency toward Zionism and featured the celebration of Israeli Independence and Holocaust commemorations. It intended to be a document reflecting the times in which it was published and the tendencies of the constituents it would serve. The new prayer book of 2007 is named *Mishkan T'filah* (Dwelling Place of Prayer). The layout of the prayer book (*siddur*) is innovative. It reads from back to front and has the same prayer repeated four times: the right hand page in two columns offers the prayer in Hebrew, a transliteration in phonetic English for those who would want to pray in the ancient language; on the left page are two more columns one a poetical translation, the other a meditative reflection on the prayer. One can choose the traditional service or an alternative as one pleases.

**Conclusion:** It seems fair to say that modern Jewish belief ranges from Orthodox acceptance of bodily resurrection and glory for the righteous with some ambiguity with regard to the unrighteous. Reform and Conservative Jews believe that death is final and any continuance beyond the grave is had through memory and whatever there may be of lasting accomplishments one brought into existence while alive.

## Part II

### Resurrection as Fact: Jesus is raised from the dead

#### The witness of the four Gospels:<sup>xix</sup>

Matthew 28	Mark 16	Luke 24
<p>1 After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.</p> <p>2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.</p> <p>3 His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow.</p> <p>4 The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men.</p> <p>5 Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified.</p> <p>6 He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.</p> <p>7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you."</p> <p>8 Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples.</p> <p>9 And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage.</p> <p>10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."</p>	<p>1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him.</p> <p>2 Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.</p> <p>3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"</p> <p>4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large.</p> <p>5 On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed.</p> <p>6 He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.</p> <p>7 But go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'"</p> <p>8 Then they went out and fled from the tomb, seized with trembling and bewilderment. They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.</p> <p><b>Longer ending</b></p> <p>9 When he had risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven</p>	<p>1 But at daybreak on the first day of the week they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.</p> <p>2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb;</p> <p>3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.</p> <p>4 While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them.</p> <p>5 They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead?</p> <p>6 He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee,</p> <p>7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day."</p> <p>8 And they remembered his words.</p> <p>9 Then they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others.</p> <p>10 The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; the others who accompanied them also told this to the apostles,</p> <p>11 but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them.</p> <p>12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, bent down, and saw the burial cloths alone; then he went home amazed at what had</p>

<p>11 While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had happened.</p> <p>12 They assembled with the elders and took counsel; then they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,</p> <p>13 telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep.'"</p> <p>14 And if this gets to the ears of the governor, we will satisfy (him) and keep you out of trouble."</p> <p>15 The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has circulated among the Jews to the present day.</p> <p>16 The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.</p> <p>17 When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.</p> <p>18 Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.</p> <p>19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,</p> <p>20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."</p> <p><b>A Short Commentary:</b></p> <p><u>General</u> All of the resurrection narratives have two points in common: the tomb is empty; there</p>	<p>demons.</p> <p>10 She went and told his companions who were mourning and weeping.</p> <p>11 When they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.</p> <p>12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them walking along on their way to the country.</p> <p>13 They returned and told the others; but they did not believe them either.</p> <p>14 (But) later, as the eleven were at table, he appeared to them and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had been raised.</p> <p>15 He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.</p> <p>16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.</p> <p>17 These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages.</p> <p>18 They will pick up serpents (with their hands), and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."</p> <p>19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.</p> <p>20 But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.</p> <p><b>A Short Commentary:</b></p> <p>Vs. 1-8 Mark ends so abruptly that many think there were lost verses. Jesus promises appearance in Galilee as he had predicted in Mk. 14:28.</p>	<p>happened.</p> <p>13 Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,</p> <p>14 and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.</p> <p>15 And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,</p> <p>16 but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.</p> <p>17 He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast.</p> <p>18 One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?"</p> <p>19 And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,</p> <p>20 how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him.</p> <p>21 But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place.</p> <p>22 Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning</p> <p>23 and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive.</p> <p>24 Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see."</p> <p>25 And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!</p> <p>26 Was it not necessary that the</p>
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<p>were appearances (or in Mk. The promise of appearances) to the disciples. Mt's. theme is that with the resurrection an new era has begun; the opposition that began with the resurrection event continues at the time of this writing, around dating probably 70-80 CE; the disciples now have an extended mission – during Jesus public mission to Israel, now to all of the world. Jesus, risen, will be with them always – he is alive.</p> <p>Vs. 1-8 depend on Mark, but Mt. has altered them to make his own theological points regarding activity on the announcement of his message and the Kingdom.</p> <p>Vs. 2-4 the “earth quake” is particular to Mt. see 27:51-53. The identification of the “young man” of Mk 16:5 as an angel is probably what Mark had in mind, but it is a designation particular to Mt. The purpose in rolling the stone is to show that the tomb is empty. The only attempt to describe the resurrection will be found in the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter ( a short composition not divided into chapters, but with numbered verses – see vs. 35-45</p> <p>Vs 9-10 particular to Mt. but similar to Jn. 20:17.</p> <p>Vs. 11-15 the dispute is not whether the tomb is empty, it is; but why.</p>	<p>The women are to communicate this to his disciples and Peter but in fear they fled saying nothing to anyone. Note, they witnessed that the tomb was empty and received information that Jesus had been raised.</p> <p>Vs 9-20 are often called the “Longer Ending” the work of a final editor who constructed these verses from the gospels of Luke 24 and John 20. It is a canonical part of the Gospel a defined by the Council of Trent. Early citations by the Fathers of the Church suggest it was added by the second century.</p> <p>The longer ending has four sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) appearance to Mary Magdalene parallels Lk.24:10-11; Jn 20:14-18</li> <li>2) appearances to two disciples parallels found in Lk. 24: 13-35</li> <li>3) Commission to the Eleven parallels in Mt. 28: 16-20; Lk. 24: 36-49; Jn: 20:26-29</li> <li>4) Ascension parallel found in Lk. 24:50-51; Acts 1: 9-11</li> </ol> <p>In one manuscript called <i>Washingtoniensis</i> there is a scribal insertion after vs. 14 seemingly intended to soften Jesus’ criticism of the disciples. It reads –</p> <p>"And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things dominated by the spirits [or, does not allow the unclean things dominated by the spirits to grasp the truth and power of God]. Therefore reveal your righteousness now.' They spoke to Christ. And Christ responded to them, "The limit of the years of Satan's power is completed, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who sinned I was handed over to death, that they might return to the truth and no longer sin, in order that they might inherit the spiritual and</p>	<p>Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"</p> <p>27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.</p> <p>28 As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.</p> <p>29 But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.</p> <p>30 And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.</p> <p>31 With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.</p> <p>32 Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"</p> <p>33 So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them</p> <p>34 who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"</p> <p>35 Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.</p> <p>36 While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."</p> <p>37 But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost.</p> <p>38 Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts?"</p> <p>39 Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."</p> <p>40 And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.</p> <p>41 While they were still incredulous for joy and were</p>
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	<p>incorruptible heavenly glory of righteousness."</p>	<p>amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?"  42 They gave him a piece of baked fish;  43 he took it and ate it in front of them.  44 He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled."  45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.  46 And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day  47 and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.  48 You are witnesses of these things.  49 And (behold) I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."  50 Then he led them (out) as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them.  51 As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.  52 They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy,  53 and they were continually in the temple praising God.</p>
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The Resurrection narratives in the Gospel of John: Chapter 20

- 1 On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.
- 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."
- 3 So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.
- 4 They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first;
- 5 he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

6 When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there,  
 7 and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.  
 8 Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.  
 9 For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.  
 10 Then the disciples returned home.  
 11 But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb  
 12 and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus  
 had been.  
 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord,  
 and I don't know where they laid him."  
 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus.  
 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the  
 gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him."  
 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher.  
 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my  
 brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"  
 18 Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her.  
 19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for  
 fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."  
 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the  
 Lord.  
 21 (Jesus) said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 And when  
 he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit.  
 23 Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."  
 24 Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.  
 25 So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark  
 of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not  
 believe."  
 26 Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the  
 doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."  
 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my  
 side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe."  
 28 Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"  
 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have  
 not seen and have believed."  
 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of (his) disciples that are not written in this book.  
 31 But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that  
 through this belief you may have life in his name.

## Chapter 21 Appendix

1 After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this  
 way.  
 2 Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons,  
 and two others of his disciples.  
 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they  
 went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.  
 4 When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was  
 Jesus.  
 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No."  
 6 So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast  
 it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish.  
 7 So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the  
 Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea.

8 The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish.

9 When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

11 So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three <sup>5</sup> large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish.

14 This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

16 He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." (Jesus) said to him, "Feed my sheep."

18 Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

19 He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, "Master, who is the one who will betray you?"

21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

22 Jesus said to him, "What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me."

23 So the word spread among the brothers that that disciple would not die. But Jesus had not told him that he would not die, just "What if I want him to remain until I come? (What concern is it of yours?)"

24 It is this disciple who testifies to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.

25 There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written.

The story told in the four Gospels is both continuous and discontinuous with our discussion of an after-life and immortality in pagan literature; and those concerning the resurrection in Judaism. It is continuous in that it corroborates the human instinct that life does not end with death; it is discontinuous in that the Gospel accounts make it clear that something very new burst onto the historical stage with the resurrection of Jesus, something unforeseen; and that it carried with it the promise of what God has planned for his favored creation – eternal happiness. Jesus is raised bodily from the dead in a transformed embodiment – not resuscitated in the identical pre-death body still vulnerable to the necessities and limitations he had until his death on the cross. He rose transcending time and space: trans-historical, trans-temporal yet the same Jesus who died and was buried three days before. Nothing in paganism or Judaism could have prepared his witnesses for what they now experienced in his appearances to them. Among the Jews who believed in resurrection their expectation was for fulfillment in the end of time, not in time. Death led to life-after-death; resurrection to life after life-after-death. Jesus rose immediately in the body that had died on the cross. This explains why the disciples were so frightened at his appearances, doubted what their senses presented to them, and misinterpreted their experience as an encounter with a ghost. Resurrection for the Jew is a doctrine that explains their after-life hope; Jesus' resurrection is a *fact*, an event that is

the foundation for his followers' faith and hope for their own future glory. This is why Christianity is at its very core a resurrection movement as Paul affirms in 1 Corinthians 15: 14-19 "And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all"; again in Romans 8:10-11 "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you." The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #991 speaks directly to the resurrection as "an essential element of the Christian faith from its beginning.

Just a glance at the Synoptic accounts of the resurrection, those of Matthew, Mark and Luke, given above, suggests that while the authors tell essentially the same story, each tells it in his own way. If Mark was the first to write, the generally accepted position among Scripture scholars today, in the eight verses of chapter 16 (considered original to that Gospel) there are 138 words. Matthew's parallel account in chapter 28: 1-8 uses only 35 words that match Mark; Luke in 24: 1-9 uses only 16 words that correspond to those used by Mark. And if we match Matthew with Luke there are only about a dozen matching words.<sup>xx</sup> Yet it is interesting that in each Gospel the words of the angel to the women are the same οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε ἡγήρθη ("he is risen, he is not here"). From this essential announcement the Synoptic Evangelists are both individual and corporate witnesses to the most critical fact about Jesus that authenticates all he said and did. John, probably aware of the other accounts and having written later than they, is concerned to give additional details with only echoes of parallel witness, saying nothing to contradict the other accounts and implicitly corroborating them. The value of all this is that it leads to the conclusion that each of the Evangelists had access to a number of different oral (and written?) accounts of this unique story and finally redacted it to address the needs of the community for which he is writing. Their individuality urges the truthfulness of their accounts. Any literary similarities that exist are not enough to warrant the suspicion of collusion. One of the canons of historiography is the value of independent witnessing, which we have in these accounts, and the fact that in aggregate they corroborate one another.

In Part I of our study we were alerted to the perceived incompatibility of the notions of immortality and resurrection. Plato rejected resurrection because he considered the body the prison of the soul. The soul was by nature immortal and in one or many journeys through the world (he held the transmigration of souls) the soul's task was to return to the "world of ideas" unencumbered by a body and apparently anonymous in its final stage. Aristotle considered the soul the "form" of the body and denied immortality since as a constituting element that allowed pure potency to be actualized, it ceased to exist with the corruption of the body. Even in Judaism, the denial of the resurrection of the body by the Sadducees continued to arise in later centuries; and the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection placed it at the end of time as 'life' after 'life-after-death'. Their doctrine survived the calamities of 70 and 135 AD in rabbinical teaching only to be challenged by Moses Maimonides in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and

Reformed/Conservative Judaism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries respectively. Christianity maintained certainty with regard to the resurrection of the body and made it a central, defining element of its teaching. Christian belief in immortality is firmly founded on an identifiable Christological center – the resurrection of Jesus which guaranteed the indestructibility offered the human being by his having conquered death in his own resurrection. Hence, Christianity offered a new anthropological vision of the “afterlife” open between death and resurrection.<sup>xxi</sup>

However, the Christian story was not without its difficulties. In John’s Gospel account of the resurrection (20: 24-29) the author injects the story of Thomas’s doubts about the appearances of the risen Jesus that he had missed, and declares his refusal to believe without empirical evidence. A week later he is present when Jesus again appears and invites Thomas to handle his wounds. Thomas submits. It is not impossible that this brief event in a Gospel written about 100 AD is reflective of groups of Christians who constituted the larger problem called Gnosticism. They disparaged the body, preaching a doctrine that the Jesus of the ministry only appeared to have a body and to die on the cross – a doctrine called Docetism (from the Greek “to seem”, or “to appear”). Their common doctrine was the incompatibility of matter (the body, flesh) and spirit. Hence, they denied the reality of the resurrection. Today’s doubters or those seeking to eviscerate the resurrection of its literal truth are not innovators, but hold-overs of a position that lay dormant in Christian history till relative recent times.<sup>xxii</sup>

Aristotle despaired of continued existence after physical death unless something of the divine should dwell in man, and he reasoned it did not. His concept of the soul *anima forma corporis* (the soul is the form of the body) was reinterpreted and enriched by St. Thomas Aquinas in the light of the Christian experience of Christ’s resurrection. “To Aristotle, the formula meant that the soul, just like the entelechy<sup>xxiii</sup> – the formation principle of material reality in general – is tied to matter. Without ‘form’ matter remains a mere potency, while form becomes reality only in its union with matter.” Aristotle so immanently connected ‘form’ and ‘matter’ that they constitute a reality only when joined together, necessitating his conclusion that when the matter (the body) disintegrates in death, the form does likewise. Aristotle’s notion of ‘soul’ as form links it with the world of matter so intimately that it becomes subject to the same fate. It also means that the Aristotelian ‘soul’ can never be individual or personal. St. Thomas saw these defects, and reinterpreting Aristotle affirmed of the soul that it is both ‘spirit’ and ‘personal’. Anton Pegis, one of the great Thomistic philosophers, recognized what Thomas did here: “The Thomistic doctrine of an intellectual substance as the substantial form of matter must be seen as a moment in history when an Aristotelian formula was deliberately used to express in philosophical terms a view of man that the world and tradition of Aristotelianism considered a metaphysical impossibility.”<sup>xxiv</sup> This yields a most important truth: “the human spirit is so utterly one with the body that the term ‘form’ can be used of the body and retain its proper meaning. Conversely, the form of the body is spirit, and this is what makes the human being a person.”<sup>xxv</sup>

The soul, then, is not disjunctively “substance” and “form.” It is substance as form of the body, and form of the body as substance. The separation of soul and body in death is not natural because the soul is not in the body as an activity but as the soul’s own self-realization as well as the actualization of the body. This notion of soul owes its

discovery to the Christian faith. From this faith stems an anthropology that is strictly Christian: man is the image/likeness of God, destined in Christ and because of him to resurrected life and glory. There is an apologetic value to this observation. It renders impossible any suggestion that the apostles and early disciples could have concocted the story of the resurrection. The Gospel accounts make it eminently clear that they did not understand resurrection, even when Jesus, during his public ministry spoke of rising on the third day or after the Transfiguration when, coming down from the mountain Jesus urged Peter, James and John to silence about what they had witnessed until “the Son of Man should have risen from the dead...they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant” (Mk.9:9-10).

What is essential for an understanding of the Christian’s faith in eternal life? First, and foremost we must observe that the starting point is the Christian concept of *God*. It is from there that the Christian faith derives a fruitful dialogical character. God is the God of life and therefore of the living (see Mt. 28:32), he who calls man to life; hence, man is not subject to annihilation. In Christ, God assumed our humanity and the risen Christ lives forever in his transformed human nature. Incorporated into Christ by his salvific act of death/resurrection, man cannot be understood solely as an isolated existent ‘form’ but must be considered in reference to the body that is a constituent element of his human nature. God is immortality; he calls man in the wholeness of his being to immortal, eternal life.

Secondly, we look at the Christian concept of *creation*. What is saved is what God created, i.e., man in the integrity of his nature: body and soul. Man is whole when embodied. His personal integrity is not founded on matter which is perishable and even in the course of life is constantly changing. It is necessary for us in our self-understanding to distinguish the duality of body and soul; but this distinction must never be allowed to become dualistic. It is the unity of the human being that distinguishes him/her as an individual, as a person.

Finally, the Christian creed affirms belief in the “*communion of saints*” and Jesus taught us to pray saying “*Our Father*”. We are in dialogue with God mediated through our dialogue with one another. Salvation is always communitarian. “In Christology, then, theology and anthropology converge as two strains in a conversation, two forms of the search for love.”<sup>xxvi</sup> And, “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8). The saints are those known by God to be such. Therefore, this vision takes upon itself a truly ecumenical dimension and demands that we exclude no one from the call to eternal life; that all be treated with the same dignity and respect owed to ourselves, all of us potential companions in the glory of God and enjoyment of the Beatific Vision.

We have in the above discussion attempted to rejoin the ideas of *immortality* and *resurrection*, against the tendencies both ancient and modern to separate them. Now we have to ask about the nature of the resurrected body. In all probability Paul was asked this very question and answered it in 1 Corinthians 15: 35-58:

35 But someone may say, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?"

36 You fool! What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies.

37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind;

38 but God gives it a body as he chooses, and to each of the seeds its own body.  
 39 Not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for human beings, another kind of flesh for animals, another kind of flesh for birds, and another for fish.  
 40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the brightness of the heavenly is one kind and that of the earthly another.  
 41 The brightness of the sun is one kind, the brightness of the moon another, and the brightness of the stars another. For star differs from star in brightness.  
 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible.  
 43 It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful.  
 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one.  
 45 So, too, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being," the last Adam a life-giving spirit.  
 46 But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual.  
 47 The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven.  
 48 As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly.  
 49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.  
 50 This I declare, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption.  
 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed,  
 52 in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.  
 53 For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality.  
 54 And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"  
 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.  
 57 But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

### **Brief commentary on Paul:**

In 1 Cor, 15: 12 Paul begins: "If Christ is not raised..." and proceeds to point out that the whole of Christianity would be vitiated. He is addressing, most probably, people who do not believe in the resurrection and he specifies two questions they have: *how?* (the manner of the resurrection) and *what?* (the quality of the risen body). These questions seem to be implied from objections of those who imagine that the resurrected body would be the exact body they had during their life times. Paul deals with these questions in reverse order: verses 36-49 treats the kind of body that will rise; verses 50-58 the manner of the resurrection.

Treating the question about the kind of body the risen will have, Paul uses two analogies: the image of the seed (36-44) and Adam, the first man (45-49). The seed must die to itself in order to become the flower it had the potential to be. Within that simile in verses 39-41 Paul introduces yet another, as it were parenthetical analogy regarding the marvelous variety of bodies God has created. In listing their natures as animal bodies, plants and the vast array of heavenly bodies, Paul is not saying that all will experience some form of resurrection, only man will, but he is setting up the comparative part of the analogy, verses 42-44 describing the risen person: before death animated by natural life-principle (psyche); after death the animating life-principle is the spirit (*pneuma*). That leads Paul to the second major analogy of the first man Adam (45-49) given life; contrasted with the "last Adam" the Christ the life-giver. Tracing the experience that is

present in every human life passing through this world, a vulnerable living being – like the earthly man so are we; likewise as is the heavenly man so are we destined to be in heaven.

Then Paul, in verses 50-58, turns his attention to the issue of “how?” or by what means the resurrection will take place. His answer is theologically rich, it will happen by God’s transformative/ creative power. God accomplishes what nature cannot: flesh and blood cannot inherit heaven; corruption cannot produce incorruption. At the end of time when Christ returns, Paul imagines that there will be living people and assures his readers that they will have neither advantage nor disadvantage (and he reiterates this in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18). The dead will rise to incorruptibility, and the living will be clothed with immortality. With this, death receives its final and permanent defeat. All is accomplished in the resurrection of Jesus.

#### **A Theological Excursus on the Resurrection of the Dead:**

“How do the dead rise?” “With what kind of body do they rise?” Here Paul is offering a new paradigm in the new corporeality of the risen Lord. The risen Lord is the analogue to which he compares the risen bodies of all the dead. Paul’s immediate dialogue partners would have been Jews who held the Pharisees vision of resurrection wherein the risen body would have been identical with the earthly body, and the world into which they would rise merely a continuation of the world as we know it. The Sadducees (cf. Mt. 22:23-33), though they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead were rejecting this vision of their enemies the Pharisees. It is against this picture that the Sadducees attempt to trap Jesus into supporting foolishness with their foolish case of the woman who had multiple husbands. It is this same image Jesus rejects as he rebukes the Sadducees saying: “You are misled because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” Such an image of resurrection is totally shattered by the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection. On the one hand his total otherness, his emancipation from the laws of matter, and on the other hand his being visible and palpable, recognizable and able to communicate leads the discussion into a whole new realm of meaning. Jesus’ appearances come not out of the world of history which he left behind by his death on the cross, but from the heavenly world he enters with his resurrection to glory. It is important to note that the resurrection and ascension to the glory of the Father are one and the same event. Our liturgical celebration of the ascension 40 days after Easter (a Biblical symbol for an indeterminate period of time) marks the end of his planned appearances to the apostles and disciples. The *fact* of Jesus’ resurrection annuls all naturalistic and physicalistic ideas held by his contemporaries including his disciples who were men and women of that period of time and culture. This is another reason for their fright, wonder, doubt and slowness to believe what their senses were offering to them. They had a lot to unlearn before they could grasp the totally new reality that had just come into existence; a new meaning to the concept of resurrection, one richer than they could ever have imagined. Only the Holy Spirit’s activity in their lives would bring the disciples to an understanding of this mystery. In John 16:7 Jesus told them “It is expedient for that I go [to the Father] for unless I go the Advocate [the Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” The Spirit opened their minds to accept this new theological anthropology so well prepared by their former beliefs, but so

much richer than they could ever have suspected. Joseph Ratzinger<sup>xxvii</sup> sees the preparation Jesus had given the disciples to accept this new understanding of the resurrection in the discourse he gave them in John's Gospel, 6: 55. There, Jesus declared "my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him, and I will raise him up on the last day". This promise was fulfilled at the Last Supper when bread truly became Jesus' body, and wine became his blood by a divine transformation only the creative power of God could effect: "physicalist reality" and "pneumatic reality" are opposed. What looked, tasted and chemically examined seemed bread and wine became, with God's power, the body, blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; similarly, in the resurrection and by God's power, the resurrected body enlivened by my spirit (my soul) that survived death becomes my body. The matter assembled by God and enlivened by my unique existence becomes my personal self.

One of the problems that seems to have agitated eschatological discussion in recent times is a way of speaking about the situation between death and the resurrection of the body at the end of time. Not long ago cremation was forbidden because powerful organizations advocated it as a mockery of the doctrine of bodily resurrection. In another forum jokes were made about having in the resurrection a beauty or other physical assets denied the individual in this life. None of these are relevant and the teaching is more important than these frivolities or blasphemes would suggest. In fact it was considered so important that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on May 17, 1979 with the approval of Pope John Paul II issued a document entitled *Letter on Certain Questions in Eschatology*. The Congregation expressed its concern in these words: Si le chrétien ne peut plus donner aux mots « Vie éternelle » un contenu certain, les promesses de l'Évangile, le sens de la création et de la rédemption s'évanouissent, la vie présente elle-même est privée de toute espérance (cf. *Hebrews* 11, 1). "If Christians cannot have a reliable hold on the content of the words 'life everlasting' then the promises of the Gospel and the meaning of creation and redemption evaporate, while even earthly life is robbed of its hope." The letter summarizes certain teachings of the Church regarding the period between death and bodily resurrection at the end of time. The letter continues: Cette S. Congrégation, qui a la responsabilité de promouvoir et de protéger la doctrine de la foi, veut ici rappeler l'enseignement que donne l'Église au nom du Christ, spécialement sur ce qui advient entre la mort du chrétien et la résurrection générale. (This Congregation, having the responsibility to promote and defend the doctrine of the faith, wishes to recall the teaching given to the Church in the name of Christ, particularly on what happens between the death of the Christian and the general resurrection.)

Here we may look, in particular to three affirmations of the Letter which have the hope of enlightening us with regard to the interim state between death and resurrection at the end of time:

1. L'Église croit (cf. *Credo*) à une résurrection des morts. 2. L'Église entend cette résurrection de l'homme tout entier ; celle-ci n'est pour les élus rien d'autre que l'extension aux hommes de la Résurrection même du Christ. (The resurrection of the dead which the Church announces in its creed she believes extends to the *whole* man; and for the elect it is nothing more than an extension of Christ's resurrection to all).

3. L'Eglise affirme la survivance et la subsistance après la mort d'un élément spirituel qui est doué de conscience et de volonté en sorte que le « moi » humain subsiste. Pour désigner cet élément, l'Eglise emploie le mot « âme », consacré par l'usage de l'Ecriture et de la Tradition. Sans ignorer que ce terme prend dans la Bible plusieurs sens, elle estime néanmoins qu'il n'existe aucune raison sérieuse de le rejeter et considère même qu'un outil verbal est absolument indispensable pour soutenir la foi des chrétiens. (The Church affirms the continuity and independent existence, after death, of the spiritual element endowed with consciousness and will; i.e., the human "I" continues to exist. In naming that element, the Church employs the word "soul," consecrated by usage in both Scripture and Tradition. Without ignoring the fact that the word bears many meanings in the Bible, it insists there is no solid reason for rejecting this term. Consider it a verbal instrument that has become indispensable for expressing the Christian faith).

6. L'Eglise, dans son enseignement sur le sort de l'homme après sa mort, exclut toute explication qui ôterait son sens à l'Assomption de Marie en ce qu'elle a d'unique, c'est-à-dire le fait que la glorification corporelle de la Vierge est l'anticipation de la glorification destinée à tous les autres élus. (The Church in its teaching on the status of the human being after death excludes every explanation that would detract from its understanding of Mary's Assumption, that is, so to say, the fact that the corporeal glorification of the Virgin is an anticipation of the glorification destined for all of the elect).

Professor Ratzinger<sup>xxviii</sup> concentrates on the theological necessity for retaining the word "soul." He notes that Luther cast doubt on its necessity and expressed the interim period between death and the resurrection as being "asleep." Since Luther denied Purgatory and prayers for the dead as useless, one has to ask – who is asleep? If, since the body is obviously corrupting it is something distinct from the body that is asleep – why does the word "soul" not suffice? Or, if "asleep" is meant to express some temporary suspension of existence – would not the awakening in resurrection mean a new creation? However like the man who fell asleep, such a resurrected one could not be the same person who had died, there being no continuity with the pre-death individual. That suggestion having failed, one turns to Karl Barth who may be a more influential opponent to the usefulness of the concept "soul" at this point in history as it relates to what continues during the interim between death and resurrection. In his position, the human being is conceived as indivisible in terms of matter and spirit, and with death the person passes from "time" to the state of "no time", he already enters the "end-time" and, therefore, enters into Christ's Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead. There is no need for "soul" to preserve personal identity in an 'intermediate state' since "being with the Lord" and resurrection are one and the same thing. However, in critique of Barth one may ask – since at death the body remains in space and time, is buried and corrupts and obviously does not rise, the deceased's being outside time does not affect the body. Logic suggests that something distinguishable from the body enjoys "being with the Lord" – why not call it "soul"? "Historically, it must be affirmed quite unambiguously that the concept of soul found in Christian tradition is in no sense a simple borrowing from philosophical thought. In the form in which Christian tradition has understood it, it exists nowhere outside that tradition."<sup>xxix</sup> Christian tradition assimilated preexisting insights, transformed them in the light of faith and fused them into a new unity. It is the unity summed up in the formula *the soul is the form of the body*

that makes it a valid articulation of the unique Christian anthropology that the incarnation, death and resurrection of the eternal Son of God brought into existence.

## Conclusion

Since there are many excellent commentaries on the Gospel and other New Testament accounts of the Resurrection, we have not offered to reduplicate them here. Yet it is imperative to emphasize certain important point.

- 1) The language used in the resurrection narratives is realistic. People were able to see, hear, touch and converse with the risen Jesus as they could during his lifetime. Perhaps we can collapse these experiences into the first mentioned to “see” Jesus since all of the other experiences would lead to similar conclusions. What did it mean to *see* the risen Jesus? Davis<sup>xxx</sup> holds “...the plain sense of the Scriptural accounts...entail that the risen Jesus was seen rather than visualized. That is, the risen Jesus was a physical body that was objectively present to the witnesses in space and time, and he was accordingly seen in a normal sense of the word.” Therefore, anyone who might have been present at the appearances could have seen him. What would their experience have been? Raymond E. Brown<sup>xxxi</sup> distinguishes helpfully between *sight* and *insight* – the chosen disciples who witnessed the appearances of Jesus enjoyed not only physically seeing Jesus but recognized him as Lord: “...the appearances [to them] entail a sight that involves revelation, a sight that goes beyond ordinary experience.” Those not of Jesus’ disciples, should any have been present, should have been able to recognize him as someone they encountered during his ministry and could point to him saying “that is Jesus of Nazareth”, the same yet somehow different. All witnesses would have seen the same body that Jesus received from Mary, but transformed and transfigured. Pope Paul VI taught: *Jesus rose again in the same body he had taken from the Blessed Virgin, but in new conditions, vivified by a new and immortal animation, which imposes on Christ’s flesh the laws and energies of the Spirit....This new reality....is far above our capacities of knowledge and even of imagination, that it is necessary to make room for it in our minds through faith.*<sup>xxxii</sup>
- 2) The resurrection/glorification of Jesus is the beginning of the “end time” a truly eschatological event. The categories of space and time are our instruments for talking and writing about the resurrected Jesus, and are valid if we do not forget they are analogical. While the event of the resurrection is trans-temporal and trans-historical it impacted on the historical. The ‘empty tomb’ remained in history and demanded an explanation. Multiple witnesses knew its location and that Jesus was the first and only one ever to have been buried in it, and real people went to the tomb ‘on the first day of the week’ but did not find the body. All of this is historical and demands an explanation. They offered reasonable explanations clearly indicating that they were not complicit in some fabrication, they did not expect that this body could explain its absence from the tomb. There has to be a balance in our speaking about the resurrection as an eschatological event. To emphasize the eschatological to a point where the historical is denied

- threatens the ultimate truth and creates the implication that the resurrection did not happen at all. Jesus, raised, is outside space and time; but his appearances touched people in space and time.
- 3) There is a reciprocal relationship between the appearances of Jesus to his disciples which shaped the narratives of the resurrection; and the narratives themselves which reveal the impact of the event on the observers. This is true of any witnessing: the event shapes the story told; and the story as told reveals what happened to the observer. Jews who became disciples of Jesus had a background in resurrection doctrine and in their discipleship were forewarned by Jesus of his impending death/resurrection. This gave them a language and images to describe the event of Jesus' resurrection; and the event, when it happened, enriched, broadened, sharpened and confirmed their resurrection understanding. It was far more than they had hoped or expected. There are important theological implications to this: the Father's glorification of his Son authenticates all that Jesus said and did; it makes the end-purpose God has in store for us clear and certain; it confirms our faith in the Eucharistic presence of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine, that it is the living body and blood, soul and divinity present for us sacramentally.
  - 4) Paul is correct – if Jesus has not risen all is in vain.
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## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> Harris Polls have researched also issues related to religion among Americans, so that in February 2003 a 90% believed in God; a 84% in the survival of the soul after death (63% expects Heaven, 1% Hell, 6% Purgatory); 82% believe there is Heaven; 68% in Hell and Devil; 27% in reincarnation (among those of 25 to 29 years old is 40%...); 80% in the Resurrection of Christ (but a 68% among those aged 25-29: there might be a big proportion who conforms an important subgroup consciously or unconsciously pertaining to the New Age beliefs). See also: Andrew Greeley and Michael Hunt *American Sociological Review* vol. 64 #6 Dec 1999 pgs 813-35 Abstract: “A greater fraction of American adults believe in life after death in the 1990s than in the 1970s. According to data from the General Social Survey, year-to-year changes are significant, but the increase is most evident when we compare across cohorts and separate religious groups. Protestants have not changed; in every cohort 85 percent believe in life after death. It has been Catholics, Jews, and persons with no religious affiliation who have become more likely to believe in an afterlife. The percentage of Catholics believing in an afterlife rose from 67 percent to 85 percent across cohorts born from 1900 to 1970. Among Jews, this percentage increased from 17 percent (1900 cohort) to 74 percent (1970 cohort). Immigration is a key factor in this increase, as immigrants are significantly less likely to believe in an afterlife than are their grandchildren. We connect the increase among Catholics to the organizing and teaching led by Irish American priests and bishops. There is no evidence that contact with Protestants increases belief in life after death among persons who do not convert to a Protestant denomination.”

<sup>ii</sup> English translation published by the Catholic University Press, 1988

<sup>iii</sup> For a more developed treatment see N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2003, chapter two, “Shadows, Souls and where they go” pgs 32 - 84

<sup>iv</sup> See Johann B. Bauer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Crossroads, N.Y., 1981; article “Death” by Ernst Schmitt, pgs. 181-184. See also *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, David Noel Freedman, ed., Doubleday, 1992. Vol. 2 (D-G), pgs. 108-111. Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, Catholic University of America Press, 1988, chapter IV, “The Theology of Death”, pgs. 69 – 103.

<sup>v</sup> See the article “Dead, Abode of the” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, David Noel Freedman, ed., Doubleday, 1992, Vol. 2 (D-G), pgs. 101-105.

<sup>vi</sup> J. Ratzinger, op.cit., pg. 88.

<sup>vii</sup> N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2003, pg. 109, 133.

<sup>viii</sup> Ratzinger, op. cit., pg. 85.

<sup>ix</sup> N.T. Wright, op. cit., pg.92; see also Geza Vermes, *The Resurrection: History & Myth*, Doubleday, 2008, chapter 4 “Martyrdom and Resurrection in Late Second Temple Judaism”, pgs. 29-38.

<sup>x</sup> See Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews*, Yale University Press, 2008, pgs. 146-155.

<sup>xi</sup> Idem. Pg. 165-168.

<sup>xii</sup> See the excellent treatment in Davis, Kendall, O’Collins, eds. *The Resurrection*, Oxford University Press, 1997, article by Alan F. Segal, “Life After Death: The Social Sources”, pgs.97ff.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid. pg. 101.

<sup>xiv</sup> See the article in the Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905, article entitled “Academies in Palestine.”

<sup>xv</sup> *Mishnah* along with the *Gemara* forms a single unit with the *Talmud*. There are two Talmuds: The Babylonian completed between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE and favored; and the Palestinian completed around the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Roughly two thirds of the Babylonian Talmud is *Aggadah* (containing material unrelated to law: homilies, Biblical tales, folklore, legends and aphorisms). The Talmud is a treasury of Jewish history and custom. The Mishnah is a codification of Jewish law; the Gemara offers discussion on Mishnaic law. For more information see Dr. Ben Isaacson *Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, Bantam Books, 1979.

<sup>xvi</sup> Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, **the dead are raised up, the poor have the glad tidings preached to them** (Luke 7:22-23 and Matthew 11:4-5). Michael O. Wise translation published in the *Biblical Archeology Review*

<sup>xvii</sup> See Jon Levenson, op. cit., pg. 2 for a brief description of the motivations for change.

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- <sup>xviii</sup> See Elliot L. Stevens, “The Prayer Books, They Are A’Changin’” *Reform Judaism Magazine*, on line, <http://reformjudaismmag.org/articles/ondex.cfm?id=1150>
- <sup>xix</sup> Translation from the *New American Bible*
- <sup>xx</sup> See N.T. Wright, op. cit., pgs. 589-590.
- <sup>xxi</sup> See Ratzinger, op. cit. pgs 146-161.
- <sup>xxii</sup> See Madigan and Levenson. Op. cit., pgs 221-234.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> The quotation is again from Ratzinger, op. cit. pg148. The word *entelechy* comes from Greek *entelēs=full* and *echein=to have*. In Aristotle’s philosophy it means the full realization of form-giving cause, or the actual as contrasted with mere potential existence.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Quoted by Ratzinger, op. cit. pg. 149.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Ratzinger’s comment idem.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Ratzinger, idem; and for this summary see his pages 157-160.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Ratzinger, op. cit. pg. 170.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Op. cit. Pgs. 243-260.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Idem. Pg. 257.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Stephen Davis in his essay “‘Seeing’ the Risen Jesus”, in *The Resurrection*, Oxford University Press, 1997, Pgs 146-147.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, Paulist Press, 1973, pgs. 112-113.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Brown, idem. Pg. 125 from the English edition of *L’Osservatore Romano*, April 13, 1972.

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