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“THIS FLESH WILL RISE AGAIN”:
RETRIEVING EARLY CHRISTIAN FAITH
IN BODILY RESURRECTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School
of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

J. Robert Douglass

December 2007

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J. Robert Douglass

2007

“THIS FLESH WILL RISE AGAIN”: RETRIEVING EARLY
CHRISTIAN FAITH IN BODILY RESURRECTION

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ABSTRACT

“THIS FLESH WILL RISE AGAIN”: RETRIEVING EARLY CHRISTIAN FAITH IN BODILY RESURRECTION

By

J. Robert Douglass

December 2007

Dissertation Supervised by Professor Michael Slusser

The doctrine of bodily resurrection is fundamental to the Christian faith. Its significance is grounded in the fact that the Christian faith arises from and is dependent upon the belief that Jesus returned to life after having been dead and buried. As a result of this belief and the teaching of Christ’s first followers, the early Church articulated a hope for a similar resurrection. In spite of the centrality of the doctrine of bodily resurrection for the early Church, the doctrine’s present relevance is questionable. This dissertation provides an answer to the question, What does it mean to affirm faith in bodily resurrection? Through its response, this study also demonstrates that the doctrine of bodily resurrection can be articulated in a way that is meaningful to contemporary Christian faith.

This study explores the various expressions of faith in resurrection from Ante-Nicene Alexandria. After the examination of these ancient testimonies, three more recent interpretations of the doctrine are considered. They are found in the explanations of the Apostles' Creed provided by Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The dissertation concludes with an articulation of the doctrine of bodily resurrection intended for an audience who does not view the epistemological foundations of previous generations as valid.

Therefore we are not discouraged; rather,
although our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.
For this momentary light affliction is producing for us
an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen;
for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.
For we know that if our earthly dwelling,
a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God,
a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.
2 Corinthians 4.16 - 5.1, NAB

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There are several people to whom I owe much gratitude. First, I need to thank my wife, Chris, and children, Rebekah, Andrew, and Julianne, for the inspiration and time to complete this work. I could not have completed this without them, their endurance, and their support. I also want to thank my mother, Cheryl Douglass for the ways in which she is faithfully awaiting the resurrection, and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Rev. Don and Doris Gaff, who have always encouraged and supported me in all of my pursuits. I am also indebted to Dr. Michael Slusser, my *Doktorvater*, whose patience and guidance throughout this process has been invaluable. He has been a mentor and has tried to ensure that this document is some of my best work.

I would also like to note my sincere appreciation to Ashland Theological Seminary for the opportunity to join them in theological education. To my colleagues there, it is a privilege to be in ministry with you. In particular, I am indebted to the library staff at Ashland, especially Sylvia Locher and Sarah Thomas for their gracious assistance. Also, I wish to thank the Theology Department of Duquesne University for giving me my first teaching experience by granting me a graduate teaching assistantship. Lastly, I wish to thank the Whitaker United Methodist Church and the Ashland Brethren in Christ Church, which are the congregations where I served as pastor while pursuing my doctorate.

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PREFACE

The Scripture found in the epigraph is the text for the sermon I preached at my father's funeral four months after I started at Duquesne University. My father contributed to my development as a theologian by playing a significant role in my faith development throughout my life, but the way in which his illness and death intertwined with my doctoral studies intimately connected my studies to the Christian hope of bodily resurrection. As significant as my father's death has been for me, it is only one of the ways the doctrine of bodily resurrection intersected with my personal life and my doctoral studies.

In my first doctoral class, I met a bright young man with whom I had many things in common. We were both young Protestant ministers, married, and fathers of young children. We were also just beginning the doctoral program at Duquesne. This second fact resulted in us having several classes together. I appreciated his friendship and think of him often. Unfortunately for his family and for all who knew him, Sam Brunsvold was murdered. In light of these life-changing experiences and their connectedness to my studies, it seems only proper to be concluding my doctoral studies with an exploration of the hope expressed by the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of bodily resurrection is fundamental to the Christian faith. Its significance is grounded in the fact that the Christian faith arises from and is dependent upon the belief that Jesus returned to life after having been dead and buried. As a result of this belief and the teaching of Christ's first followers, the early Church articulated a hope for a similar resurrection. In the words of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, "Since its earliest beginnings the acknowledgment of a resurrection of the flesh for the dead belonged to the fundamental beliefs of Christianity."¹ This hope was included in the creeds of the Church and has been transmitted as part of the Christian faith throughout its history.

While the centrality of the doctrine of bodily resurrection for the early Church is beyond dispute, the doctrine's present relevance is questionable. I am not suggesting that the doctrine has been abandoned altogether, since it is frequently affirmed in the Creed, but the inclusion of a doctrine in a creed is no guarantee that the doctrine is understood or genuinely regarded as an integral part of the Christian faith.

In his book *The Creed*, Luke Timothy Johnson identifies two negative attitudes

¹Christoph Schönborn, "'Resurrection of the Flesh' in the Faith of the Church," *Communio* 17 (Spring 1990): 8.

that some people have about the Creed. He first notes an apathy toward the Creed when he writes, “Some sleepwalk through the words they memorized as children, bothered not at all by the outrageous ideas to which they are declaring their commitment.”² Even more troubling than this apathy is the antipathy that Johnson describes in people who are aware of the radical claims of the Creed but “deal with the scandal by freelance editing, passing over in silence or altering the statements” with which they disagree.³ In terms of the article on bodily resurrection, I submit that in spite of the Creed’s clarity on the subject and the frequency with which it is professed, there are indications that most contemporary reflection on eternal life lacks an expectation of bodily resurrection.

In my ecclesiological experience, which is primarily confined to American Protestantism, I have encountered a peculiar avoidance of the hope of bodily resurrection. Even within evangelicalism, which likes to think of itself as most closely resembling the primitive Church, we talk about saving souls. Seldom do our sermons elucidate it, few of our people contemplate it, and almost none of our songs celebrate the doctrine of bodily resurrection. While this assessment could be attributed to my limited experience, I believe that the problem is more pervasive.

My experience and concern seem to be supported by Caroline Walker Bynum as she writes in her book, *The Resurrection of the Body*,

Although opinion polls tell us that most Americans believe in heaven, it is clear that the resurrection of the body is a doctrine that causes acute embarrassment, even in mainstream Christianity. Thoughts of “life after death” still conjure up for

²Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 6.

³Johnson, *The Creed*, 6.

most people some notion of a disembodied soul flying, rather forlornly, through pearly gates and golden streets. Preachers and theologians (especially Protestants) pride themselves on avoiding soul-body dualism, but pious talk at funerals is usually of the departed person surviving as a vague, benign spirit or as a thought in the memories of others.⁴

I am convinced that the incongruity between the clarity of the Creed on bodily resurrection and the “acute embarrassment” expressed by many Christians is a crisis of faith.⁵

In the search for a solution to this problem it may be tempting to consider either retaining the doctrine solely for its historic value or jettisoning it altogether. Yet, as convenient as these options may appear, when we recall the fundamental nature of the doctrine for the early Church, we are confronted with the fact that the doctrine was once understood as an indispensable part of the Christian faith. Consequently, I believe that if the Church in the twenty-first century is to retain any legitimacy with the previous two millennia of Christian history, the only real remedy to the present neglect of the doctrine is a renewed commitment to the hope of bodily resurrection as expressed in the Creed. But what do I mean by a “renewed commitment?”

By calling for and working toward a renewed commitment, I am not arguing for

⁴Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 14-15.

⁵The prevalence of this doctrinal confusion is further substantiated by David Toolan in his essay *Reincarnation and Modern Gnosis*. In it, Toolan refers to a Eurobarometer study from 1989 that reportedly finds that 31% of practicing European Catholics and 37% of European Protestants believe in reincarnation. David S. Toolan, “Reincarnation and Modern Gnosis” in *Resurrection or Reincarnation?* ed. Herman Haring and Johann-Baptist Metz (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 33-34.

the mere reaffirmation of dogma nor for some radical reinterpretation that is an abstraction of the historic doctrine. Rather, the approach that I propose is a renewed understanding that seeks to maintain the tension between fidelity to the faith and relevancy to the world. While this method is considerably more difficult than either the rejection of or repetition of historic dogma, it has the potential to inspire a genuine hope for bodily resurrection, since it is a hope that is held not in spite of modern objections but in the midst of the uncertainty that they create. Dorothy Sayers addressed a similar situation several decades ago when she wrote, “What is urgently necessary is that certain fundamentals should be restated in terms that make their meaning - and indeed the mere fact that they have meaning - clear.”⁶

The process of pursuing the meaningful re-articulation of doctrine is not a new enterprise; instead, it is one of the ongoing duties of the Church. This has been clearly set-forth in *Gaudium et spes* where we read of the Church’s duty to be continually adapting Christian doctrine in ways that are both relevant and faithful. It states,

With the help of the holy Spirit, it is the task of the whole people of God, particularly of its pastors and theologians, to listen to and to distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light of God’s word, in order that the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented.⁷

This is an important passage for the present study and will be explored briefly.

In the exhortation for a more suitable presentation of the revealed truth, the

⁶Dorothy Sayers, *Creed or Chaos?* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1995), 57-58.

⁷*Gaudium et spes*, 44.

Church is acknowledging its perpetual obligation to re-articulate the faith. In addition, this teaching places part of the responsibility for the meaningful presentation of doctrine at the feet of theologians. By doing so, it establishes this study as a legitimate exercise of theological inquiry. Lastly, this instruction is important because it offers direction for this study by providing a model for pursuing doctrinal renewal.

Using the language of the Church's teaching, the goal of this study is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the doctrine of bodily resurrection with the hope of contributing to a more suitable presentation or meaningful re-articulation of it. According to this teaching, the means of accomplishing this goal involve a process of listening, distinguishing, and interpreting the "many voices of our times."

I am convinced that among the "many voices" that need to be heard on the subject of bodily resurrection are those of the early Church. At this point one may ask, How can the ancient voices of the Church qualify as being among the "many voices of our times"? I believe that this is possible in at least three ways. First, the segment of Christianity which this dissertation examines has been largely ignored by scholarship on the subject of resurrection.⁸ Second, the many archeological discoveries that have occurred within the last fifty years have revolutionized what is known about early Christianity so that its testimony can be said to be a relatively new voice. Third, there is similarity between current attempts to understand resurrection and those of the early Church. Even Christ's

⁸To my knowledge, all of the works that address early Christian faith in resurrection from Alexandria concentrate primarily on Origen. Only a few even bother to mention Clement of Alexandria. This does not allow either Clement or Origen to be understood within the larger context of Egyptian Christianity nor does it adequately represent the diversity found in Ante-Nicene Alexandria.

first followers reportedly discussed among themselves “what ‘rising from the dead’ meant.”⁹ Similarly, the debates about resurrection during the first centuries of this era are the Church’s attempt to wrestle with the fundamental question that confronts a renewed commitment to the doctrine, namely, What does it mean to affirm faith in bodily resurrection?

As stated above, it is my conviction that a renewed understanding of the doctrine made possible by a retrieval of early Christian faith has the potential for reinvigorating hope for bodily resurrection in popular devotion. While I believe that it is imperative that the present situation is addressed, it is not the only contribution offered by this study.

Many significant works have been published recently on the subject of early Christian belief in resurrection.¹⁰ This indicates that the doctrine is a timely subject.

⁹Mark 9:10. All references to Scripture will be from the New American Bible translation unless otherwise specified.

¹⁰See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Shape of Death: Life Death and Immortality in the Early Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1962); PHEME PERKINS, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984); Joanne E. McWilliam Dewart, *Death and Resurrection* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1986); Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Horacio E. Lona, *Über die Auferstehung des Fleisches: Studien zur frühchristlichen Eschatologie* (New York: De Gruyter, 1993); Catherine Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Katharina Schneider, *Studien zur Entfaltung der altkirchlichen Theologie der Auferstehung* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1999); N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Alan F. Segal, *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Thought* (New York: Doubleday, 2004); Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2004); James H. Charlesworth, C. D. Elledge, J. L. Crenshaw, and W.W. Willis, Jr., *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

These works also validate what has been noted already that despite the scholarly attention given to the subject of resurrection in the early Church, there is no deliberate and extensive treatment of early Alexandrian Christianity in the way that this study addresses it. Furthermore, while these studies do a wonderful job examining the subject from the perspective of historical theology, most do not make a concerted effort to contribute to the larger theological conversations on the doctrine as this study does.¹¹

In summary, this dissertation contributes to a renewed understanding of the doctrine of bodily resurrection in order that it might be shown to be meaningful to contemporary faith. This will be accomplished by examining some of the ancient testimony of the Church on the subject. The enriched understanding that results can serve as a corrective to the negative attitudes toward the doctrine and can contribute to the current theological conversation on the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

Defining Early Christian Faith

In 1934 Walter Bauer's revolutionary work *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* was published. In it he argued that early Christianity was more diverse than unified and that it was inaccurate to refer to a single orthodox position before the fourth century. At the moment, it is sufficient to note that there were significant variations of Christianity before Nicaea. The effect of this variety on the doctrine of bodily resurrection was significant. Despite the fact that the hope for resurrection was a

¹¹I am not suggesting that the authors listed above are disinterested in broader theological dialogue, but their primary concern is the investigation of historical theology as its own worthwhile discipline.

universal aspect of early Christian faith, there were differing opinions as to how the doctrine should be understood. Why examine early Alexandrian Christianity?¹² There are several reasons for this decision.

Chronologically, I will be restricting my examination of early Christian faith in bodily resurrection to the Ante-Nicene era because it is during this time that the Church was confronted with the threat of Gnosticism.¹³ Gnosticism presented a competing understanding of eternal life that challenged the Christian idea of bodily resurrection. The challenge presented by Gnosticism necessitated that the Church articulate its faith in resurrection. This is particularly relevant given the fact that some believe that Gnosticism is alive and well.¹⁴

Geographically, the focus will be on the Church in Alexandria. The Alexandrian Church is an appropriate subject for this type of endeavor for practical and theological reasons. In terms of practicality, the views of the Alexandrian Church are well-documented. An impressive amount of primary literature has survived which is believed

¹²For the remainder of this work, references to the Church in Alexandria should be understood as meaning before Nicaea unless otherwise noted.

¹³The issues surrounding the use of the terms Gnostic and Gnosticism will be addressed later.

¹⁴In his book *Omens of the Millennium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams, and Resurrection*, the late Yale professor and renowned literary critic Harold Bloom offers what he calls his spiritual autobiography. In explaining why he considers himself a Gnostic, Bloom writes “our American Religion . . . is more of a gnostic amalgam than a European kind of historical and doctrinal Christianity.” To those who would reject his notion, Bloom cites America’s fixation with angels, near-death experiences, and astrology as evidence of a prevalent Gnosticism. See Harold Bloom, *Omens of Millennium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams, and Resurrection* (New York: Riverhead, 1996), 31.

to be of Egyptian provenance or which can be shown to be connected to the Alexandrian Church. As a result of the extant primary literature, a sizeable collection of secondary literature is also available.

Theologically, the faith of the Alexandrian Church is significant because of the aforementioned challenge of Gnosticism.¹⁵ While Gnosticism was widespread in the Greco-Roman world, it was particularly prevalent in Alexandria. This study will document the creativity with which the early Alexandrian Christians expressed their faith in bodily resurrection in and to a culture that was largely antagonistic to the idea.

In this study, it will not be suggested that the notions of bodily resurrection associated with Alexandrian Christianity are the most orthodox or the most widely accepted perspectives.¹⁶ On the contrary, the faith explored in the following pages represents the largely neglected testimonies of Christians who struggled to articulate a genuine faith in bodily resurrection in a context where competing ideas regarding the nature of eternal life challenged the foundations of Christianity.

The Method for the Retrieval

The first chapter of the study provides the necessary foundations for the retrieval

¹⁵References to “the faith of the Alexandrian Church” should be understood in a collective sense. As this study will demonstrate, I do not wish to infer that there was only one Christian view of bodily resurrection that existed in Alexandria.

¹⁶The Alexandrian understanding of resurrection tends to be characterized as only involving the immortal soul. This dissertation will demonstrate that this does not adequately reflect the diversity in Alexandrian thought nor the nuance with which the hope was articulated.

of early Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection. It begins by examining several aspects of the context of Alexandria and concludes with a brief analysis of the origins of Egyptian Christianity. The second chapter examines a number of individual primary texts that are connected to early Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection. Some of them have been attributed to an author and others are anonymous. The third chapter considers the works of several Ante-Nicene Church bishops and teachers who are connected in some way to Egyptian Christianity. The fourth chapter explores ways in which ancient Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection can both inform and be informed by contemporary understandings of the doctrine.

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXT OF ALEXANDRIAN FAITH IN BODILY RESURRECTION

Interpretation is a key component of any form of communication, and part of the process of interpretation is understanding the context(s) of a message. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to supply an adequate understanding of the context of faith in bodily resurrection in Ante-Nicene Alexandria.¹⁷ This is done in order to provide the requisite foundation for the chapters that follow. Although the focus of this study is on Alexandria as it existed in Roman Egypt, it is necessary to consider earlier eras.

The process of becoming aware of the context of Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection can be divided into two distinct tasks. First, in order to fully appreciate early Alexandrian Christianity, it must be considered in relationship to the geopolitical aspects of Pre-Christian Alexandria. These geopolitical factors will be explored in the first section of this chapter. Second, a thorough understanding of the Christian hope for bodily resurrection is only possible when one is aware of its antecedents. For this reason, the second section of this chapter examines the ways in which the various Alexandrian religious and philosophical traditions conceptualized the nature of the afterlife. For this

¹⁷I have intentionally avoided defining the term, resurrection, in an attempt to allow the various texts to speak for themselves.

study, the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are particularly important. Consequently, the second section of this chapter concludes with an examination of the testimony of the New Testament concerning the nature of resurrection. The chapter concludes with an investigation into origins of Egyptian Christianity.

The Geopolitical Elements of Pre-Christian Alexandria

Alexandria was founded in 331 BCE by Alexander the Great on and around the site of the Egyptian village of Rhakotis. It is important to recognize that Alexandria was not an Egyptian city that was conquered by Alexander and Hellenized; instead, it was created at the command of Alexander.¹⁸ It is true that the location of the city included the area of Rhakotis, but any comparison between Rhakotis and Alexandria must conclude that Alexander founded the city rather than merely renaming a conquered Egyptian town.¹⁹

The significance of this lies in the fact that while Alexandria is geographically located along the Nile in northern Egypt, and while there was always a significant Egyptian presence there (primarily in the old area of Rhakotis), early Alexandria was much more characteristically Greek than Egyptian. In fact, Alexandria was so thoroughly

¹⁸For this document, Hellenization will be understood to mean the process of dissemination of Greek culture from the time of Alexander throughout the Greco-Roman empire. This process was not a unilateral interaction, but neither was it an equal exchange between cultures.

¹⁹Atilla Jakab, *Ecclesia alexandrina: Évolution sociale et institutionnelle du christianisme alexandrin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 8-9.

Hellenic that it has been viewed by some as the best representation of Hellenization.²⁰

As alluded to above, Alexandria was founded at what was then one of the major mouths of the Nile. This area had a port which was protected from the Mediterranean Sea by the Island of Pharos. The city also enjoyed the benefit of careful planning exemplified by its having two major streets that connected at right angles to one another and several secondary streets running perpendicular and parallel to the two main thoroughfares.²¹ The transportation made possible by these streets and the various surrounding waterways allowed Alexandria to become one of the centers of commerce in the ancient world. As Alexandria grew as a center of commerce, it also emerged as a center of culture.

Alexander died in 323 BCE and was eventually interred in Alexandria. After his death, Alexandria became the capital of the region controlled by the Ptolemies. Around 295 BCE the *Museion* was commissioned. It was reportedly an exceptional place of learning and contemplation, comparable to a modern university, and like a modern university, it had an impressive library. Josephus indicates that the library sought to have books from all over the world.²² The actual number of volumes that had been acquired is

²⁰Barry Henaut, "Alexandria or Athens as the Essence of Hellenization" in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within a Greco-Roman World*, ed. Wendy E. Helleman (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 99.

²¹Edward A. Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library: Glory of the Hellenic World* (New York: The Elsevier Press, 1952), 58.

²²Josephus, *Ant.* 12.12. Unless otherwise noted, all reference to the works of Josephus are from the Loeb Classical Library translation.

in dispute, but it is believed to have been considerable.²³ In fact, there was even a library in the Egyptian quarter of the city.²⁴

Demographically, the city was comprised of three major ethnic groups. These were Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews. As is often the case in relationships between the conquered and the conqueror, there was tension between the Egyptians and Greeks from the beginning of the city. According to Henri Riad, “The native Egyptians formed the majority of the population on whose labors the economic prosperity of the country depended.”²⁵ Despite this, they were generally excluded from the rights of citizenship.²⁶ The presence of Egyptians and Greeks in Alexandria is to be expected, but the Jewish presence deserves further comment.

The existence of a Jewish community in Alexandria is attributable to voluntary and involuntary immigration occurring over several hundred years. There are numerous sources that attest to a Jewish presence in Egypt as early as the sixth century BCE. One of these is the testimony of Scripture. The Hebrew Bible gives indication of Jews in Egypt before the fall of Jerusalem when it describes an encounter between Egyptian Jews

²³While the trustworthiness of the testimony is questionable, Josephus records that the number was approaching 500,000. See *Ant.* 12.13.

²⁴Parsons, 72.

²⁵Henri Riad, “Egyptian Influence on Daily Life in Ancient Alexandria” in *Alexandria and Alexandrianism*, ed. Kenneth Hama (Malibu, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996), 30.

²⁶Riad, “*Egyptian Influence*,” 30.

and the prophet Jeremiah.²⁷ There is also non-biblical evidence for Judaism in Egypt before the Greek conquest in what is known as the Elephantine papyri, which mention the existence of a Jewish military community in Egypt before the fifth century BCE at Elephantine Island.²⁸ The community even had a temple for the worship of “Yahu.”²⁹ In light of the Jewish presence in Egypt, the existence of an early Jewish community in Alexandria is less remarkable than it may first appear.

While there was a noteworthy Jewish presence in Egypt, it increased dramatically under Alexander according to Josephus’ account.³⁰ Josephus records the existence of a significant Jewish presence before Alexander’s death. This is inferred from Josephus’ claim that Alexander gave the Jews in Alexandria privileges equal to those of the Greeks for their assistance against the Egyptians. They were also reportedly given their own

²⁷Jeremiah 43-44.

²⁸Yochanan Muffs, *Studies from the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine*, with a prolegomenon by Baruch A. Levine (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xii. For the English translation of these texts, see *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, trans. Brezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986). For a survey of the history of Judaism in Egypt, see chapter three in Peder Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996).

²⁹Borgen, 71.

³⁰As pertinent as this information may be to this study, its accuracy is questionable. There is scholarly consensus that Josephus was trying to offer an apology for the status of the Jews, who had apparently tried to gain full citizenship. While this does not necessarily mean that his account is fictional, it suggests that it could be. See Harald Hegermann, “The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. E. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, vol. 2, *The Hellenistic Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 121-122.

quarter, which was set apart from the Gentiles.³¹

Whether the Jewish presence in Alexandria during its earliest years was as prominent as Josephus suggests or more meager, the size of the Jewish community in Alexandria increased significantly under Alexander's successors. Josephus attributes this growth to Ptolemy, who took many Jews to Egypt as captives.³² Others went of their own accord apparently being drawn by the "goodness of the soil and the liberality of Ptolemy."³³

In 30 BCE the city fell to the Romans and remained under Roman control throughout the Church's first centuries. This changed the political climate in that Alexandria had once again become a part of a larger empire and was no longer the political center that it had been under the Ptolemies. G. W. Bowersock elaborates on the effect of these changes on the city by stating,

The mixed population of Egyptians, Jews, and Greeks made civil disturbances inevitable. Alexandria became notorious for its unruly citizenry. With a diminished political role in the world at large, Alexandria could devote itself to its own internal enthusiasms and animosities.³⁴

The limited Egyptian influence in Hellenic Alexandria continued after the city fell to the Romans. Henri Riad has noted that the official name of the city during the Roman

³¹Josephus, *J.W.* 2.487.

³²Josephus, *Ant.* 12.7.

³³Josephus, *Ant.* 12.9.

³⁴G.W. Bowersock, "Late Antique Alexandria" in *Alexandria and Alexandrianism*, ed. Kenneth Hamma (Malibu, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996), 263.

era was *Alexandria ad Aegyptum* and that “the full title of the prefect of Egypt was *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*.”³⁵ Like that of the Egyptians, the social position of Alexandrian Jews remained relatively unchanged at the beginning of Roman rule. According to Robert Wilken, the Jews of Alexandria enjoyed some privileges at first unlike the Egyptians. He writes, “There is every indication that they played a prominent and influential role in Alexandria, especially during the early Roman period.”³⁶

It is clear from this analysis of the geopolitical aspects of Alexandria that it was an ethnically diverse city with three main ethnic groups occupying different social strata. The result of the ethnic diversity in Alexandria extended beyond the geopolitical realm. Having considered the geopolitical aspects of Alexandria, we shall now attend to the ways in which the city’s diversity expressed itself through religious and philosophical beliefs in the afterlife.

Views of the Afterlife in Pre-Christian Alexandria

Since this dissertation is concerned with bodily resurrection and not merely the Ante-Nicene religious environment in Alexandria, the following section is devoted to understanding the ways in which the major religious and philosophical perspectives, Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and Jewish conceptualized the nature of the afterlife. The first to be considered is Egyptian religion.

³⁵Riad, 29.

³⁶Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 39.

Afterlife in Egyptian Religion³⁷

There is irrefutable evidence that belief in the afterlife was an integral part of early Egyptian society. In fact, it has been noted that “belief in the afterlife is among the fundamental concepts of Egyptian culture.”³⁸ The centrality of the afterlife to Egyptian culture is attested to by a significant number of sources, most of which are connected to Egyptian mortuary practices. The evidence of these practices has been well preserved.³⁹ Since Egyptian belief in the afterlife is an important facet of the religious environment in Alexandria, we shall examine ancient Egyptian anthropology and the Osiris myth.⁴⁰

According to Maya Müller, there were several elements of an individual in ancient Egyptian thought.⁴¹ These included the *ren*, *ka*, the *ba*, the shadow, the *khat*, and the

³⁷One cannot understand early Alexandria without considering ancient Egypt. László Kákósy has demonstrated that Egyptian mythology survived into the Middle Ages. László Kákósy, “Survivals of Ancient Egyptian Gods in Coptic and Islamic Egypt,” in *Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies*, ed. Włodzimierz Godlewski (Varsovie: Éditions Scientifiques de Pologne, 1990), 175-179.

³⁸Maya Müller, “Afterlife,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), I: 32.

³⁹John Baines has observed that the “mortuary beliefs are the best-documented aspect of Egyptian religion.” See John Baines, “Society, Morality, and Religious Practice,” in *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, ed. Byron E. Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 144.

⁴⁰While this study is about resurrection, anthropology will be a recurring theme. As Stanley Marrow writes, “Both ‘immortality’ and ‘resurrection’ presuppose, indeed require, an anthropology for their proper comprehension.” Stanley B. Marrow, “Athanasia/Anastasis: The Road not Taken,” *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 573.

⁴¹Müller, I: 32.

ahk.⁴² The *ren* was the person's name. In Egypt people did not just have names, they were names. A *ren* was an expression of a person's individuality.⁴³ The *ka* is a difficult concept to describe, since it had no European counterpart.⁴⁴ Despite our present inability to fully appreciate its role, it was profoundly important to Egyptian mortuary ritual. It was often understood as a double or twin.⁴⁵ There was a strong connection between the *ka* and the "life-force" of an individual.⁴⁶ After death, the *ka* was believed to continue living. This was most frequently conceptualized as occurring within the tomb. As such, the *ka* was the recipient of food offerings. By providing food for the *ka* the individual was kept alive.⁴⁷

The *ba* was also a complex term, but unlike the *ka* it had some similarity to European concepts. It is most frequently translated as "soul."⁴⁸ Like most understandings

⁴²The *ahk* is sometimes transliterated as *akh*. See John H. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 31.

⁴³Taylor, 23.

⁴⁴Admittedly, there is danger in attempting to understand the concepts of a foreign culture in terms of our own. Since there is no realistic alternative, I will proceed to examine the ancient anthropologies, being cognizant of the intellectual humility that this situation necessitates. See J. G. Oosten, "The Examination of Religious Concepts in Religious Anthropology," in *Religion, Culture and Methodology*, ed. Th. P. van Baaren and H.J.W. Drijvers (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 102-103.

⁴⁵Andrey O. Bolshakov, "Ka," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), II: 215-216.

⁴⁶Taylor, 19.

⁴⁷Taylor, 19.

⁴⁸James P. Allen, "Ba," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), I: 161. Louis Zabkar argues against the rendering of *ba* as soul in his classic work. He believes that the difference between *ba* and our

of “soul,” the *ba* was invisible and intimately connected with belief in life beyond the grave. While it was invisible, the *ba* was not amorphous.⁴⁹ In the words of John Taylor, “The capacity for free and unrestricted movement was in fact the single most important characteristic which the *ba* possessed; it was the means by which the dead were empowered to leave the tomb and to travel.”⁵⁰ In spite of its freedom, the *ba* was inextricably connected to the body. In fact it had to return to the body every day.⁵¹ The *ba* continued to be a central aspect of Egyptian thought. There are representations of it in Egyptian tombs from the Roman Period.⁵²

There was also a shadow or shade. It was similar to the *ba* in that it was thought to be able to separate from the body. Other references intimately connect the shadow to the body.⁵³ *Khat* referred to the body. E. Wallis Budge notes that “the word seems to indicate something which decayed.”⁵⁴ In addition to comprising a material component of

common understanding of soul meant that *ba* is better untranslated. See Louis V. Zabkar, *The Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 162-163.

⁴⁹The word invisible was utilized here because some scholars believed that the *ba* had a corporeal aspect to it. See Allen, I: 161; and Zabkar, 162.

⁵⁰Taylor, 20.

⁵¹Taylor, 21.

⁵²Taylor, 20-21.

⁵³Taylor, 24.

⁵⁴E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris: The Egyptian Religion of Resurrection* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1961), II: 117.

the individual, the body was believed to bear a person's consciousness.⁵⁵ As a result, there was great care given to the preservation of the *khat*. This is demonstrated by the ritual practice of mummification.

It is important to realize that early Egyptians understood a person as a unity. Each part, the *ba*, *ka*, *ren*, *khat*, and shadow were all elements of the individual. Taylor observes that "the deceased could survive through each of the aspects described above," but that "the ideal was for all of these forms to be perpetuated after death, and to be united."⁵⁶ Moreover, while these elements were important, the ultimate goal was becoming *ahk* after death.

The *ahk* was "capable of unhindered movement and full physical functioning."⁵⁷ Taylor explains that "To be *akh*, then, was to be an effective spirit, enjoying the qualities and prerogatives of gods, having the capacity for eternal life."⁵⁸ There was also a close connection in the funerary texts between the concept of an *ahk* and transfiguring light.⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that not everyone was thought to become *ahk*. Again, in the words of John Taylor, "Those who had lived wicked lives were denied the blessed state, and were condemned to a second death, total extinction, after suffering horrifying punishments."⁶⁰

⁵⁵Müller, I: 32.

⁵⁶Taylor, 24.

⁵⁷Florence Dunn Friedman, "Ahk," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), I:47.

⁵⁸Taylor, 32.

⁵⁹Friedman, 47-48.

⁶⁰Taylor, 32.

Becoming an *ahk* at death also depended on having a properly prepared body, the correct tomb goods and the knowledge of magical spells.⁶¹

In addition to anthropological information derived from Egyptian funerary practices, we are given an insight into Egyptian understanding of the afterlife through the myth of Osiris. In an article entitled, “Resurrection in Ancient Egypt,” Jan Assmann offers a concise summary of the Osiris myth:

Osiris, a god and a king of Egypt, had been killed by his brother and rival Seth, who moreover, tore his body apart and scattered his limbs all over Egypt. Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, traverses Egypt in search of the *membra disiecta* of her brother, reassembling them into the shape of a body. Together with her sister Nephthys she bewails the body in long songs of lamentation using the power of speech as a means of reanimation. Isis and Nephthys were so successful in their reanimating recitations that Isis was able to receive a child from the reanimated body of Osiris.⁶²

The child’s name is Horus, who battles his uncle Seth, in an attempt to restore order from chaos.⁶³ This Osiris story indicates that the notion of a reanimated body was not a completely foreign concept in ancient Egypt.

What can we conclude about the afterlife? There is little agreement on the answer to this question. Scholars like Henk Milde interpret the data to indicate that Egyptians

⁶¹Friedman, 48.

⁶²Assmann, 126.

⁶³The Osiris myth is important for this study for two reasons. The first is that it informs our understanding of Egyptian belief in the afterlife. The second is the religious and political significance of Alexander assuming the title of Horus upon conquering Egypt, thereby asserting himself as the divinely-ordained restorer of order. Alan Segal, *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 63.

“yearned for the resurrection of their own body.”⁶⁴ Jan Assmann is also quite comfortable applying the term “resurrection” to early Egyptian belief but is less specific than Milde about the role of the body. He writes,

Virtually all the religions of the ancient world around the Mediterranean and in the Near East make the distinction between the world of the living and the world of the dead, the upper world and the underworld. . . . In the context of these religions, ancient Egypt seems to have been the sole exception. Only here, human existence encompassed three worlds, the world of the living, the world of the dead, and an Elysian world for which there are many names and descriptions in Egyptian texts. . . . Here “resurrection” does not mean to return to life on earth, but to be redeemed from the world of the dead and to be admitted into the Elysian world.⁶⁵

Jon Davies seems to be of two minds on the matter. At one point, Davies argues that resurrection is an inappropriate term for characterizing the Egyptian view of the afterlife when he writes,

The Egyptian fourfold concept of the person in effect sees it [a person] as immortal, with “death” providing more of an opportunity for fulfillment, rather than experienced as a negation requiring rebirth, a resurrection. The whole point of Egyptian funerary ritual was to prevent a *second* death (feared as oblivion) from taking place by transcending any gulf there might be between the two worlds.⁶⁶

However, he writes later, “The Egyptians were essentially ritual optimists, believing

⁶⁴Henk Milde, “Going Out into the Day,” in *Hidden Futures: Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical, and Arabic-Islamic World*, ed. Jan M. Bremmer, Th. P.J. van den Hout, and R. Peters (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 16.

⁶⁵Assmann, 124-125.

⁶⁶Jon Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 28-29.

ferently in the ‘resurrection’ of the dead as an individualised, embodied self.”⁶⁷ The apparent ambivalence of Davies can be contrasted to N. T. Wright, whose understanding of Egyptian afterlife belief is best summarized by his statement, “What does not belong here is the word ‘resurrection.’”⁶⁸ Whether or not the Egyptian ideas about the afterlife should be called a belief in resurrection, it is clear that before the arrival of the Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, and Christians ancient Egyptians had a hope for an afterlife and that this expectation was intimately connected to one’s physical body.⁶⁹

Afterlife in Greco-Roman Religion and Philosophy

Any attempt to understand the dominant views of the afterlife common to Roman culture must begin by considering those of Greek culture. This is due to the profound influence that Greek anthropology and religion had on its Roman counterparts.⁷⁰ N. J.

⁶⁷Davies, 34.

⁶⁸Wright, 47.

⁶⁹While few scholars would agree with him, Assmann also makes an interesting argument for the influence of Egyptian resurrection belief on Jewish thinking on resurrection. This would also mean that it influenced Christian thinking on the subject. See Assmann, 135.

⁷⁰In reference to the influence of Greek mythology, Jon Davies notes that “These ancient stories were reinvented and reinvigorated in the Roman Empire which subsumed both Classical and Hellenistic Greece. . . . It should be noted that this Roman ‘annexation’ of ancient Greek myths was *a very deliberate affair*.” See Davies, 128. The influence of the Hellenic thought on Roman life is further evidenced by Roman burial practices. Among the Roman burial rituals is the act of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased for Charon, who is the ferryman of the dead in Greek mythology. Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier, “Corpus: Some Philological and Anthropological Remarks upon Roman Funerary Customs,” in *Self, Soul, and Body in Religious Experience*, ed. Albert Baumgarten, Jan Assmann, and G. A.

Richardson warns of the complexity of Greek concepts of the afterlife when he writes, “There is surely no society in which people’s view of death and the after-life are entirely coherent and consistent, and the Greeks were no exception.”⁷¹

Afterlife in Early Greco-Roman Religion

It is commonly accepted that the work of Homer is the most important surviving source for ancient Greek anthropology and mythology. Yet, German scholar Albrecht Dihle writes, “At the earliest accessible level, namely, Homer, Greek has no words for our concepts of body and soul.”⁷² Dihle’s emphasis on *our* concepts must be highlighted since both σῶμα and ψυχή occur in Homer. The questions that arise are, How were these terms used in early Greek anthropology and what implications did they have for understanding the afterlife?

In Homer, the use of σῶμα is primarily limited to referring to carcasses.⁷³ When a person dies, her or his body becomes a σῶμα. The person’s ψυχή, on the other hand, “leaves to Hades and does not return.”⁷⁴ Drawing on the work of Scandinavian

Stroumsa (Boston: Brill, 1998), 420.

⁷¹N. J. Richardson, “Early Greek views about life after death,” in *Greek Religion and Society*, ed. P. E. Easterling and J. V. Muir (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 50.

⁷²Dihle, “ψυχή,” *TDNT* 9.608.

⁷³Schweizer, “σῶμα,” *TDNT* 7.1025.

⁷⁴Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 74.

anthropologist Ernst Arberman, Jan Bremmer has made some interesting observations concerning the early Greek understanding of ψυχή. Arberman distinguishes between “body souls endowing the body with life and consciousness and the free soul, an unencumbered soul representing the individual personality.”⁷⁵ Bremmer notes that in Homer the ψυχή is inactive when the body is active; it leaves the body when one swoons; and it represents the person after death.⁷⁶ Thus, according to Arberman and Bremmer, ψυχή should be identified with the “free soul.” The “body soul” is represented by terms like νοῦς, θυμός, and μένος. The significance of this is that in Arberman’s framework, it is the body soul that is the animating principle so that the free soul or ψυχή does not give a person life.⁷⁷

While ψυχή is not the animating element, it is the part of the person that goes to Hades. It is not the only term used to describe the dead, however. The term εἶδωλον was also employed and is somewhat more revealing about the nature of the afterlife. An εἶδωλον means a “copy” or “ghost.”⁷⁸ It can mean the figure of a person, but cannot mean the person him/herself.⁷⁹ The use of the term “suggests that the Greeks believed the dead soul looked like the living being.”⁸⁰ Εἶδωλον has also been understood as a shadow or

⁷⁵Bremmer, 9.

⁷⁶Bremmer, 21.

⁷⁷Bremmer, 22.

⁷⁸See “εἶδωλον” in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Bremmer, 73. This is an important issue to keep in mind because of its implications for understanding the nature of the resurrected body in Christian faith.

ghost. The dead, therefore, have only a shadowy existence in Hades. While there are some similarities between the idea of ψυχή and εἶδωλον, it should be understood that Homer never used εἶδωλον to refer to the soul of a living person.⁸¹

During the sixth century BCE an important variation of Greek religion emerged, called Orphism. Orphism was a mystery cult based upon the writings of a great poet, Orpheus. Orphism is important for this study for three reasons. First, it clearly articulated a radical dualism between the σῶμα and the ψυχή. Second, the initiate was promised an afterlife among the blessed.⁸² This is a significant development over the soul's dreary existence in *Hades* described by Homer. Third, for those who were not granted a place among the blessed, followers of Orphism believed that the ψυχή could be reincarnated in another body. This is known as the transmigration of souls or metempsychosis and was understood as a form of punishment. The famous comparison of this group is σῶμα- σῆμα. The body was viewed as the tomb of the soul.⁸³ Only through a radical release, or ἔκστασις, could one's ψυχή be freed and true essence be realized.⁸⁴

⁸¹Bremmer, 79.

⁸²Peter Bolt, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in the Greco-Roman World," in *Life in the Face of Death*, ed. Richard Longenecker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 76.

⁸³Robert Parker, "Early Orphism" in *The Greek World*, ed. Anton Powell (New York: Routledge, 1995), 487.

⁸⁴For examples of this see *The Orphic Hymns: Text Translation and Notes*, trans Apostolos N. Athanassakis (Missoula, MA: Scholars Press, 1977). In particular see the hymn "To Death."

Afterlife in Greek Philosophy

The dualism often associated with Greek philosophy is most clearly articulated by Plato. In his account of the death of Socrates, we read that the soul is divine and immortal and is merely entrapped in the body.⁸⁵ Related to this is his understanding of knowledge, which emphasizes the task of reasoning over sense experience. For Plato "the most the senses can do is to remind us of realities accessible only to reason."⁸⁶ Perhaps the most striking indicator of the diminished view of the body's worth in Plato is the term εἶδωλον. You will recall that from the time of Homer εἶδωλον was an image or ghost of something but never the real thing. By using the term to refer to the disembodied dead, the implication is that Homer understood life in the physical body to be reality. In Plato we find the opposite. Life in the body is the εἶδωλον and real life occurs when the ψυχή is free from the body. This is demonstrated quite clearly in *Laws*, where Plato uses εἶδωλα in reference to this temporal life. He states, "And of those who have met their end, it is well said that the *bodies of the dead* [italics mine] are mere images, but the actual essence of each of us is called the deathless soul, which goes off to other gods to render account."⁸⁷

⁸⁵*Phaedo* 66b, 79b, 80 a, b. The reference in 79b is interesting in that Socrates declares that the soul is invisible, but perhaps only to humans. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Plato's writings are from the Loeb Classical Library translation.

⁸⁶R. W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 11.

⁸⁷Plato, *Laws* 12.959b, also *Theaetetus* 150b, c.

Not all philosophies agreed with Plato's understanding of the role of the body. One of the most important of these groups for understanding resurrection faith in Alexandria is the Stoics. The Stoics were followers of Zeno. He was a younger contemporary of Epicurus, born around 336 BCE. For the Stoics, ψυχή was the unifying element that held the organic body together.⁸⁸ The Stoics believed that the ψυχή was material. It was fundamentally composed of fire. Upon death it returns to its pure state and thus is consumed by fire. While there was a sense of immortality in the unity with the world-soul, the ψυχή did not provide any means of personal immortality.

While this survey has demonstrated a variety of beliefs in the afterlife arising from ancient Greek religion and philosophy, it did not reveal a strong indication of the idea of resurrection. The majority of scholars do not find convincing evidence of resurrection belief from Greek culture.⁸⁹ Recently, Stanley Porter has argued that the Jewish concept of resurrection may have some roots in Hellenistic thought.⁹⁰ The idea is derived from T.F. Glasson's book, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology*, where Glasson observed that resurrection is not a theme in Judaism before the onset of Hellenism and that there are some accounts of resuscitations in Greek mythology.⁹¹ There is little scholarly

⁸⁸R.D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 61.

⁸⁹Perkins, 62.

⁹⁰Stanley Porter, "Resurrection, the Greeks, and the New Testament" in *Resurrection* ed. Stanley Porter, Michael Hayes, and David Tombs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 68.

⁹¹See T. F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology* (London: SPCK, 1961).

support for attributing emergence of Jewish belief in resurrection to the Greeks. In fact, there is considerable agreement that ἀνάστασις was always understood as involving some form of re-embodiment after death and that the Greeks understood this to be impossible.⁹²

Afterlife in Ancient Judaism

There is no doubt that the Christian belief in bodily resurrection is dependent upon the Jewish belief in resurrection that existed at the turn of the era. While the ancient Jewish belief in bodily resurrection is important to this study, it is not necessary to offer a detailed account of its origin and development in ancient Hebrew culture. Consequently, the issue of its development will be discussed only briefly.⁹³ Before examining the notion of resurrection, it is helpful to briefly address the ancient Hebrew notion of the soul.

About fifty years ago, the understanding of ancient Hebrew anthropology changed dramatically. Oscar Cullmann presented the Ingersoll lectures in which he set dualism of Greek thought against the wholism of ancient Hebrew thought and subsequently that of

⁹²Albrecht Oepke, "ἀνάστασις," *TDNT* 1:369. See also A.J. M. Wedderburn, "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV," *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981), 231.

⁹³In addition to being beyond the focus of this study, it is quite difficult to trace the origin and development of this belief in Hebrew culture. In the first place, while there are passages of Scripture that give indications of belief in the afterlife, there are few passages that specifically address the subject of bodily resurrection. This is demonstrated by the fact that the phrase אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. Another reason for the difficulty of the task is the chronological, social, and literary diversity of the Old Testament. As will be demonstrated, the relevant biblical material seems to indicate a variety of beliefs about the afterlife, and these are not easily codified.

Christianity.⁹⁴ It is now generally agreed that Cullmann overstated the difference by failing to acknowledge the diversity in ancient Hebrew thought particularly concerning intertestamental Judaism. In fact, the existence of dualistic thought in some early Jewish anthropologies has been well established.⁹⁵

While there were various ways of understanding the soul's relationship to the body, it remains that נִפְשׁ "is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life," nor is it "capable of living when cut off from that life."⁹⁶ This is in contrast to the recent work of James Barr, who has argued that it is possible to discern occurrences where נִפְשׁ is used in reference to being immortal in the Greek sense. He also believes that the current sense of a monistic anthropology or a "unity of being" is a modern projection onto the Old Testament.⁹⁷ While intriguing, there is little support for the idea of נִפְשׁ being understood as the core of personal identity as

⁹⁴Oscar Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" in *Immortality or Resurrection*, ed. Krister Stendahl (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 22-24.

⁹⁵See George W. F. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 177-180, and more recently, John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 81-103.

⁹⁶Hans Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 20.

⁹⁷James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 42-43.

was common in Greek understanding.⁹⁸ Thus, while Cullmann's position did not reflect all of the nuances of ancient Hebrew anthropologies, his notion that the central Hebrew anthropology refers to the whole person remains relatively intact.

Jewish Resurrection Belief within the Agreed Canon⁹⁹

While there is little scholarly consensus regarding the origin of Jewish belief in bodily resurrection, two things are generally conceded.¹⁰⁰ The first is that the earliest articulations of Hebrew faith included a notion of a “shadowy” postmortem existence in *שְׁאוֹל* (*Sheol*). The second is that by the second century BCE, hope for individual bodily resurrection, while not universal, was extremely common in Hebrew thought. For this reason, we shall begin by considering the Hebrew concept of *Sheol*.

Sheol is the most common term for the netherworld in the Old Testament, and yet,

⁹⁸Robert A. Di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology and Construction of Personal Identity," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (April 1999): 229.

⁹⁹By choosing to begin with the books of the Jewish Bible that followers of YHWH agree upon, I am not making a value judgment on the canonicity of other books. Instead, it is simply an attempt to begin on common ground before moving to *adiaphora*. This means that while Daniel 12 may be understood as an intertestamental text, it is being examined here.

¹⁰⁰There are numerous theories that attempt to explain the origin of the belief in resurrection in Judaism. Among these are Iranian, Canaanite, Egyptian, and Greek. Scholars like Bernhard Lang have argued for a Iranian source for this belief. See Lang, “Afterlife: Ancient Israel’s Changing Vision of the World Beyond,” *Bible Review* 4 (1988), 19. Martin-Achard discusses the possibility of Canaanite influence. See Martin-Achard, 195-200. As was noted earlier, Jan Assmann and Stanley Porter have suggested Egyptian and Greek origins, respectively.

it is not found in the languages of the people surrounding Israel.¹⁰¹ Among the suggested derivations are the Akkadian word for “underworld” and another which means “the place of decision.”¹⁰² Other options include the Hebrew verbs meaning “to ask,” “to lie desolate,” “to hollow out,” and “to be quiet.”¹⁰³ *Sheol* was perceived as the unavoidable lot of every human being, as Richard Longenecker notes in the introduction to *Life in the Face of Death*,

The hope of the faithful in Israel was not that they would never die or escape Sheol. Sheol was as much a part of every person’s experience as birth and family. . . . The hope of the righteous in the religion of Israel was simply 1) a long life, 2) for a good death, 3) for the continuance of one’s ideals in one’s posterity, and 4) the continued welfare of the nation.¹⁰⁴

It was a place characterized by forgetfulness and captivity.¹⁰⁵ Philip Johnston states that descriptions of *Sheol* “suggest a somnolent, gloomy existence without meaningful activity or social distinction. There is certainly no elaborate journey through the gates or stages of the underworld, in Mesopotamian or Egyptian style.”¹⁰⁶ Martin-Achard is even less

¹⁰¹Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 21.

¹⁰²Friedman, 42-43.

¹⁰³Klaas Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1986), 66.

¹⁰⁴Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 9.

¹⁰⁵Philip S. Johnston, *Shares of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 75-76.

¹⁰⁶Johnston, *Shares of Sheol*, 85.

optimistic when he describes it as “the lifeless land where demons and the spirits of dead men prowl.”¹⁰⁷

The dead in *Sheol* were called **רְפָאִיִּם** or shades. This has led some scholars to question whether the belief in bodiless existence in *Sheol* can legitimately be called a belief in the afterlife.¹⁰⁸ Roland Murphy, for example describes this existence as "non-life."¹⁰⁹ This poses the question, How did resurrection become prevalent in Judaism given the absence of a real expectation of an afterlife?

The generally accepted explanation is that there was a relatively straightforward development from belief in *Sheol* to the hope of individual resurrection. This position is summarized by Roland Martin-Achard in his study *From Death to Life* when he writes “the Old Testament, after having asserted the quasi-decisive power of death over those who, seemingly forgotten by Yahweh, dwell in Sheol, proclaims, at first hesitantly and

¹⁰⁷Martin-Achard, 44.

¹⁰⁸André-Marie Dubarle, “Belief in Immortality in the Old Testament and Judaism,” in *Immortality and Resurrection*, ed. Pierre Benoît and Roland Murphy (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 37-38.

¹⁰⁹Roland E. Murphy, "Death and the Afterlife in the Wisdom Literature," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, vol. 3, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and Bruce Chilton (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 101. While the work of Dubarle and Murphy represent the majority opinion about Sheol, some scholarship has proposed a different understanding. In her 1981 dissertation, Ruth Rosenberg observed that Sheol is never described as the gathering place of one's ancestors. In her words, "Natural death is accompanied by unification with kin and Sheol is never mentioned." Evil death is connected to Sheol and as being cut-off from one's kin. See Ruth Rosenberg, *The Concept of Biblical Sheol Within the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Beliefs*. Quoted and referenced by Davies, 92-93.

then with more assurance, the resurrection of the dead."¹¹⁰ Those who subscribe to this view believe faith in resurrection to be a late development in Judaism with little indication of it before the second century.¹¹¹ While the origin and development of afterlife belief in Judaism is fascinating, it does not directly benefit this study. It is sufficient to understand that at least by the second century BCE, belief in an afterlife was widespread and that resurrection was one of the prominent expectations of this postmortem existence. In order to substantiate this we will consider three biblical texts: Ezekiel 37, Isaiah 26, and Daniel 12.¹¹²

¹¹⁰Martin-Achard, 51. New Testament scholar N. T. Wright gives an interesting observation when he writes that resurrection, "when it occurs, is not so much a further development, beyond a general life-after-death hope such as may be found in some of the Psalms, and hence even further away from the (early?) belief in Sheol, but in a sense a reversion to the earlier view that the only sort of life that really counts is full, bodily life." N. T. Wright, "An Incomplete (but grateful) Response to the Review by Markus Bockmuehl of *The Resurrection of the Son of God*," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (2004): 506.

¹¹¹Among those of this persuasion is Robert Grant, who states, "no expressions of belief in resurrection are to be found in the Old Testament earlier than the time of the Exile." See Robert M. Grant, "The Resurrection of the Body," *Journal of Religion* 28:2 (1948): 120. Recently, an increasing number of scholars have suggested that there are indications of belief in resurrection earlier than has historically been considered. See Leila Bronner, "The Resurrection Motif in the Hebrew Bible: Allusions or Illusions," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 30:3 (2002): 143. Also Shawna Overton and Richard Friedman critique the presuppositions that lead to a linear development of belief and late view of resurrection, when they write, "There are references to resurrection or resuscitation in various places in the Hebrew Bible. . . . Yet, in order to make their linear progression of ideas viable, scholars discount or downplay each one until Daniel." Friedman and Overton, 55. See also the recent study by Jon Levenson. Jon Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹¹²These texts are being considered because they specifically refer to resurrection. I am not arguing that these are the earliest nor am I suggesting that resurrection was the dominant concept. It should be remembered that a variety of beliefs about the

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Ezekiel 37 is likely from the sixth century BCE and is a vivid account of God's power over death describing dry bones resuming flesh and becoming re-animated. The first ten verses state,

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. 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!

He asked me: Son of man, can these bones come to life? "Lord GOD," I answered, "you alone know that."

Then he said to me: Prophesy over these bones, and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!

Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life. 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.

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. I saw the sinews and the flesh come upon them, and the skin cover them, but there was no spirit in them.

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.

I prophesied as he told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and stood upright, a vast army.

afterlife existed throughout Judaism and into the Christian era. This is exemplified most vividly in the Wisdom literature of the Bible. Both Proverbs and Qoheleth generally express the view that death is the end of the human life. See Roland Murphy, 103-116. As will be evident, this diversity continues for centuries until after the time of Jesus. See Acts 23:65-68.

Andrew Chester notes that Exekiel 37 "represents the most sustained, and in many respects the most famous, 'resurrection' passage within the Old Testament."¹¹³ Scholars agree that the idea of resurrection should be understood as a metaphorical reference to the restoration of the nation following exile.¹¹⁴ However, understanding the pericope in Ezekiel as metaphorical does not mean that the passage has no implications for early faith in resurrection. Andrew Chester, while accepting the majority opinion regarding the passage's symbolic nature, still finds profound theological depth in the account. According to Chester, resurrection in Ezekiel signifies a re-creation, not merely restoration, of the people, an overcoming of death, and a connection between resurrection and the eschata.¹¹⁵

Leila Bronner believes that physical resurrection is present in Ezekiel 37. In her opinion, the physical description of restored bodies, particularly in verse 6, addresses bodily resurrection. She does not disagree with the scholarly consensus on Ezekiel 37, instead she expands on it. She concedes that the passage is mainly about the restoration of the nation but adds "the vision also embodies a(n) expanded dimension of physical revival for the individual at a time when the wish for personal vindication was

¹¹³Andrew Chester, "Resurrection and transformation," in *Auferstehung = Resurrection: the Fourth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, ed. Friedrich Avemarie and Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 48.

¹¹⁴This is particularly true in light of the explanation that is offered beginning in 37:11. See Martin-Achard, 93-102.

¹¹⁵Chester, 53.

developing.”¹¹⁶

Whether one agrees with Bronner’s opinion or not, she raises an important issue. Scholars agree that around the time of the exile, perhaps just before, there was a “growing emphasis on the worth and responsibility of the individual . . . and shift in Israel’s hope from the historical to the eschatological plane.”¹¹⁷ At a minimum, there is in Ezekiel a testimony of faith in God's ability to give life and to reclaim the dead.

Isaiah 26:19

Isaiah 26:19 states, "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." This passage is part of the Isaiah Apocalypse. For this reason, some have suggested a date contemporaneous to Daniel 12.¹¹⁸ This is nearly impossible due to the fact that a complete scroll of Isaiah, found at Qumran, has been dated to the second century BCE. This is further unlikely since many scholars believe that Daniel 12 is an interpretation of Isaiah 26:19.¹¹⁹ Other have suggested a date as early as the sixth century.¹²⁰ In any event, it is very likely that the text is older than Daniel 12.

¹¹⁶Bronner, 150.

¹¹⁷Dewart, 17.

¹¹⁸In addressing the date of Isaiah 26, Andrew Chester writes, "It has frequently been taken to come from as late as the second century BC." Chester, 54.

¹¹⁹Nickelsburg, 17-19. The most commonly held view understands the passage to be a product of the fourth century BCE. Martin-Achard, 137.

¹²⁰Chester, 54.

Scholars disagree about whether Isaiah 26:19 teaches the resurrection of the nation or of individuals, but the view that it is a reference to personal resurrection is becoming increasingly popular. Gerhard Hasel delineates the case for bodily resurrection in Isaiah 26 when he writes, "A purely metaphorical interpretation seems to fail because it does not fit into the context."¹²¹ He also points out that verse 19 seems to be the antithesis of verse 14, which is a clear reference to physical death. He further states that it is difficult to identify a definite reference to Israel in the pericope.¹²² Hasel believes that this is evidence that the text is addressing the world more than Israel, which would lead toward an understanding of resurrection that has universal implications, rather than merely national ones.¹²³ Hasel finishes his examination of Isaiah 26:19 by noting that he is "led to conclude that the 'heart' of the Isaiah Apocalypse climaxes in the apocalyptic revelation of the physical resurrection of the faithful."¹²⁴

Other scholars have not been as convinced as Hasel. They believe that this passage is only a metaphor and can only refer to nation restoration. Most notably is John Collins, who has observed, "Isa. 16:19 can be read by analogy with Ezekiel 37: Israel was

¹²¹George F. Hasel, "Resurrection in the Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980): 273.

¹²²Hasel, "Resurrection," 273.

¹²³This position is also supported by other scholars. See Philip Schmitz, "The Grammar of Resurrection in Isaiah 26:19a-c," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122:1 (2003): 145-149.

¹²⁴Hasel, 275. John Sawyer agrees with Hasel's interpretation of this passage. See John Sawyer, "Hebrew Words for Resurrection of the Dead," *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973): 234.

dead in Exile, and its restoration is as miraculous as resurrection." Later he states "Isaiah 26:19, then, does not necessarily involve actual resurrection of dead Israelites, and its value as attestation of such a belief is doubtful."¹²⁵ Others like Paul Redditt are somewhere in between the two. In his commentary on Isaiah, Redditt concludes that the passage is referring to national restoration, but interestingly, he does so only after acknowledging that the terms used in the passage refer to personal and physical matters.¹²⁶

Daniel 12:2-3

Daniel 12 is often dated to the second century BCE. Verses 2-3 are the most significant Old Testament passage for understanding early belief in resurrection because of its explicit reference to personal resurrection. In fact, Daniel 12 has been called "the first undisputed evidence of a belief in the resurrection."¹²⁷ It states, "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."

¹²⁵John J. Collins interprets this in a partitive sense so that only some will arise. He specifically states, "Daniel does not envisage universal resurrection." John J. Collins, *Daniel*. Hermeneia. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993), 395. See also Brian Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking* (Sterling, VA: Peeters, 2000), 304-320.

¹²⁶Paul Redditt, *Isaiah 24-27: A Form Critical Analysis* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1973), 283-291.

¹²⁷Dubarle, 40.

An interesting qualification of the anticipated resurrection occurs in verse 2 with the use of the Hebrew word, רַבִּים. The word is generally translated "many," but in Daniel 12, it is followed by the preposition מִן. Scholars do not agree on what impact the preposition has on the understanding of רַבִּים. One option is to understand that many, but not all of the dead will awaken.¹²⁸ The other option suggests a more inclusive interpretation of רַבִּים, rendering it "all." This also can be understood in two ways. The first understands the "all" of this passage to refer to all Israelites. The second interprets it as referring to a general resurrection of which everyone will take part.¹²⁹ Whether this passage refers to a general or specific resurrection, it is noteworthy that resurrection is connected to the idea of final judgment.

Before preceding to examine the relevant intertestamental literature, Jon Levenson has provided a helpful summary of the passages considered here. He writes,

Whether in the vision of national restoration in Ezekiel 37, the ambiguous revival of the dead in Isaiah 26, or the clear prediction of resurrection with judgment in Daniel 12, resurrection does not simply vindicate the justice of God. It also fulfills the promise to Israel of the God of life. And in that, all these texts in their differing ways adumbrate the affirmation that the ancient rabbis ordained that Jews must make every day of their lives - the affirmation that God "keeps faith with those who sleep in the dust."¹³⁰

¹²⁸Collins, 392.

¹²⁹Hasel, 277-279.

¹³⁰Levenson, 200.

Intertestamental Judaism¹³¹

It has already been observed that prior to the beginning of the intertestamental period various opinions about the afterlife existed in Judaism and that belief in resurrection was emerging. This is expressed by George Nickelsburg when he writes, “In the intertestamental period there was no single Jewish orthodoxy on the time, mode, and place of resurrection, immortality, and eternal life.”¹³² Whether these diverse beliefs can be attributed to the development of belief in an afterlife as has been asserted by Martin-Achard or to the simultaneous existence of divergent ideas is difficult to say with certainty. Regardless, it is undeniable that in the intertestamental period there are beliefs that differ greatly from one another existing concurrently.¹³³ While many texts could be examined to demonstrate this variety, there are only two texts that will be considered because of the likelihood of their connection to Alexandria.¹³⁴

¹³¹For the sake of clarity, I will be following Nickelsburg’s understanding of intertestamental as referring to non-Christian, Jewish texts from 200 BCE - 100 CE, to which I add the qualification of disputed canonicity. See Nickelsburg, 9 note 1.

¹³²Nickelsburg, 180.

¹³³Among these is the idea that there is essentially no life after death. This was noted previously regarding Proverbs and Qoheleth and is found in the intertestamental literature in the book of *Ben Sirach*. A significantly more common view is the belief in a good afterlife for the just and punishment for the wicked. While this belief was frequently articulated as faith in bodily resurrection, belief in an immortal soul was also becoming increasingly popular as a result of Greek influence. See John Day, “The Development of Belief in Life and Death in Ancient Israel,” in *After the Exile*, ed. John Barton and David Reimer (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 248.

¹³⁴For this reason, despite its explicit faith in a material resurrection, 2 Maccabees will not be addressed here.

The Wisdom of Solomon

One of the most important intertestamental texts for this study is the *Wisdom of Solomon* or the *Book of Wisdom* (*Wisdom* hereafter). It was written in Greek and is believed to have been composed about a century before Christ. The two factors that make *Wisdom* important to this study are the scholarly consensus regarding an Alexandrian provenance and the text's positive, albeit somewhat obscure, attitude toward the afterlife.

The first thing that should be noted about *Wisdom* is the fact that the text does not mention bodily resurrection. It does mention several related themes, but there is no explicit reference to resurrection. For example, in the first chapter there is a discussion of the judgment that all people will face. Verses 8-11 state,

Therefore no one who utters wicked things can go unnoticed, nor will chastising condemnation pass him by.
For the devices of the wicked man shall be scrutinized, and the sound of his words shall reach the LORD, for the chastisement of his transgressions;
Because a jealous ear hearkens to everything, and discordant grumblings are no secret.
Therefore guard against profitless grumbling, and from calumny withhold your tongues; For a stealthy utterance does not go unpunished, and a lying mouth slays the soul.

Not only will there be a judgment, the text indicates that the soul can be killed. Later in chapter one, we read of the goodness of creation: "Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. For he fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, And there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the nether world on earth" (1.13-14).

In chapter 2, the author states that the wicked wrongly think that "Brief and

troubles is our lifetime; neither is there any remedy for man's dying, nor is anyone known to have come back from the nether world,” and “For our lifetime is the passing of a shadow; and our dying cannot be deferred because it is fixed with a seal; and no one returns” (2:1,5).

Chapter 3 is perhaps the most important passage of *Wisdom* for this study. It begins with the observation that “The souls of the just are in the hand of God” (3:1). This emphasis on souls sets the tone for the rest of the chapter. In verses 2-3, we read “They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead. . . . But they are in peace,” and their hope is “full of immortality” (3:4). In verse 8, we learn that the just “will judge nations and rule over peoples.”

In light of the fact that there is no explicit indication in the text of an intermediary state, it seems that the souls of the dead continue living in the presence of God. Passages like this, combined with the fact that *Wisdom* does not contain a single explicit reference to resurrection have caused scholars like Nickelsburg to conclude that *Wisdom* teaches immortality of the soul rather than bodily resurrection.¹³⁵

While Nickelsburg’s position is the prevailing opinion, the evidence is by no means definitive. Dubarle is among the scholars who find indications of resurrection faith in *Wisdom*. While not fully committing himself, Dubarle identifies, among other things, the positive attitude toward the material world found in *Wisdom*. As he writes,

Certainly nothing expressly contradicts the hope of resurrection in the Book of Wisdom. The author knew of the belief and perhaps made it his own. But he preferred, probably in order not to shock his Greek readers, to emphasize the

¹³⁵Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 88.

spiritual elements of the after-life and leave in obscurity the fate of the body. There is no positive evidence for the resurrection of the body to be drawn from his writing, but nor is it possible to find any denial of the concept there.¹³⁶

N. T. Wright also believes that the teaching of *Wisdom* does not refute belief in resurrection. His position is based on the role of the soul in the intermediate state, so that while he agrees that the emphasis in *Wisdom* is on the soul, he understands it as likely referring to the intermediate and not the final state. In this way, immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection are not irreconcilable.¹³⁷ In support of his position, Wright discerns that 3:7 begins a description of a second stage of existence.¹³⁸ Interestingly, on this point Wright and Nickelsburg agree.¹³⁹

While *Wisdom* teaches the immortality of the soul either as an intermediate or final state, it differs from Greek thinking on the subject in a fundamental way. Whereas in Greek thought the soul was considered to be immortal by its nature, the author of *Wisdom* establishes its immortality with God. In *Wisdom* the soul's immortality is a gift from God (3:15-16). Several passages support this idea. One of the more obvious examples of this is the fact that only the souls of the just are said to be immortal (3:1). Additionally, the text indicates that the soul can be killed (1:11). Finally, as Roland Murphy observes, it is righteousness and not the soul in 1:15 that is declared to be

¹³⁶Dubarle, 42.

¹³⁷Wright, 164.

¹³⁸Wright, 167.

¹³⁹Nickelsburg, 89.

immortal.¹⁴⁰ Immortality is the condition the soul enjoys; it is not an aspect of its nature.

Murphy presents another important issue relevant to the study of this text when he questions whether the use of the soul in the text presupposes a Greek or Hebrew anthropology.¹⁴¹ This is important because according to Murphy, if Hebrew anthropology is assumed, the references to soul should be understood within the framework of the integrity of the human person. This would mean the inclusion of the body. While this is profoundly important to the interpretation of the passage, it is not easily resolved. The evidence suggests that *Wisdom* is a Jewish text, believed to be originally written in Greek, at a time when both bodily resurrection and immortality of the soul were increasingly popular. Additionally, some would take issue with Murphy's limited notion of Hebrew anthropology.

The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides¹⁴²

Perhaps the best example of the diversity of beliefs in Alexandria is the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*. Its supposed author, Phocylides, was a Greek poet from Melitus who lived in the sixth century BCE.¹⁴³ The *Sentences* comprise a Greek poem written in

¹⁴⁰Murphy, 116.

¹⁴¹Murphy, 116.

¹⁴²References to the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* are from Pieter W. Van der Horst's translation. See *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), II: 574-582. See also Horst's introduction in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 565-573.

¹⁴³Horst, 565.

the style and name of Phocylides. It is believed to be composed by a Hellenistic Jew around the turn of the era.¹⁴⁴ The text is relevant to this study because it addresses the subject of resurrection and is thought to have an Alexandrian provenance.¹⁴⁵ The text has a perplexing quality in that it seems to affirm different, even conflicting views of the afterlife. As will be demonstrated, the text seems to affirm both a postmortem hope for the temporal body and the idea of incorporeal immortality. This is best established through a survey of the relevant passages.

The passage most relevant to this dissertation is found in lines 97 through 115. The first two lines include a call for moderation when grieving (97-98). We read, “Sit not in vain at the fire, weakening your heart. Be moderate in your grief; for moderation is best.” The passage continues with a call for the proper burial of the dead in line 99, which states, “Let the unburied dead receive their share of the earth.” It is reasonable to assume that this was not always occurring. Afterward, the author employs the negative imperative. In lines 100-101a we find a condemnation of the mistreatment of corpses. It states, “Do not dig up the grave of the deceased, nor expose to sun what may not be seen, lest you stir up divine anger.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴For a summary of recent scholarship on the issues of authorship and nature of the text see Walter T. Wilson, *The Mysteries of Righteousness: The Literary Composition and Genre of the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Tübingen: J.C. B. Mohr, 1994), 4-7.

¹⁴⁵One of the reasons for the belief of an Alexandrian provenance is found in condemnation of the practice of dissecting cadavers, which may have only occurred in Alexandria. Horst, 567-568.

¹⁴⁶It is not obvious from the text if the act being addressed is the disturbing of graves or the dissection of cadavers or something in between. Horst is convinced that

Here the author is providing a rationale for the careful treatment of the dead. For example in line 101b, the author advises that the mistreatment of corpses can invoke God's anger. In verses 103-104a, we read of the "hope that the remains of the departed will soon come to the light again out of the earth." In other words, the bodies of the dead should not be disturbed because of the hope of resurrection.

Another reason for respecting corpses is in line 105 where we read that "the soul remains unharmed among the deceased." The author then instructs in line 106 that the spirit "is a loan of God," and in lines 107-108 that "we have a body out of earth, and when afterward we are resolved again into earth we are but dust; and then the air has received our spirit." Walter Wilson offers a concise summary of verses 110-111 when he writes "money and possessions are worthless in Hades (verse 110), everyone is alike in the afterlife (verse 111a), and God rules over all souls after they die (verse 111b)." In line 115, the passage concludes with a statement that the soul "is immortal and lives ageless forever."

While it is tempting to try to coalesce the numerous perspectives mentioned above into a single message, it does violence to the text. As Hans Cavallin writes in his *Life After Death*, "In the same writings, and even the same passages, concepts, symbols from widely differing anthropologies are used in order to express the hope of personal survival of death."¹⁴⁷

the issue concerns dissection. See Horst, 571.

¹⁴⁷Hans Cavallin, *Life after Death: Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in I Corinthians 15* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 212.

The majority opinion during the intertestamental period was that a good afterlife awaited the just and punishment awaited the wicked. This afterlife was commonly understood in terms of bodily resurrection, but this was not the only way of expressing it. During this time, the notion of an immortal soul also grew in popularity. It is, therefore, not surprising that some texts like *Wisdom* have a preference for the soul over the body as a means of discussing the afterlife given the degree to which Alexandria was the symbol of Hellenism. It should be remembered that even in these instances however, the idea of an immortal soul was significantly redacted from the Greek concept since the soul's immortality was a gift of God, not a part of its nature.

Philo on the Afterlife¹⁴⁸

Before proceeding to the New Testament, it is important to consider the work of Philo. He is significant to this study for a number of reasons. The first is the fact that he was from Alexandria. Second, he lived at the turn of the era, which means that he is able to give another perspective on early Jewish belief in the afterlife. Third, Philo remains one of the most vivid examples of Hellenistic Judaism from the turn of the era. As Henry Chadwick once wrote, "It seems clear that of all the non-Christian writers of the first century A.D. Philo is the one from whom the historian of emergent Christianity has the most to learn."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸References to Philo's works are from the Loeb Classical Library translation.

¹⁴⁹Henry Chadwick, "St. Paul and Philo of Alexandria," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 48 (1966): 288.

As a Hellenistic Jew, he was both aware of and influenced by Greek philosophy. Even a casual reading of Philo reveals the fact that he subscribed to a form of dualism, but because he understood Greek philosophy as being dependent on early Jewish wisdom traditions, he does not share the negativity towards the material world that often accompanied dualism.¹⁵⁰ This is demonstrated in Philo's *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim (QG)* where he interprets the two creation accounts in Genesis.

In Genesis 1, we read of the creation of humans in the image of God. Genesis 2 has a second account of the creation of humanity which indicates that God "formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life" (2:7). Rather than parallel accounts of the same event, Philo understands these passages to be about two different acts of creation. In commenting on Genesis 2:7 Philo writes, "The moulded man is the sense-perceptible man and a likeness of the intelligible type. But the man made in accordance with (God's) form is intelligible and incorporeal and a likeness of the archetype, so far as this is visible" (*QG* 1:4) Thus, according to Philo, the creation account in the second chapter of Genesis details the creation of visible humans. Naturally, the influence of Greek philosophy also expressed itself in Philo's understanding of the nature of the afterlife.

As a result of his dualism, Philo believed in the immortal soul rather than bodily resurrection. This is noteworthy because of what it may indicate for Christian faith in

¹⁵⁰This statement should be understood in relation to other dualists of his time, since Philo is not completely immune from a negative view of materiality. See *QG* 2:15 where he compares the washing of Noah's flood with the cleansing that occurs at death. This washing rids one of the "sensible and corporeal qualities" which is referred to as muddy slime.

bodily resurrection at Alexandria. This will be demonstrated by a brief consideration of the vocabulary Philo employs.

In all of the extant works of Philo there are only seven occurrences of the word ἀνάστασις.¹⁵¹ One passage includes three of the occurrences and is the only place that clearly uses the term in reference to the afterlife (*QG* 2:15).¹⁵² It is, therefore, interesting that in a passage about the afterlife that includes the term ἀνάστασις, Philo would argue for the idea of an immortal soul. As Philo's writes in this passage, "by the grace of the Father we wish to cast off and wash off from the mind all the sensible and corporeal things by which it was stained as if by ulcers" (*QG* 2:15c). Philo's preference of the idea of immortality over resurrection is also reflected in his vocabulary. In comparison to the seven instances of ἀνάστασις, ἀθανασία and ἀθανατος occur 139 times in Philo's surviving texts.¹⁵³

There is a second term that Philo uses in reference to his idea of an immortal soul. The word is παλιγγενεσία which is often understood as rebirth. It also connotes the idea of restoration.¹⁵⁴ Within a Platonic system, this would imply the transmigration of souls or reincarnation. This does not seem to be how Philo is using the term, however. In an article in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Fred Burnett has suggested that the central theme

¹⁵¹Peder Borgen, ed., *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 11.

¹⁵²Once in *QG* 2:15a and twice in 15c.

¹⁵³Borgen, *Philo Index*, 7.

¹⁵⁴F. Büchsel, "παλιγγενεσία," *TDNT* 1:681-688.

of Philo's work is "the migration of the soul towards immortality" and that Philo uses *παλιγγενεσία* to that end.¹⁵⁵ Later, he writes that the use of "*παλιγγενεσία* in Philo refers to the soul's immortality, but his is a view which does not fit precisely into any Jewish or Hellenistic conception."¹⁵⁶

Resurrection in the New Testament

There are two basic sources for information on resurrection in the New Testament. They are the portrayals of the words and deeds of Jesus in the canonical gospels and the teaching of Christ's early followers contained in the letters of the New Testament. Each has something to contribute to understanding the Christian hope of resurrection and will be considered. In light of the fact that entire volumes have been written on the subject of resurrection in the New Testament, the following offers only a sampling of the most significant texts and issues related to the topic. In particular, the question that this survey seeks to answer is What is the understanding(s) of the nature of the resurrected body taught in the New Testament?

Resurrection in the Portrayals of Jesus

The portrayals of Jesus in the canonical gospels inform the understanding of resurrection in the New Testament in two ways. The first is through the teachings and

¹⁵⁵Fred W. Burnett, "Philo on Immortality," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984): 447.

¹⁵⁶Burnett, "Philo on Immortality," 470.

deeds of Jesus; the other is through the accounts of his resurrection appearances. Among the texts of the first variety, two stories will be studied here. The first is the account of the transfiguration.¹⁵⁷ It is found in Mark 9:2-8, Matthew 17:1-13, and Luke 9:28-36. In Mark's account we read,

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified.

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."
Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

The most important aspect of this passage is the connection between the transfiguration and the resurrection of Christ. This is implied by the fact that in each gospel account the transfiguration immediately follows Jesus' foretelling his own death and resurrection.¹⁵⁸ As Stephen Barton notes, "Seen in this light, the transfiguration is an

¹⁵⁷Before considering the words and deeds of Christ's own resurrection, it is necessary to make a comment on the various demonstrations of his power over death found in the gospels. Among these are the son of the widow of Nain in Luke 7, and Jairus' daughter in Mark 5 and Luke 8. While these clearly testify to God's power over death and thus serve as a precursor to both Christ's resurrection and that of his followers, they are better understood as resuscitations. This is because the dead returned to their earthly life presumably only to die again at a later time. The fact that the person experiences death a second time is strikingly different from what is meant by resurrection. For this reason, they will not be considered here.

¹⁵⁸Pheme Perkins has suggested that Luke's account of the Transfiguration displays more evidence of having been crafted in order to connect the transfiguration

anticipation - a temporary unveiling in the form of an apocalyptic vision - of Jesus' post-resurrection glory. . . . From Mark's point of view, the transfiguration is an invitation to see the fate of Jesus and followers of Jesus in eschatological terms, as a prelude to glory."¹⁵⁹ The extent to which the transfigured body exemplifies the resurrected body indicates that the resurrected body involves a radical transformation of the temporal body into a luminous one.

While the transfiguration served as an "object lesson" of sorts for the disciples, Jesus also taught about the resurrection.¹⁶⁰ The most primary occurrence of this is a conversation between Jesus and the Sadducees on the subject of resurrection. In fact, N. T. Wright calls this pericope "far and away the most important passage about the resurrection in the whole gospel tradition."¹⁶¹ The encounter is recorded in Mark 12:18-27 and in parallel versions in Luke 20 and Matthew 22. There is an emerging consensus that the pericope is likely authentic to a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.¹⁶² Mark's account states,

to the resurrection. See Perkins, 98. While this is noteworthy, it does not negate what has been observed here.

¹⁵⁹Stephen C. Barton, "The Transfiguration of Christ according to Mark and Matthew: Christology and Anthropology," in *Auferstehung=Resurrection: the Fourth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, ed. Friedrich Avemarie and Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 239.

¹⁶⁰While this is true, C. F. Evans has rightly observed a "notable scarcity in the recorded teaching of Jesus of reference to resurrection." C. F. Evans, *Resurrection and the New Testament* (Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1970), 33.

¹⁶¹Wright, 415.

¹⁶²John Meier presents a very compelling case for the authenticity of the event. See John P. Meier, "The Debate on the Resurrection of the Dead : An Incident from the Ministry of the Historical Jesus?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 77

Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and put this question to him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, 'If someone's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother.'

Now there were seven brothers. The first married a woman and died, leaving no descendants. So the second married her and died, leaving no descendants, and the third likewise. And the seven left no descendants. Last of all the woman also died. At the resurrection (when they arise) whose wife will she be? For all seven had been married to her."

Jesus said to them, "Are you not misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God? When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, 'I am the God of Abraham, (the) God of Isaac, and (the) God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled."

In this passage Jesus is confronted by the Sadducees on the subject of Levirate marriage in an attempt to refute the idea of resurrection. Two aspects of this exchange should be noted. First, Jesus rejects the view of the Sadducees by asserting the reality of the resurrection in Mark 12:25. He teaches that the resurrection is ἐκ νεκρῶν. Equally important is the second part of Jesus' response in which he emphasizes the discontinuity between this life and the resurrected life. He states that in the resurrection even the basic relationship of marriage will not exist as we think of it now (Mark 12:25). Instead, we will be like the angels. Unfortunately, nowhere is it specified the way or ways the resurrected life can be said to be like that of angels.¹⁶³ Jesus is clearly attempting to

(2000): 3-24.

¹⁶³In the redaction that seems to have occurred in Luke's account, being like the angels is understood as meaning a deathless state. See Luke 20:36. See also Perkins, 74. Joseph Fitzmyer suggests that there is humor in Christ's appeal to angels, since the Sadducees also did not believe in angels. See Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel*

correct the ideas of some who believed that resurrection was simply a continuation of the temporal life.¹⁶⁴

As indicated above, the teaching of the New Testament about the nature of resurrection is informed by the teaching of Jesus and the accounts of Christ's own resurrection. This second source is less direct in that any information about the nature of bodily resurrection must be inferred from the text. Nevertheless, the accounts of Jesus' resurrection are fundamental to this study since the Christian hope for bodily resurrection is dependent on Christ having been raised. Moreover, it is generally believed that the resurrected body of Christ is the model *par excellence* for that of his followers.¹⁶⁵

As will become apparent, the resurrection appearances of Jesus indicate that the nature of the resurrected body will be both consistent with and dissimilar from the temporal body. Given the limitations of this study, it is impossible to consider each of the resurrection stories found in the gospels. Instead, Luke's account of the resurrection and resurrection appearances will be considered in that he provides evidence for understanding the resurrected body as being both consistent and inconsistent with temporal body.¹⁶⁶

according to Luke, Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1305.

¹⁶⁴It is unclear whether this correction was directed against the Sadducees or others in the audience, perhaps even the Sadducees' opponents.

¹⁶⁵For examples of this connection, see I Thes. 1:10; 4:14-16; I Cor. 15:20; 16:14; and 2 Cor. 4:14.

¹⁶⁶An additional reason for selecting Luke's account is the artistry with which the resurrection stories are recounted. See John Gillman, "The Emmaus Story in Luke-

The first and most obvious element of the resurrection accounts is the fact that the tomb was empty (Luke 24:3,12).¹⁶⁷ Hans-Joachim Eckstein has suggested that the fundamental question of the exegete in the resurrection stories is “Why is it so important for all the Gospel writers to record that the grave of the Risen One was *empty*? And why did not or could not the early Christians combine their faith in the continuous living and working of the crucified Lord with the concept that his dead body had decayed in the grave?”¹⁶⁸ The resurrection had to be bodily because as Raymond Brown has observed, “there was no other kind of resurrection.”¹⁶⁹

This means that the empty tomb and grave clothes integrally connects the temporal and resurrected bodies. Somehow, Christ’s resurrected body involves the corporeality of his earthly body. Taken out of context, this passage could even indicate the reanimation of Jesus’ unchanged temporal flesh, but the next pericope prohibits this interpretation.

Acts Revisited,” in *Resurrection in the New Testament*, ed. R. Bieringer, V. Koperski, and B. Lataire (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 179-185.

¹⁶⁷It should be noted that while it can be inferred, Mark’s account does not explicitly indicate that Jesus’ body was gone. See Mark 16:6-7. James M. Robinson has suggested that the lack of resurrection appearances in Mark’s gospel is “perhaps because those available were so luminous as to seem disembodied.” James M. Robinson, “Jesus: From Easter to Valentinus (or the Apostles’ Creed)” *JBL* 101 (1982): 10.

¹⁶⁸Hans-Joachim Eckstein, “Bodily Resurrection in Luke,” in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, ed. Ted Peters, Robert John Russell, and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 116.

¹⁶⁹Raymond Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), 70.

Immediately after Luke appears to identify the temporal body with the resurrected one, he includes an encounter between the risen Christ and two of his disciples which demonstrates the radical discontinuity between the temporal and resurrected bodies. In the story, we learn that while the disciples were speaking, “Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him” (24:15-16). The two likely explanations for this phenomenon are that Christ’s identity was miraculously hidden or that there was something about his resurrected body that was sufficiently different to cause his followers to not recognize him. The manner in which Luke records the encounter gives the impression that the disciples were kept from knowing his identity.¹⁷⁰ I. Howard Marshall has noted that “the lack of recognition is more due to a spiritual blindness by the disciples than to something unusual about the appearance of Jesus.”¹⁷¹ As if the unrecognizable character of Christ were not enough, Jesus disappears just as they are ready to eat (24:31).

The emphasis on the change from temporal to resurrected body continues in the next pericope. In Luke 24:36-49, Jesus appears in the midst of a gathering of his disciples.¹⁷² Something about Christ’s appearance leads them to conclude that they are

¹⁷⁰This passage should be considered alongside John 20:14 that indicates that Mary Magdalene also did not recognize Jesus. Mark explicitly claims that Jesus changed the form of his appearance (ἐν ἑτέρῃ μορφῇ) in 16:12, but this passage is not contained in the most reliable manuscripts.

¹⁷¹I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), 893.

¹⁷²John’s account expresses the unexpectedness of Jesus’ appearance by noting that the doors were locked when he appeared. See John 20:19.

seeing a ghost (Luke 24:37). Whatever is the case, Christ claims to have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), and his remedy to their fear is to invite them to see and touch his wounds (Luke 24:39-40). Like the empty tomb, Christ's display of his wounds affirms the continuity between the two bodies. He also eventually eats with them (Luke 24:41-43).¹⁷³ PHEME PERKINS comments on this passage that like Luke's account of the empty tomb, "his account of the resurrection appearance of Jesus is equally concerned with the demonstration that Jesus' resurrection is bodily and not an apparition."¹⁷⁴ In other words, this last pericope begins by emphasizing the radical discontinuity of Christ's resurrected body to that of temporal bodies by his sudden appearance in their midst and concludes by emphasizing the way in which it is the same body by the demonstration of the wounds, the invitation to touch, and the eating of fish.

From the various resurrection appearances, we can conclude that the afterlife existence exhibited by Jesus and anticipated by his followers involves some form of body. Christ's resurrected body has some similarities with the earthly body in that Jesus eats and is apparently able to be touched. It is equally true that the gospels give evidence of some significant differences, such as his unrecognizable body and his ability to appear and disappear at will.

Resurrection in the Pauline Letters

Resurrection in I Corinthians 15. There is little debate among biblical scholars

¹⁷³This is also asserted in Acts 1:4 and 10:41.

¹⁷⁴Perkins, 163.

that Paul is attempting to correct wrong thinking in the Corinthian church about resurrection, but is it possible to determine what their error was?¹⁷⁵ The answer seems to occur in verse 12 where Paul indicates that some people in the church were saying that there was no resurrection from the dead (I Cor. 15:12). Unfortunately, understanding that some did not believe in Paul's understanding of resurrection from the dead does not explain what was believed in its place. In an attempt to understand this situation better, it is necessary to look at this verse more closely.

To begin, there are two elements of Paul's use of ἐν ὑμῖν τινες in this verse which should be noted. First, through this phrase Paul is indicating that only some, probably a minority hold to the erroneous view of resurrection. Second, Paul writes, "some of you." At the beginning of this discussion, Paul calls the recipients his brothers (I Cor. 15:1). Here, he includes those in error in his audience. This likely means that he understands even those who are in error to be included in the household of faith. The question that some scholars have asked is, Given the centrality of resurrection in Paul's thought, could he have included anyone who denied the resurrection among the brothers of faith? It does not seem likely. As E. Earle Ellis has noted, Paul "regards the bodily resurrection of the dead as the *sine qua non* for a future life since without it Christ himself has not been raised."¹⁷⁶ So, if the problem is not an outright denial of

¹⁷⁵Hans Conzelman believes that Paul misunderstood the position of the Corinthian Christians, so he would argue that one cannot know what their error was from I Corinthians 15. Hans Conzelman, *I Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 261-263.

¹⁷⁶E. Earle Ellis, "Sōma in *First Corinthians*," *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 141-142.

resurrection, what other possible explanations does the text support?

Karl Plank has suggested that instead of denying any notion of resurrection, some in the Corinthian church had a belief in a realized and spiritualized resurrection. He writes,

The problem in Corinth is not the denial of the kerygma but its enthusiastic interpretation: the scandal of the crucified Messiah has been overcome by an uncontrolled exaltation christology. . . that understands redemption to have already been effected. The difficulty is not the failure of the Corinthians to believe in the resurrection, Christ's or their own, but the fact that they believed "too much"!¹⁷⁷

While a realized resurrection is not a denial of resurrection *per se*, it results in a denial of a future bodily resurrection, which Paul desires to address. Richard Longenecker agrees with Plank's position and finds evidence in the structure of the chapter. He writes,

Evidently some Christians at Corinth were claiming that a future, personal, corporeal resurrection of believers in Jesus was (1) *irrelevant* since the eschatological hope of the gospel was already fulfilled in a believer's present, spiritual experience; (2) *impossible*, since the corporeal in Greek religious thought was excluded from divine redemption . . . and (3) even *unnecessary*, since believers were thought to possess an already immortal soul.¹⁷⁸

Longenecker sees Paul arguing for the idea of a future bodily resurrection in verses 12-35, the manner of this resurrection in verses 35-49, and the necessity of it in verses 50-58.¹⁷⁹

In light of the fact that no serious interpretation has been offered to contradict the idea

¹⁷⁷Karl A. Plank, "Resurrection Theology: the Corinthian Controversy Reexamined," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 8 (1981):45.

¹⁷⁸Richard Longenecker, "Is There Development in Paul's Religious Thought?" in *Life in the Face of Death*, ed. Richard Longenecker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 186.

¹⁷⁹Longenecker, 186..

that Paul is arguing for a future resurrection of the body in 15:12-35, we will proceed to Paul's statements on the nature of the resurrected body, which is of particular relevance to this study.

In 15:35-38, Paul describes the nature of the resurrected body and its relationship to the earthly body through the use of a seed metaphor. He states,

But someone may say, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?" You fool! What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind; but God gives it a body as he chooses, and to each of the seeds its own body.

By employing this metaphor, Paul indicates that there is an implicit connection between the two bodies - one proceeds from the other. However, while a connection exists, the metaphor more directly affirms the significant differences between the two bodies as the plant is different from the seed from which it grows. The difference between the earthly and resurrected bodies is also emphasized by Paul in 15:42-44 where he resumes the seed metaphor. He writes, "It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one."

This brings up one of the central issues for understanding Paul's teaching on resurrection and about which there is little agreement: What does Paul mean by the term $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$?¹⁸⁰ Some have argued that Paul's use of $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ should be understood in a Semitic

¹⁸⁰Dale Martin's *The Corinthian Body* is an important study on the subject, but does not add substantially to the discussion of resurrection. His emphasis is on the ways in which the discussion of the body at Corinth was an indication of

way as referring to the unity which is a human person.¹⁸¹ Others have even suggested that “community” is a suitable equivalent.¹⁸² More recently, Robert Gundry has made a somewhat convincing case for understanding $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ as referring to the physical body.¹⁸³

As he states,

We conclude that in neither the Pauline epistles, nor the literature of the NT outside those epistles, nor the LXX, nor the extra-biblical ancient Greek literature does the definition “whole person” find convincing support. . . . Rather, apart from its use for a corpse, *sōma* refers to the physical body in its proper and intended union with the soul/spirit. The body and its counterpart are portrayed as united but distinct - and separable, though unnaturally and unwantedly separated. The *sōma* may *represent* the whole person simply because the *sōma* lives in union with the soul/spirit. But *sōma* does not mean “the whole person.”¹⁸⁴

A.J.M. Wedderburn seems to support this view when he writes, that for a Hellenistic audience, the concept of resurrection would have meant something physical and earthy.¹⁸⁵

In addressing the issue of corruption of the body, C. K. Barrett comments that

Paul does not mean that the body placed in the grave is in a process of physical decomposition, though this is a part of the truth and the clearest expression of it. *Corruption* is an evil power, by which the world is dominated in the old age

socioeconomic strife. Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

¹⁸¹Marie-Emile Boismard, *Our Victory over Death: Resurrection?* trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 36-37.

¹⁸²For a discussion of these views, see John A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM, 1952).

¹⁸³See Robert H. Gundry, *SOMA in Biblical Theology: with an emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

¹⁸⁴Gundry, *SOMA*, 79-80.

¹⁸⁵A.J. M. Wedderburn, “The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV,” *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981): 231.

(Rom. VII.21). It affects not only human life, but the whole of creation. Its domination will be ended in the age to come, at the beginning of which the resurrection takes place. Thus Paul's point is not simply that we shall have a new body, no longer subject to change and decay, but that the new body will be appropriate to the new age in which God, having reasserted his sovereignty, is *all in all*.¹⁸⁶

I believe that verse 50 is the most important verse of Scripture for this study. Paul writes, "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." As will become evident in the following chapters, there has been little agreement about the meaning of the phrase "flesh and blood" since the composition of I Corinthians 15:50. Among the interpretations that presently exist, PHEME PERKINS has noted that "'flesh and blood' is a Semitic expression for human being."¹⁸⁷ JOACHIM JEREMIAS has argued that "flesh and blood" refer to alive humans and "perishable" refers to decaying bodies with the result being that "neither the dead nor the living can take part in the Kingdom of God - as they are."¹⁸⁸ N. T. WRIGHT has offered a more traditional view when he writes, "'flesh and blood' is a way of referring to ordinary, corruptible, decaying human existence."¹⁸⁹ As we shall see, the question that the early Church Fathers endeavored to answer is, What did Paul mean by flesh and blood? We

¹⁸⁶C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 372.

¹⁸⁷Perkins, 306.

¹⁸⁸Joachim Jeremias, "Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God," *New Testament Studies* 2 (1956): 152.

¹⁸⁹Wright, 359.

shall return to this question later.¹⁹⁰

Romans 8. Resurrection can be found throughout the book of Romans, as N. T. Wright states, “squeeze this letter at any point and resurrection spills out.”¹⁹¹ It is not necessary, nor is it practical to examine each instance when the idea occurs in the book. Instead, I will focus on chapter eight because I believe it is most fruitful for this study.

I am convinced that chapter eight offers the most profound material on the resurrection in the entire letter. One of the first aspects of the section that I wish to note is Paul’s return to the theme of being “in the flesh.” In 8:8 we read, “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” While this shares a resemblance to I Corinthians 15:50, this passage does not suffer from the same ambiguity. Taken in context, it is clear that Paul is using the phrase “in the flesh” as a means of discussing being in a state of sin, for in 8:9 he states, “But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

The next verse that I wish to address is 8:11. Romans 8:11 reads, “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.” This verse is particularly noteworthy because Paul only speaks of the resurrection in the future

¹⁹⁰It is not possible nor necessary for our purposes here to resolve this debate. In fact, as I will propose later, the various interpretations of I Corinthians 15:50 is one way of distinguishing various notions of resurrection.

¹⁹¹Wright, 241.

tense.¹⁹² Romans 8:11 is also important because Paul promises that God through his Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies. Pheme Perkins interprets the phrase “will give life to your mortal bodies” as referring to God’s present activity of giving us life, which she understands as the basis for Christian ethics.¹⁹³ While I completely agree with the truthfulness of her statement, I disagree that this passage is ultimately about the present life. I believe that 8:11 is an uncomplicated affirmation that the resurrected body somehow involves the temporal body. If, as I suspect, Paul is referring to the eschatological redemption of bodies, then it would seem to be evidence against those who believe that Paul’s view of resurrection underwent considerable development during his lifetime.¹⁹⁴

Understanding this passage as a reference to resurrection seems to be supported by Paul’s return to the topic in 8:23. Paul teaches that “we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.”¹⁹⁵ This both offers hope to our bodies as well as placing that hope in the

¹⁹²This contrasts with chapter six where Paul’s language suggests the present possession of resurrection. This is particularly true of 6:13 where Paul employs the aorist παραστήσατε which gives the sense of having already been made alive. For a thorough summary of scholarship on the issue of the Christian’s present possession of resurrection see A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology Against its Graeco-Roman Background* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 37-69.

¹⁹³Perkins, 270.

¹⁹⁴For a history and analysis of the debate, see Longenecker, 171-202. See also Ben F. Meyer, “Did Paul’s View of the Resurrection of the Dead Undergo Development?,” *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 363-387.

¹⁹⁵Concerning this verse, Longenecker writes, “Certainly the cosmic eschatology of Rom 8:19-22 puts an end to any theory that Paul shifted from a collective eschatology in his earlier letters to a personal, individual eschatology in his later

future.¹⁹⁶

In this sampling of the teaching about resurrection from the New Testament, two aspects of the nature of the resurrected body have been noted. First, there is continuity between the temporal and resurrected bodies. Second, life in the resurrected body involves a radical change from that of the temporal. While evidence has been supplied demonstrating both, the second seems to be a more dominant theme.

Having examined the theological precursors to resurrection faith in the Jewish and Christian Scripture as well as various aspects of Alexandria before the arrival of Christianity, the final section will sketch the early history of Alexandrian Christianity, the Christianity that produced the texts that will constitute the focus of the rest of this dissertation.

The Origins of Egyptian Christianity

In order to fully appreciate Alexandrian Christianity, it is necessary to consider what is known or not known about its origin. In the words of Colin Roberts, “The obscurity that veils the early history of the Church in Egypt and that does not lift until the beginning of the third century constitutes a conspicuous challenge to the historian of primitive Christianity.”¹⁹⁷ The lack of substantive evidence has resulted in varying

letters.” Longenecker, 198.

¹⁹⁶Matthew Black, *Romans*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1973), 117.

¹⁹⁷Colin Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.

explanations being proposed about the Christian beginnings in Alexandria. Despite the diverse opinions about its origin, scholars agree that there was some form of Christianity in Egypt by the early second century.¹⁹⁸

The first theory to be considered here is that the earliest form of Christianity in Alexandria was Gnostic. This was proposed in 1934 by Walter Bauer in his book, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.¹⁹⁹ In it, Bauer argued that Christianity in its earliest form was much more diverse and geographically localized than portrayed by Eusebius. He writes, “perhaps certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as ‘heresies’ originally had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion - that is, for those regions they were simply ‘Christianity.’”²⁰⁰ In the book, Bauer marshals evidence to demonstrate that different geographical areas tended to produce different forms of Christianity.

¹⁹⁸In 1990, C. Wilfred Griggs published the preliminary findings of an archeological dig in Egypt from the 1980's. The group discovered a very particular change in burial practices before the end of the first century CE, which he hypothesized was an indication of the arrival of Christianity. C. Wilfred Griggs, “Excavating a Christian Cemetery Near Seila, in the Fayum Region of Egypt,” in *Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies*, ed. Wlodzimierz Godlewski (Varsovie: PWN - Éditions Scientifiques de Pologne, 1990), 145-150.

¹⁹⁹Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1934). All references will be to the English translation. See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Paul J. Achtemeier and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

²⁰⁰Bauer, xxii.

According to Bauer, the earliest form of Christianity in Egypt was Gnostic.²⁰¹ In support of his position, Bauer observed the peculiar silence from the Church Fathers concerning the Christian beginnings in Egypt. His supposition was that if there was something about the beginning of the Egyptian Church which would support orthodox Christianity, it would have been reported.²⁰²

The lack of an account favorable to proto-orthodox Christianity is not the only evidence which Bauer presents for his position. As Attila Jakab writes, “L’hypothèse de

²⁰¹Bauer, 53. There is admittedly some difficulties in using terms like “Gnostic” and “Gnosticism.” The most significant of these is the charge that the terms have been used to describe so many different ideas, movements, texts and people that they are unhelpful descriptors. Bentley Layton offers a helpful survey of the early use of the terms “Gnostic” and “*Gnostikos*” in his “Prolegomena to the Study of Ancient Gnosticism,” in *The Social World of the First Christians*, ed. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 334-350. For a summary of the debate that emerged in the last few decades see Kurt Rudolph, “‘Gnosis’ and ‘Gnosticism’ - the Problems of their Definitions and their Relation to the Writings of the New Testament,” in *The New Testament and Gnosis*, ed. A. H. B. Logan and A. J. M. Wedderburn (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983), 21-37.

Among the more recent attempts at addressing the issue are Michael Allen Williams in his *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and Karen L. King’s, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Williams states that the term, Gnostic, “has come to mean too much, and therefore perhaps very little.”(4) Similarly, his view of the term Gnosticism is that it obscures more than it enlightens (50). In place of Gnosticism, Williams suggests “biblical demiurgical tradition”(51). King both applauds and critiques William’s study (214). In spite of her conviction that the term “Gnosticism” should be abandoned, she uses it throughout her work. Therefore, while I am aware of the complexity of the terms, this study will employ the terms Gnostic and Gnosticism in the absence of acceptable alternatives. When used, it should be remembered that it is in reference to a complex system of loosely related beliefs not a unified heretical movement.

²⁰²Bauer, 45.

W. Bauer est fondée sur deux éléments majeurs - des textes . . . et des personnes.²⁰³ The texts are the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* and the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*.²⁰⁴ Bauer argues that these texts are likely representative of the two primary forms of Christianity in Egypt.²⁰⁵ The dominant form would eventually be called Gnostic and the minority one, orthodox or catholic.²⁰⁶ He also notes that the earliest known Alexandrian personalities who articulate some form of Christian teaching are individuals the Church eventually label as Gnostics. The most famous of these are Basilides and Valentinus.²⁰⁷ The connections between these teachers and Alexandria have been well established.²⁰⁸

²⁰³Jakab, 59.

²⁰⁴Unfortunately, these texts have not survived apart from a few references in the works of some Alexandrian fathers. See Bart Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15, 17.

²⁰⁵There are basically two aspects of his argument concerning these Gospel accounts. First, Bauer asserts that both texts are connected to Egypt, which he concludes from the fact that references to the texts are from Alexandrian Fathers. Not only do the references by Alexandrian Fathers suggest an Egyptian provenance, for Bauer this implies that the texts were considered authoritative. Second, the documents differ significantly from one another but both are called Gospels. Bauer, 50-53.

²⁰⁶Bauer, 53-55.

²⁰⁷Bauer, 48. While Bauer includes Carpocrates in his list of Alexandrian Christian Gnostics, I am following the work of Bentley Layton who does not believe that Carpocrates could be considered Gnostic in the classic sense. See Bentley Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 199.

²⁰⁸For a thorough treatment of the influence of Basilides and Valentinus on the origins of Egyptian Christianity, see Everett Procter, *Christian Controversy in Alexandria: Clement's Polemics Against Basilideans and Valentinians* (New York:

The present state of evidence supports Bauer's thesis about Egypt on two important points. First, apart from Eusebius' account there are no known "orthodox" bishops before the episcopacy of Demetrius (189-232).²⁰⁹ Second, there can be little doubt that there were early Christian Gnostics in Egypt and that they exerted influence on the emergence of Christianity there. The issue for this study is, To what extent were they representative of early Egyptian Christianity?

It does not now appear that Bauer's thesis holds for the origins of Christianity in Egypt. In the second half of the twentieth century several scholars began to raise serious objections to Bauer's thesis. Among the earliest is Henry Turner. In his book, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, Turner presented a thorough critique of Bauer's thesis and demonstrated several of the weaknesses in Bauer's argument.²¹⁰ Concerning the origins of Egyptian Christianity, Turner states, "Most of the new discoveries have the effect of moving what we know of Alexandrine Christianity further to the right. The probability that the Gospels according to the Hebrews and the Egyptians represent splinter groups on the fringe of the Church rather than the official Gospels of two halves of an equally

Peter Lang, 1995).

²⁰⁹Bauer, 44. While the absence of "orthodox" bishops is noteworthy, it does not establish "heterodox" Christianity in Egypt.

²¹⁰These include Bauer's habit of overstating the conclusions suggested by the evidence, his reliance on arguments from silence, and perhaps most importantly his narrow definition of orthodoxy. See H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church* (London: Mowbray, 1954), 46-58.

tainted orthodoxy is correspondingly strengthened.”²¹¹ While acknowledging the absence of testimony regarding early “orthodox” bishops in Egypt and the prominence of specific Gnostic teachers, Turner is not convinced that this is sufficient to conclude the primacy of Gnostic Christianity in Egypt. He states, “The further inferences drawn by Bauer seem to carry us beyond the limits which we can safely traverse.”²¹²

Among the more recent and interesting criticisms of Bauer’s position is that provided by James McCue. His position is that “the orthodox play a role in Valentinian thought such that they seem to be part of the Valentinian self-understanding.”²¹³ McCue believes that the way in which Valentinians used the books of the New Testament is best explained if one understands Valentinianism as arising within a context of second-century proto-orthodoxy. McCue raises another objection to Bauer based upon the self-understanding of the Valentinians. McCue questions whether or not a group like the Valentinians who seemed to understand themselves as the few against the many and who reveled in their exclusiveness could ever rise to be the majority form of Christianity that is required by Bauer’s thesis.

Four years after Turner’s book was released, Jean Daniélou published *Théologie du Judeo-Christianisme* wherein he presents the second view of the origins of Egyptian Christianity namely, that the earliest form of Christianity in Alexandria was Jewish, not

²¹¹Turner, *Pattern*, 57.

²¹²Turner, *Pattern*, 58.

²¹³James F. McCue, “Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979): 120.

Gnostic.²¹⁴ Daniélou does not follow Bauer, but he does not refute him either. He simply presents an alternative interpretation of the evidence. Daniélou posits that both the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* and *Gospel according to the Egyptians* display the effects of a Jewish Christian influence rather than Gnostic.²¹⁵ More specifically, Daniélou asserts that Christianity was likely brought to Egypt by Essene Christians.²¹⁶

Another important study on the subject of the origins of Egyptian Christianity has been offered by Colin Roberts. Based upon the surviving manuscripts, Roberts has also asserted the Jewish origins of Egyptian Christianity. Interestingly, he suggests that it is the Jewish nature of early Egyptian Christianity that may offer an explanation of the relative silence concerning the “orthodoxy” nature of early Egyptian Christianity. In order to appreciate his reasoning, it is necessary to be aware of the Kitos War, or the Second Jewish-Roman War.

According to historian Victor Tcherikover, “In the Roman period the Jewish population in Cyrene developed considerable strength, and at the end of the reign of the Emperor Trajan made its desperate attempt to rebel against Rome, a rebellion which brought destruction not only on the Jewish population of the county but also on the Jews

²¹⁴Jean Daniélou, *Théologie du judéo-christianisme* (Paris: Desclée, 1958). Unless otherwise noted, all references to this work will be from the English translation. See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker (London: Dartman, Longman, and Todd, 1964).

²¹⁵Daniélou, *Théologie*, 24-25. See also Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, *The First Six Hundred Years*, trans. Vincent Cronin (London : Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), 45-46.

²¹⁶Daniélou, *Théologie*, 52.

of Egypt and Cyprus.”²¹⁷ Similarly, Robert Wilken has commented on the Jews in Egypt that “the war of 115-117 destroyed Jewish social and cultural life.”²¹⁸

Colin Roberts has noted that during the first 150 years of Roman rule, there are nearly 300 documents that refer to the Jews, but from 117-337 there are only 44 known documents with references to the Jews.²¹⁹ Roberts concludes, “It is precisely when the evidence for Judaism grows scarce that that for Christianity begins to appear.”²²⁰ The significance for this study is that “For the first time Christians in Egypt were free of the legacy of their past; in the course of the war they may have been able to disassociate themselves from the Jews.”²²¹

Wilfred Griggs had suggested that the earliest stage of Egyptian Christianity “was founded on a more broadly-based literary tradition and a less defined ecclesiastical tradition than was the same religion in the region from Syria to Rome.”²²² He makes a

²¹⁷Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, trans. S. Applebaum (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), 291.

²¹⁸Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 40. While the effect on Egyptian Judaism was profound, it did not eradicate Judaism from Egypt. In the same study, Wilken later writes, “During the fourth and fifth centuries Judaism was still a force to be reckoned with in Alexandria. Though the destruction and devastation of the first two centuries had great and far-reaching consequences for Egyptian Jewry, the ravages of these centuries did not put an end to Judaism there.” Wilken, 53.

²¹⁹Roberts, 58.

²²⁰Roberts, 58.

²²¹Roberts, 58.

²²²C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), 34.

convincing case that later, around the end of the second century, a more stringently defined version of Christianity arrived in Egypt.²²³ Griggs observes that “no argument can be presented and defended which shows that doctrinal or ecclesiastical unity in the Christian church definitely was of great concern in the first and early second century Egypt. This argument is usually assumed, but its presence in Egypt cannot be established earlier than Irenaeus.”²²⁴ It has been noted previously that the end of second century brings the episcopacy of Demetrius, who is the first known “orthodox” bishop in Egypt. Griggs further indicates,

the time span from Demetrius to Dionysius in Egyptian Christianity can be characterized as the period when Alexandria begins to emerge as an important center of the church in the Mediterranean world and when the Alexandrian bishop acquired an authoritative position equaling and sometimes rivaling that of other bishops in the major cities such as Rome, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The primary reason for this development occurring in Alexandria . . . was the imposition into Egypt of an ecclesiastical and doctrinally well-defined Christianity . . . near the end of the second century.²²⁵

The third century proved to be difficult for Egyptian Christianity. Prior to the third century, most of what is known of Egyptian Christianity comes from Alexandria, but beginning around the third century there is increasing evidence about local versions of

²²³Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 34.

²²⁴Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 46.

²²⁵Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 79. While “orthodoxy” triumphed in Alexandria in the late second and early third century, the church was continuing to evolve. Attila Jakab has identified three stages of ecclesiastical development in this time. The first is a period of tension “marquée essentiellement par Clément.” The second is a period of transition which corresponds to Origen’s life, and the third is a period of consolidation which “commence avec le départ d’Origène d’Alexandrie.” Jakab, 96.

Egyptian Christianity.²²⁶ Griggs notes, “it is clear that much of Egypt for a long time continued to have a sizable portion of its Christian population following what later came to be defined as heretical doctrines and practices.”²²⁷ Later he states, “as the Alexandrian church became more aligned with Catholicism, much of the native population would appear to be increasingly heretical in religious matters.”²²⁸ The result of these trends in third century Egypt is that as the prestige and authority of the Egyptian bishops increased so did the potential for conflict.²²⁹

This survey of the origins of Egyptian Christianity has identified numerous varieties of Christianity observable in Egypt. It has also demonstrated how the work of scholars like Turner, Daniélou, and McCue has led to the widely-accepted opinion that Bauer was wrong about the Christian origins of Egypt and that the origins of Egyptian Christianity lies with Palestinian Judaism rather than Gnosticism.²³⁰ While I believe

²²⁶Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 79.

²²⁷Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 83.

²²⁸Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 83-84.

²²⁹Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 106.

²³⁰Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 106. This position has been also argued by Birger Pearson. See Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 202. As Alain Le Boulluec states, “En ce qui concerne les débuts du christianisme en Égypte, des objections très fortes ont été faites à la thèse de Bauer, pour qui les premières communautés chrétiennes en Égypte auraient été gnostiques.” See Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles* (Paris : Etudes augustiniennes, 1985), 15, n. 5. Likewise Attila Jakab concludes, “L’idée selon laquelle Alexandrie aurait reçu le christianisme de Palestine . . . est généralement acceptée par les auteurs modernes.” See Jakab, 49.

Bauer to be wrong in his final conclusion about Egyptian Christianity, it is undeniable that significant diversity existed in Egypt. Bart Ehrman writes that in light of these discoveries we must conclude that “If anything, early Christianity was even less tidy and more diversified than he realized. . . . It is widely thought today that proto-orthodoxy was *simply one of many* [emphasis mine] competing interpretations of Christianity in the early church.”²³¹

Ehrman seems to be operating with Bauer’s narrow definition of orthodoxy. As a result, this statement exemplifies one of the difficulties that arises with an overemphasis on the diversity of early Christianity: the neglect or denial of a core or center to Christianity. I do not think that such a position is supported by history, however. From the Church’s earliest years there are indications of nonnegotiable aspects of the faith.²³² In contrast to this interpretation, I believe a more adequate understanding of proto-orthodoxy acknowledges that there was both an observable variety within early Christianity and that there was some core to the faith. This is expressed in the words of Robert Wilken when he writes, “What is required is to discover ways of talking about Christian identity which are sensitive to the complexity of early Christianity, yet

²³¹Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 176.

²³²An example of this has already been noted in I Corinthians 15. Despite the scholarly debate about how this passage should be understood, it is clear that for Paul resurrection was a *sine qua non*. The centrality of resurrection to Christianity has also been explored and substantiated quite convincingly by Claudia Setzer. See Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004). In the book she explores the role of the doctrine of bodily resurrection in the formation and preservation of Jewish and Christian self-identity.

recognize the continuity within early Christian life and the sense of a center among early Christians.”²³³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have endeavored to provide a foundation for the retrieval of early Christian faith in bodily resurrection from Alexandria. First, the various social and religious dimensions of pre-Christian Alexandria were considered. Afterward, the biblical evidence for resurrection faith was surveyed. Throughout this process it has become clear that there were numerous ways of expressing hope for an afterlife and some of them included the physical body.²³⁴ Even within the canon of Christian Scripture a variety of expressions has been observed.²³⁵ Lastly, we have explored the origins of Alexandrian Christianity. As will become evident in the next chapter, regardless of exactly how and when Christianity arrived in Egypt, it included some notion of resurrection.

In his book *Our Victory over Death: Resurrection?*, Marie-Émile Boismard has offered a helpful summary of the biblical teaching on the afterlife which will also be

²³³Robert L. Wilken, “Diversity and Unity in Early Christianity,” *Second Century* 1 (1981): 106-107.

²³⁴As Claudia Setzer writes, “Between the two poles of resurrection of the body and immortality of the soul is a range of ideas of the afterlife, many of them not fully articulated.” Setzer, 2.

²³⁵While this diversity is important to note, it should not be over-emphasized. The fact remains that *ἀθανασία* is only used by *Wisdom* in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament. Marrow, 572-573.

useful in distinguishing the various interpretations expressed in chapters two and three. He suggests that the central theme of the Bible on the afterlife is final victory over death.²³⁶ He then identifies four different ways through which the Bible expresses this belief. The first involves a monistic anthropology that has been noted previously. In this view,

At death, human beings in their entirety go down to Sheol, where they become unsubstantial shades, practically lifeless, waiting for the day when God will raise the righteous (and them only) by giving back to them the physical elements necessary to their psychic life and at the same time the vital breath.²³⁷

The second view is akin to traditional Greek dualism. Accordingly, when someone dies his/her body decomposes but the soul goes to Sheol, where it awaits God's judgment. At that time, the unrighteous souls will remain in Sheol while the righteous are united with God.²³⁸ Those in Boismard's third category understand that at death the soul is separated from the body and returns to Christ where it receives a new, glorified body. The fourth view asserts that at death the soul goes to either heaven or hell where it awaits the resurrection of the body which is preceded by the return of Christ.²³⁹

Boismard indicates that the first and fourth categories are expressions of belief in resurrection while the second and third are expressions of belief in the immortality of the

²³⁶Boismard, viii.

²³⁷Boismard, 133.

²³⁸Boismard, 133-134.

²³⁹Boismard, 134. Boismard has little affection for the last view. This is primarily due to his conviction that the evidence suggests that the dominant anthropology of the Bible is monistic.

soul. Some scholars include the notion of receiving a new body as a form of resurrection.²⁴⁰ For this study, the belief that the soul, separated from the body by death, returns to Christ and receives a new, glorified body will be considered a belief in resurrection.

There are two questions that enable one to distinguish between Boismard's categories. The first is, Does the text in question articulate some sense of embodiment as the final state of a person? If it does not, Boismard would argue that it is category two and cannot be understood as belief in resurrection.²⁴¹ The second question helps to distinguish between the remaining three categories. It is, How does the text handle the issue of continuity and discontinuity? By continuity and discontinuity, I am referring to the various ways that life in the resurrected body is understood to be similar to and dissimilar from temporal existence. This is important because in most discussions of belief in the afterlife, the afterlife is understood as either a continuation of this life, a radical break from this life, or some mixture of the two. While nearly all texts have some degree of both, most tend to emphasize either continuity or discontinuity. Both Boismard's categories and the means of distinguishing between them will be helpful in

²⁴⁰While not addressing Boismard's taxonomy, Gisbert Greshake has proposed the idea of a "resurrection in death." His idea is very similar to Boismard's third category, but where Boismard refers to the idea as a form of immortality, Greshake calls it resurrection. Gisbert Greshake, "Tod und Auferstehung: Alte Probleme neu überdacht," *Bibel und Kirche* 32 (1977): 1-11.

²⁴¹This is particularly true given the fact that resurrection had historically included some final form of embodiment and for Greeks it meant something physical. See A.J. M. Wedderburn, "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV" *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981).

the following chapters.

The next chapter begins the examination of the earliest primary texts that inform our understanding of early Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection. While not all of the texts that will be studied are now considered orthodox, it is important to keep in mind that the orthodoxy of a text is not germane to this study. Instead, the following seeks to determine what was meant by the various affirmations of resurrection observable in Ante-Nicene Alexandrian Christianity.

CHAPTER 2
RESURRECTION FAITH IN EARLY ANONYMOUS
ALEXANDRIAN TEXTS

There are several texts that illuminate the Alexandrian understanding of bodily resurrection. The first to be studied here are texts of unknown authorship that are associated with Alexandria and enjoy some scholarly agreement regarding an early date of composition. They are the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and the *Gospel of Thomas*. Afterward, two additional texts are examined, the *Epistle to Rheginos* and the *Gospel of Philip*.²⁴² Scholars are less certain about the dates of their composition, but it is generally agreed that they were composed between the middle of the second century and the middle of the third century.²⁴³

²⁴²There are other texts that could be considered because of a connection to the subject of resurrection and Egyptian Christianity. They are being excluded because either their dates of composition or their connection to Egyptian Christianity is questioned by scholars. Among these are Pseudo-Athenagoras' *De Resurrectione* and the creed found in the Der-Balizeh papyri. Regarding the *De Resurrectione*, Bernard Pouderon is one of the few scholars who continue to attribute the text to Athenagoras. The Der-Balizeh creed is most commonly believed to be from around the late fourth or early fifth century.

²⁴³The manuscripts of the Nag Hammadi texts studied in this chapter are dated to 350CE. The autographs must be earlier as scholars agree that they existed in Greek before their translation into Coptic.

The Epistle of Barnabas ²⁴⁴

The first text to be examined is the *Epistle of Barnabas*. *Barnabas* is an interesting text in that it exhibits an impressive awareness of Judaism, while also being one of the more anti-Jewish documents of the early Church. Before examining the text of *Barnabas*, there are some preliminary elements that deserve consideration such as the date and provenance.²⁴⁵

Scholars agree that *Barnabas* must have been composed sometime between 70 and 150CE.²⁴⁶ One of the clues in dating the text is the fact that the first Christian reference to *Barnabas* is by Clement of Alexandria. He is also the first to attribute the text to the apostle Barnabas.²⁴⁷ As is often the case with ancient texts, establishing a date of composition for *Barnabas* requires drawing conclusions from clues within the text.

²⁴⁴References to the Greek text of *Barnabas* are from Pierre Prigent and Robert A. Kraft, *Épître de Barnabé* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971). Unless otherwise noted, the English translation of *Barnabas* that is being utilized here is that of Robert Kraft. See Robert M. Grant, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol. 3, *Barnabas and the Didache* by Robert A. Kraft (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1965), which hereafter is cited as Kraft, *Barnabas*. See also James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1994), cited hereafter as Paget, *Barnabas*, and Ferdinand R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

²⁴⁵The authorship of the text is not an issue for this study. The letter is anonymous. The only way that the identity of the author is remotely relevant to this study is the fact that the authority granted this text by the early church is undoubtedly based upon the belief of its apostolic authorship.

²⁴⁶*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Barnabas, Epistle of.”

²⁴⁷Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* II..ii.6.31.

For example, the text mentions the destruction of the Temple and expresses concern over its rebuilding (16:4). This establishes the earliest date for the composition sometime after the Temple's destruction. Some scholars have suggested a date between 132 and 135 CE.²⁴⁸ James Paget has argued that the latest possible date is around 130 CE, citing the absence of any reference to a second Jewish revolt in a letter that is otherwise anti-Jewish.²⁴⁹ More specifically, Paget believes that the evidence suggests that *Barnabas* was written around the middle 90s CE.²⁵⁰

There is some variety in thought about the provenance of *Barnabas*, but the majority opinion is that the text was composed in or around Alexandria.²⁵¹ The evidence for this includes Barnabas' use of allegorical interpretation, the similarities with the work

²⁴⁸Everett Ferguson, "Barnabas, Epistle of," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed.

²⁴⁹Paget, *Barnabas*, 9.

²⁵⁰James Carleton Paget, "Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas," *Novum Testamentum* 38 (October 1996): 364, hereafter cited as Paget, "Paul and Barnabas." Paget understands the letter to be "a response to a crisis of confidence in the Alexandrian Christian community. This crisis of confidence was brought about by a conviction, then present amongst the Jews of Alexandria, that the Emperor Nerva's perceived pro-Jewish attitude would bring about a rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem." Paget, "Paul and Barnabas," 364. In light of the fact that Nerva died around 98, Paget believes that the text was written before the second century CE. This date has also been suggested by other scholars. See Peter Richardson and Martin Shukster, "Barnabas, Nerva, and the Yavnean Rabbis," *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1983): 31-55.

²⁵¹Among the most prominent scholars who disagree is Pierre Prigent, who believes that the document may come from the Syria-Palestine region. He bases this belief on Barnabas' knowledge of Rabbinic literature. See Prigent, 18 and Everett Ferguson, "Barnabas, Epistle of," in *EEC*.

of Philo, and the inclusion of the entire text of *Barnabas* in the Codex Sinaiticus.²⁵² None of these establishes an Alexandrian provenance with absolute certainty, but the weight of their significance increases when considered together. Robert Kraft makes a similar observation in his commentary when he notes that the parallels between *Barnabas* and the texts of Clement of Alexandria suggest that they emerge from the same Christian tradition.²⁵³ This means that *Barnabas* is an appropriate text for this study, since even in the unlikely event that it was composed somewhere other than Egypt, it is indisputable that it was known in Alexandria.²⁵⁴ This is deduced from the fact that the vast majority of references to *Barnabas* come from people generally associated with Alexandria.

Not only was *Barnabas* referenced by the Alexandrian fathers, it was given considerable authority. In fact, there is evidence that suggests that Clement of Alexandria and Origen may have regarded *Barnabas* as canonical.²⁵⁵ As mentioned above, the authoritative status bestowed on *Barnabas* is further confirmed by its inclusion in the Codex Sinaiticus from the fourth century. It is now appropriate to examine the text for its relevance to Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection.

The first explicit reference to the notion of resurrection is found in *Barnabas* 5. Before examining the passage itself, there are a few comments about its context that

²⁵²Paget, *Barnabas*, 30-31.

²⁵³Kraft, *Barnabas*, 46.

²⁵⁴For the most recent thorough treatment of the provenance of *Barnabas*, see Prostmeier, 119-130.

²⁵⁵The term “canonical” is somewhat anachronistic but best conveys the point. See Paget, *Barnabas*, 249-253; Kraft, *Barnabas*, 40-41.

should be made. First, one of the major themes of chapters 5-7 of *Barnabas* is “the Lord’s presence *in the flesh*.”²⁵⁶ In addition, the immediate context of this passage is a dialogue which is trying to reconcile the Lord’s humiliation with his exalted nature.²⁵⁷ The way in which *Barnabas* addresses this issue creates a strong connection between Christ’s incarnation and his resurrection. This will be explored further in what follows.

Barnabas 5:6 states, “He submitted so that he might break the power of Death and demonstrate the resurrection from the dead (τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστασίην) thus it was necessary for him to be manifested in flesh (ἐν σαρκί).” While the fact that Christ’s destruction of death is related to this study, the real significance lies in the second half of this verse. Christ was raised to point to the future resurrection. The way in which Christ’s resurrection is discussed here suggests that it was an “object-lesson” of sorts, but does the resurrection of Christ only reveal (δείκνυμι) the fact that there will be a resurrection, or does it also reveal something about the nature of the resurrection? The text seems to be only addressing the truth of resurrection, but some inferences can be made concerning the nature of the resurrected life. For example, it is significant that *Barnabas* notes this demonstration of resurrection as one of the reasons that necessitated Christ’s manifestation “ἐν σαρκί.”²⁵⁸ The unspoken implication is that Christ’s temporal

²⁵⁶Kraft, *Barnabas*, 93.

²⁵⁷Kraft, 94. Kraft believes that the dialogue format of this passage indicates that this issue was a cause for dispute in the Barnabas community.

²⁵⁸*Barnabas* further emphasizes resurrection with his use of ὑπομείνανταεν. See Prostmeier, 245.

flesh was related somehow to his resurrected body.²⁵⁹

The author continues the subject of resurrection in 5:7. We read, “Also (he submitted) so that he might fulfill the promise to the fathers and, while he was preparing the new people for himself and while he was still on earth, to prove that after he has brought about the resurrection he will judge.” Two points should be understood. First, Christ is said to be the cause of the resurrection. Second, Barnabas connects the judgment to the resurrection by indicating that the resurrection occurs first. PHEME Perkins states that *Barnabas* “makes resurrection ‘in the body’ a means for judgment.”²⁶⁰

Chapter 21 is also devoted to the subject of the coming judgment. Like the reference in 5:7, the resurrection of the dead is connected to judgment, but unlike the preceding occurrence, where the issue seems to be one of chronological order, in this instance there is a more substantial connection between the two. In 21:1 we read “It is well, therefore, after learning the written ordinances of the Lord above to live by them. For the man who does so will be glorified in the kingdom of God; the one that chooses their opposites will perish with his works. This is the reason for resurrection, this is the reason for recompense.” In other words, it is the fact that God will judge that makes resurrection necessary. Katharina Schneider indicates that this is significant in that *Barnabas*’ association of resurrection with the final judgment is a sign of development in

²⁵⁹As Horacio Lona writes, “Daß auch seine Auferstehung auf diese ‘fleischliche’ Realität bezogen sein muß, bleibt jedoch unausgesprochen.” Lona, 48.

²⁶⁰Perkins, 336.

patristic thought on resurrection. In this view the resurrection is simply a precursor to the final judgment and conveys no value itself.²⁶¹ In other words, the resurrection is not a reward for the righteous, but it is a prerequisite for the *Endgericht*. As Ton van Eijk observes, “Parce que le jugement présuppose la résurrection, il s’ensuit que la résurrection est une résurrection de tous, et non seulement des chrétiens.”²⁶²

While this is the extent of the overt references to resurrection, there are several additional passages to observe in order to fully appreciate *Barnabas*’ teaching on the resurrection. The first passage with relevance to the topic of resurrection is 6:9, where we read, “And learn what knowledge says. Hope, it says, in Jesus, who is to be manifested to you in flesh.” The text states that Christ will soon appear “ἐν σαρκὶ.” There can be little doubt that this is a reference to Christ’s parousia and not his incarnation, since the context of this passage is an exposition of the eschatological new creation.²⁶³ Later in 6:13 *Barnabas* states, “Again, I will show you how he says to us that he made a second fashioning in the last times. And the Lord says: Behold, I make the last things like the first.” This indicates the continuity between the first and second creations.

The eschatology presented in *Barnabas* 15 introduces a second issue with implications for bodily resurrection. The issue is millennialism or chiliasm. Early millennialists believed the coming thousand-year kingdom of Christ to be a material

²⁶¹Katharina Schneider, *Studien zur Entfaltung der altkirchlichen Theologie der Auferstehung* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1999), 106.

²⁶²Ton H. C. van Eijk, *La Résurrection des Morts chez les Pères Apostoliques* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 34.

²⁶³Kraft, *Barnabas*, 98.

kingdom, which means that they believed in material resurrection of the flesh.²⁶⁴ The prevailing opinion among scholars is that *Barnabas* is not a chiliastic text,²⁶⁵ but there can be little doubt that the author of *Barnabas* at least employed chiliastic terminology.²⁶⁶ While I believe that there are enough indications of millennial thought in *Barnabas* to support a material view of the resurrected body, it is possible to draw conclusions about *Barnabas*' view of resurrection without considering the chiliastic material.

Regardless of whether Barnabas was a chiliast or not, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is clearly positive about an embodied final state. This is demonstrated by the references to Christ's resurrection and return as being "ἐν σαρκὶ" (5:6 and 6:9, respectively).²⁶⁷ His notion of bodily resurrection was also intimately connected with the final judgment. In light of the evidence in *Barnabas*, we may safely conclude that *Barnabas* not only articulates a belief in an embodied afterlife, it understands the resurrected body to have a

²⁶⁴It is important to note that millennialism is not necessary for belief in bodily resurrection. In this way, millennialism is a secondary issue. However, the issue of millennialism is relevant to this study because, if demonstrable, it indicates a particular understanding of bodily resurrection.

²⁶⁵This position is held by scholars like Robert Kraft and Pierre Prigent. It has been supported recently by Charles Hill who declines to address *Barnabas* as a millennial text in his important work on patristic millennial thought. See Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Co., 2001), 77.

²⁶⁶For the case in favor of understanding *Barnabas* as a millennarian text, see Angelo O'Hagan, *Material Re-creation in the Apostolic Fathers* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968). The connection between resurrection belief and millennial thought in *Barnabas* is also noted by Katharina Schneider, as she includes *Barnabas* 15:5 as one of the passages which discusses resurrection. See Schneider, 98-99.

²⁶⁷Horacio Lona also observes 7.9 as implying the fleshly quality of the resurrected life. See Lona, 48.

high degree of continuity with the present temporal body, perhaps even its materiality.

The Apocalypse of Peter ²⁶⁸

Another important text for understanding resurrection faith in early Alexandria is the *Apocalypse of Peter*.²⁶⁹ *Apoc. Petri* is an interesting text, which is thought to have been composed in the first half of the second century and which offers its readers a vivid tour of heaven and hell. It is preserved in two forms. One is the Akhmim text, discovered around 1886 in a cemetery near Akhmim. The text in Greek is believed to have been copied in the 8th or 9th century.²⁷⁰ The second is an Ethiopic translation. The Ethiopic version has been known since 1910 and was identified in 1911.²⁷¹ At present, scholars agree that the Ethiopic version of *Apoc. Petri* is a generally reliable preservation

²⁶⁸References to the Greek text (Akhmim text) of *Apoc. Petri* will be from Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragmente mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004). References to the Ethiopic text will be from the English translation of C. Detlef G. Müller's work. See *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), II: 625-635.

²⁶⁹It is important that this text is not confused with the *Apocalypse of Peter* that is found in codex VII of the Nag Hammadi library. As Andreas Werner writes of the Nag Hammadi version, "In all probability the Coptic gnostic Apocalypse of Peter has only its title in common with the Apocalypse of Peter preserved . . . in an Ethiopic translation." Andreas Werner, introduction to "The Coptic Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, II: 701.

²⁷⁰Müller, 621.

²⁷¹Müller, 621.

of the original text.²⁷²

Apoc. Petri is a significant text for understanding early Alexandrian Christianity for several reasons. First, it is clear that *Apoc. Petri* was a very popular text as early as the second century.²⁷³ This is evidenced by the fact that some in the early Church, including Clement of Alexandria, considered it as canonical.²⁷⁴ Likewise, while it is undeniable from the evidence that *Apoc. Petri* was known in Egypt, there are some indications that suggest that *Apoc. Petri* may have been composed in Egypt.²⁷⁵

Apoc. Petri is the account of an experience the apostle has with the risen Christ.

²⁷²There are elements of the Ethiopic version that are believed to be later additions, but the text is still considered trustworthy. The argument for the primacy of the Ethiopic text is offered by Dennis Buchholz in his *Your Eyes Will Be Opened: A Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 80-82.

²⁷³Buchholz, *Apocalypse*, 20.

²⁷⁴Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* VI.14.1. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Eusebius' *Hist. eccl.* will be from the Loeb Classical Library edition. As was noted with *Barnabas*, while the notion of canonical text is anachronistic, the term best conveys the reverence given the text. For more details on the canonical status of *Apoc. Petri*, see Kraus and Nicklaus, 87-92.

²⁷⁵The central argument for an Egyptian provenance is 10:5 where among those who are in hell are the makers of idols. The list of idols includes animals normally associated with ancient Egyptian mythology, with cats being the first animal mentioned. There is also other evidence to consider. Among contemporary scholars who are convinced of an Egyptian provenance, Jan Bremmer cites various Orphic elements in the text. See Jan Bremmer, "The *Apocalypse of Peter*: Greek or Jewish?," in *The Apocalypse of Peter*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Istvan Czachesz (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 8. Even Richard Bauckham, who believes that *Apoc. Petri* should be understood as a product of a Palestinian-Jewish form of Christianity, acknowledges the possibility of Egyptian provenance. See Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead : Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 185-186.

In it, Peter is given a tour of heaven and hell. Christ shows him “in his right hand the souls of all (men) and on the palm of his right hand the image of that which shall be fulfilled at the last day; and how the righteous and the sinners shall be separated and how those will do who are upright in heart, and the evil-doers will be rooted out for all eternity” (3). The next section describes what will happen on the day of judgment. Peter describes that “all the children of men from the east unto the west shall be gathered before my Father who ever liveth, and will command hell to open its bars of steel and to give up all that is in it. And the beasts and fowls shall he command to give back all flesh that they devoured, since he desires that men should appear (again); for nothing perishes for God, and as all things came to pass when he created the world and commanded all that is there” (4). Concerning this passage, Richard Bauckham writes that it is “not meant to explain how the corpses of those consumed by animals could be restored in resurrection,” rather it is a “means of asserting that they will be.”²⁷⁶

Sections 5 through 11 of the text describe the tortures of hell. A few examples will serve to illustrate the various types of punishment and how they relate to a person’s sins. The tortures that are described are graphic and clearly involve one’s body. For example, people who had deceived others will have their lips cut off and fire poured into their mouths. Likewise, slanderers chew their tongues continually and have red hot irons put into their eyes (9).²⁷⁷ The significance of these images is that by expressing the role

²⁷⁶Bauckham, 288.

²⁷⁷For a more detailed treatment of the various tortures, see Istvan Czachesz, “The Grotesque Body in the *Apocalypse of Peter*,” in *The Apocalypse of Peter* ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Istvan Czachesz (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 109-126.

of the body in the experience of judgment, the text assumes a profoundly corporeal understanding of the nature of afterlife existence. This is also exhibited in the concluding sections of *Apoc. Petri*.

At the end of the document, Peter includes what could be called an alternate account of the Transfiguration.²⁷⁸ As in the record in the canonical gospels, Peter sees a glorified Jesus, Moses, and Elijah and offers to make them tabernacles. Likewise, in each account there is a voice from heaven. The major difference between the two versions is that instead of continuing his earthly ministry as Jesus does in the accounts in the Synoptic gospels, Peter states, “And there came a great and *exceeding white cloud* over our heads and *bore away the Lord*”(17). This is the context for what is perhaps the most definitive statement in *Apoc. Petri* on the nature of the resurrected life. Peter states, “we looked up and the heavens opened and we saw men in the flesh, and they came and greeted our Lord” (17).²⁷⁹

The Akhmim text has an even more vivid description. Verse 5-7 of the Akhmim text states,

And we, the twelve disciples, went with him and entreated him to show to us one of our righteous brethren who had departed from the world that we might see in

²⁷⁸*Apoc. Petri* 16-17 cf. Matthew 17:1-11; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36.

²⁷⁹This is one of the interesting variations between the Ethiopic and Greek texts. The Ethiopic text has the account of the Transfiguration at the end of the document. In what we have of the Greek version, it occurs towards the beginning. Furthermore, the Ethiopic version describes the appearance of the two men as indistinguishable from other people. In fact, it is translated into English as *in the flesh*. In the Greek text, the two men are described as being radically dissimilar from regular humans. Their bodies are such a beautiful combination of shining white and red (λευκότερα and ἑρυθρότερα) that it is impossible (οὐ δύναμαι) to describe.

what form they are, and taking courage might encourage the men who should hear us. And when we prayed, suddenly there appeared *two men*, standing before the Lord, on whom we were not able to look. For there went forth from their countenance a ray as of the sun, and their raiment was shining, such as the eye of man never saw.

In this version, no identification of the two men is supplied other than that they are the answer to the disciples' request (12-13). Instead of an account of the tabernacles, there is an extended description of the glory of heaven (15-20).

There can be little doubt that *Apoc. Petri*, like *Barnabas*, expects some form of bodily existence in the afterlife. For both texts, a body is necessary in order for God to judge between the good and the wicked. Consequently, both *Barnabas* and *Apoc. Petri* indicate that all, not only the righteous will arise. Likewise, both texts express an understanding of the afterlife body that includes a significant degree of continuity with the temporal life. While these texts share some important perspectives on the afterlife, there are also some significant differences.

The central difference is the role each text ascribes to Christ. In *Barnabas*, the author repeatedly ties the Christian hope for resurrection to the resurrection of Christ. This connection may be implied in *Apoc. Petri* but is never articulated. On the contrary, apart from serving as Peter's guide on his tour of the afterlife and being the main character in Peter's version of the Transfiguration, Christ has very little to do with either the resurrection or the judgment of humanity.

The Gospel of Thomas²⁸⁰

The next text to be examined is the *Gospel of Thomas*. There is little agreement regarding when *Thomas* was written. Some scholars have suggested a date as early as 60 CE while others believe it to be as late as the beginning of the third century.²⁸¹ I have placed it at this point in this study because it is widely thought to have reached a final form between 120 and 140 CE.²⁸² It also provides a bridge to the discussion of the Christian-Gnostic texts that follow.²⁸³

Most scholars agree that the text probably originated around Edessa and is the product of Syriac Christianity.²⁸⁴ Despite the great likelihood of its non-Egyptian provenance, there are at least two ways by which we know the text was present in Egypt.

²⁸⁰References to the *Gospel of Thomas* are from *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), I: 117-129. See also Jacques Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1975) and Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Routledge, 1997) as well as April D. DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth* (London: T & T Clark, 2005). For the Greek text of the Rainer fragment, see M. R. James, "The Rainer Fragment of the Apocalypse of Peter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1931): 270-279.

²⁸¹Valantasis, 12.

²⁸²For the argument for dating it to 120, see DeConick, 240. For the 140 date see Gilles Quispel, "The *Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," in *Colloque International sur les Textes de Nag Hammadi*, ed. Bernard Barc (Quebec: les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1981), 222.

²⁸³For a discussion of these issues see Antti Marjanen, "Is *Thomas* a Gnostic gospel?" in *Thomas at the Crossroads*, ed. Risto Uro (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 107-139.

²⁸⁴Quispel, 222. It is worth noting that Quispel is emphatic about an Edessan provenance.

First, ancient Greek fragments of the text were discovered at Oxyrhynchus in the early 1900's.²⁸⁵ These fragments are believed to be from around 200 CE.²⁸⁶ They were not identified until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices in 1945, which included a complete Coptic translation of the text.²⁸⁷ Thus, two of the earliest extant transmissions of *Thomas* are from Egypt before the fifth century.

Unlike the canonical gospels, *Thomas* does not teach any concept that could be understood as a hope for a future resurrection. In logion 21 Jesus' disciples are described as "little children who have settled in a field which does not belong to them. When the owners of the field come, they will say: Leave us our field. They are naked before them, in order to leave it to them and give them (back) their field." It is widely accepted that Jesus is referring to the deaths of his followers as their undressing. By this undressing, his followers give back what was not really theirs. The association of death with disrobing is repeated in logion 37. It states, "His disciples said: On what day will you be revealed to us, and on what day shall we see you? Jesus said: When you unclothe yourself and are not ashamed, and take your garments and lay them beneath your feet." Jacques Ménéard perceives the association of death with disrobing when he interprets this passage as meaning that death is "la délivrance de l'âme emprisonnée dans le corps."²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵Helmut Koester, Introduction to the *Gospel of Thomas* in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 124.

²⁸⁶Valantasis, 13.

²⁸⁷Koester, 124.

²⁸⁸Ménéard, 112-113.

Thomas is discussed here because it is an early Christian text, which is known to have existed in Egypt and which articulates a faith that some have seen as being in opposition to the general understanding of the teaching of the canonical Scripture. As Gregory Riley writes, “The *Gospel of Thomas* declares that the body will not be raised.”²⁸⁹ Furthermore, Riley argues that the gospel of John was composed for the express purpose of combating the form of Christianity of the Thomas sect because of its notion that the soul could survive the grave in an impalpable form that somehow remained identifiable with the person’s temporal existence.²⁹⁰

In light of the diversity of beliefs about the afterlife that has been observed in the last chapter, it is not surprising that some early Christian texts would articulate notions of the afterlife different from what has been accepted as “orthodox.” The significance of Riley’s thesis lies in the fact that he believes that the *Gospel of Thomas* is a very early text, which causes him to argue that the afterlife belief of the Thomas community is a more primitive and thus more faithful representation of early Christian faith. If Riley is correct, one of the earliest forms of Christianity not only fails to affirm bodily resurrection but it strongly opposes the idea.²⁹¹

While it is nearly impossible that the version of Christian teaching recognized by the Thomas community was more primitive than that described in the canonical

²⁸⁹Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 68.

²⁹⁰Riley, 58. This idea has been revived more recently by Elaine Pagels in her work, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*.

²⁹¹Riley, 1-5.

Scriptures,²⁹² it is still very reasonable to assume that early groups of Christians had dissimilar notions of the nature of the afterlife.²⁹³ The question that *Thomas* raises is, Was the belief in a recognizable but impalpable form of postmortem existence simply a different way of understanding resurrection or was it contrary to faith in resurrection? Currently, there is no definitive answer.

*The Treatise on the Resurrection*²⁹⁴

Another important text is a Christian-Gnostic document found in codex I, tractate 4 of the Nag Hammadi codices. It is called the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, or the *Epistle to Rheginos*. Like the *Epistle of Barnabas*, it is an anonymous text, but where resurrection is a secondary issue to ethical living in *Barnabas*, the *Treatise* is specifically about the subject of resurrection.

The precise date for the *Treatise* is unknown. In spite of this uncertainty, there is

²⁹²Recent scholarship has demonstrated *Thomas*' reliance on the canonical gospels, which has the effect of subverting key elements of Riley's thesis. See Ismo Dunderberg, "Thomas' I-sayings and the Gospel of John," in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*, ed. Risto Uro (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 40.

²⁹³Even the New Testament canon testifies to this as this seems to be some of the impetus behind I Corinthians 15.

²⁹⁴Unless otherwise noted, the translation that is being utilized is that of Malcolm Peel. See *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, ed. Harold Attridge, Nag Hammadi Studies XXII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), I: 123-157, hereafter referenced as Peel, *Treatise*. See also Peel's notes in *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)*, ed. Harold Attridge, Nag Hammadi Studies XXII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), II: 137-215, hereafter referenced as Peel, *Notes*. See also Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), hereafter *Gnostic Treatise*.

significant consensus regarding the parameters of the possible date. It is deduced that a date after Paul is necessary due to the author's considerable reliance on his writings.²⁹⁵

The latest possible date is sometime before 350 CE. This is due to the dating of the existing manuscript to 350 CE and the fact that scholars agree that the present manuscript is a Coptic translation of a Greek text.²⁹⁶ It is generally agreed that the text is attributable to somewhere between the middle of the second century and the third century CE.²⁹⁷

As was previously observed, the *Treatise* has both Gnostic and Christian elements in them. In the introduction to his translation, Malcolm Peel offers a helpful summary of the evidence indicating the influence of Valentinian Gnosticism.²⁹⁸ According to Peel, this evidence includes parallels between “the spiritual resurrection that [had] already occurred and the charges of Valentinian ‘realized eschatology’” as reported by Tertullian and Irenaeus.²⁹⁹ Peel also notes references to Valentinian cosmogony in the *Treatise* with elements of primordial pleroma and human preexistence.

The evidence for the Christian aspect of the *Treatise* is strong but slightly less

²⁹⁵W. C. van Unnik, “The Newly Discovered Gnostic ‘Epistle to Rheginos’ on the Resurrection,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 15 (1964): 154.

²⁹⁶Bentley Layton, “Treatise on Resurrection” in *The Gnostic Scripture* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 317.

²⁹⁷Both Bentley Layton and Malcolm Peel suggest a late second century date. Recently, Mark Edwards has argued for a date in the fourth century. See M. J. Edwards, “The *Epistle to Rheginus*: Valentinianism in the Fourth Century,” *Novum Testamentum* 37 (1995): 76-91.

²⁹⁸Malcolm Peel, *The Epistle to Rheginos: A Valentinian Letter on the Resurrection* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 53.

²⁹⁹Peel, *The Epistle to Rheginos*, 53. See also Peel, *Treatise*, 141-142.

obvious. Craig Evans, Robert Webb, and Richard Wiebe dedicate nearly six pages of their book, *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible*, to cataloging the numerous biblical allusions in the *Treatise*.³⁰⁰ This is even more remarkable when one considers that the Nag Hammadi manuscript of the *Treatise* is only eight pages long.

There is little scholarly agreement about the nature of the *Treatise*. Before examining the text itself, I will briefly explain the spectrum of interpretations of the *Treatise* that have been proposed. One view has been proposed by W. C. van Unnik. He believes the text to be primarily Christian with the intention of bolstering Rheginos' confidence in the reality of the resurrection. Subsequently, van Unnik emphasizes the Christian aspects of the text and minimizes the Gnostic aspects,³⁰¹ and understands the tension as a sign of an early date of composition, when the distinction between Christian and Gnostic may have been blurred.³⁰² The second view is offered by Bentley Layton who believes that the author is attempting to proselytize the Christian, Rheginos, into Valentinian Christianity. The third view is somewhere between the two and has been articulated by Malcolm Peel. Peel acknowledges the presence of both Christian and

³⁰⁰Craig Evans, Robert Webb, and Richard Wiebe, eds. *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 42-47.

³⁰¹While I believe that this is a fair characterization of van Unnik's position, it may also be an overstatement as he is intentionally attending to the Christian aspects since the Gnostic aspects had been addressed by the editors of the *editio princeps*.

³⁰²Van Unnik, 151. Van Unnik's position is offered here in order to demonstrate the variety of interpretations of the *Treatise* that exist. Most scholars believe that he overemphasized the Christian aspects of the text. For this reason, he will not be considered here. See Jacques Ménard, "L'Épître à Rhèginos (le *De Resurrectione*): sa notion de résurrection," in *Acts of the Second International Congress of Coptic Studies* (Rome: CIM, 1985), 167.

Gnostic elements and tries to respect both. Peel believes that the text is the product of a respected Valentinian-Christian teacher who “has with time become more and more influenced by his fundamentally Christian faith and by the teaching of the New Testament.”³⁰³

The author begins with a discussion of Christ in 44.13-38. He states, “How did the Lord proclaim things while he existed in flesh and after he had revealed himself as Son of God? He lived in this place where you remain, speaking about the Law of Nature - but I call it 'Death'” (44.14-15). This passage is significant because it indicates that the author understood Christ to have flesh and that this life is actually “Death.” He continues by noting that Christ possessed both divinity and humanity (44.25-26). The author indicates that the purpose of Christ’s incarnation is so that he may bring about the restoration of the pleroma (44.27-33).

After briefly acknowledging the difficulty of the instruction being offered (44.39-45.13), the author writes,

The Savior swallowed up death - (of this) you are not reckoned to be ignorant - for he put aside the world which is perishing. He transformed [himself] into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up having swallowed the visible by the invisible and he gave us the way of our immortality (45.14-23).

In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to consider the significance of the author’s use of the idea of “swallowing up.”

Layton observes an interesting parallelism within the *Treatise*. He believes that there is a relationship between “The savior swallowed death” in 45.14 and he “raised

³⁰³Peel, *The Epistle to Rheginos*, 180.

himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible” in 45.19.³⁰⁴ The author also later states that the resurrection being discussed is a spiritual resurrection “which swallows up the psychic in the same way as the fleshly” (45.40-46.2). Peel observes that the idea of “swallowing up” is “a Pauline expression meaning ‘destroys’ or renders irrelevant.”³⁰⁵ Peel’s interpretation is supported by the author’s use of “swallowing up” in 49.2-4 when he describes the effect of light on darkness as one of swallowing. If Peel is correct, then Christ rendered the visible world irrelevant and the future resurrection makes the fleshly aspect of the world irrelevant.

One of the most difficult sections to understand is 47.1-10. Our author encourages Rheginos not to doubt the resurrection (47.2-3). The rationale for this admonition is the author’s argument in 47.4-10 which states “if you were not existing in the flesh, you received flesh when you entered the world. Why will you not receive flesh when you ascend into the Aeon? That which is better than the flesh is that which is for it (the) cause of life.” The easiest aspect of this passage to grasp is the author’s belief in human preexistence.³⁰⁶ Rheginos only assumed flesh upon entering this world. If Rheginos existed before taking on flesh and the end is a return to the beginning, it follows that the final state is one without flesh. This is how Bart Ehrman understands this passage. He writes, “The author continues by pointing out that before they appeared in

³⁰⁴Layton, *Gnostic Treatise*, 137. Layton understands this to be evidence of the Gnostic thought of the author. His view is the prevailing opinion. See also Peel, *Notes*, 138.

³⁰⁵Peel, *Treatise*, 137.

³⁰⁶Peel, *The Epistle to Rheginos*, 113.

this world, people were not in the flesh, and once they leave this world, they will leave the flesh behind.”³⁰⁷ Pheme Perkins has reached the same conclusion while understanding the passage a little differently. In addressing this passage she writes, “It is apparently answering an objection that proposed that if the soul had received a body upon descent into the world, the body would coexist with the soul in the next.”³⁰⁸ While this is the view that could be expected of a Gnostic teacher, the question, “Will you not receive flesh when you ascend into the Aeon?” seems to affirm some type of flesh.³⁰⁹

Malcolm Peel has offered a different view that tries to account for the reception of flesh in the heavenly realm. He distinguishes between “flesh of the incarnate life . . . which is inferior to the ‘spirit’ which animates it” and a “spiritual ‘flesh’ which is received upon ascent into the heavenly sphere.”³¹⁰ The first is excluded from the spiritual resurrection, but the second partakes in it.³¹¹ I find this interpretation to be the most convincing since it requires less manipulation of the text.

The next important section is 47.31-48.3, where the author addresses the issue of the immediacy of people being saved once they physically die. He states, “But there are some (who) wish to understand, in the enquiry about those things they are looking into, whether he who is saved, if he leaves his body behind, will be saved immediately.” In

³⁰⁷Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*, 132.

³⁰⁸Perkins, 359.

³⁰⁹Peel interprets the reference to Aeon as “heavenly sphere.” Peel, *Notes*, 179.

³¹⁰Peel, *Notes*, 179.

³¹¹Peel, *Notes*, 179.

response, the author teaches, “Let no one doubt concerning this. . . . Indeed, the visible members which are dead shall not be saved, for (only) the living [members] which exist within them would arise” (47.36-48.3). This not only teaches the immediacy of salvation, it reaffirms that the physical body will not rise.

The next section is an extended attempt to define resurrection (48.4-49.9). First, the author states, “It is always the disclosure of those who have risen” (48.4-7). It is important to observe this definition of resurrection since it implies that resurrection is a revealing of what already is, as opposed to the unveiling of a new creation.³¹² In other words, resurrection is a present reality not merely a future one. This idea is repeated in 48.34-38 where we read, “It is the revelation of what is, and the transformation of things, and a transition into newness.” Evidence of this also occurs in the next section.

Following the attempt at defining resurrection, the author turns to the account of the transfiguration (48.8-11). He instructs, “For if you remember reading in the Gospel that Elijah appeared and Moses with him, do not think the resurrection is an illusion. It is no illusion, but it is truth! Indeed, it is more fitting to say the world is an illusion, rather than the resurrection which has come into being through our Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ.” Scholars have offered several interpretations of this passage.

The first one to be noted understands the appeal to the transfiguration as a means of justifying the notion of resurrection presented elsewhere in the text. It has been

³¹²In an article on the *Treatise*, Luther Martin believes that this is a wrong translation. He suggests that it should be rendered, “It is the continual revelation *to* (not of) those who have arisen.” Luther H. Martin, “Note on ‘The Treatise on the Resurrection,’” *Vigiliae Christianae* 27 (1973): 281. While important to note, his suggestion has not been followed by the overwhelming majority of scholars.

proposed by Jacques Menard who writes, “S’il y a discontinuité entre les deux états, il y a toutefois continuité, grâce à l’homme intérieur et à la chair spirituelle qui conserve des caractéristiques personnelles identifiables.”³¹³ The second view is offered by Layton who understands the transfiguration to be a challenge to the teacher’s instruction. He writes, “the objection here entertained is . . . if Elijah and Moses, though dead, could be seen in their resurrection state, will not the body, vivified by the superior part, continue to exist at least as a kind of shade, visible but insubstantial?”³¹⁴ Lastly, Perkins has suggested that both Layton and Peel are wrong and that the author is appealing to the account because it supports his notion of the immediacy of the transformation of resurrection.³¹⁵ I think that Perkins’ view fits the context best and does not require more from the text than it offers.

Afterward, the author argues that in comparison to the resurrection, it is this life that is the illusion (48.12-23). In 48.26-28 the author repeats the charge when he teaches that “Those who are living shall die. How do they live in an illusion? The rich have become poor, and the kings have been overthrown. Everything is prone to change.”³¹⁶ On the contrary, resurrection is firm (48.33).

The author concludes his/her treatment of the topic of resurrection with a final

³¹³Jacques Ménard, “La Notion de ‘Résurrection’ dans l’Épître à Rhéginos,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts*, ed. Martin Krause, Nag Hammadi Studies VI (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 113.

³¹⁴Layton, *Gnostic Treatise*, 95.

³¹⁵Perkins, 359.

³¹⁶As will be noted in the next chapter, this is a common objection to the doctrine. It is quite similar to those raised by Celsus.

exhortation to Rheginos. He writes, “Therefore, do not think in part, O Rheginos, nor live in conformity with this flesh for the sake of unanimity, but flee from the divisions and the fetters, and already you have the resurrection” (49.10-16). If Rheginos does not live according to the flesh, then he already has resurrection. Rheginos ought to then live as one already in possession of resurrection (49.16-30). The hope is to “receive again what at first was” (49.35-36), which recalls the idea of the restoration of the Pleroma and Rheginos’ preexistent state. Bart Ehrman comments on this passage by writing, “And so, to achieve this return to the realm whence we came, we must refuse to satisfy the longings of our flesh. This is scarcely the ticket to flagrant immortality that the proto-orthodox thought; instead it is a life of freedom of the spirit, no longer yielding to the demands of the body.”³¹⁷

So, does the *Treatise* indicate a bodily existence as the final state? The answer depends on how several passages are interpreted. It is quite clear that the author offers no hope to temporal flesh. As has been demonstrated, it is difficult to know for certain the degree to which the ascended state was understood to have a corporeal dimension to it. The author’s emphasis on the present availability of resurrection seems to refute a hope for a final bodily state, but by placing too much emphasis on this point means that the apostle Paul is susceptible to the same charge.³¹⁸ In his introduction to the *Treatise*, Peel offers a helpful summary of the teaching of the document when he writes,

The resurrection, according to our text, is neither the escape of the bare “spirit”

³¹⁷Ehrman, 132.

³¹⁸Ephesians 2:6

(πνεῦμα) or “mind” (νοῦς) from the physical body, nor is it the survival of the earthly flesh. . . . After death there is an ascension of the inward, invisible “members,” covered by a new spiritual “flesh” (σάρξ, 47.408). Thus, in the author’s view, discontinuity between the earthly and the resurrection body is occasioned by death and departure from the external, visible members and flesh; whereas continuity of identity is furnished by the inner spiritual man and his new, *post mortem* flesh.³¹⁹

While I believe that Peel’s assessment of the *Treatise* is accurate, it is possible the author was merely using the language of “resurrection” and “flesh” to strengthen his claims of Christian faith. Additionally, I am not fully convinced that the hope outlined in the text can be called bodily resurrection given that it involves being covered with new “spiritual” flesh that has no apparent connection to the temporal flesh.

*The Gospel of Philip*³²⁰

The *Gospel of Philip* is another Valentinian text that should be considered when examining early teaching on resurrection. While it is believed that it was written in Greek in or around Syria, it was included in the texts found at Nag Hammadi. It can be dated to the second half of the third century.³²¹ Like the *Treatise*, it is complicated by having both Christian and Gnostic elements. Unlike the *Treatise*, it is not specifically

³¹⁹Peel, *Treatise*, 142-143.

³²⁰Unless otherwise noted, references to the *Gospel of Philip* will be from Wesley Isenberg’s translation. See *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7*, ed. Bentley Layton, Nag Hammadi Studies XX (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), I:129-217. See also Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel According to Philip: The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 38 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), hereafter cited as Turner, *Sources and Coherence*.

³²¹Wesley Isenberg, introduction to “The Gospel of Philip,” in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7*, 131.

about the resurrection, although it mentions the subject numerous times. Its primary focus is on the significance of the sacraments of the Christian Gnostic cult from which it arose.

Unlike the gospel accounts in the New Testament, *Philip* is a loosely related collection of sayings. In light of this and due to the fact that resurrection is not its central topic, *Philip* will not be examined in the same way the *Treatise* was.³²² Instead of a line by line exegesis of the text, *Philip* will be studied more thematically.

The first aspect of *Philip* that should be noted is that the text teaches that in the end everything returns to its original state. In 53.20-21, *Philip* declares that “Each one will dissolve into its earliest origin. But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble.” In a related theme, the author has a negative attitude toward the created world which is exhibited throughout the text and has implications for his understanding of resurrection. It is demonstrated in 56.24-26 by the statement, “Compare the soul. It is a precious thing and it came to be in a contemptible body.” Another example is found in 75.3 where the author claims that “The world came about through a mistake. For he who created it wanted to create it imperishable and immortal. He fell short of attaining his desire.”

The first reference to resurrection sets the tone for how the subject is handled in the text in *Philip*. In 53:31, *Philip* includes resurrection as one of several topics which

³²²There is some scholarly discussion about the unity of *Philip*. For a consideration of these issues, see Martha Lee Turner, “On the Coherence of the ‘Gospel According to Philip’” in *Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 223-250, hereafter cited as Turner, *On the Coherence*.

most people misunderstand. Later, *Philip* instructs that resurrection is not only possible to possess in this life as the *Treatise* argued, it must be obtained in this life. In 56.17-18 the author claims “Those who say that the Lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for he rose up first and (then) died.” In his commentary on *Philip*, Robert McLachlan Wilson suggests that there are two possible ways of interpreting this passage. The first lies “in the different meanings of the Greek words ἀνίστημι and ἐγείρω.”³²³ He proceeds to note how ἀνίστημι was used to describe the appointment of a high priest or prophet and how ἐγείρω was employed to describe David’s ascendancy to the throne. In this view, the references to Christ rising are not references to resurrection but to his different aspects of Christological mission.³²⁴ The second view is that the phrase is addressing resurrection, “since Jesus as Redeemer anticipated, as it were, the journey of the soul, so he must have risen first.”³²⁵ As will become evident, there are other passages that reverse the expected order of things which makes the second option the more reasonable interpretation.

In the next verses, Philip proceeds to suggest that we must follow Christ’s example. Within the context of Christ’s example, the text likely teaches that we should also attain the resurrection first, but the text curiously states, “If one does not first attain the resurrection he will not die” (56.18-19). While this admonition is a little

³²³Robert McLachlan Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 85.

³²⁴Wilson, 85.

³²⁵Wilson, 86.

ambiguous, it comes into sharper focus when considered alongside similar passages. One of these is 73.1-4, where the author states, “Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing.” Another example is 66.17-19, which states, “It is fitting for us to acquire the resurrection, so that when we strip off the flesh, we may be found in rest.” In addition to demonstrating the present availability of resurrection, this last passage introduces the next issue.

There are several instances in *Philip* where the notions of nakedness and garments are used in reference to death and resurrection. The first example of this is a perplexing section that begins in 56.27. The author begins by attempting to correct those who desire to rise in the flesh because they believe that without it they will be naked. He states, that “they do not know that it is those who wear the flesh who are naked” (56.27-30). He proceeds to quote I Corinthians 15:50, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” *Philip* then argues that it is those who have divested themselves of the flesh (literally unclothed themselves) who are clothed (56.31-32). He then proceeds to compare the bread and wine of the Eucharist with the Word and Holy Spirit. In continuing the interpretation of I Cor. 15:50, Philip states,

What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us. But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which belongs to Jesus and his blood. Because of this he said "He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him" (Jn 6:53). What is it? His flesh is the word, and his blood is the Holy Spirit. He who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing (57.3-8).

Thus for Philip, whoever participates in the Eucharist has clothing (57.8). Van Eijk notes, “He should not be afraid of rising naked, because he is clothed with the flesh and

blood of the Lord.”³²⁶

The next section complicates the teaching significantly. For after having just argued against those who think the flesh will rise, the author finds “fault with the others who say that it will not rise” (57.10). In fact, the author states very plainly, “It is necessary to rise in this flesh, since everything exists in it” (57.18-19). In observing this tension, van Eijk notes that the meaning of flesh “had been ambiguous every [*sic*] since the days of St. Paul. The gnostics deliberately played on this ambiguity.”³²⁷ For van Eijk, the flesh that is being referenced in 57.18-19 is the flesh of Christ. He states, “it is only the flesh of Christ that rises; in this flesh the individuality of the gnostic’s flesh seems to disappear completely.”³²⁸ But, what does the text mean when it states, “necessary to rise in the flesh”?

Jacques Ménard has suggested that this reference to “this flesh” refers not to the flesh of the author or audience, but the flesh of Christ in the Eucharist.³²⁹ Thus, the idea of resurrection in *Philip* is also intimately connected to the group’s sacraments. PHEME PERKINS states, “This Gnostic group is not concerned with speculation about the nature of

³²⁶A. H. C. Van Eijk, “The Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostics and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 (1971): 96.

³²⁷Van Eijk, *Philip*, 95.

³²⁸Van Eijk, *Philip*, 98.

³²⁹Jacques Ménard, *L’Évangile selon Philippe* (Paris: Letouzey & Ane, 1967), 140-143. This interpretation has been articulated more recently by Martha Lee Turner. See Turner, *Sources and Coherence*, 232.

the resurrection or its foundation in a particular anthropology or soteriology. It is concerned with the cultic experience of the reality of resurrection.”³³⁰

If Ménard’s interpretation is correct, it is the first but not the only time that resurrection is connected to the sacraments of *Philip*’s audience. In fact, the topic of resurrection occurs in *Philip* frequently within the author’s discussion of the sacraments. A second allusion occurs in 61.12-20, but instead of connecting resurrection to the Eucharist, the language suggests a connection to baptism.

In 61.12-20 *Philip* describes God as a person who dyes fabric. The most significant part of this passage is 61.19-20, which states, “Since his dyes are immortal, they become immortal by means of his colors. Now God dips what he dips in water.” The connection between God dipping in water and immortality is undeniable, so the only question is whether the idea of dipping in water should be understood as baptism. Bentley Layton subscribes to this view as he translates the passage, “Yet those whom god dips, he dips in water,” to which he adds a footnote that explains “dips” as being equivalent to “baptizes.”³³¹ The idea that God’s dyes are immortal, or as Layton translates them “imperishable” or “colorfast”³³² recalls the beginning of this study where it was noted, “Each one will dissolve into its earliest origin. But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble” (53.20-21), which implies the work that God does lasts

³³⁰Perkins, 362.

³³¹Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1987), 336. See also, Deconick, *True Mysteries*, 237-238.

³³²Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 336.

to eternity.³³³

While we have noted the connection between resurrection, Eucharist, and baptism in *Philip*, the author and audience of *Philip* appear to have another sacrament. In 73.17-19 we read, “It is from the olive tree that we get the chrism, and from the chrism, resurrection.” Chrism is also said to be better than baptism (74.12-13). Not only is chrism one of the group’s sacraments, it seems to be one of the most important sacraments, since “He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the holy spirit” (74.19-21).³³⁴

What can be concluded about the nature of resurrection in *Philip*? Although resurrection is a frequent topic in *Philip*, the author offers no exact definition of what he means by the term.³³⁵ Rather than discuss the nature of the resurrection, the author’s focus is on his audience’s need to obtain resurrection in this life through the group’s sacraments. These facts do not mean that nothing about the nature of resurrection can be

³³³Additional support for this interpretation can be found elsewhere in the text. For example, the association of baptism to resurrection is explicitly stated in 69.25-26 where *Philip* instructs that “baptism includes the resurrection” (69.25-26).

³³⁴Another one of the group’s sacraments is marriage. This is expressed in the various references to a Bridal Chamber (see 61, 67, 122). Although the imagery implies some connection to the afterlife, there is no evidence to aid in understanding what was meant by or involved in this sacrament. For a thorough analysis of the sacramental thought of *Philip* see April DeConick, “The True Mysteries: Sacramentalism in the *Gospel of Philip*,” *Vigilae Christianae* 55 (2001): 225-261.

³³⁵Van Eijk concludes that it is “rather difficult to draw a sharp dividing line between Ev.Phil.’s conception of the resurrection of, and in the flesh . . . and that what ‘orthodox’ theologians as Irenaeus and Tertullian have to say on this matter.” Van Eijk, 119.

gained from the text. In reality, some things are discernible, but it must be inferred from the text.

There is no overt discussion in *Philip* of whether some form of bodily existence is either included or excluded from the final state, but if there is a body in the final state it is not the temporal one. Whatever is meant by resurrection in *Philip*, it cannot be connected to the physical body, since Christ rose before he died (56:18-19). Statements like this, combined with the many expressions of a negative attitude toward creation are evidence that the author has little regard for material creation and holds out no hope for its participation in any postmortem existence (57.27-30). This is similar to what was observed in the *Treatise*, but in *Philip* it creates a paradox. This is due to Philip's insistence that the resurrection must be obtained in this life through the sacraments. Therefore, while the physical body does not have any role in the resurrection in that there is no hope for its survival, the body plays a pivotal role in resurrection by being the means through which it is obtained.

The various notions of the afterlife examined in this chapter differed from one and in some instances from those observed in the previous chapter. In both *Apoc. Petri* and *Barnabas* the physical body had an integral role in the afterlife and this was connected to the final judgment. *Thomas*, on the other hand, was shown to be a Christian text that deliberately avoids the idea of resurrection. In contrast to both of these, the Christian-Gnostic texts studied here utilize the language of resurrection but articulate no hope for

the physical body and no sense of a final judgment as had been observed in *Barnabas* and *Apoc. Petri*. As we conclude this chapter several questions remain: What should be made of the use of resurrection in Christian-Gnostic texts such as those examined here? Does the use of resurrection simply represent the best available term to express the belief of the communities represented by the *Treatise* and *Philip* or was it simply a convenient tool used by some in their attempts to legitimize their brand(s) of Christianity? While these questions remain unanswered, we can be certain that by the second century in Alexandria at least two competing interpretations of resurrection were being used. One expressed hope for the physical body, and the other did not.

CHAPTER THREE

RESURRECTION FAITH OF BISHOPS AND TEACHERS

This chapter continues the investigation into early Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection, but where the last chapter studied early anonymous texts, this chapter examines works that have been attributed with some degree of certainty to a bishop or teacher that has some connection to early Egyptian Christianity.³³⁶ The first section of this chapter examines the works of the earlier and more prominent individuals. Afterward, the relevant works of later and lesser-known Egyptian bishops are considered.

Major Theologians Known in Ante-Nicene Egypt

The theologians examined in this section are some of the most famous of the Ante-Nicene fathers. They are Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. They are all connected in some way to early Egyptian Christianity and have several extant texts. In light of the volume of their material that is available, I will begin the study of each

³³⁶The one exception to this is the *Acts of Phileas* which is an anonymous account of the martyrdom of an Egyptian.

theologian by examining his anthropology and proceed to investigate his specific statements on the resurrection.

Irenaeus³³⁷

Given the fact that the focus of this chapter is on bishops and teachers connected to Egyptian Christianity, it may be somewhat surprising to begin with Irenaeus. While Irenaeus is not personally associated with Alexandrian Christianity, there is irrefutable evidence that his views were known in Egypt. In fact, some of his writings were not only known in Egypt, they appear to have arrived relatively early.³³⁸

Among the many texts discovered at Oxyrhynchus is a fragment which has since been identified as part of his *Against the Heresies* (*Haer.* hereafter).³³⁹ Even before its identification, it was believed to be from the late second or early third century.³⁴⁰ It is

³³⁷References to the Greek and Latin texts of *Adversus Haereses* are from Irenaeus, *Contre les Hérésies*, ed. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965-1982). The primary source for English translation is Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (New York: Routledge, 1997), because his translation is based on the critical editions of the texts. Since Grant does not provide a complete translation, additional references to Book I will be from *Against the Heresies*, trans. Dominic Unger, Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Paulist Press, 1992); additional references to books II-V are from *Against the Heresies*, ed. Alexander Robinson and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885-1896; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

³³⁸Additional evidence of an awareness of Irenaeus in Egypt is suggested by Lloyd G. Patterson, "The Divine Became Human: Irenaeus Themes in Clement of Alexandria," *Studia Patristica* 31, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 497-516.

³³⁹P. Oxy. iii.405.

³⁴⁰Roberts, 14.

commonly agreed that *Haer.* was written about 180 CE. The proximity of the date of the original manuscript to that of the Oxyrhynchus fragment may mean that Colin Roberts is only slightly exaggerating when he wrote that the work arrived “not long after the ink was dry on the author’s manuscript.”³⁴¹

Of the various texts examined in this dissertation, Irenaeus’ *Haer.* presents one of the most easily intelligible views of resurrection. Scholars agree that Irenaeus articulates a view of resurrection that is materialistic in that it emphasizes the corporeal dimension.³⁴² His position is summarized by Brian Daley when he states, “Irenaeus insists on the fleshly reality of risen bodies.”³⁴³ Irenaeus states that the raising of all flesh is part of what “the church, dispersed throughout the world to the ends of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples” (*Haer.* I.10.1).³⁴⁴ But on what bases does Irenaeus make his case? There are several aspects of Irenaeus’ argument upon which scholars agree. These include God’s omnipotence, the concept of recapitulation, and Irenaeus’ anthropology.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹Roberts, 53.

³⁴²See the works of Daley, Pelikan, McWilliam, Setzer, and Perkins.

³⁴³Daley, 30.

³⁴⁴A second discussion of centrality of resurrection occurs in I.22.1. It is similar to the above in that Irenaeus is providing a summary of the Christian faith (*regulam veritatis*).

³⁴⁵While scholars disagree about which of these is most fundamental to his thought, there is general agreement about the importance of all of them. It should also be noted that scholars agree on the fact that Irenaeus’ millennialism is an important part of his materialistic hope. It will not be discussed here since the relationship between millennialism and a hope for a material resurrection has been noted

God's Omnipotence

For Irenaeus, the reality of the resurrection stands or falls with the power of God (V.3.2). Joanne McWilliam states that Irenaeus' refutation of the Gnostics' notion of resurrection "is argued first on the basis of God's power."³⁴⁶ The argument is that if God is all-powerful, then he is able to raise flesh. Conversely, if God cannot raise dead flesh, he is not all-powerful nor has Christ been raised. Irenaeus reasons that if God can make flesh live once, then he can make it live again. Among the passages that indicate this is *Haer.* V.3.2 where Irenaeus writes,

Those men, therefore, set aside the power of God, and do not consider what the word declares, when they dwell upon the infirmity of the flesh, but do not take into consideration the power of Him who raises it up from the dead. For if He does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power. But that He is powerful in all these respects, we ought to perceive from our origin, inasmuch as God, taking dust from the earth, formed man. And surely it is much more difficult and incredible, from non-existent bones, and nerves, and veins, and the rest of man's organization, to bring it about that all this should be, and to make man an animated and rational creature, than to re-integrate again that which had been created and then afterwards decomposed into earth, . . . For He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not, just when He pleased, shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence, when it is His will [that they should inherit] the life granted by Him. And that flesh shall also be found fit for and capable of receiving the power of God, which at the beginning received the skillful touches of God.³⁴⁷

previously.

³⁴⁶McWilliam, 93. See also Perkins, 363; and Daley, 30-31.

³⁴⁷This passage is from Grant's translation.

Recapitulation

Mary Clark has observed, “the center of Irenaeus’ theology is Paul’s doctrine of the ‘recapitulation of all things in Christ.’ Human nature in its entirety is assumed by the Word of God. Christ as the new Adam renews all creation and leads it back to its author through the incarnation and redemption.”³⁴⁸ The result of this recapitulation is that in Christ the original purpose for creation can be fully realized. In a sense, it is possible to assert that the end to which all things are moving is a return to their original or intended state and purpose, since in Christ “the whole history of salvation is resumed, so that the beginning, middle, and end are brought together.”³⁴⁹

One of the numerous occurrences of the idea of recapitulation is found in *Haer.* I.10.1, where Irenaeus instructs that Christ is coming again “to recapitulate all things and to raise up all flesh of the whole human race.”³⁵⁰ A passage that has a similar theme is found in V.32.1 where Irenaeus indicates that the goal is the return of creation to its pristine condition (*ipsam conditionem redintegratam ad pristinum*). In terms of the account of creation, Irenaeus taught that the image of God is possessed in the flesh or

³⁴⁸Mary T. Clark, “Irenaeus,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. Similarly, Jaroslav Pelikan calls the idea of recapitulation the “most characteristic term for Irenaeus’ understanding of the work of Christ.” Pelikan, 109. See also McWilliam, 93-94, and Setzer, 131.

³⁴⁹Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 116.

³⁵⁰Although somewhat dated, a helpful study on the subject is J. T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Co., 1968). See also Christopher R. Smith, “Chiliasm and Recapitulation in the Theology of Irenaeus,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 48 (1994): 313-331.

carni quae est plasmata secundum imaginem Dei (V.6.1). This is significant for Irenaeus' argument because if God did not raise the flesh, it would mean that God had forsaken his own image. This is why scholars like John Behr write, "For Irenaeus, the rhythm of the events of the last times is based upon the opening verses of Genesis."³⁵¹

Interestingly, Irenaeus' reverence for human flesh causes him to argue that Adam and Eve were not originally nude but clothed with God's glory. Accordingly, "La nudité du péché est la nudité d'un corps sans gloire."³⁵² It can therefore be assumed that the resurrected body will be like that of Adam and Eve before the fall. It will be flesh that is clothed in glory.

Irenaeus' Anthropology

According to Irenaeus, the Gnostics whom he was refuting believed in three elements to a person. They were the material, the psychic, and the spiritual (I.6.1), and each had its own eschatological fate. The material will naturally perish because it is "incapable of receiving the breath of imperishability" (I.6.1). The psychic is "in the middle between spiritual and material and will go where it makes a turn" (I.6.1). The spiritual "has been sent forth so that joined with the psychic it will receive formation, instructed with it during its life" (I.6.1). In contrast to this, Irenaeus expressed a unified

³⁵¹John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 82.

³⁵²Ysabel de Andia, *Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyons* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1986), 96.

understanding of the human person that was a “single composite of spirit and flesh.”³⁵³

PHEME PERKINS calls this Irenaeus’ “central contribution to the development of Christian understanding of resurrection.”³⁵⁴ While the focus of this study is on Irenaeus’ view of resurrection, it is worth noting that his anthropology also means a rejection of the idea of reincarnation³⁵⁵ and a refinement of the notion of an immortal soul.³⁵⁶

One of the fundamental arguments against Irenaeus’ material resurrection is that the temporal flesh was incapable of receiving eternal life since “salvation is only for the soul” and “the body is perishable by nature” (I.24.5).³⁵⁷ Among the arguments that Irenaeus employs to refute this position is an insightful appeal to the Eucharist. According to Irenaeus, the Church in its celebration of the Eucharist is a symbol of the unity between the spiritual and the material. In IV.18.5, Irenaeus argues “Then, again,

³⁵³Daley, 28.

³⁵⁴Perkins, 363.

³⁵⁵There are essentially three elements to Irenaeus’ assertion that reincarnation is absurd. First, if reincarnation was true, past memories would create difficulties for successive incarnations either by remembering them or by forgetting them (*Haer.* II.33.1). The second is his statement that the soul preserves the form of the body, even when separated from it (II.34.1). Third, while the body is quickened by the soul and thus needs the soul (V.7.1), Irenaeus taught that the soul needs the body as an artist needs an instrument (*corpus enim organo simile est*) (II.33.4).

³⁵⁶On the one hand, Irenaeus affirms immortality for the soul (V.4.1 and V.7.1). On the other, Irenaeus objects to the idea that souls are eternal and uncreated. The idea of an uncreated soul was the basis for the claim that the soul was naturally immortal. The assumption was that if something has a beginning, it must have an end (II.34.2). Logically, if it is true, one cannot argue for both a created soul and an immortal soul. In II.34, Irenaeus rejects both premises of this syllogism.

³⁵⁷This is repeated in *Haer.* I.27.3.

how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned..”³⁵⁸ If flesh cannot experience redemption, then the celebration of communion is pointless, despite the importance it was given in some Gnostic communities. Similarly, in V.2.3 we read, “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?”

The notion that the flesh is capable of experiencing redemption is also evident in Irenaeus’ attack on his opponents’ understanding of I Corinthians 15:50 which states that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (V.9-15). In addressing this issue, Irenaeus interprets the flesh of I Corinthians 15:50 as referring to the carnal aspects of life rather than as literal flesh like the Gnostics do. For Irenaeus, the term spiritual describes those who “partake of the Spirit” not those whose “flesh has been stripped off and taken away” (V.6.1). Irenaeus argues that otherwise, the promise in I Corinthians 15:53 of God giving life to mortal bodies would not make any sense. He states,

What therefore is there left to which we may apply the term “mortal body,” unless

³⁵⁸In reference to this passage, Ysabel de Andia writes, “L’intention du texte est claire: montrer, contre ceux qui nient la *salus carnis*, la participation de nos corps à la vie incorruptible dans l’eucharistie et l’espérance de résurrection qu’elle suscite.” Andia, 239-240.

it be the thing that was moulded, that is, the flesh, of which it is also said that God will vivify it? For this it is which dies and is decomposed, but not the soul or the spirit. For to die is to lose vital power, and to become henceforth breathless, inanimate, and devoid of motion, and to melt away into those [component parts] from which also it derived the commencement of [its] substance (V.7.1).³⁵⁹

This interpretation is important because it allows Irenaeus to affirm the truth of both I Corinthians 15:50 and his belief in the resurrection of the flesh. As Anders Lund Jacobsen writes, “The argument is clear: flesh and blood understood as substance can inherit the kingdom of God because the substance of the flesh will not be destroyed when man has received the Spirit, but the physical and the ethical qualities of the flesh are improved so that the renewed flesh will be able to inherit the kingdom of God.”³⁶⁰

Irenaeus’ inclusion of the flesh in the resurrected life can not be overstated, since “only such a hope can take seriously God’s continued involvement with his creation.”³⁶¹ For Irenaeus, the resurrected body is the temporal body in every way. As John Behr observes,

The most significant feature . . . is that there is a direct continuity between the life which human beings (even the Gnostics) presently live and the eternal life which will vivify them in the resurrection. The only distinction made between the two is that of “weaker” and “stronger,” with their correlates “temporal” and “eternal.” There is no suggestion that they are two different types of life.³⁶²

³⁵⁹This passage is from Grant’s translation.

³⁶⁰Anders Lund Jacobsen, “The Philosophical Argument in the Teaching of Irenaeus on the Resurrection of the Flesh,” in *Studia Patristica XXXVI*, ed. M.F. Miles and E.J. Yarnold (Louvain: Peeters, 2001), 258.

³⁶¹Daley, 30

³⁶²Behr, 96-97.

Clement of Alexandria³⁶³

The first person in this study known to have lived in Alexandria and who is of major theological significance is Clement of Alexandria. Scholars believe that Clement was born in Athens around 150 CE.³⁶⁴ This makes him a younger contemporary of Irenaeus. He arrived in Alexandria around 180 where he met Pantaenus, who was the

³⁶³References to the Greek text and English translation of his sermon *Quis Dives Salvetur?* (*Quis Dives*) and the *Protrepticus* (*Prot.*) are from Clement of Alexandria, *Quis Dives Salvetur?*, trans. G. W. Butterworth, Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1960). References to the Greek text of the *Paedagogus* (*Paed.*) are from Clement of Alexandria, *Le Pédagogue*, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960-70). Quotations of the English translation are from *Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon Wood, Fathers of the Church (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954). All references to the Greek text of the *Stromateis* are from Clement of Alexandria, *Les Stromates*, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1951-1999). References to the English translation of books I-III are from *Stromateis*, trans. John Ferguson, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991). The remaining quotations from books IV-VII are from Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, ed. Alexander Robinson and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885-1896; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). References to Clement's commentary on I Peter preserved in Latin by Cassiodorus are from *Clemens Alexandrinus*, ed. Otto Stählin, Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte (Berlin : Akademie-Verlag, 1960). References to the Greek text of the *Excerpta* are from *Extraits de Theodote*, trans. François Sagnard (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970). References to the English translation will be taken from Robert McL. Wilson's translation of Werner Foerster's work. See Werner Foerster, *Gnosis*, trans. Robert McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), I: 222-233.

³⁶⁴*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Clement of Alexandria." See also Ronald Heine, "The Alexandrians," in *The Cambridge Companion of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Francis Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 117.

head of the school there.³⁶⁵ Apparently, Clement was well educated. David Runia has indicated that Clement is the first Christian known to have read Philo.³⁶⁶ Eventually, Clement succeeded Pantaenus as the head of the Alexandrian school.³⁶⁷

It was noted above that Irenaeus presents one of the easily discernible views on bodily resurrection. The opposite is true of Clement of Alexandria. In the first place, very few scholars give any attention to his thought on resurrection. Secondly, those who do examine his work agree that Clement's thought on resurrection is difficult to understand. Joanne McWilliam, for example, has concluded that Clement's work "leaves certain questions - notably his understanding of the resurrection body -

³⁶⁵Heine, 117-118. A good summary of the existing scholarship on Pantaenus can be found in Attila Jakab's *Ecclesia alexandrina*, 107-115. There is some possibility that what is known about Pantaenus may increase in the next few years. This is a result of the recent publication of Papyrus Berolinensis 20915, which is a previously unknown text. While it is agreed that the Coptic manuscript is from the fourth century, it is also agreed that it is a copy of an earlier Greek text. In a recent paper, A. van den Hoek has proposed that the text is earlier than Clement and may possibly have originated with Pantaenus. A. van den Hoek, "Papyrus Berolinensis 20915 and Other Early Christian Writings," in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 75-92.

³⁶⁶David Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 132.

³⁶⁷It should be noted that many scholars believe that the school which Pantaenus and Clement led was not official. For a recent examination of the issue of the Alexandrian school, see Roelof van den Broek, "The Christian 'School' of Alexandria in the Second and Third Centuries," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 197-205. The view that is more sympathetic to the pre-Origen school being understood as more-or-less "official" is presented in Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School in Early Alexandria and its Philonic Heritage," *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997): 59-87.

unanswered, or answered only partially.³⁶⁸ Charles Hill takes the ambiguity surrounding Clement's notion of resurrection a step further when he asserts that "a perceived difficulty for Clement's eschatology is the preservation of a traditional doctrine of the resurrection of the body."³⁶⁹ In light of all of the surviving texts from Clement, why is there so much ambiguity concerning his view on bodily resurrection?

There are several factors that have contributed to the present assessment of Clement's statements on resurrection. One of the most significant is the fact that an explicit treatment on the resurrection by Clement does not exist.³⁷⁰ Another is the numerous streams of influence that have affected Clement's thought, thereby adding to its complexity.³⁷¹ While this can be said of many authors, it is particularly true of Clement.

³⁶⁸McWilliam, 114. The difficulty of providing a definitive account of Clement's thought on resurrection is demonstrated in several popular treatments of early Christian faith in resurrection. In his *The Hope of the Early Church*, Brian Daley dedicates twenty pages to Alexandrian faith. Just over three of those pages are offered to Clement; the remaining pages are given to Origen. While McWilliam offers considerably more ink to Clement in her book, much of her attention is given to issues other than (albeit somewhat related to resurrection, like creation and incarnation. In reality, these studies are among the better examples. Neither Claudia Setzer, PHEME Perkins, nor N. T. Wright pay any attention to Clement in their studies of the topic of resurrection.

³⁶⁹Hill, 172. It is assumed that Hill's use of the term "traditional" means an interpretation consistent with that of Irenaeus.

³⁷⁰Clement's treatise *On the Resurrection* is lost (*Paed.* I.vi.46). Charles Bigg suggested that rather than being lost, "Clement never composed his promised treatise on the Resurrection." Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913; reprint Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 148.

³⁷¹Peter Karavites states, that "Clement exhibits an admirable openness to pagan thought when many of his contemporaries, apparently equally versed in Greek education, opted to renounce it." Peter Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Brill, 1999), 2. Similarly, Brian

In the words of Salvatore Lilla, “The problem of reconciliation and synthesis between Christianity and Hellenism was felt by no other Christian author of the second century A.D. so deeply as by Clement.”³⁷² At times, these sources of influence conflict with one another. As Jaroslav Pelikan states, “Neither the Christian account of man’s origin nor the Christian picture of his destiny can be bent into congruity with the Greek circle of immortality.”³⁷³ Lastly, the genre and intended audience of his various works influence how Clement articulates his thoughts.³⁷⁴ In addressing the eschatological hope espoused by Clement, Brian Daley writes, “The importance he assigns the traditional features of that hope, and the interpretations he suggests for them, vary with the character of the work he is writing and with the kind of audience - popular or intellectual - for which it is intended.”³⁷⁵

Daley writes of Clement’s eschatology that “Clement draws on both the intellectualist, anthropocentric speculations of Platonic and Stoic cosmology, and on the esoteric, mythically couched revelations of the New Testament apocrypha and the Gnostic documents.” Daley, 44.

³⁷²Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 9. Henry Chadwick has also described Clement as being “hellenized to the core of his being.” Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966): 64.

³⁷³Pelikan, 36-37.

³⁷⁴Daley, 44.

³⁷⁵Daley, 44. Daley reasserts his opinion later when he states, “In his works of a more popular nature, Clement alludes occasionally, although without a great deal of elaboration, to more traditional Christian expectations of an afterlife.” Daley, 46. Charles Hill also writes, “It is especially in the *Paedagogus* . . . that the doctrine receives a place that seems to be quite keeping with traditional orthodox emphasis.” Hill, 173.

Both Daley and Hill have raised the question of the “traditional” aspects of the Christian hope in reference to Clement. Consequently, the following will explore both the “traditional” and the creative elements of Clement’s thought concerning resurrection. It is important to keep in mind that Clement’s orthodoxy is irrelevant to this study. The division between the traditional and creative aspects of his view is simply a means of investigating an issue raised by current scholarship. It also provides a structure for examining Clement’s works.

The texts that are considered first give indication of being intended for a general audience. They include a small work entitled *Who is the Rich Man Being Saved?* (*Quis Dives*), the *Instructor* (*Paed.*), in which Clement “instructs Christians in the way they should live and the virtues they should try to acquire,”³⁷⁶ and a fragment containing Clement’s interpretation of I Peter. Texts that are more esoteric are considered later and include the *Stromateis* (*Strom.*) which has been described as “an artful construction of clues, rooted in advanced ethics, directing disciplined and initiated Christian Gnostics toward the third stage of philosophy, esoteric knowledge (gnosis),”³⁷⁷ and the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Excerpta*) in which Clement has preserved numerous statements from a Gnostic teacher along with his own comments.

³⁷⁶Eric Osborn, “Clement of Alexandria,” in *The First Christian Theologians*, ed. G. R. Evans (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 127.

³⁷⁷Walter H. Wagner, “Clement of Alexandria,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. For an examination of the nature of the *Strom.*, see Daniel Ridings “Clement of Alexandria and the Intended Audience of the *Stromateis*,” in *Studia Patristica*, 31, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 517-521.

In order to appreciate Clement's thoughts on bodily resurrection, it is helpful to begin with an understanding of his overall theological enterprise. For Clement, the incarnation of Christ provides the possibility of "transforming earth-born man into a holy and heavenly being" (*Paed.* I.xii.98). Thus, the Christian life consists of a gradual progression or προκοπή toward perfection (*Strom.* VI.xiii.107.2-3). This goal of perfection is also known as deification or divinization. This is fundamental to Clement's thought, and everything else is secondary to it. Joanne McWilliam expresses the ramification of this for Clement's view of the body when she writes, "Clement's primary interest lay not in its fate, but in the perfection of the knowledge of faith."³⁷⁸ It is also important to understand this element of Clement's thought because it is connected to his understanding of the resurrected life, since the one "who has first moderated his passions and trained himself for impassibility, and developed to the beneficence of gnostic perfection, is here equal to the angels" and is "luminous already" (*Strom* VI.xiii.107.2-3).

Traditional Elements in Clement's Writings

While most forms of Gnosticism and some forms of Greco-Roman philosophy understood creation to be evil, there is no question that Clement understood creation to be inherently good. This is apparent when Clement credits the existence of creation to the divine Logos rather than attributing it to a mistake of a demiurge as in Gnosticism. As Clement quotes John 1:3 approvingly: "All things were made by him" (*Excerpta* 8.2). Likewise, Clement cites Wisdom 2.23 that God created humanity "for immortality, and

³⁷⁸McWilliam, 120-121.

made him an image of His own nature" (*Strom.* VI.xii.97.1).

As was noted previously in the section on Irenaeus, many Gnostics taught that people had different natures. The same is reported in the *Excerpta*, "From Adam three natures were begotten. The first was the irrational, which was Cain's, the second the rational and just, which was Abel's, the third the spiritual, which was Seth's. Now that which is earthly is "according to the image" (*Excerpta* 54:2). In *Excerpta* 56 we read, "Therefore many are material, but not many are psychic, and few are spiritual." Clement rejects the threefold distinction of people made by the Gnostics. Based on Paul's concept of equality in Colossians 3:11, Clement instructs that "It is not, then, that some are enlightened Gnostics and others are only less perfect Spirituals in the same Word, but all, putting aside their carnal desires, are equal and spiritual before the Lord." (*Paed.* I.vi.31).³⁷⁹

As a result of its positive view of creation, "traditional" Christian thought believed in the cooperation between the body and soul. As Jaroslav Pelikan wrote, "The Christian doctrine of creation forbids setting body and soul into such an antithesis that they appear alien to each other."³⁸⁰ One way in which Clement demonstrates a compatibility between body and soul is by rejecting the idea of a pre-existent soul.³⁸¹ A

³⁷⁹I will not be exploring Clement's understanding of the composition of the human person other than his view of the relationship between the soul and body. For a treatment of various models proposed by Clement, see Behr, 136-139.

³⁸⁰Pelikan, 40.

³⁸¹Pelikan, 35 and 36. In addition, it is clear that some believed that the account of God's covering Adam's and Eve's nakedness with "coats of skin" in Genesis 3 was a description of the embodiment of the soul. This implies a pre-existent soul and

very helpful passage for understanding Clement's view of the relationship between the body and soul is *Strom.* IV.xxvi. Clement writes,

Those, then, who run down created existence and vilify the body are wrong; not considering that the frame of man was formed erect for the contemplation of heaven, and that the organization of the senses tends to knowledge; and that the members and parts are arranged for good, not for pleasure. Whence this abode becomes receptive of the soul which is most precious to God; and is dignified with the Holy Spirit through the sanctification of soul and body, perfected with the perfection of the Saviour. And the succession of the three virtues is found in the Gnostic, who morally, physically, and logically occupies himself with God. . . . For "the flower of grass," and "walking after the flesh," and "being carnal," according to the apostle, are those who are in their sins. The soul of man is confessedly the better part of man, and the body the inferior. But neither is the soul good by nature, nor, on the other hand, is the body bad by nature. Nor is that which is not good straightway bad. . . . The constitution of man, then, which has its place among things of sense, was necessarily composed of things diverse, but not opposite - body and soul (*Strom.* IV.xxvi.163.1-3; 164.2-3,5).

The main theme of this passage is that soul and body are different from one another but they are both good. This differs significantly from the dualism of many Greek philosophies, since for Clement the soul and body are not opposite forces but partners working toward the same goal of perfection. Perhaps the most striking feature of this passage is Clement's claim that both the soul and body are sanctified.³⁸²

As a result of the cooperation between the body and soul, Clement can affirm the body's participation in the afterlife. This both aligns him with the "traditional" elements

makes the physical body a result of sin. Clement rejects the interpretation of Genesis 3 that allows some to argue for the soul's pre-existence when he writes that the "coats of skins" in Cassia's view are bodies. . . . both he and those who teach the same as he does are wrong" (*Strom.* III.xiv.95.2).

³⁸²This can also be found in *Strom.* III.vi.47.1 where Clement teaches that "in us it is not only the spirit which ought to be sanctified, but also our behavior, manner of life, and our body." See also *Paed.* I.xiii.102.

of the Church and distinguishes him from most Gnostics. We find evidence of this in the first book of the *Paed.*, where Clement states that God “concerns Himself with the whole creature, and as the Physician of the whole man heals both body and soul” (*Paed.* I.ii.6.2). He also opposes the Gnostics by teaching that the resurrection of the believing dead is a future event and that we do not presently possess it. He writes that at present, we can only anticipate that which we will have “as an actuality after the resurrection” (*Paed.* I.vi.29.3). He argues the same point more strongly in *Strom.* III.vi.48.1-2 where he states, “If, as they say, they have already attained the state of resurrection, and on this account reject marriage let them neither eat nor drink.”³⁸³

Clement’s most direct comments on resurrection occur in a fragment preserved in Latin by Cassiodorus, where Clement is commenting on I Peter. He begins by rejecting the idea of metempsychosis or reincarnation when he indicates that the soul never returns a second time to the body in this life - “*Decebat autem iterum nunquam reverti secundo ad corpus animam in hac vita.*”³⁸⁴ While the soul does not return to the body in this life, it will be reunited to it in the resurrection.³⁸⁵ The principle that Clement employs is that the soul will seek out its body at the resurrection according to its proper form, *iuxta*

³⁸³The point here is that the resurrection is a future event. I will return to this passage when examining Clement’s view of the nature of the resurrected body.

³⁸⁴GCS, *Clem.* III: 203, lines 10-11. Clement’s opposition to reincarnation is also found in *Strom.* IV.xii.85.3 where he states that souls do not return to bodies and that the idea that they do is from the devil.

³⁸⁵GCS, *Clem.* III: 203, line 13.

genus proprium.³⁸⁶ Clement also declares “*quoniam non est naturaliter anima incorruptibilis, sed gratia dei per fidem et iustitiam et intellectum perficitur incorruptibilis*.”³⁸⁷ Another explicit affirmation of bodily resurrection is found in the *Paed.* where Clement states that the Tutor “wants to save my flesh” (σώσαι βούλεταί μου τὴν σάρκα) by wrapping it in the robe of immortality (*Paed.* I.ix.84.3).

Evidence of Clement’s Creativity

It is difficult to overstate the significant contribution that Clement’s creativity has had on Christian theology.³⁸⁸ In terms of bodily resurrection, there are several points to

³⁸⁶GCS, *Clem.* III: 203, line 14. Clement’s intended meaning for this phrase is not entirely clear, but it seems to suggest that people receive different types of bodies according to merit.

³⁸⁷GCS, *Clem.* III: 203, lines 20-22. Brian Daley believes Clement’s notes on this passage express a belief that both the righteous and the unrighteous will rise. See Daley, 46.

³⁸⁸Clement’s theology forged new frontiers as a result of his utilization of philosophy. Karavites observes that he “is the first among the early ecclesiastic writers to deal extensively . . . with the freedom of man’s will.” Peter Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Brill, 1999), 176. Annewies van den Hoek observes that “Almost for the first time in a Christian context, he [Clement] thinks about the implications of martyrdom from a speculative point of view.” A. van den Hoek, “Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom,” in *Studia Patristica*, 26, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 327. Jules Gross notes that “Clement is the first one who uses the term θεοποιεῖν to refer to the deifying action of the incarnated Logos in the Christian.” Eventually the term becomes standard among Greek Fathers. Jules Gross, *Divinization of the Christian According to the Greek Fathers*, trans. Paul Onica (Anaheim, CA: A & C Press, 2002), 134. Brian Daley has observed that Clement was “the first Christian exponent of the doctrine of purgatorial eschatological suffering” as well as “the first Christian writer to suggest universal salvation for all intelligent creatures.” Daley, 47.

observe. First, while Clement affirmed the relationship between the body and soul, he also understood the departure from the temporal body to be a positive change. Among the passages that express this are some from the *Stromateis*. In addressing the subject of persecution, Clement states that if we had the right perspective, “we should feel obliged to those who have afforded the means for speedy departure” (*Strom.* IV.ii.80).³⁸⁹ Furthermore, Clement teaches that in terms of conformity to the image of God, “the words ‘after the image and likeness,’ as we have said before are not directed to physical matter - it is not right to compare mortal and immortal - but to intellect and reason, whereby the Lord can stamp his seal appropriately on the likeness related to his beneficence and his authority” (*Strom.* II.xix.102.6). Thus, conformity to the image and likeness of God is not meant for the body. But how can Clement affirm the existence of a visible body in the afterlife, if it is not intended for perfection? He is able to affirm the presence of a body in the afterlife by emphasizing the existence of several different kinds of bodies.

The *Excerpta* is a particularly helpful text at this point. In *Excerpta* 10.1, Clement argues that all things have shape and a body, even if it is radically different from our understanding of bodies in this world. He states, regarding the Son,

But not even the world of spirit and of intellect, nor the archangels and the First-Created, no, nor even he himself is shapeless and formless and without figure, and incorporeal; but he also has his own shape and body corresponding to his preeminence over all spiritual beings, as also those who were first created have bodies corresponding to their preeminence over the beings subordinate to them.

³⁸⁹Another passage is *Strom.* VII.xii.83, where Clement describes the death of the true gnostic as “leaving all hindrances, and despising all matter which distracts him, he cleaves the heaven by knowledge.”

The inference from his statements is that even God can be said to have a body.³⁹⁰ In other words, incorporeality for Clement is a matter of perspective. In *Excerpta* 11.2-3, he quotes I Cor. 15.40, “There is one glory of the heavenly, another of the earthly, another of angels, another of archangels, because in comparison with bodies here, like the stars, they are incorporeal and formless, as in comparison with the Son, they are dimensional and sensible bodies.” Later, he states, “even the soul is a body. . . . And how can the souls which are being punished be sensible of it, if they are not bodies? Certainly he says, ‘Fear him who, after death, is able to cast soul and body into hell.’ Now that which is visible is not purged by fire, but is dissolved into dust. But, from the story of Lazarus and Dives, the soul is directly shown by its possession of bodily limbs to be a body” (*Excerpta* 14.2-4).

This means that according to Clement, the resurrected body is different from the temporal one. One example of this is Clement’s use of Matt. 22:30 and its parallels that “souls are neither male nor female” (*Strom.* VI.xii.100.3), and that we become like or equal to angels (*Strom.* VI.xiii.105.1). As will be demonstrated below, another example of the radical difference of the resurrected body occurs in *Strom.* III where Clement offers his rationale for the continued validity of marriage.

It appears that some people were claiming that they had already attained a resurrected state, which means that they were finished with the temporal desires of life and were no longer in need of marriage. Clement’s response has been noted earlier when

³⁹⁰This is different from what will be observed in Origen.

he asks why, if some people have conquered life's temporal desires, do they continue to eat and drink, since we know that the stomach will not be included in the resurrection (*Strom.* III.vi.48.1-2)? He continues by stating that "the apostle says that in the resurrection the belly and food shall be destroyed. Why then do they hunger and thirst and suffer the weaknesses of the flesh and all the other needs which will not affect the man who through Christ has attained the hoped for resurrection?" While Clement's basis for excluding the stomach from the afterlife is interesting, it is not particularly germane here. Rather, it is significant that for Clement the resurrected body does not appear to include all of the organs involved in the common functions of bodily life.

There are several points which I wish to recall as I conclude this section on Clement of Alexandria. First is Clement's profound admiration for creation. The material body is not evil nor the result of a mistake. Second, Clement was convinced that the human person consisted of both body and soul, designed to work together toward the goal of conformity to Christlikeness.³⁹¹ Third, while Clement articulated a faith in bodily resurrection, it was one that anticipated considerable change to the material body. Describing the change that occurred in Christ's resurrected body, he wrote, "He says that He is flesh, and very likely means flesh that has risen after having passed through the fire, as wheat destined to become bread rises from the destruction of the seed, and flesh which yet has gathered all the churches together in gladness of heart through fire, as the wheat is gathered together and baked by fire to become bread" (*Paed.* I.vi.46).

³⁹¹I am not suggesting that there are only two elements in Clement's view of a person, but that these two worked together.

This passage accentuates the difference between bodies by extending the seed metaphor beyond what has been noted previously. Where the comparison in other authors was often between the seed that is buried and the wheat that springs up, in this passage it is between the seed and the baked bread.³⁹² Subsequently, the body will experience dramatic change, but this should not be understood as an end of corporeality. Arkadi Choufrine explains Clement's notion of incorporeality, by stating that he "means the operations of the mind freed from the "flesh" in the sense of passions only, not from corporeality *per se*. For even the demons, angels, and human souls have, for Clement, some kind of bodies peculiar to them. Nothing of that which has come into being transcends corporeality."³⁹³ As Clement writes, "if we renounce the deeds of the flesh and clothe this pure flesh with incorruption, we are living a life like that of the angels" (*Paed.* II.x.100).

Origen³⁹⁴

³⁹²The fact that the baked bread is a reference to communion does not diminish the significance of the way in which Clement has expanded the metaphor.

³⁹³Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 183-184.

³⁹⁴References to the Greek text of *Contra Celsum* are from Origène, *Contre Celse*, trans. Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967-1976). English quotations are from Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965). References to the Greek and Latin texts of *De Princ.* are from Origène, *Traité des Principes*, trans. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978-1984). English quotations are from Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). Quotations from the English translation of Origen's

Origen was born around 185 and was reared in Alexandria.³⁹⁵ This means that he is the first person examined in this study who was a native Alexandrian. Despite the fact that there is no mention of Clement in any of Origen's surviving writings, it is generally assumed that Origen was influenced, perhaps even instructed by Clement.³⁹⁶ Around 203, he became the head of the catechetical school in Alexandria.³⁹⁷

Origen's view of resurrection is the most complex view of resurrection of those

Exhortation to Martyrdom and book IV of *De Princ.* are from Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, First Principles: Book IV, Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers*, trans. Rowan Greer (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). References to the Greek text of the *Dialogue with Heraclides* is from Origène, *Entretien d'Origène avec Héraclide*, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960). The English translation of *Dialogue with Heraclides* is from Origen, *Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul*, trans. Robert S. Daly, S.J., Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). References to the Latin text of Origen's *Homilies on Genesis* are from Origène, *Homélie sur la Genèse*, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976). Quotations from the English are from Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1982). References to the English translation of Origen's commentary on Psalm 1 are from Jon Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity in Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 373-376.

³⁹⁵Trigg, *Origen*, 4.

³⁹⁶Trigg, *Origen*, 9. This has recently become even more likely in light of Caroline Hammond Bammel's critical edition of Origen's commentary on Romans in which she notes numerous parallels between this work of Origen and Clement's *Stromateis*. Caroline Hammond Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Übersetzung Rufins, Buch 1-3* (Freiburg: Herder, 1990).

³⁹⁷Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 7. See also R. van den Broek, "The Christian 'School' of Alexandria," 198. These scholars are among those who view the Alexandrian school under Pantaenus and Clement as unofficial. If correct, this would mean that Origen is the first official head of the school, having been appointed by Bishop Demetrius.

examined here. Consequently, there is little about it that enjoys scholarly consensus.³⁹⁸

One of the primary reasons for the diversity of opinion is the fact that Origen both defends and opposes the doctrine of bodily resurrection. Henri Crouzel writes that Origen

is concerned about opinions that he considers erroneous, with shortcomings which he is anxious to overcome. In fact he wants to affirm the reality of the resurrection of bodies in the face of infidels and heretics who deny it. But he perceives acutely that the conceptions many Christians hold of this mystery are largely responsible for this denial. . . . So Origen begins by opposing the doctrine of the resurrection current among many Christians of his own day.³⁹⁹

In what follows, we shall consider both Origen's defense and opposition to bodily resurrection. By exploring these diverse approaches, we shall obtain a better understanding of Origen's view on bodily resurrection.

Among Origen's works that are consulted in this section are his *Homilies on Genesis* and a fragment of a commentary on Psalm 1 which has been preserved by Methodius and Epiphanius. More extensive reference will be made to his defense of his teaching found in *Dialogue with Heraclides (Dial. Her.)*, his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, his defense and explanation of the faith in *Contra Celsus (Celsus)*, and his most famous work, *De Principiis (De Princ.)*. It is important to understand that while the *De Princ.*

³⁹⁸While explaining Origen's view of resurrection in detail, Brian Daley notes that it is "one of the most debated points in Origen's eschatology." Daley, 51.

³⁹⁹Crouzel, *Origen*, 249-250. Caroline Bynum articulates a similar understanding when she writes, "Origen saw himself as treading a middle way between, on the one hand, Jews, millenarian Christians, and pagans who (he thought) understood bodily resurrection as the reanimation of dead flesh and, on the other hand, Gnostics and Hellenists who (he thought) denied any kind of ultimate reality either to resurrection or body." Bynum, 64.

expresses Origen's thought, it is an expression of his theological exploration and speculation and not necessarily his understanding of dogma. He states, "the reader must carefully consider and work out for himself; for we must not be supposed to put these forward as settled doctrines, but as subjects for inquiry and discussion" (*De Princ.* II.8.4).⁴⁰⁰

Origen's Defense of Bodily Resurrection⁴⁰¹

In the preface to *De Princ.* Origen includes "the resurrection of the dead" as an element of the rule of faith having been taught by the apostles. He states that "*erit tempuo resurrectionis moruorum cum corpus hoc . . . surget in gloria*" (*De Princ. praef.* 5). He repeats this belief in II.10.1 and proceeds to vigorously defend the doctrine. The II.10.1 passage is particularly noteworthy as I believe it is a fitting description for the present state of the doctrine in the twenty-first century. Origen offers his rationale for discussing the resurrection when he states, "it seems not reasonable to repeat a few of the arguments from our former works, particularly because some make this objection to the faith of the church, that our beliefs about the resurrection are altogether foolish and silly."

⁴⁰⁰This statement is offered in the context of Origen's treatment of the soul which will be addressed later. It nevertheless serves as a helpful word of caution.

⁴⁰¹It should be noted that Origen operates with two definitions of resurrection. The first refers to the partial resurrection that occurs in the soul as it becomes morally conformed to God's likeness. The second is the final resurrection. Since this study is only about the latter, the first will not be discussed. See Henri Crouzel, "La 'première' et la 'seconde' résurrection des hommes selon Origène," *Didaskalia* 3 (1973): 3. See also Mark J. Edwards, "Origen's Two Resurrections," *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1995): 502-518.

In responding to those who find the Creed to be foolishness, he argues that one must either deny the resurrection of the dead altogether or admit that there is a resurrection of the body, since “the expression ‘rise again’ could not properly be used except of that which had previously fallen” (*De Princ.* II.10.1).⁴⁰² Therefore, “no one can doubt that these bodies rise again in order that at the resurrection we may once more be clothed with them” (*De Princ.* II.10.1). This means that the resurrected body must be “our own individual bodies, existing in some recognizable form.”⁴⁰³

Mark Edwards explains the significance of this when he writes, “if anywhere, he might have been expected to disguise this Pauline stumbling-block; yet in fact he rather insists it is faith in a corporeal resurrection that sets apart the Christian from the Greek.”⁴⁰⁴ In his argument against Celsus, Origen even goes as far as to affirm “the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh,” which he says is “preached in the churches” (*Celsus* V.18).

Origen’s Refutation of Bodily Resurrection

While Origen acknowledges that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is a fundamental part of the Church’s kerygma, he goes to great lengths to refute the views of resurrection belonging to simple-minded Christians who believe that the resurrected body

⁴⁰²For a study of this formula, see Ton H.C. van Eijk, “Only that can rise which has previously fallen: the history of a formula,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971): 517-529.

⁴⁰³Daley, 51.

⁴⁰⁴Edwards, “Two Resurrections,” 503.

is simply the temporal flesh that has been reanimated. He writes,

Now some men, who reject the labour of thinking and seek after the outward and literal meaning of the law, or rather give way to their own desires and lusts, disciples of the mere letter, consider that the promises of the future are to be looked for in the form of pleasure and bodily luxury. And chiefly on this account they desire after the resurrection to have flesh of such a sort that they will never lack the power to eat and drink and to do all things that pertain to flesh and blood, not following the teaching of the apostle Paul about the resurrection of a “spiritual body.” (*De Princ.* II.11.2).

In rejecting Celsus’ accusation on the subject, he states, “Neither we, nor the divine scriptures maintain that those long dead will rise up from the dearth and live in the same bodies without undergoing any change for the better; and in saying this Celsus falsely accuses us” (*Celsus* V.18). Instead, “the end will be like the beginning” (*De Princ.* I.6.2). As will be demonstrated, this means that for Origen the nature of the resurrected body is spiritual not temporal. In order to appreciate his argument it is necessary to briefly consider his anthropology.

Origen understands the two accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 as describing two acts of creation.⁴⁰⁵ In Genesis 1:26, we are told of God’s decision to make man in his own image. In reference to this passage Origen writes, “We do not understand, however, this man . . . to be corporeal. For the form of the body does not contain the image of God, nor is the corporeal man said to be ‘made,’ but ‘formed,’ as it is written in the words which follow. For the text says: ‘And God formed man,’ that is fashioned, ‘from the

⁴⁰⁵Origen not only suggests that the two counts refers to two different creations, he completely rejects the idea that they are two accounts of the same act. As he states in *Dialogue with Heraclides*, “Some people think that it is a repetition in the creation account. . . . But we are not so mad as either to say that God is composed of an inferior element and a superior element, in order to have the *image* apply to both” (*Dialogue with Heraclides* 12.7-17).

slime of the earth”” (*Homilies on Genesis* I:13).⁴⁰⁶ The body cannot contain the image of God, because God is the only one who is perfectly incorporeal (*De Princ.* I.6.4 - *sine materiali substantia*).

Instead of the body, the object that is in the image of God in Genesis 1:26-27 is the νοῦς, *mens*, or rational soul. As Origen states, “It is our inner man, invisible, incorporeal, incorruptible, and immortal which is made ‘according to the image of God’” (*Homilies on Genesis* I:13). While these passages suggest that the fundamental nature of humanity is incorporeal, it should be remembered that only God was truly incorporeal. He writes, “the original creation was of rational beings, it is only in idea and thought that a material substance is separable from them, and that though this substance seems to have been produced for them or after them, yet never have they lived or do they live without it; for we shall be right in believing that life without a body is found in the Trinity alone” (*De Princ.* II.2.2).

There are other elements of Origen’s anthropology that should be noted. For example, the νοῦς or *mens* is intricately related to the soul. According to Origen, “Mind when it fell was made soul, and soul in its turn when furnished with virtues will become mind” (*De Princ.* II.8.3). Origen also articulates an interesting view of the body. He states, “Those rational beings who sinned and on that account fell from the state in which they were, in proportion to their particular sins were enveloped in bodies as a punishment; and when they are purified they rise again to the state in which they formerly were,

⁴⁰⁶For a more detailed treatment of the role of God’s image in Origen’s thought, see Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l’image de Dieu chez Origène* (Aubier: Mouton, 1956).

completely putting away their evil and their bodies” (*De Princ.* II.8.3).⁴⁰⁷ In addition, Origen employs *σῶμα* in a variety of ways, because as was observed with Clement, there are different kinds of bodies that exist. He invites his readers to

Consider whether one ought to agree with a man who criticizes the Christians when he puts forward such doctrines, and if one should abandon a philosophy which accounts for the diversity of bodies by the hypothesis that different qualities are given to them. For we also know that there are “both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.” (*Celsus* IV.57).

Later in the same passage Origen notes differences in heavenly bodies, which leads him to conclude, “Therefore also, as we believe in the resurrection of the dead, we affirm that changes occur in the qualities of bodies” (*Celsus* IV.57).⁴⁰⁸

Michael O’Laughlin explains the interaction of the various elements of Origen’s anthropology by stating, “The spirit and the flesh impose on or influence the core of the human person, the soul. The *πνεῦμα* attempts to guide the soul towards God and away from the distractions of materiality.”⁴⁰⁹ In spite of the inferiority of the material body,

⁴⁰⁷It must also be noted that Origen writes of this theory: “This statement of ours, however, that mind is changed into soul, or anything else that seems to point in that direction, the reader must carefully consider and work out for himself; for we must not be supposed to put these forward as settled doctrines, but as subjects for inquiry and discussion” (*De Princ.* II.8.4).

⁴⁰⁸Spirit is another aspect of Origen’s anthropology, but it is beyond the parameters of this study to investigate. This is because *πνεῦμα* has multiple meanings in the writings of Origen. Among the possible referents are the Holy Spirit and the divine breath that animates all living creatures. See “*πνεῦμα*” in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). For the purpose of this study, it is sufficient to understand *πνεῦμα* as “l’élément divin présent dans l’homme.” Henri Crouzel, “L’anthropologie d’Origène: de l’arche au telos,” in *Arche e Telos*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1981), 38.

⁴⁰⁹Michael O’Laughlin, “The Anthropology of Evagrius Ponticus and Its Sources,” in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and

Origen unequivocally maintains that the material body is the work of God, thus countering Celsus' claim that "the soul is God's work, but the nature of the body is different," which is to say that nothing corruptible can be the work of God (*Celsus* IV.56).

One of the difficulties of Origen's position arises at this point. Joseph Trigg asks, "If the ultimate source of all things is the incorporeal godhead, will not corporeal existence, entailing, as it does, the possibility of a differentiation from God, ultimately cease to exist when God is all in all?"⁴¹⁰ In order to appreciate the nuances of Origen's position, it is necessary to understand his multiform use of the idea of incorporeality.

Crouzel has noted that Origen employs the idea of incorporeality in two distinct ways.⁴¹¹ The first addresses the state of the soul after death and before the final

William Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988), 359. Among the passages that support this idea is Origen's discussion of the soul of Christ, where we read, "Into the hands of His Father He commends not His soul, but His spirit; and when He says that the flesh is weak, He does not say that the soul is willing, but the spirit: whence it appears that the soul is something intermediate between the weak flesh and the willing spirit" (*De Princ.* II.8.4).

⁴¹⁰Trigg, 30. Anders-Christian Lund Jacobsen draws the same conclusion: "that in the consummation, the rational beings will once again be without bodies." Anders-Christian Lund Jacobsen, "Origen on the Human Body," in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 651.

⁴¹¹Henri Crouzel, "La doctrine origénienne du corps ressuscité," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 81 (1980): 175. More recently, Lawrence Hennessey has observed three uses of incorporeality in Origen. Lawrence Hennessey, "A Philosophical Issue in Origen's Eschatology: The Three Senses of Incorporeality," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 373. According to Hennessey, Origen's third sense refers to "a life which is in no way a slave to the body and its passions and corruptions." Since this is not directly relevant to the present study, I will be only addressing Hennessey's first two senses of the term, which are also Crouzel's.

resurrection and refers to being without any body.⁴¹² The second refers to being without a temporal body.⁴¹³ While Origen frequently uses the term incorporeal in reference to the human soul, as Crouzel writes, “La plupart des textes d’Origène présentent l’âme sans corps entre mort et résurrection.”⁴¹⁴ While I do not find Crouzel’s distinction helpful in completely alleviating the problem raised by Trigg, it should be noted that Origen emphatically rejects the idea “that in this ‘end’ material or bodily nature will utterly perish” (*De Princ.* I.6.4).⁴¹⁵

In light of Origen’s emphasis on the transformation involved in resurrection, how does Origen account for continuity between the temporal and resurrected lives so as to affirm personal survival?⁴¹⁶ Origen understands life to be in a perpetual state of “flux” which means that the materiality of the body is particularly susceptible to change (*De Princ.* III.1.2). In a fragment on Psalm 1:5 preserved by Methodius and Epiphanius, Origen suggests that in light of the body’s state of continuous change that a “river is not a bad name for the body, since strictly speaking, the initial (*proton*) substratum

⁴¹²Hennessey, “Incorporeality,” 373.

⁴¹³Hennessey, “Incorporeality,” 373.

⁴¹⁴Henri Crouzel, “Mort et immortalité selon Origène,” *Bulletin de Litterature Ecclesiastique* 79 (1978): 181.

⁴¹⁵Another example of this is Origen’s refutation of the idea that “rational creatures can at any time lead an existence out of the body” (*De Princ.* II.3.3 and II.2.2).

⁴¹⁶As Henry Chadwick states, “the evidence points to the conclusion that [Origen] held to the continuance of personal identity in some form.” Henry Chadwick, “Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body,” *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948), 102.

(*hypokeimenon*) of the bodies is perhaps not the same for even two days.”⁴¹⁷

Consequently, according to Origen’s thought, it is not only unnecessary but erroneous to link personal survival to the temporal body, given the fact that the temporal body is itself continually changing.

This does not mean that Origen ignores the issue of continuity, however. It simply means that rather than the body,

the principle of continuity between present and future forms of the human body is clearly the soul, which acts throughout life as an ‘inherent principle of intelligibility. . . . In this sense, it is more correct to say - as Scripture does - that the incorruptible soul ‘clothes’ the body with its own permanence than that the body, as the garment of the soul, is itself made immortal.”⁴¹⁸

While the soul is the fundamental means of continuity for Origen, he also provides further means of continuity through his use of the terms ὄχημα and εἶδος.

Lawrence Hennessey writes, “Origen’s use of the Middle Platonic ὄχημα helps to clarify a critical problem in his Christian theology of resurrection: there must be real continuity between the earthly and the glorified body.”⁴¹⁹ In his commentary on Psalm 1, Origen states that there is a vehicle (ὄχημα) of the soul at the moment it departs which has the same form of the earthly body.⁴²⁰ This text is also helpful in understanding Origen’s

⁴¹⁷Dechow, 373-374.

⁴¹⁸Daley, 52.

⁴¹⁹Hennessey, “Incorporeality,” 377.

⁴²⁰This is from Crouzel’s translation of the *Commentaire sur le Psaume I*: “Peut-être on comprendra par là le vehicule of the soul au moment du départ, ayant la même forme que le corps épais et terrestre.” Henri Crouzel, “Le thème platonicien du ‘véhicule de l’âme’ chez Origène,” *Didaskalia* 7 (1977): 226.

use of εἶδος. Dechow explains Origen's notion of εἶδος when he writes that while we are always changing, the real part of us "is always the same - [and] not merely in [the] soul. . . even if the nature of the body is in a state of flux, because the form (εἶδος) characterizing the body is the same."⁴²¹ We can conclude that for Origen, the εἶδος preserves the form that "shapes and integrates the material body."⁴²² Jon Dechow observes that this "form (εἶδος) must be understood to be the same in the future."⁴²³

It is clear from this study of Origen that he believed in an embodied final state. It is also clear that this final embodiment varies significantly from the physical body. As was noted above, this does not mean that there is no continuity from the temporal to the resurrected life in Origen's thought. As Jon Dechow notes,

Origen's eschatology, in its own setting, is then an attempt at clear affirmation and articulation of the resurrection against the wide background of late Hellenistic thought. . . . Featuring a sophisticated conception of the corporeal form in the light of ancient philosophy and sciences, it offered a plausible option to many third- and fourth- century Christians for stressing the manner of the whole body's resurrection - and of the whole flesh properly understood. Analogous to Platonic, Aristotelean, and gnostic views of corporeality, Origen's belief was nevertheless basically a way of professing traditional Pauline/New Testament resurrection

⁴²¹Dechow, 374.

⁴²²Daley, 53.

⁴²³Jon Dechow, "Origen and Early Christian Pluralism," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William Petersen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 342. Riemer Roukema also notes that through the εἶδος the identity "en sera préservé." Riemer Roukema, "La résurrection des morts dans l'interprétation origénienne de *1 Corinthiens 15*," in *La résurrection chez les Pères*, Centre d'analyse et de documentation patristiques (Strasbourg: Université Marc Bloch, 2003), 173.

Parenthetically, I find it fascinating that those known for their allegorical interpretation of Scripture interpret I Corinthians 15:50 literally, while others, who typically employ a more literalist hermeneutic, interpret it figuratively.

doctrine in the contemporary terms of intellectual Alexandrian Christianity.⁴²⁴

Later Ante-Nicene Egyptian Bishops

While the previous section of this chapter examined the works of the three most prominent names connected with Alexandrian Christianity, this section focuses on later individuals who are considerably less famous. Unlike the previous section where none of the individuals were Egyptian bishops, all of the people in this section were. In addition, while a significant amount of the writings of Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen have survived, the bishops examined below either wrote little or, as is more likely, little of what they wrote has survived. For this reason, rather than considering the existing material categorically as was done above, the following will examine the relevant texts individually.

Dionysius⁴²⁵

The first Egyptian bishop to be discussed is Dionysius of Alexandria. After his conversion, he became a pupil of Origen and was placed in charge of the catechetical school when Heraclas vacated the position for the episcopacy. He served as bishop from

⁴²⁴Dechow, 352.

⁴²⁵The primary source for what is known about Dionysius is Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.* See also Charles Feltoe, *The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1904); F. C. Conybeare, "Dionysius of Alexandria, Newly discovered letters to the Popes Stephen and Xystus," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 111-114; and Wolfgang Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandrien zur Frage des Origenismus im dritten Jahrhundert* (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1978), which will be cited as Bienert, *Dionysius* hereafter.

248 to 264 CE. During his episcopacy, the Church in Alexandria experienced significant persecution, which resulted in his fleeing from Alexandria. Dionysius is best known for his biblical scholarship which is exhibited in different texts that have survived.⁴²⁶

There are only a handful of texts by Dionysius which are related to the subject of resurrection. The one most pertinent to this study is Dionysius' response to the followers of Nepos. According to Dionysius, Nepos was an Egyptian bishop who tried to prove the kingdom of Christ will be on earth: "Let me say that in many other respects I approve and love Nepos, for his faith and devotion to work, his study of the Scriptures, and for his abundant psalmody by which many of the brethren have till this day been cheered; and I am full of respectful regard for the man, all the more for that he has gone to his rest already."⁴²⁷ While Dionysius appears to take great care to not dishonor the memory of Nepos, he nevertheless rejects the chiliasm that Nepos taught.

Dionysius' response, which is referred to as *On the Promises*, is his attempt at correcting the error of Nepos' millennial views.⁴²⁸ Only a fraction of the original text has survived, and most of what has is about Dionysius' understanding of the nature of the *Apocalypse*. There is one brief reference early in the text that illuminates Dionysius' understanding of the afterlife. Dionysius explains that the chiliasts he is addressing are preventing others from believing any "high and noble thoughts" about the resurrection or

⁴²⁶Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 3rd ed., s.v. "Dionysius the Great."

⁴²⁷Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7:24. All references to Eusebius' *Hist. eccl.* are from the Loeb Classical Library edition.

⁴²⁸ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7:24-25.

being made like Christ.⁴²⁹ In contrast, Dionysius understands the view of chiliasts as being ignoble. In fact, he states that the chiliasts adhere to the materialism of their chiliastic beliefs because of their fondness for bodily pleasure.⁴³⁰

Until recently, there was conflicting information regarding the extent to which Dionysius' agreed with Origen on the subject of the soul's pre-existence. Procopius from the fifth century argued that Dionysius rejected Origen's interpretation, but Feltoe includes a fragment attributed to Dionysius that is consistent with Origen's interpretation.⁴³¹ Feltoe summarizes the confusion when he writes, "Either Procopius is mistaken or the last-named extract is not genuine or Dionysius changed his views in the course of his studies."⁴³² This ambiguity remained for 70 years.

In 1973 Wolfgang Bienert published an article introducing new fragments from codex Vatopédi 236.⁴³³ One of these is from Dionysius' commentary on Ecclesiastes. The fragment is a comment on Ecclesiastes 12:17 and it clearly states that the soul and body were created at the same time, which eliminates the possibility of the soul's pre-existence: "Concerning the soul, . . . the one who formed (humanity) . . . created [it] at

⁴²⁹Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7:24.

⁴³⁰Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7:25. Dionysius' objections against the materialism of the chiliasts is not a result of a negative view of creation. In his treatise *On Nature* he writes against the Stoic and Epicurean concepts of creation popular in his time in favor of an intentional, loving Creator.

⁴³¹Feltoe, xxvii-xxviii

⁴³²Feltoe, xxviii.

⁴³³Wolfgang Bienert, "Neue Fragmente des Dionysius und des Petrus von Alexandrien aus Cod. Vatop 236," *Kleronomia* 5 (1973): 308, 314.

the same time as the body.”⁴³⁴ Later, it states that the soul does not exist before the body.⁴³⁵ Wolfgang Bienert concludes, “Dies aber widerspricht eindeutig der Lehre des Origenes von der Präexistenz der Seelen sowie einer ewigen geistigen Welt, einer ewigen Schöpfung, die sich vorübergehend mit der Materie verbindet.”⁴³⁶ By rejecting this fundamental part of Origen’s understanding of the resurrected state, it is only reasonable to expect that Dionysius’ notion of resurrection differs considerably from Origen’s.⁴³⁷ But what did Dionysius believe?

In assessing Dionysius’ understanding of resurrection, there are several facts to keep in mind. First, Dionysius firmly believed in bodily resurrection. In a letter to Stephanus, who was Bishop of Rome, Dionysius specifically condemns anyone who “despises the doctrine of bodily resurrection.”⁴³⁸ He teaches that those who despise the doctrine should “be at once ranked with the dead.”⁴³⁹ Second, by rejecting the pre-existence of the soul Dionysius rejected the understanding that the original state of humanity was bodiless. Third, while he rejected some of the support for a highly

⁴³⁴This is Tim Vivian’s translation of Bienert’s “Neue Fragmente.” Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 112-113.

⁴³⁵Vivian, 112-113.

⁴³⁶Bienert, *Dionysius*, 116.

⁴³⁷Bienert indicates that the “die spirituelle Deutung der Auferstehungslehre” is one of the areas where Dionysius opposed Origen. Bienert, *Dionysius*, 21.

⁴³⁸Conybeare, 113.

⁴³⁹Coyne, 113.

spiritualized notion of resurrection, Dionysius also rejected the materialistic view of the chiliasts.

As was noted, Dionysius' objection to chiliasm was not merely that Scripture did not support the idea of an earthly kingdom lasting 1,000 years but that its understanding of the Christian hope was not as grand as it should be. Therefore, the available evidence supports the notion that for Dionysius, resurrection had a strong bodily component, but it is one that is far more glorious than the present earthly existence. While he apparently expected the resurrected body to be significantly different from the temporal body, how and to what extent it will differ remains a mystery.

Phileas⁴⁴⁰

The next bishop to be considered is Phileas. While this creates a 40 year gap in this study, little is known or has survived from this time that has relevance for understanding early Alexandrian faith in resurrection.⁴⁴¹ Phileas was bishop of Thmuis, which was along the Nile in lower Egypt. We know from Eusebius that he was imprisoned in Alexandria with three other Egyptian bishops and that their captivity

⁴⁴⁰References to the Greek text and English translation are from Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 229-245. Musurillo chose to use P. Bodmer XX for his translation. For a critical edition of P. Chester Beatty XV, see Albert Pietersma, *The Acts of Phileas Bishop of Thmuis* (Geneve: Peter Cramer, 1984).

⁴⁴¹Among the possible individuals who could be studied are Theognostus and Pierius who had led the Alexandrian school during this time. Only a few lines have survived from their works, and none of them are helpful to my endeavors here. Similarly there is nothing from the bishops who served between Dionysius and Peter (Maximus and Theonas) that can assist this investigation.

figured in the origins of the later Meletian schism. During his imprisonment he wrote a letter praising the faithfulness of the Alexandrian martyrs.⁴⁴² He died as a martyr around 305 CE.

The text of relevance for this study is known as the Acts of Phileas (*Phileas* hereafter). *Phileas* is an account of the bishop's inquisition before the Roman prefect Culcianus. Since the relevant dialogue is brief, I will provide the passage here.

Culcianus: "Do we have concern here for the soul?"

Phileas: "Yes, both for the soul and the body."

Culcianus said: "Why?"

Phileas said: "I have said (that we do), that you may receive there recompense for the good deeds it has done for God."

"The soul alone," said Culcianus, "or the body as well?"

"The soul and the body," said Phileas.

Culcianus said: "This body?"

"Yes," said Phileas.

Culcianus said: "This flesh will rise again?"

In amazement he asked once again: "This flesh will raise again?"

Phileas said, "This flesh will rise again."

It is immediately apparent that Phileas' hope involves both body and soul. The flow of the conversation suggests that Culcianus is shocked by Phileas' faith. His response causes Phileas to repeat his answer that there is hope for both body and soul. Further indication of his apparent disbelief is found in the fact that Culcianus asks Phileas twice if Phileas means "this flesh." Having summarized the more obvious aspects of the passage, I want to mention several issues which the text raises.

First, it is fascinating to note how astonished Culcianus is at the idea of resurrection. It may suggest the degree to which resurrection was an unacceptable belief

⁴⁴²Eusebius, *Eccl. hist.*, VIII.10.2-10.

in the culture outside of Christianity. The question the text poses is, Was the idea of extending hope for bodily life after death surprising, but not as unbelievable as attributing a future hope to the physical flesh?

Second, Phileas does not only express hope for the body and soul but notes that they are both objects of God's judgment and reward. The connection of the body and soul to the idea of judgment is a common theme of early resurrection belief and has been observed previously in *Barnabas* and *Apoc Petri*. It is, therefore, interesting that in his discussion of recompense (ἀμοιβήν), Phileas only mentions reward for the good deeds done and not punishment for wrongs.

Third, in responding to the incredulity of Culcianus, Phileas makes it clear that he believes that this σὰρξ will rise again. I believe that it is reasonable to conclude that Phileas was affirming a resurrection of a fleshly body. This is based on Phileas' emphasis on the σὰρξ and Culcianus' amazement. In spite of Phileas' clarity about the inclusion of the flesh, it is impossible to determine whether Phileas' affirmation refers to the reanimation or the transformation of the temporal flesh. Either way, the *Acts of Phileas* testifies to a definite hope for resurrection that includes flesh.

Peter of Alexandria⁴⁴³

Saint Peter of Alexandria became bishop in 300 CE, which means he was a

⁴⁴³Quotations of the English translation and references to the Greek texts of Peter of Alexandria are from Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988). Unless otherwise noted, the Roman numerals will refer to those assigned by Vivian.

contemporary of Phileas. He lived a few years longer than Phileas and died a martyr in 311 CE. Over time he has received the reputation of being one of the first anti-Origenist bishops. In his important work on Peter, Tim Vivian has successfully questioned several of the presuppositions upon which that claim is based.⁴⁴⁴ In what follows, both Peter's disagreement with and his similarity to Origen on the matter of resurrection will be demonstrated.

The first text to be considered is a Greek fragment of an exposition on the soul (Περὶ ψυχῆς).⁴⁴⁵ In it Peter indicates the simultaneous creation of humanity. He states, "it is not possible for souls to sin in heaven before they assume corporeal form, nor for that matter is hypostasis . . . possible before corporeal existence" (II.1a). The result of this statement is a rejection of Origen's pre-existent soul.⁴⁴⁶ The Syriac version has the interesting addition: "Whence it is known that the body, which is killed by men, also arises united again with the soul in order that both might receive retribution in judgment for those things which they did in this life" (II.2).

The second text of significance to Peter's understanding of resurrection is a

⁴⁴⁴Vivian concludes that the most that can be claimed with certainty is that Peter opposed one or two of Origen's ideas. Vivian, 110-126.

⁴⁴⁵The exposition *On the Soul* has survived in four groups of fragments. Three are Greek and one is Syriac. They "are preserved by Leontius of Byzantium (frag. II.1), the emperor Justinian, (frag. II.1a), and, in a twelfth century codex. . .on the 'Corruptible and the Incorruptible.'" Vivian, 97.

⁴⁴⁶The significance of this has been addressed previously in the section on Dionysius.

fragment from a Paschal letter by Peter.⁴⁴⁷ In Vivian's fragments III.1-2 from codex Vatopedi 236, we read that when we arise from the dead we will be changed "μετασχηματιζόμενοι καὶ συμμορφούμενοι" into his body of glory (III.1) and that "when we arise from the dead we receive a different body, not according to substance, but according to the quality made manifest in him" (III.2).⁴⁴⁸ The subtlety of this difference is clearer when we consider how the texts describe Christ's risen body. Vivian points out the fact that "The Greek fragments do not claim the identity of the resurrection body with the risen body: Jesus, when he rose from the dead, 'received his *own* body' (τὸ ἴδιον ἀπέλαβε σῶμα) not the *same* (τὸ αὐτὸν σῶμα) body."⁴⁴⁹

A second issue from Peter's Paschal letter is the fact that, as Vivian says, he implies a realized resurrection for Christians, by which he means that it is something that is already a present reality.⁴⁵⁰ He discusses the hope that his audience is being made alive - ζωοποιούμεθα (III.2). This is the same word that is used a few lines earlier when referring to Christ's resurrection.⁴⁵¹

All of the comments thus far have been on the existing Greek texts. There is a Syriac fragment attributed to Peter that also deserves comment. The text *On the*

⁴⁴⁷Vivian makes a convincing case that only the Greek fragments can be relied upon for discerning Peter's theology. See Vivian, 109.

⁴⁴⁸Vivian, 102.

⁴⁴⁹Vivian, 123.

⁴⁵⁰Vivian, 103.

⁴⁵¹Vivian, 103.

Resurrection states, “even if the soul leaves the body at the time of separation and dissolution, we are nevertheless a work of art and the work of an artificer, whence we are able to return from the dead since it is known that at the resurrection our mortal bodies put on immortality in order that the body united with the soul might receive the reward which it deserves” (IV.1).⁴⁵² While this understanding of resurrection would be expected if Peter was as anti-Origenist as has traditionally been suggested, it is not supported by the texts believed to be earlier and most reliable. Apart from the Syriac fragments, Peter is like Origen in that he does not refer to the resurrection of the flesh. Instead, his focus is on the radical change that the mortal body will undergo.

Alexander of Alexandria⁴⁵³

In the introduction, I expressed my belief that the testimony of Alexandrian Christianity has been neglected by scholarship. It is likely that this statement is most true in connection with Alexander of Alexandria. Since the purpose of this study is to examine the Ante-Nicene Alexandrian Fathers, Alexander is the last person to be discussed for this retrieval of early Christian faith. This is because Alexander became

⁴⁵²Vivian, 103. Vivian observes, “the emphasis in the Syriac fragment is on the resurrection of the body from the grave, whereas Peter makes no mention of this in the extant Greek fragments.” Vivian, 104.

⁴⁵³References to the Latin text are from Migne, *PG* 18:586-607. Quotations from the English are taken from Budge’s translation of the Coptic. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Homilies in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London; British Museum, 1910), 258-274.

bishop in 313CE and died in 328.⁴⁵⁴ The two events that have given him notoriety are the rise of Arianism which occurred during his episcopacy and his ordination of Athanasius, who accompanied him to the Council of Nicaea.

While the majority of the existing texts attributed to Alexander address the Arian controversy, there is one that has particular relevance to this study. It is a homily referred to as *De Anima et Corpore*. In 1910 E. A. Wallis Budge published his *Coptic Homilies in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, which is a collection of texts he has edited from papyrus Oriental 5001. In it he included a translation of a homily which the manuscript attributes to Athanasius. In the introduction of his book, Budge notes that there is a Syriac version of the same homily in the British Museum that attributes the sermon to Alexander.⁴⁵⁵ Both the Syriac version and a Latin translation by Matthaëus Sciabuanus and Franciscus Mahesebus have been reprinted by Migne. From the time of Budge's comment, this homily was largely ignored by scholars for almost 50 years.

In 1957, Wilhelm Schneemelcher published an essay on this text as part of a *Festschrift*.⁴⁵⁶ In the article, Schneemelcher investigates the issue of the homily's author. While Schneemelcher is careful to note that it is impossible to definitively attribute *De Anima et Corpore* to anyone, he leaves open the possibility of Alexander's authorship and

⁴⁵⁴Berthold Altaner, *Patrology*, trans. Hilda C. Graef (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), 309.

⁴⁵⁵Budge, xlv-xlvi. The work is also attributed to Alexander in *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, ed. Mauritiï Geerard, vII (Turnhout: Brepolis, 1974), 2004.

⁴⁵⁶To my knowledge, this is the only article to have been published on this homily.

seems to be intrigued by the idea.⁴⁵⁷ Before considering what the sermon teaches relevant to bodily resurrection, I want to briefly explore some of the textual reasons for supporting Alexander as the author of *De Anima et Corpore*.

Schneemelcher indicates that the Coptic manuscript is likely to be relatively late.⁴⁵⁸ This gives prominence to the Syriac version with its ascription of the homily to Alexander. In addition, while Schneemelcher never asserts the authorship of Alexander with certainty, he flatly rejects the possibility of Athanasius as the author of the Coptic homily.⁴⁵⁹ In addition to the prominence of the Syriac version, Schneemelcher finds further evidence against Athanasius as author in the fact that both the Coptic and Syriac versions have a noticeable absence of specific references to biblical passages.⁴⁶⁰ This contrasts with the way in which the identifiable writings of Athanasius display an acute awareness and use of Scripture. Instead of Athanasius, he attributes some of the material in the homily to Melito.⁴⁶¹ In the end, he concludes that “Es wäre denkbar, daß tatsächlich Alexander eine frühere Predigt, die von Melito stammte, benutzt hat.”⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁷Wilhelm Schneemelcher, “Der Sermo ‘*De Anima et Corpore*,’ Ein Werk Alexanders von Alexandrien?” in *Festschrift für Günther Dehn*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1957), 143.

⁴⁵⁸Schneemelcher believes that the Coptic text came into existence before the seventh century but probably not before the fifth century. See Schneemelcher, 133.

⁴⁵⁹Schneemelcher, 132.

⁴⁶⁰Schneemelcher, 129.

⁴⁶¹Schneemelcher, 134.

⁴⁶²Schneemelcher, 143.

The Syriac states, “Now the soul, having been taken to Sheol, is bound in fetters by the Evil Tempter. But the king reconstructeth a city which hath fallen down, ,or a general collecteth together [again] the soldiery who has been scattered, or the steersman maketh ready [again] the ship which had foundered, so also is it with the soul. ⁴⁶³ Thus, while the soul and body have their own destinies as in other forms of dualism, the body is not the prison of the soul. Instead, the body is seen as a boat and the soul as the captain.⁴⁶⁴ This is reminiscent of Origen’s concept of ὄχημα - the body as the soul’s vehicle.

There is an interesting aspect of the anthropology presented in *De Anima et Corpore* that is worth noting. The homilist seems to believe that anthropology has changed as a result of Christ’s incarnation. He states, “Now at the time when He fashioned us with His hand, He had not suffered [on our behalf]; but now that He hath begotten us a second time, through the suffering of his death, He suffereth with us even as doth she who gave birth.”⁴⁶⁵ The Coptic text states, “He has made man one again, the soul with the body.”⁴⁶⁶

In terms of resurrection, the Syriac and Coptic versions include different material.

⁴⁶³Budge, 419.

⁴⁶⁴The image of the body as the vehicle of the soul has been noted previously, but is perhaps articulated most strongly in Origen. Among the images that are used are the idea of the body as a ship and the soul as the captain (PG 18.590-591). The Coptic is even more striking as it refers to the soul as an artist and the body as a musical instrument. See Budge, 261.

⁴⁶⁵Budge, 268.

⁴⁶⁶Budge. 266.

The Syriac version clearly asserts that Christ arose, but it does not give any details about the nature of his resurrected body.⁴⁶⁷ The same hope awaits those who are in his image and likeness.⁴⁶⁸ The most explicit treatment of the nature of the resurrected life is found in the homilist's belief that Christ can gather again that which was separated, which almost certainly means the body and soul separated by death.⁴⁶⁹

The Coptic version is slightly more explicit than the Syriac version regarding the nature of the resurrected body, but it is much more extravagant in its celebration of the hope of resurrection. For example, there is a stronger connection between the soul and the body in the Coptic version which seems to extend more hope for the involvement of the physical body in the resurrection. Alexander states, "The Savior Jesus . . . set free the soul from its bonds, and He bound the flesh together inseparably, and He brought the two towards each other, and made them one of one, the soul and the body, and He rejoined them each to the other."⁴⁷⁰ Regarding the extravagance of the Coptic version, every time Christ's victory over death is recounted, the homilist launches into praise. I will conclude this chapter with one example. A few lines after the previous passage, we read, "And now, O soul, sing thou hymns of praise in the body wherein thou art, to thine own

⁴⁶⁷Migne, 18.602.

⁴⁶⁸Migne, 18.603AB.

⁴⁶⁹The idea of gathering that which was separated is stated repeatedly in the last part of the sermon. There is a much stronger sense of the idea of resurrection in the *Additamentum* to the text which Migne provides. It states, "*mortuus, ut vitam nobis rederet; sepultus, ut nos suscitaret,*" and later "*hic omnium resurrectio et salus.*" (Migne, 18.606-607).

⁴⁷⁰Budge, 266.

Imperishable God, because Christ died for us, in order that we might live with Him forever.”⁴⁷¹

It is clear from this passage that Alexander had hope for an embodied final state, where the soul would be connected to the body once again. While both versions express hope for bodily resurrection, the Syriac version of the sermon is less explicit than the Coptic regarding the degree to which the temporal flesh participates in the resurrected life.

Conclusion

In the first chapter, I referenced Boismard’s taxonomy for understanding the biblical testimony regarding life after death. I further suggested that distinguishing between Boismard’s categories was possible by answering two questions. The first was, Does the text in question articulate some sense of embodiment as the final state of a person? The second question was, How does the text handle the issue of continuity and discontinuity between the temporal and resurrected bodies? As I conclude this chapter, I will apply these questions to the texts examined in chapters two and three. I will also utilize an additional question for added clarity.

The new question that I believe will supplement the understanding of the texts in chapters two and three is, If the text in question anticipates a bodily final state, how does it interpret I Corinthians 15:50, which excludes the participation of “flesh and blood” in the kingdom of God? Admittedly, not all of the texts in this study address the verse, but I

⁴⁷¹Budge, 266.

am confident that it is possible to hypothesize a reasonable interpretation for each text. There are two approaches to the verse. The first interprets the “flesh and blood” of I Corinthians 15:50 figuratively. This means that the text understands the phrase to refer to the sinful state of humanity rather than materiality. In this view, the temporal body is not precluded from participating in the final state. The other understands it literally, so that the body of the resurrection is radically transformed, in some instances even being able to be understood as a new body. When these questions are applied to the texts in the early texts from Alexandria, three distinct views are observable.

The first is similar to Boismard’s second view. It does not articulate an embodied final state. These texts believe that the nature of afterlife existence is quite dissimilar to the temporal life since there is no body. Consequently, these texts emphasize the discontinuity over the continuity between the two lives, and any continuity that does exist is attributed to the soul. These texts typically understand I Cor. 15:50 from excluding a bodily component to the afterlife. The texts that are most similar to this description are the *Epistle to Rheginos*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, and the *Gospel of Philip*.

All of these texts have a negative view of material creation and look forward to the soul’s liberation that occurs at death. As Brian Daley writes, “resurrection for Gnostic theology could hardly be called bodily even at all; it is an experience of inner enlightenment, of release from the present bodily world, of radical reinterpretation of the self, its history, and its future.”⁴⁷²

⁴⁷²Brian Daley, “A Hope for Worms: Early Christian Hope,” in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, ed. Ted Peters, Robert John Russell, and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 147.

Both the second and third perspectives articulate a hope for an embodied final state, but they differ in their understanding of the resurrected body. As a result, the issues of continuity/discontinuity and the interpretation of I Cor. 15:50 become important.

The second view is similar to Boismard's first category. It expects the greatest amount of continuity between the present and future lives believe in the reanimation of the physical body at the return of Christ. In fact, there is such a high degree of continuity between the temporal and resurrected bodies that the resurrected body is the temporal body. This view understands that a person's physical body is a fundamental part of being completely human. Within this perspective, there tends to be an emphasis on the resurrection of the flesh specifically, not just the body. These texts also understand the "flesh and blood" of I Cor. 15:50 as addressing something other than the nature of the resurrected body. In light of the above, the texts that fit this category are *Barnabas*, *Apoc. Petri*, Irenaeus' *Haer.*, and the *Acts of Phileas*.⁴⁷³

The remaining texts express the third view which is similar to Boismard's fourth category. These texts articulate faith in bodily resurrection but in a way in which the resurrected body is more a symbol of dissimilarity than continuity. In this view, the soul functions as the means of continuity between death and resurrection. Thus, while this view expects an embodied final state, the emphasis is on the transformation that occurs in

⁴⁷³I am including *Phileas* in this category by taking his discussion of σὰρξ literally. A strong objection to this understanding is that Phileas would be the only example of a material understanding of resurrection from a known Egyptian Christian before Nicaea. It has been demonstrated that while Clement and Origen did not understand the resurrected body to be the temporal body, they nevertheless affirmed the resurrection of the (highly transformed) flesh.

resurrection. These texts tend to understand I Cor. 15:50 as referring to literal flesh and blood. This means that the temporal flesh has no place in the kingdom of God. These texts, like the Gnostic texts above, interpret “flesh and blood” literally, but rather than understanding it as a reason for dismissing the possibility of bodily existence in the afterlife, they understand the verse to be indicating a resurrected body that is spiritual rather than temporal. In this view, the soul continues to exist after the death of the body until the resurrection of the body. While this view expects an embodied final state, the emphasis is on the transformation that occurs in resurrection. Therefore, any continuity that exists between the temporal and spiritual body is attributed to the soul. This describes the works of Clement, Origen, Dionysius, and Peter of Alexandria, and Alexander.

Before considering contemporary affirmations of the doctrine, there are several conclusions that can be drawn. First, it can be said that apart from the Gnostics, the Alexandrian Christians articulated a faith in bodily resurrection. Some expected the resurrected body to be very materialistic while others expected a spiritual body similar to the angels. Second, while even the Alexandrian “problem child” Origen affirmed that the flesh will arise, the preferred manner of referring to the resurrection by those most closely associated with Alexandria, was the phrase, “resurrection of the body,” not “resurrection of the flesh.” Third, the general view of the texts studied here was that while there would be some continuity between the temporal and resurrected bodies, the transformation involved in resurrection was emphasized significantly more. This means that for most of the authors studied here, the resurrected body was more dissimilar than similar to the

temporal body. As a result, personal continuity between the temporal and resurrected state was attributed to the soul.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEMPORARY AFFIRMATIONS OF RESURRECTION FAITH

In chapters two and three, I have shown the range of Alexandrian Christian beliefs about resurrection and the issues at stake regarding some of them. How can that knowledge enrich our theology and preaching today? In this final chapter, I intend first to consider how the Creed's affirmation of belief in "the resurrection of the body" and life everlasting is treated in a few theological texts, chosen for their representative character.

The texts considered in this chapter are treatments of the Creed by some of the most distinguished and widely studied theologians of today: Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI); Wolfhart Pannenberg; and Hans Urs von Balthasar. This will not be an analysis of each man's theology of resurrection, but only a consideration of what they have felt it worth saying on the subject in a popular work, one that any Christian might pick up.

I shall close this chapter and this dissertation by proposing a good way of presenting faith in resurrection of the body today in preaching and catechesis. Both in what I propose should be said and in what I would leave unsaid or even argue against, I shall draw on the Alexandrian tradition and the debates that are reflected in the writings of that time.

Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity*⁴⁷⁴

The first modern interpretation of the Creed to be studied here is Joseph Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity*. The material was first presented as lectures to students at Tübingen in the summer of 1967 and were first published in 1968. The original audience is significant in that the lectures represent Ratzinger's attempt to make the Creed understandable to students familiar with modern philosophy. The impact that the audience has on Ratzinger's presentation is evident when one compares the explanation of the doctrine in his *Introduction* to that found in his *Eschatology*.⁴⁷⁵ The *Introduction* is being considered here because it is intended to be an exposition of the creed.

The key to understanding the interpretation of resurrection which Ratzinger presents in his *Introduction* is his anthropology, and the most important aspect of his anthropology is his position that humans are whole creatures, not a sum of components.

⁴⁷⁴Joseph Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum: Vorlesungen über das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1968). The first English edition was published the following year. While there have been no substantive changes to the content of Ratzinger's explanation of the doctrine in the various editions, references to the English translation will be from the 2004 edition. Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004). The pages in the 1969 English edition are 268-278.

⁴⁷⁵This section will document the creativity with which Ratzinger presents the doctrine in his *Introduction*. His *Eschatology* has a more traditional presentation of the doctrine in which the bodily component of the resurrection is emphasized more vigorously. For explicit affirmations of bodily resurrection in his *Eschatology*, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 134, 147, 172, and 253-254 among numerous others.

As will be demonstrated, Ratzinger carefully tries to find a balance between two extremes: a) understanding the ancient Greek notion of an immortal soul as an acceptable substitute for the Creed's doctrine on bodily resurrection and b) overemphasizing the bodily component of the resurrection.

Ratzinger begins his treatment of the Creed's article on resurrection by explaining the implications of his monistic anthropology when he writes, "from this angle we can understand afresh the biblical message, which promises immortality, not to a separated soul but to the whole man."⁴⁷⁶ He then proceeds to explain the relationship between the Greek notion of the immortal soul and the biblical doctrine of resurrection.

Ratzinger's first step is to help his audience see that the doctrine of bodily resurrection and the idea of immortality are not mutually exclusive. He states, "the hope for the resurrection of the dead simply represents the basic form of the biblical hope for immortality."⁴⁷⁷ He then explains how these concepts came together "each being understood as half the answer to the question of the fate of man."⁴⁷⁸ Lastly, he differentiates between the classical Greek anthropology that understands people as combinations of "two mutually foreign substances," and the "biblical train of thought" that "presupposes the undivided unity of man."⁴⁷⁹ As a result of this unified anthropology, Ratzinger is able to write, "the idea of immortality denoted in the Bible by

⁴⁷⁶Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 347.

⁴⁷⁷Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 348.

⁴⁷⁸Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 348.

⁴⁷⁹Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 349.

the ‘resurrection’ is an immortality of the ‘person.’”⁴⁸⁰ In other words, while Ratzinger readily embraces the term immortality for understanding the Creed’s doctrine of resurrection, he rejects the anthropology that is often associated with it.

Rather than affirm that any particular part of a person is immortal, such as the soul, Ratzinger teaches that immortality is a result of being in dialogical relationship with God. He states, “Immortality results not simply from the self-evident inability of the indivisible to die but from the saving deed of the lover who has the necessary power: man can no longer totally perish because he is known and loved by God”⁴⁸¹

After rejecting the Greek notions that the soul is the true essence of the person and that the soul is naturally immortal, Ratzinger advises caution against an overemphasis on bodies. In addressing the biblical testimony, Ratzinger observes that the New Testament has “no word denoting *only* the body (separated and distinguished from the soul).”⁴⁸² Elsewhere he writes, “The awakening of the dead (not bodies!) of which Scripture speaks is thus concerned with the salvation of the *one*, undivided man.”⁴⁸³ After making this observation, Ratzinger writes that it is “clear that the real heart of the faith in resurrection does not consist at all in the idea of the restoration of bodies.”⁴⁸⁴ Later, he states,

It should be noted here that even the formula of the Creed, which speaks of the

⁴⁸⁰Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 350.

⁴⁸¹Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 350.

⁴⁸²Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 349.

⁴⁸³Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 349.

⁴⁸⁴Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 349.

“resurrection of the body”, the word “body” means in effect “the world of man” (in the sense of biblical expressions like “all flesh will see God’s salvation”, and so on); even here the word is not meant in the sense of a corporeality isolated from the soul.⁴⁸⁵

Ratzinger repeats this idea later when discussing the immortality of people.

For Ratzinger, the fundamental teaching of the Bible on the subject of resurrection “is not the conception of a restoration of bodies to souls after a long interval.”⁴⁸⁶ Instead, it is that the person is the essential part that lives on by the power of God.⁴⁸⁷ This is demonstrated by his understanding of the teachings of John and Paul. “Both John (6:63) and Paul (I Cor. 15:50) state with all possible emphasis that the ‘resurrection of the flesh’, the ‘resurrection of the body’, is not a ‘resurrection of physical bodies’.”⁴⁸⁸ Paul, in particular does not teach “the resurrection of physical bodies, but the resurrection of persons, and this not in the return of the ‘fleshly body’.”⁴⁸⁹ Ratzinger seems to be aware that this diverges from traditional notions of resurrection, when he asks, “If this is the position, is there really such a thing as a resurrected body or can the whole thing be reduced to a mere symbol for the immortality of the person?”⁴⁹⁰

Ratzinger responds to the question in three ways. In my opinion, the strongest and

⁴⁸⁵Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 350-351.

⁴⁸⁶Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 353.

⁴⁸⁷Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 353.

⁴⁸⁸Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 357.

⁴⁸⁹Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 357-358.

⁴⁹⁰Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 356.

most easily understood response is his acknowledgment that we will be like Christ.⁴⁹¹ It is only reasonable to conclude that this means that there is a bodily component to the resurrection, inasmuch as Christ appeared to his followers after his resurrection. In his description of the resurrected Christ, Ratzinger notes, “the life of him who has risen from the dead is not once again *bios*, the bio-logical form of our mortal life within history; it is *zoe*, new, different, definitive life; life that has stepped beyond the mortal realm of *bios* and history, a realm that has been surpassed here by a greater power.”⁴⁹²

The second way by which Ratzinger affirms an embodied final state is his rejection of the alternative. As was noted previously, Ratzinger explicitly rejects the Greek idea of an immortal soul as a sufficient expression of the person.⁴⁹³ The weakest response is his somewhat obscure statement that “in reality this means that the self, which now appears in a body that can be conceived in chemico-physical terms, can, again, appear definitively in the guise of a transphysical reality.”⁴⁹⁴ The hope that Ratzinger offers a bodily resurrection is best summarized in an earlier passage where he states, “the essential part of man, the person, remains; that which has ripened in the course of this earthly existence of corporeal spirituality and spiritualized corporeality goes on existing in a different fashion.”⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 358.

⁴⁹²Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 306-307.

⁴⁹³Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 347.

⁴⁹⁴Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 357.

⁴⁹⁵Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 353.

The evidence is clear that Ratzinger does not extend hope to the physical flesh in his *Introduction*. This was demonstrated most clearly in his interpretation of I Corinthians 15:50. On the other hand, it is also not possible to understand Ratzinger's presentation as rejecting any bodily component, as the texts in my second category do. Instead, Ratzinger's presentation in his *Introduction* is most similar to the texts that affirm a bodily component to the final state that involves considerable change from life in the present temporal body.

Ratzinger's exclusion of the temporal flesh in the resurrected state does not mean that the resurrected life has no connection to the material world for him. He concludes his presentation by affirming that "there is a final connection between matter and spirit in which the destiny of man and of the world is consummated, even if it is impossible for us today to define the nature of this connection."⁴⁹⁶ While this statement does little to aid in understanding the nature of the resurrected life, it allows him to not only affirm the participation of matter in the final state but preserve the mystery of the resurrection as well.

Pannenberg's Apostles' Creed

The second interpretation is provided by Wolfhart Pannenberg and was published in 1972 with the title *The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions*. As the title indicates, Pannenberg is aware that questions or doubts about particular elements of the Christian faith exist. While he does not specifically indicate which doctrines people find

⁴⁹⁶Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 358.

most troublesome, it is safe to assume that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is among them. Pannenberg expresses the problem which this study addresses when he writes,

If the Apostles' Creed has become incomprehensible for many Christians today, or is even a stumbling block in some of its formulations, this is probably due to the circumstance that the facts of redemption listed in its articles seem to have no relation to - or even seem to contradict - reality as it is experienced today; and consequently they are felt to be a hindrance to present-day faith rather than the expression or primary foundation of personal faith. It would therefore seem reasonable to let the statements of the creed drop and to withdraw to the personal act of faith, to trust in Jesus and his message of love. For the ancient church, however, the love of God would have been an idle phrase without the resurrection of the dead, and trust in Jesus would have seemed groundless unless it held fast to the power of God which is present in him and was revealed in his resurrection.⁴⁹⁷

Thus, Pannenberg, like Ratzinger is endeavoring to present the Creed to a modern audience.

In addition to providing evidence of the importance of this study, this statement indicates one of Pannenberg's central themes on the subject of resurrection: the Christian hope for bodily resurrection is inextricably linked to the resurrection of Jesus. It is, therefore, not surprising that Pannenberg begins his treatment of the Creed's article by referring the reader to his comments on the Creed's earlier article on the resurrection of Jesus. Consequently, Pannenberg's interpretation of Christ's resurrection will serve as our starting point as well.

When considering the resurrected Jesus, one of Pannenberg's frequent observations is the radical difference between the resurrected life and what we currently experience. For example, he states, "the resurrection of Jesus was not a return to life as

⁴⁹⁷Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Apostles' Creed: In Light of Today's Questions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 9.

we know it; it was a transformation into an entirely new life.”⁴⁹⁸ Later, he indicates that the language of being “raised from the dead” is metaphorical because “we are dealing with a transformation into a reality which is entirely unknown to us.”⁴⁹⁹

The idea of transformation is a recurring theme in Pannenberg’s understanding of resurrection. As the following passage demonstrates, Pannenberg is interested in both emphasizing the change that must occur and maintaining a sense of continuity between this body and the resurrected body. He states,

The transformation of what is mortal into a spiritual body will therefore be on the one hand so radical that nothing remains unchanged. On the other hand, however, it is this present earthly body which will experience the transformation. . . . What is to be created in place of the present body is not something totally different from it.⁵⁰⁰

Elsewhere, when attempting to address Paul’s description of a spiritual body, Pannenberg is careful to note that Paul does not mean a disembodied spirituality but a radical change to this body.⁵⁰¹

In light of the radical change that the temporal body will experience, it cannot be the means by which personal identity is preserved. This would seem to leave the soul as the only logical option. However, Pannenberg, like Ratzinger, does not attribute the postmortem survival of that which individuates one person from another to either the body or the soul. Instead of the body or soul, Pannenberg’s solution is to propose a

⁴⁹⁸Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 97.

⁴⁹⁹Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 98.

⁵⁰⁰Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 99.

⁵⁰¹Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 98-99.

different view of time. The perspective he proposes can be understood by considering the apocalyptic aspect of Scripture. He states, “For the apocalyptic understanding of time held by early Christianity, that which is to be revealed on earth in the future already stands ready in divine concealment.”⁵⁰² The implication for hope in resurrection is that “the future resurrection of the dead will reveal what already forms the secret life of our history for the eternal God who is present in our lives.”⁵⁰³

By this move, Pannenberg has established the resurrection not as one of the *eschata* but as an event that finds its significance in the ultimate *telos*, which is God. In addition, since it is the *telos* that truly defines each person and not any particular moment in the sequence of time, Pannenberg has no difficulty with continuity. He states,

This then means that the continuity of our present life with the future life of the resurrection of the dead must not be sought in the linear sequence of time, but that it lies in the hiddenness of the eternal God, whose future is now already present for our lives. In this vertical dimension of our present life, the truth about this life - for judgment or salvation - is already present, the truth which has none the less still to be decided in the course of our life. Accordingly the future life can now . . . really be understood as being materially identical with the present one; for the content of this future life will be what fills the still-hidden vertical dimension of our present life.⁵⁰⁴

While I am trying to limit my discussion of these theologians’ comments on the Creed, a separate essay by Pannenberg helps to illuminate this point. In an essay entitled, “The Task of Christian Eschatology,” Pannenberg identifies the difficulties in attributing continuity to either the body or soul and then writes,

⁵⁰²Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 172.

⁵⁰³Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 172-173.

⁵⁰⁴Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 174.

The conceptual difficulties can be solved, it seems to me, only on one condition: the assumption that our life, whose history ends in the moment of death, passes away in that moment from our experience, but not from the eternal presence of God. In God's memory our individual life is preserved. Thus, there is no element of earthly existence that would escape death in order to guarantee our continuous existence beyond death, but only God himself is able, because of his unlimited power, to preserve our temporal lives in his memory and to grant them a new form of existence of the own.⁵⁰⁵

Rather than I Corinthians 15:50, Pannenberg cites I Corinthians 15:53. Thus, Pannenberg not only affirms the bodily component to the final state, he emphasizes that it is “*this* perishable” body that is raised.⁵⁰⁶ He continues,

The stress on the identity of the body despite its transformation is directed against the Platonic idea of the rebirth of the soul in a different body. I mean that man's identity depends on the uniqueness and non-recurrence of his physical existence. That is why the creed insists on the identity of the matter of “the body” with a rigidity which must have already seemed barbarous to the Hellenistic world.⁵⁰⁷

In light of the fact that Pannenberg identifies the resurrected body with the temporal one, as well as previous statements like it is “this present earthly body which will experience the transformation,”⁵⁰⁸ it is clear that Pannenberg believes in an embodied final state and that there is a very close relationship between the physical and resurrected bodies.

While he affirms that resurrection happens to the temporal body, Pannenberg is

⁵⁰⁵Wolfgang Pannenberg, “The Task of Christian Eschatology,” in *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 8.

⁵⁰⁶Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, 171.

⁵⁰⁷Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, 171.

⁵⁰⁸Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, 99.

equally clear that in the resurrection, the physical body will experience dramatic changes. Therefore, Pannenberg's view is similar to the view shared by Clement, Origen, Dionysius, and Peter. Yet in spite of the similarities, the texts differ in the way in which they account for continuity between this life and the afterlife. Rather than attribute personal survival to the soul or the body, Pannenberg, like Ratzinger appeals to God who is the ultimate end.

Balthasar's *Credo*

Hans Urs von Balthasar was about twenty years older than Ratzinger and Pannenberg, but his treatment of the Apostles' Creed was published about twenty years after theirs. It was published as separate articles for a pastoral bulletin in 1988 that were not collected until after his death later that year. According to Medard Kehl, they are "undoubtedly among the last things to be written by him."⁵⁰⁹

The fact that *Credo* was written as individual meditations for a pastoral bulletin is more important than it might first appear. For instance, the previous texts on the Creed were written for a general audience in order to offer some doctrinal explanation. *Credo*, on the other hand, was originally written for priests. The emphasis in the book is less about the didactic role of the Creed than it is about its role in spiritual formation. Thus, *Credo* is a wonderful reminder of the fact that the Creed is for all Christians, not only the newly converted.

⁵⁰⁹Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Credo: Meditations on the Apostles' Creed, with an introduction by Medard Kehl* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 7.

Balthasar begins his meditation on the article on the general resurrection by noting his objection to the tendency in some traditions to substitute the phrase “resurrection of the body” with the phrase “resurrection of the dead.” He responds to this trend by noting that Christ’s victory is “for the benefit of the embodied human being who is destined for eternal life. A bodiless soul is not a human being, and reincarnation would never be able to redeem us from entrapment in death.”⁵¹⁰

As was observed in the works of Ratzinger and Pannenberg, the resurrection of Christ is the basis for understanding the Christian hope for resurrection. Balthasar’s thought is so intricate that, in order to understand his view of Christ, it is necessary to have a sense of the role that love plays in his overall theological program. While Balthasar acknowledges various definitions of the term love, he understands it most clearly as the act of self-giving for another.⁵¹¹ This understanding of love is one of the cornerstones of Balthasar’s thought.⁵¹²

This understanding of love sets up a poetic irony regarding Christ. As Balthasar states, “He has died purely from love, from divine-human love; indeed, his death was the supreme act of that love, and love is the most living thing that there is. Thus his really

⁵¹⁰Balthasar, *Credo*, 95.

⁵¹¹This is expressed wonderfully in his *Love Alone is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005).

⁵¹²He uses it in his discussion of the Creed’s first article on “God the Father, Almighty.” Balthasar, *Credo*, 30. It is also at the heart of his understanding of the Holy Trinity. Balthasar, *Credo*, 37. This love is also the reason for the Incarnation.

being dead . . . is also an act of his most living love.”⁵¹³ This statement indicates that for Balthasar, Christ’s self-giving is connected to both a form of death and an expression of life. This in turn effects Balthasar’s understanding of our life, death, and resurrection.

The significance of this for humanity is that our death “can become for us an expression of our purest and most living love,” provided that we give ourselves completely to God, and “death becomes purification.”⁵¹⁴ In interpreting I Corinthians 15:54, which states that the sting of death has been removed, Balthasar writes, “The reality of dying, as the human being’s giving up of self - this reality has lost its sting.”⁵¹⁵

In addition to these intricate concepts, Balthasar offers plain statements that indicate his view of resurrection. For example, Balthasar references Luke 24:39 where Christ’s resurrected body is said to have “flesh and bones” and then proceeds to note the uselessness of speculating on when this miracle will happen to us.⁵¹⁶ It is possible to infer from the fact that he offers no comment or explanation of the meaning of “flesh and bones” that he is understanding them literally. Thus, this passage suggests that Balthasar would understand I Cor. 15:50 figuratively, since a literal interpretation precludes flesh from participating in the kingdom of God. Later, Balthasar explains the significance of the resurrected Christ’s retaining the marks of his crucifixion, because it is “proof that all earthly suffering will pass with us to the other side and be transfigured into luminous

⁵¹³Balthasar, *Credo*, 53-54.

⁵¹⁴Balthasar, *Credo*, 54.

⁵¹⁵Balthasar, *Credo*, 59.

⁵¹⁶Balthasar, *Credo*, 95.

eternal life.”⁵¹⁷ In the section on the New Testament, both the “flesh and bones” and his visible wounds were presented as evidence of the continuity between Christ’s temporal and resurrected bodies. While Balthasar affirms the continuity, he also expects significant change.

I believe that Balthasar’s most succinct statement about the nature of the resurrected life occurs at the end of the treatment of the article when he writes, “the materiality of nature will not dissipate into Spirit but rather take on a new form beyond the reach of decay.”⁵¹⁸ This description of resurrection as a taking on of a new form is evidence of Balthasar’s emphasis on the transformation connected to resurrection. Balthasar’s discussion of Revelation 21:1 is another example of his emphasis on change. He explains that the “new heaven and new earth” that is experienced is a transformed creation and not a second creation.⁵¹⁹

Balthasar has clearly expressed a belief in an embodied final state. This is not simply a resuscitation of the temporal body nor is it an entirely new creation. For Balthasar, the resurrected life should be understood as including the material body which has experienced profound transformation. The close association of the material body with the resurrected life would seem to suggest a high degree of continuity between the

⁵¹⁷Balthasar, *Credo*, 96.

⁵¹⁸Balthasar, *Credo*, 98.

⁵¹⁹Balthasar, *Credo*, 98.

temporal and eternal lives, but it is not explicitly affirmed or explained.⁵²⁰ Consequently, Balthasar's *Credo* is most similar to the view of Ratzinger and Pannenberg, which anticipates a spiritual and radically transformed resurrected body.

Ratzinger, Pannenberg, and Balthasar in Light of Early Alexandrian Faith in Resurrection

Each of the contemporary theologians examined above has aspects of his thought that are similar to some of the Alexandrian Christians studied in the previous chapters. Most significantly, it was noted above that Ratzinger, Pannenberg, and Balthasar all emphasize the radical change that must be a part of resurrection. On this point, their views closely resemble those of Clement, Origen, Dionysius, and Peter.

Given this similarity, it is noteworthy that the contemporary theologians give evidence of operating with substantially different anthropologies from their predecessors. You will recall that for Clement and Origen in particular, the postmortem survival of that which individuates one person from another is ascribed to the soul.⁵²¹ Ratzinger, Pannenberg, and Balthasar, on the other hand, each argue for the indivisibility of the human person, albeit in diverse ways and with differing emphases.

A second way in which the contemporary theologians differ from their Alexandrian counterparts is the unique contribution that each of their presentations makes that cannot be found in the works of the ancient Alexandrians. In Ratzinger's

⁵²⁰It is interesting that Balthasar does not discuss the means of accounting for continuity. He does not specifically attribute continuity to either the soul or body.

⁵²¹For Clement see *Strom.* IV.xxvi.166.1-5. For Origen see page 149.

presentation, he notes the “communal character of human immortality.”⁵²² This is a particularly helpful reminder for contemporary Christian faith, which often overemphasizes the importance of the individual. Pannenberg notes the political aspect of the resurrection in his closing paragraphs in his treatment of the doctrine. He states, “there is no direct approach to the kingdom of God via political change, but only conversely, social effects deriving from religious trust in the kingdom’s nearness and its power to determine the present.”⁵²³ Balthasar identifies the cosmic significance of the resurrection. He writes, “Not only will humanity, which is something like the result or sum total of the created world, be resurrected, but the created world, too, which was its precondition and, in a certain sense its family tree, keeps pressing on from within, toward its own perfection.”⁵²⁴

Lastly, the contemporary interpretations of bodily resurrection differ from some of the Alexandrian texts by not explicitly connecting the idea of judgment to resurrection. I am not suggesting that all of the texts studied in chapters two and three emphasized judgment as being related to resurrection, but several of them did such as *Barnabas*, *Apoc. Petri*, and *Adv. Haer.* While I believe that a final judgment is part of the Christian faith, I believe that there is wisdom in not including it in a contemporary presentation of the faith.

⁵²²Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 351. Origen’s notion of God being “all in all” while not discussed here, is related to the communal nature of the afterlife.

⁵²³Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 177.

⁵²⁴Pannenberg, *Apostles’ Creed*, 98. This notion of perfection is reminiscent of what was observed in the works of Clement and Origen.

Professing Faith in Bodily Resurrection Today

The guiding principle for this study has been *Gaudium et spes*, which states, “With the help of the holy Spirit, it is the task of the whole people of God, particularly of its pastors and theologians, to listen to and to distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light of God’s word, in order that the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented.”⁵²⁵ The final step in this process is a more suitable presentation of the doctrine of bodily resurrection. I am convinced that this study can contribute to this endeavor in two ways: first, by attending to the manner of the doctrine’s presentation and second, by considering how it is understood. Consequently, the first part of this section offers an approach for proclaiming faith in bodily resurrection in contemporary homiletical and catechetical contexts. The second part will explore the content of that proclamation.

The Manner of the Proclamation

In the introduction to this study, I proposed that the renewed understanding of bodily resurrection that is needed is one that seeks to maintain the tension between fidelity to the faith and relevancy to the world. In order to understand the importance of this balance, it is necessary to be aware of the dangers of both extremes.

In terms of fidelity to the faith, Christians who readily sacrifice relevancy in order to remain true to the *fidei depositum* are likely to believe that the antidote to the present

⁵²⁵*Gaudium et spes*, 44.

apathy and antipathy lies simply in the insistence on a particular understanding of the doctrine in spite of modern objections. While overemphasizing fidelity is unhelpful, the opposite extreme is also problematic. When the concern for relevancy is emphasized so much that there is little or no attention to fidelity, it is often accompanied by a willingness to ignore or discard aspects of the faith viewed as difficult or troublesome.⁵²⁶ As I have suggested, a renewed faith in bodily resurrection is a hope that is maintained in the midst of the uncertainty that current objections create, not by ignoring the objections. All of this leads to the question, To whom are we seeking to present the faith today and what are their objections?

On several occasions during this study, the presentation of the doctrine of bodily resurrection has been adapted in order to make it accessible to particular contexts with particular philosophical assumptions. In terms of the ancient texts, this is observable most vividly in the works of Clement and Origen. We have noted previously in Brian Daley's description of Clement's work that "the importance he assigns the traditional features of that hope, and the interpretations he suggests for them, vary with the character of the work he is writing and with the kind of audience - popular or intellectual - for

⁵²⁶An example of a contemporary scholar who places an emphasis on relevancy over fidelity is Elaine Pagels. In her recent book, *Beyond Belief*, Pagels writes, "I wondered when and how being a Christian became virtually synonymous with accepting a certain set of beliefs." Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 5.

which it is intended.”⁵²⁷ A similar observation can be made regarding Origen.⁵²⁸ Both Clement and Origen restated the faith of the Church in a manner that is accessible to those influenced by the philosophy of the day.

This is also true of the texts studied in this chapter. For example, there is clearly a difference between Ratzinger’s treatment of bodily resurrection in his *Introduction* and that of his *Eschatology*. This is most easily explained as being attributable to the intended audience of each work. In light of the examples that have been encountered in this study, the following proposal seeks to present bodily resurrection in a way that is accessible to an audience that has become dissatisfied with older forms of justifying knowledge.

Previous generations have been satisfied with the rational self as the basis of knowledge. This involved an emphasis on reason and natural science which was believed to be able to arrive at objective truth.⁵²⁹ Epistemologically, this is a form of philosophical foundationalism. Stanley Grenz offers the following definition of this epistemology:

In its broadest sense, foundationalism is merely the acknowledgment of the seemingly obvious observation that not all beliefs we hold (or assertions we formulate) are on the same level, but that some beliefs (or assertions) anchor

⁵²⁷Daley, 44.

⁵²⁸An example of this is the caution that he offers about the *De Princ.* See *De Princ.* II.8.4.

⁵²⁹Jürgen Habermas described the “project of modernity” as consisting “of a relentless development of the objectivating sciences, the universalistic bases of morality and law, and autonomous art in accordance with their internal logic . . . in the rational organization of living conditions and social relations.” Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity: An Unfinished Project,” in *The Post-Modern Reader*, ed. Charles Jencks (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 162-163.

others. Stated in the opposite manner, certain of our beliefs (or assertions) receive their support from other beliefs (or assertions) that are more “basic” or “foundational.” Defined in this manner, nearly every thinker is in some sense a foundationalist. . . . In philosophical circles, however, “foundationalism” refers to a much stronger epistemological stance than is entailed in this observation about how beliefs intersect. At the heart of the foundationalist agenda is the desire to overcome the uncertainty generated by our human liability to error and the inevitable disagreements that follow. Foundationalists are convinced that the only way to solve this problem is to find some means of grounding the entire edifice of human knowledge on invincible certainty.⁵³⁰

Recently and for reasons beyond the scope of this study, there has been a loss of confidence in the continual progress of knowledge that was expected to be achieved through technology. As philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has advised, “On all fronts foundationalism is in bad shape. It seems to me that there is nothing to do but give it up for mortally ill and learn to live in its absence.”⁵³¹ In light of the loss of these epistemological foundations, How can the Church continue to affirm the doctrine of bodily resurrection as truth?

In his book, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, Stanley Grenz offers several characteristics for a postmodern presentation of the gospel. He recommends the presentation of the gospel that is “*post-individualistic, post-rationalistic,*” and “*post-dualistic.*”⁵³² The meaning of a “post-individualistic” presentation is self-explanatory and requires no comment. A post-rationalistic affirmation must not be understood as

⁵³⁰Stanley Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 30.

⁵³¹Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 52.

⁵³²Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 167.

irrational. Instead, it is reasonable, but rather than simply being asserted as dogma to be believed, doctrinal statements should be “treated as hypotheses to be tested by means of their coherence with other knowledge.”⁵³³ Moreover, church doctrines function “not as expressive symbols or as truth claims but as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude, and action.”⁵³⁴ A post-dualistic presentation emphasizes wholeness and integrity. Having considered an approach to presenting bodily resurrection that is sensitive to some current philosophy, it is necessary to consider what a proclamation may include that is “post-dualistic,” “post-individualistic,” and “post-rationalistic.”

The Content of the Proclamation

A Post-Dualistic View of Resurrection. This study has demonstrated that the doctrine of bodily resurrection has been understood in a variety of ways in ancient Alexandria. I believe that faith in resurrection must involve some notion of bodily existence. More specifically, the resurrected body must have some integral relationship to the temporal body. There are numerous reasons for this assertion.

First, this study has recognized that Scripture teaches a strong relationship between the resurrected and temporal bodies. This was demonstrated by the empty tomb and abandoned grave clothes, Christ’s visible wounds, and his eating with his followers. Second, I believe that this is supported by the faith of the early church that affirmed “only

⁵³³Stanley Grenz, *Reason for Hope* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 17.

⁵³⁴George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 18.

that which has fallen can arise.” Third, in my understanding of theology, God cares for his creation. Is it possible that humans could care more about what happens to their physical bodies after death than God does? Lastly, in endeavoring to apply Grenz’s principles, it would seem necessary to affirm some kind of participation of the temporal body in the resurrected life in order to be “post-dualistic.”

Having made this affirmation, I acknowledge that there are numerous ways that the resurrected body can be understood to be continuous with the temporal body. I believe that it is possible to affirm that the body which rises is the *same* body that died, without necessarily having to ascribe to the resurrected body all of the qualities of the temporal body, such as its materiality. Rather, just as the temporal body must participate in resurrection, it is equally necessary to affirm the radical changes which are a part of resurrection.⁵³⁵

Not all Christians would agree with me on this point. Some in my tradition believe that it is necessary to understand the resurrected body as being fundamentally physical and identical to the temporal body.⁵³⁶ Yet, to demand that one understands the resurrected body to be as physical as the temporal body is to ignore the numerous

⁵³⁵The evidence for the transformative dimension of resurrection falls into the same categories as that offered for the continuity within resurrection. First, the transformation of resurrection is taught by Scripture. Second, on numerous occasions it has also been shown to have been affirmed by the early church. Theologically, an all-loving and all-powerful God would certainly desire and be able to bring about the perfection of his creation.

⁵³⁶Among the scholars of this conviction, Norman Geisler is the most prominent. See Norman L. Geisler, “I Believe . . . in the Resurrection of the Flesh,” *Christian Research Journal* (1989): 20.

Scriptures that express a radical change in the nature of the resurrected body. I believe that on this issue a renewed awareness of the early Alexandrian Christians, such as the one provided by this study, can be instructive. In particular, Origen's various senses of corporeality may provide new ways of conceptualizing a bodily existence that differs from the temporal one.⁵³⁷

While I believe that the temporal body must be understood to participate in the resurrected life somehow and that radical change is an integral part of resurrection, the profundity of resurrection in the Christian faith extends beyond bodies. I agree with Ratzinger that the general teaching of Scripture is the resurrection of whole persons.⁵³⁸ In the first place, resurrection affects more than bodies. The resurrection is not simply an event that will reanimate or transform only bodies. It is not merely the resumption of corporeal life; it is the transformation of life into a radically different mode of existence beyond our present ability to completely understand. The emphasis on whole persons also allows for a "post-dualistic" presentation of the faith.

A Post-Individualistic View of Resurrection. Just as resurrection is not only about bodies, it is also not only about individuals. The contemporary theologians studied at the beginning of this chapter are especially helpful on this point. Ratzinger offered his notion of the communal dimension of the afterlife, Pannenberg reminded us of the political dimensions of the resurrection, and Balthasar emphasized the cosmic implications such as a greater concern for the environment. These are by no means the extent of the

⁵³⁷See pages 146-147.

⁵³⁸Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 349.

significance of resurrection. Rather, I offer this brief list in an attempt to demonstrate the significance of bodily resurrection beyond the issue of the postmortem survival of the personal body.

A Post-Rationalistic View of Resurrection. This category addresses the issue of epistemology. Rather than establish the reality of bodily resurrection on the basis of the authority of the Bible or the Magisterium, or on some self-evident principle or universal human experience, a post-rationalistic approach to revelation looks to other bases. Two of the contemporary texts considered in this chapter demonstrate an awareness of this approach. Both Ratzinger and Pannenberg ground the truthfulness of the faith in the *eschaton*. Ratzinger refers to the consummation in the final complexity and Pannenberg looks to God as the ultimate justification of the faith. This approach does not mean that the doctrine of bodily resurrection cannot be based upon the Bible. It simply means that the final truthfulness of bodily resurrection will not be established until the *eschaton*.

While this attempt at a postfoundationalist articulation of the doctrine avoids the pitfalls of foundationalism, it does not establish the truthfulness of Christianity. This leads Grenz to ask

Why give primacy to the world-constructing language of the Christian community? As Christians we would likely respond by asserting that we believe that the Christian theological vision is *true*. But on what basis can we make this claim? Must we now finally appeal to some court beyond the Christian faith itself, some rational “first principle” that supposedly carries universality? In the end, must we inevitably retreat to a foundationalist epistemology?⁵³⁹

Grenz answers his own question by stating

⁵³⁹Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 54.

The task of systematic theology is to show how the Christian mosaic of beliefs offers a transcendent vision of the glorious eschatological community that God wills for God's own creation and how this vision provides a coherent foundation for life-in-relationship in this penultimate age, life that ought to be visible in the community of Christ as the sign of the age to come.⁵⁴⁰

Therefore, the goal for a postfoundationalist approach to the issue is not absolute certainty but validity. In other words, rather than argue that bodily resurrection is the correct understanding of the final state, a postfoundationalist approach affirms that the doctrine of bodily resurrection offers the best transcendent vision of the glorious eschatological community that God wills for God's own creation and also offers a coherent foundation for life-in-relationship to others. The issue of whether the Christian hope of bodily resurrection is the correct vision or not, or which understanding of bodily resurrection is most accurate will only be confirmed in the *eschaton*.⁵⁴¹ This means that from the postfoundationalist perspective, Christian truth claims are only provisional pending their justification in the *eschaton*. Consequently, while these affirmations can be made confidently, they must also be asserted humbly.

Conclusion

⁵⁴⁰Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 54.

⁵⁴¹Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 54. It is possible to discern indications of a similar mindset in the approaches that Pannenberg and von Balthasar take to the Creed. Pannenberg does not seek to establish the truthfulness of doctrine on the basis of revelation or reason but in the *telos*. As he states, "the future revelation of the rule of God does not only reveal what is already decided even without this happening. It rather finally decides for the first time that from eternity God was the all-determining reality." Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, 174. Similarly, von Balthasar does not seek to establish the truthfulness of Christianity on some self-evident first principle but on the unique expression of love that Christ demonstrated.

The goal of this study has been to retrieve early Christian faith in resurrection in order to enhance the Church's understanding of the doctrine. In the previous chapters, I have set the belief in bodily resurrection from the Ante-Nicene Church in Alexandria within its context of competing religious and philosophical ideas as well as within the stream of its own tradition. The result has been the identification of diverse interpretations of the resurrected life which were proposed by those who called themselves Christians. The retrieval of ancient Alexandrian faith in bodily resurrection broadens our understanding of the doctrine through the recovery of unfamiliar or forgotten material. As has been demonstrated, this increased awareness of the various interpretations of the Church's doctrine can contribute to the Church's catechetical, liturgical, and kerygmatic efforts. At the least, we are challenged by the fact that with the exception of the Gnostics, they affirmed hope in bodily resurrection.

The question that is seldom asked is, Was the idea of resurrection really any more plausible to people living in the first three centuries of this era than it is for people today? By being aware of the objections of Celsus or the reaction of Culcianus, we are confronted with the likelihood that resurrection was just as implausible then as it is today, and yet the early Christians still articulated their hope in this mystery. I submit that it is no more difficult to affirm the idea of bodily resurrection in contemporary society than it was in Ante-Nicene Alexandria.

Ancient Alexandrian faith does not only challenge contemporary Christianity, it has a contribution to make. The main contribution is the creativity that Alexandrians like Clement and Origen demonstrated in their attempts at being both relevant to their culture

and faithful to the Church's doctrine. Their efforts are an enduring example for the Church, and it is in that spirit that I offered a postfoundationalist affirmation of bodily resurrection. There is an additional benefit to contemporary faith made possible by this retrieval. I am convinced that the way in which Origen wrestled with issue of constant change has great potential for assisting the affirmation of bodily resurrection in an age where information travels around the world at the speed of light.

In light of the fact that life is filled with continual changes, the call of *Gaudium et spes* is never finished. The Church still needs people who will explore the boundaries of the faith in order to keep the faith accessible. I conclude with a thought from Wolfhart Pannenberg that summarizes my goal for this study:

The life to come is the strength of this life, the liberal theologian Ernst Troeltsch said Contemporary secular men and women have lost this strength. The Christian proclamation should once more make it available to them and that could be done if only contemporary Christians would ourselves recover the authentically Christian confidence in a life beyond death, in communion with our risen Lord and with the eternal life of God the Father in his kingdom to come.⁵⁴² _____

⁵⁴²Pannenberg, "Resurrection," 262.

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