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**The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus: A
Study of the New Testament Evidence**

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ABSTRACT

If Jesus's resurrection did not happen, the Christian faith is falsified. The question is therefore raised as to whether it is possible to prove the historicity of the resurrection, and thus verify the Christian faith. The problem is first historical (what is the nature of the evidence for the resurrection?) and secondly apologetic (how does the resurrection help in communicating the Christian faith?); this thesis aims to address the historical question, and introduce apologetics as a future concern.

The work is set in context by a survey of approaches to the historical Jesus through the centuries, culminating in the "Third Quest for the Historical Jesus." The origins of the idea of resurrection are sought in an examination of ancient Hebrew ideas about death, exploring the development of hope from the survival of the community rather than the individual, through the awareness of the need for justice and the continuing relationship with God, through a range of metaphors to the first explicit hope of resurrection from the dead. The influence of Hellenism and ideas of immortality in the intertestamental period are noted, but these ideas were not adequate to explain the experience of Jesus's disciples.

The New Testament is then surveyed to identify all resurrection traditions. Some traditions are theological and metaphorical, but some are narrative or apparently derived from a historical event. It is noted that some canonical books make relatively little of the resurrection, and that extracanonical books such as the Gospel of Thomas ignore it completely. A study of the extracanonical texts suggests that omission of resurrection tradition is due to later theological preference, rather than indicating early tradition implying that passion-resurrection tradition was a later innovation. Where there is extracanonical resurrection tradition, it is dependent upon canonical tradition. There follows a discussion of the various criteria which have been used to examine New Testament tradition for historicity, examining the strengths and weaknesses of each. It is concluded that no single criterion is adequate, but that it is possible to achieve a satisfactory degree of historical plausibility. The discussion returns to the New Testament traditions to identify where they purport to be historical, and then explored in the light of the historical criteria for plausibility. While there is clear theological development and interpretation, there is a persistent core tradition deriving from an original event. Alternative explanations, that the disciples invented resurrection to

explain other experiences, are dismissed as resurrection is the least likely explanation for them to offer. The historical event itself is irrecoverable, but may be discerned by its effects. The most plausible explanation for the testimony underlying New Testament tradition, celebration on the first day of the week, and the explosive growth of the Jesus movement, is that the resurrection actually happened. Brief consideration is given to the implications of the resurrection for theology, eschatology, apologetics and engagement with postmodernism.

Key words:

kerygma tradition historical Jesus quests criteria resurrection apologetics historicity mythology

PREFACE

The research and writing for this dissertation was begun not long after I became the superintendent minister of the Pickering Methodist Circuit in the York and Hull District of the British Methodist Church. Due to the demands of ministry, it continued throughout that appointment and into the first years of my appointment as superintendent of the Upper Calder Circuit in the West Yorkshire District. It took almost twice as long as anticipated, but proved to be as much a stimulus to thought and ministry as a competitor for time and attention. Distance education can be a lonely exercise, and places its own particular demands upon the student. Theological resources and forums for discussion which occur naturally in a university context must be sought out by the distance education student.

During my studies, I have benefitted from participation in various internet discussion groups, notably the Crosstalk egroup. I found suitable libraries at York Minster Library, York St John's College, Cliff College, and St Deiniol's Library. I am grateful for the encouragement and help I have found in these places. I have valued the guidance and support of my supervisors and the staff of the Greenwich School of Theology, who have been supportive in matters academic and administrative. I am especially grateful for the support and guidance of my colleagues in local churches and circuits, and especially for those who have entered into conversation with me to explore the issues raised by the subject. It is my hope that the fruits of this research will benefit my colleagues in ministry and the congregations we serve.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In a Christian coffee bar, some teenagers were debating with an evangelist whether Jesus was more than a 'superstar' figure, a martyr, or a religious teacher alongside Buddha, Mohammed and the rest. The difference noted was Jesus's resurrection. They argued at length, the evangelist noting that both proponents and opponents agreed to the empty tomb, and then eliminating all alternative explanations until the only remaining option was resurrection. The youngsters listened attentively, and finally agreed that there was no other explanation for the empty tomb. They then went to find another coffee.

This anecdote illustrates two crucial issues.

First, the resurrection sets Jesus apart from other religious teachers. Like him, many were historical: Buddha, Mohammed, Guru Nanak existed. However, Jesus is the only one whose salvation event is argued as an historical event. Buddha is said to have achieved enlightenment when meditating under a particular tree. It is possible in principle to see the tree, but the reality of his experience was private. Jesus is said to have been raised at a specific place and the empty tomb was discovered by his followers, who then met him. In principle, it is possible to identify not only the place where the resurrection is said to have happened, but also to find testimony from those who saw the empty tomb and met the risen Jesus. Buddha's enlightenment was subjective; Jesus's resurrection is presented as an objective event and a cornerstone of the Christian faith. For Paul, the Christian faith depends upon the resurrection: if it did not happen, the Christian faith is falsified (1 Cor.15:13-17). By corollary, if it can be shown that it did happen, is the Christian faith verified? The argument is problematic. It is possible in principle. There are significant differences between Paul and the Gospels (Barclay, 1996: 24); the empty tomb traditions appear in later layers of the New Testament and could have originated through disputes in the Church or Christian responses to Jewish objections (Goulder, 1996: 48); the evidence is contained within documents which are Christian propaganda and therefore, of questionable historical reliability (Barclay, 1996: 19); the resurrection is a dogmatic need rather than a historic fact (Wedderburn, 1999: 6), and so on. There have been attempts to 'prove' the resurrection: Anderson (1969), Morison (1930). The complexity of the evidence suggests that it is not that straightforward.

Second, what difference would it make to establish the historicity of the resurrection? The teenagers in the coffee bar agreed that the tomb was empty, therefore Jesus was raised from the dead, and therefore God raised him. They were not ready to accept the Christian faith. The resurrection had no claim on them. Nevertheless, if Jesus's resurrection is true, it indicates that other things are true, which do have a claim. Historical events do impinge upon present reality. The question is how defining the Christian faith as historical affects it.

The primary concern of this thesis will be the first of these two issues: the nature of the evidence for the resurrection and possible conclusions concerning its historicity. It may then be possible to indicate ways in which the second question may then be addressed.

The background to the question of the resurrection is two-fold:

Personal experience

Since becoming a Christian, I have believed that Jesus's resurrection is central to the Gospel. However, while it is possible to persuade people that the best explanation for the story is that it happened, they do not necessarily become Christians. Does this mean that the historical argument is itself invalid, or simply that it is an inadequate evangelistic tool? How should it be used? It is important to understand the true weight of the historical argument.

The 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus

The question of the historical Jesus continues to interest (ch.2 below). More recent study has sought Jesus within his Jewish context. There is a greater openness to non-canonical sources and a new interest in the possibility of finding the historical Jesus. There is a more positive attitude to the biblical traditions, and a sense that historical criticism does not simply assume that the texts are of little historical value (Alston, 1998: 178). Against this background, the question of the resurrection is raised again: historical event or mythological construct? Are the resurrection traditions the **source** of the Easter faith or the **result** of it?

The problem has two aspects: the historical and the apologetic. The historical aspect concerns the nature of the evidence: how reliable are the texts for ascertaining the historicity of the event? What would generate these traditions? What are the

methodological issues which must be addressed to attempt such a question? The apologetic aspect concerns the meaning of the resurrection and how it might be communicable. How did the New Testament preachers and writers use the resurrection as an apologetic tool? What place did it have in their explanation and advocacy of the Christian faith to their societies? How does it help us in our attempts to communicate the faith today, especially in view of postmodernism?

This dissertation will explore the New Testament traditions to discover the state of the historical evidence and draw conclusions as to the historical nature of the resurrection. The implications for apologetics will be introduced, raising questions for future consideration.

The main research question is:

- What evidence is there in the New Testament for the historicity of Jesus's resurrection?

To address this question, the following subsidiary questions will be addressed:

- What research into the historical Jesus has already taken place?
(Note: this is additional to the original research proposal, but has become a necessary stage in the discussion.)
- What are the origins of the idea of resurrection in prophecy and apocalyptic?
- What are the resurrection traditions in the New Testament?
- How can the historicity of resurrection traditions be evaluated?
- How historical are the New Testament resurrection traditions?
- How does the historical and mythological treatment of the resurrection in the New Testament affect our apologetic task?

The aim is to evaluate New Testament evidence for Jesus's resurrection by addressing the following objectives:

- i. To survey the "quests for the historical Jesus" to identify issues and insights which affect the question of an historical resurrection.
- ii. To examine the origins of the idea of resurrection in prophecy and apocalyptic (Russell, 1964: 366f). How far are New Testament traditions shaped by reliance on pre-existing ideas and expectations? Is Jesus's vindication described in terms of resurrection because of prevailing

eschatological beliefs, or because what happened was then explained through earlier traditions?

- iii. To identify New Testament resurrection traditions, exploring how much depends upon the event and how much upon the idea. For example, Jesus foretells his death and resurrection (Mk.8:31), yet the disciples are devastated at his death and delighted and astonished at his appearances: did he actually foretell the resurrection, or are these *vaticinia ex eventu* shaped by memories of the experiences, as suggested by their “formulaic appearance” (Evans, 1999: 82)? The empty tomb traditions may be later than the appearance traditions (Barclay, 1996: 20): does this mean that the story is not historical? Similarly, Paul apparently knows nothing of the empty tomb, using only appearance traditions. The absence of material in Paul about the historical Jesus is notable. Is this because he doesn’t know about him, or because he is being selective with available material (Alston, 1998: 161f)? The resurrection is theologically important for New Testament writers: how important is it that it was an historical event? What do the sermons and speeches in Acts reveal of the place of the resurrection in the early kerygma?
- iv. To consider historical methodology in order to evaluate criteria such as the criterion of dissimilarity as opposed to the criterion of plausibility: “it is true of all currents within the ‘third quest’ that research into Jesus dissociates itself clearly from the ‘criterion of difference’ as a methodological foundation of research and tends towards an historical criterion of plausibility: what is plausible in the Jewish context and makes the rise of Christianity understandable may be historical” (Theissen, 1998:11). This should suggest a methodology to enable a proper examination of New Testament traditions.
- v. To apply methodology from the previous chapter to the traditions, in order to evaluate how much is historical. How much importance does this carry for the writers? What is the mythological weight of the tradition? Paul argues forcefully in 1 Cor.15 that a resurrection event took place, but in most of his other letters is more concerned with the personal experience of the believers (Col 3:1f); is he assuming that which he has already argued, or is the historicity of the event less important than the mythological?

- vi. The concluding discussion will focus on what are the historical and mythological aspects of the resurrection traditions? If it is important for New Testament writers that an event can be shown to have taken place, how does that affect proclamation of the faith today?

Although it may be difficult to recover firm evidence of the resurrection, nevertheless the traditions indicate an underlying historical event. I expect to find that there was an historical event which was the stimulus for the Easter faith, but that the traditions have so developed that it is impossible to 'prove' the resurrection. The resurrection stories begin from the factual experience of the disciples; attempts to account for them as expressions of grief or fictional inventions do not adequately account for the origins of the church and the development of the tradition. The historicity of the event was important for the New Testament writers; they gave significant weight to something which actually happened. Consequently, the historicity of the resurrection is important for later theology and apologetics, raising the question as to how this can be achieved in apologetics today.

- To establish the context for a study of the historicity of the resurrection, there will be a survey of the study of the historical Jesus from earliest days, concentrating particularly on those scholars whose work informs the current study.
- To establish the origins of the idea of resurrection, there will be a study of its development in Hebrew thought.
- To establish the place of Jesus' resurrection in New Testament traditions, the writings will be surveyed, to examine how the resurrection is used.
- To establish a methodology for historical criticism of the traditions, there will be a study of the discussions of historical criteria in the works of contemporary scholars.
- To examine critically the traditions for historicity, the historical criteria established in the previous discussion will be applied to New Testament writings, to weigh historicity against the theological and redactional interests of the writers.

- To conclude, the importance of the resurrection as an historical event will be demonstrated by the foregoing arguments, which will raise the issue of the importance of the resurrection for contemporary apologetics.

The theological tradition within which I work is mainstream Protestant critical orthodoxy.

CHAPTER 2: SEARCHING FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS

As already noted in Chapter 1 section 2.2, the quest for the historical resurrection relates intimately to the quest for the historical Jesus. The following survey sets the scene for the task.

It has become a “standard scenario” (Porter, 2003: 202) to describe the Quest for the historical Jesus as beginning with the “critical impulse” (Theissen, 1998: 2) of the Enlightenment, and to schematise it thus:

- Reimarus, followed by Strauss and Renan, attempt(ing) to separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith;
- Schweitzer’s critique of the Quest as reveal(ing) more about the Questers than the one they sought, suggesting that it was impossible to find the historical Jesus and paving the way for an emphasis on the Christ of the kerygma rather than historical enquiry;
- Käsemann’s challenge to Bultmann’s scepticism, beginning a “New Quest” based on the criterion of difference;
- The third quest arising from sociological and historical concerns to uncover a Jesus plausible in his Jewish context.

As with most schematisations, it oversimplifies certain complexities.

2.1 EARLY INTEREST

The historical Jesus is presupposed by Christian tradition as far back as the Gospels. Both canonical and non-canonical Gospels are attempts to interpret him and the Early Fathers “engaged in early forms of questing after the historical Jesus” (Porter, 2003: 204). Through the Early Church and medieval periods, stories of Jesus were assumed to be historically true. “In the minds of Christian interpreters of the Bible there was no difference between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of the Church’s proclamation” (Dawes, 2000: 1). Attempts to “cut (the story) free of its historical anchorage and (interpret it) as a cosmic or psychological myth attached to an esoteric mystery cult” (Chadwick, 1967: 33) were characteristic of gnosticism and docetism, and rebutted by a firm emphasis on Jesus “who was of the family of David, the child of Mary, who was truly born, who ate and drank, who was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and truly died” (Ignatius, *Adv. Trall. IX, X* cit Bettenson, 1967: 35). Attitudes

to historical questions about Jesus depended upon wider issues of biblical interpretation, as in the debate between the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen, favouring allegorical interpretation of the text to uncover its deeper meaning, and the Antiochene school of Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom and Jerome, rejecting allegory in favour of “straightforward historical interpretation” (Gillingham, 1998: 129). Even when interpreted by allegory, history is not rejected. The Christ interpreted by faith is the historical Jesus; early and medieval theology was “blissfully ignorant” of the problem (Meier, 1991: 198).

2.2 THE FIRST QUESTIONS

The Renaissance developed the realisation that “the past was not only *distant* from the present, but ... *different* from the present” (Dunn, 2003: 18). Developing historical awareness laid the foundation for the Reformation, discerning that the Church itself had changed from the Church of the apostles (Dunn, 2003: 21). The Reformers’ concern with the historical Jesus was contingent upon the project of establishing a church “in continuity with Christ and the apostles ... but in decided discontinuity with the medieval church” (Wright, 1996: 15). Contemporary expositions of the clashes between Jesus and the Pharisees were thinly veiled depictions of the strife between 16th Century legalism and the ‘true religion’ of Jesus and his successors. Post-Reformation Europe remained under ecclesiastical control, with Jesus as the icon from which both pope and reformed prince derived authority. Contemporary images of Jesus were assumed to be like the original. With the rise of the Enlightenment, a new movement of critical thought provoked an examination of the question of the historical Jesus. “The Christ of the Chalcedonian creed ‘perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man’ was just too unreal a human being” (Dunn, 2005: 16).

2.3 THE FIRST QUEST

The ‘critical impulse’ (Theissen, 1998: 2) of the Enlightenment was foundational to the development of modern scientific method and to the shift from a supernaturalist world view to an empirical naturalist understanding. Hermann Reimarus followed the English Deists in their attacks upon the miraculous elements in the Gospels. Because resurrection was inconceivable, a different explanation for the empty tomb must be

found, namely the disciples stole the body and invented the resurrection (Wedderburn, 1999: 26). Reimarus's separation of the historical Jesus and apostolic beliefs about him has become axiomatic. His historical account could only be answered by theologians allowing themselves to be drawn onto his rational ground, arguing historically and non-supernaturally. A "... devastating rational hypothesis... can only be countered by better historical hypotheses" (Morgan and Barton, 1988: 56).

Unlike Reimarus's hostile intent, David Strauss wished to reinterpret and defend Christian faith. His *Life of Jesus*, first published in 1835 to immediate uproar, was intended as the first stage of a work vindicating true religion, although he acknowledged that "the results of the inquiry which we have now brought to a close have apparently annihilated the greatest and most valuable part of that which the Christian has been wont to believe concerning his Saviour" (Strauss, 1982: 757). The resulting ostracism meant he never achieved the second stage, pensioned off from his new professorship before even taking up the post. Strauss applied to Gospel study the concept of myth already current in Old Testament study, believing both supranaturalism and rationalism to be inadequate, and a mythic interpretation of the Gospels to be a Hegelian synthesis of the two. He identified myth wherever he believed Gospel material was unhistorical: where miracles break natural laws, the traditions are contradictory, or the story is written to apply Old Testament hopes to Jesus. He believed he was defending authentic faith, and that the inner truths of Christianity were untouched by mythical thinking. He "had learnt from Kant that the historical could serve only for illustration, from Lessing that there was a 'big, ugly ditch' between truths of history and truths of reason, and finally from Hegel how to get theological truth from these largely unhistorical Gospel records" (Morgan and Barton, 1988: 47).

The critical onslaught meant some sought a basis of faith which was not vulnerable to attack, such as Schleiermacher's religious unconsciousness (Dunn, 2003: 71). The "optimism of the liberal quest" (Theissen, 1998: 5) lay in the belief that the real Jesus could be reconstructed through historical and literary criticism of the earliest sources, leaving dogma behind and preserving instead a teacher of timeless morality. For Kant, the proper sphere for religion was morality rather than metaphysics (Dunn, 2003: 36). The work of Baur in establishing the historical priority of the Synoptics over John and of Wilke, Weisse and Holtzmann in shaping the two-source hypothesis provided the confidence that led Holtzmann to see in Mark an outline of Jesus's life, with a

biographical and psychological development including the formation of messianic consciousness (Theissen, 1998: 5).

Some involved in the 'First Quest' assumed the necessity to separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith wrapped in dogma. Others, "comfortable with modern critical method," nevertheless felt it possible to use the Gospels as reliable sources for the historical Jesus (Porter, 2003, 205). Edersheim, for example, rejected the possibility of writing a "Life of Christ" on the grounds that the materials to do so do not exist, but affirmed that the Evangelists "viewed the historical Jesus of Nazareth as ... the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of man" (Edersheim, 1897: vii).

2.4 THE END OF THE FIRST QUEST

Schweitzer is usually credited with the derailing of the Quest. He observed that the Jesus in each 'Life' was the ethical ideal of the author rather than historical reconstruction, and "told us more about their authors than the person they sought to describe" (Witherington, 1997: 9). Tyrrell's image of scholars gazing at their reflections at the bottom of the well (Dunn, 2003: 48 n108) has been widely appropriated (Witherington, 1997: 281 n3). More crucially, Schweitzer argued for the centrality of apocalyptic eschatology. In neglecting apocalyptic, the liberal Lives had presented a distorted picture of Jesus. Schweitzer's Jesus expected an imminent End. When the Kingdom did not come, "... and the great wheel of history refused to turn, he threw himself upon it, was crushed in the process, but succeeded in turning it none the less" (Wright, 1996: 19). Schweitzer recovered the dimension of eschatology for theology: "The discovery of the central significance of eschatology for the message and existence of Jesus and for early Christianity... is undoubtedly one of the most important events in recent Protestant theology" (Moltmann, 1967: 37).

However, it is overstating the case to say that Schweitzer stopped the First Quest. Firstly, many of his contributions had already been made by others (Porter, 2003: 205). Weiss insisted that Jesus's teaching must be understood against the background of intertestamental apocalyptic, overturning Ritschl's understanding of Jesus's preaching of the Kingdom as primarily ethical (Dunn, 2003: 46). Kähler attacked the methodological assumption that it was possible to separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith on the grounds that the former is known through documents about the

latter (Witherington, 1997: 10), and there are no historical sources capable of sustaining a biography of Jesus (Dunn, 2003: 72). The resulting stress on the Christ of the kerygma paved the way for Bultmann's extreme historical scepticism: "We can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary, and other sources about Jesus do not exist" (Bultmann, 1958: 14). Bultmann was partly driven by biblical scepticism, and partly by existentialism. He argued that God and the world were so radically opposed that they touch only at the point of the Christ-event. It was "not what Jesus had said and done which was... decisive, but what God had said and done in the cross and resurrection" (Theissen, 1998: 6). His exegesis aimed to demonstrate this as the New Testament kerygma. Existentialism believes 'authenticity' is found in decision; Bultmann believed decision to be our response to God's call in the kerygma of the cross and resurrection. Where Strauss saw the truth of Christ as mythical, Bultmann saw it in the 'kerygma.' He argued that a literary work was a primary source for historical information about its *sitz-im-leben*, but only a secondary source for its referent. Historical data about Jesus are unrecoverable, and irrelevant. Historically, Jesus belonged to Judaism, while Christianity only began after Easter. Bultmann concluded that Jesus's teaching was irrelevant for a Christian theology: "The message of Jesus is a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of that theology itself" (Bultmann, 1952: 3). He allowed that post-Easter Christology was 'implicit' in Jesus's pre-Easter call to decision, a concession which allowed his pupils to re-address the question of the historical Jesus (2.5 below).

Second, despite the 'flight from history' (Dunn, 2003: 67ff), there was no period in which there was 'no questing' as scholars including Dibelius, Jeremias, Manson, Dodd, Hunter, and Taylor continued their work (Porter, 2003: 205f). Hunter notes three main trends in the first half of the twentieth century: the use of comparative religions to illuminate the New Testament, the reaction against rationalism especially in Otto and Schweitzer, and the rise of form criticism, which he criticises as "vitiated by an excessive scepticism" (Hunter, 1950: 14). He discusses sources and background, before setting out an exploration of Jesus's ministry, teaching, death and resurrection based on a critical but positive examination of the traditions. Manson's 1930s study of Q begins from Papias's comments about an Aramaic original of Matthew (Williamson, 1965: 152). He concludes that Papias's comments "fit a document such as Q like a glove"

(Manson, 1949: 18), but that the teachings contained within are “indissolubly bound up with the life and ministry” (Manson, 1949: 344). He utilised the same critical scholarship as contemporaries such as Bultmann, but is positive about the historicity of Jesus and the traditions about him.

2.5 THE NEW QUEST

The reaction against Bultmann’s extreme scepticism began with Käsemann’s 1953 Marburg lecture “The Problem of the Historical Jesus,” arguing that the exalted heavenly redeemer in the kerygma presupposes the historical Jesus of Nazareth. “Without knowing who had died on the cross, there would be no solid ground for upholding the gospel of the cross” (Wright 1996: 23). Form-criticism was now used to produce positive results by Käsemann, Jeremias, and Dodd (Dunn, 2003: 81). It raised the methodological problem of identifying authentic Jesus-tradition, and the tool which became most characteristic of the New Quest was the ‘criterion of dissimilarity,’ the exclusion of everything which could be derived from Judaism or earliest Christianity (Theissen, 1998: 7).

The first problem with this approach was that it necessarily produced an alien Jesus (Meier, 1991: 172) (5.6.2 below). The second is that it presupposes a clear knowledge of both the Jewish background and the Christian contexts within which Jesus’ teachings were heard (Dunn, 2003: 83). The criterion of dissimilarity alone was clearly inadequate, and it became necessary to develop further tools. It was also obvious that Jesus must have been part of his context. The search for criteria and a different target led to the Third Quest.

2.6 THE THIRD QUEST

The connection with the ‘New Quest’ indicates that the history of scholarship does not divide neatly; “some scholars ... straddle the revived ‘New Quest’ and the ‘Third Quest’” (Wright, 1996: 83). The distinction has become chronological (Powell, 1998: 29). The ‘Third Quest’ refers to a movement that began in the early 1980s. Whereas the ‘New Quest’ sought Jesus by contrasting him with his Jewish background, the ‘Third Quest’ seeks him within his Jewish context. There is greater use of extracanonical

sources, although attitudes vary: while Sanders considers “very little in the apocryphal Gospels could conceivably go back to the time of Jesus” (Sanders, 1993: 64), Crossan (1998: 116ff) places great importance on extracanonical texts and places none of the canonical texts in the earliest stratum of tradition (Crossan, 1992: 427f). Similarly, there is dispute as to whether Jesus is a non-eschatological wisdom teacher (the Jesus Seminar, Crossan) or a preacher of restoration eschatology (Sanders). The ‘criterion of plausibility’ is preferred to the ‘criterion of difference:’ “what is plausible in the Jewish context and makes the rise of Christianity understandable may be historical” (Theissen, 1998: 11). Methodologically, the Third Quest is characterised by the use of sociology, anthropology, history and archaeology to examine Jesus’s milieu. It is not uniform or coherent, as is evident in a survey of some representative approaches.

2.6.1 G Vermes

Vermes’s aim is to explore the problem facing “a sympathetic, yet religiously detached, historian” (Vermes, 2003: 126), that the synoptic picture of Jesus was recognisably the 1st Century Jewish holy man, preacher, teacher and exorcist, while John and Paul portrayed an other-worldly saviour-figure. He believes that historians can pursue research independent of belief, and that it is possible to extract historically reliable information from non-historical sources (Vermes, 1973: 4).

He sees Jesus as a charismatic Jewish *hasid*, like Hanina ben Dosa who combined miracle-working and wisdom-sayings in the contemporary Galilean charismatic milieu (Theissen, 1998: 9). Jesus was aware of his filial relation to the heavenly Father, and believed that his mission was to communicate the same sense of relationship with God among other people (Vermes, 2003: 129). He preached a Kingdom of God which was never explicitly spelt out, and was executed because of the insurrectionary implications of the Temple incident: he “died on the cross for having done the wrong thing (caused a commotion) in the wrong place (the Temple) at the wrong time (Passover)” (Vermes, 1993: x).

Vermes suggests that the disciples did not expect the resurrection, that the Gospel predictions are prophecy after the event, and that the Messiah’s suffering, death and resurrection were not part of the faith of 1st Century Judaism (Vermes, 1973: 37f). However, while not accepting that resurrection occurred, he argues “the only conclusion acceptable to the historian must be that (all) opinions ...are simply interpretations of one

disconcerting fact: (that) the women ...found not a body, but an empty tomb” Vermes, 1973: 41)

Vermes exemplifies the Third Quest in seeking a Jesus who fits the 1st Century Galilean context. He believes the Synoptic Gospels show Jesus the *hasid* through a later theological colouring, arguing that they should be seen with later rabbinic literature as part of evolving Jewish religious and literary creativity. However, while there are similarities, there are clear differences between Jesus and the *hasidim*. The *hasid* in later tradition was ultra-pietist and a strenuous observer of the Law. All our evidence of *hasidim* is post-New Testament, and much of it is legendary. The earliest accounts of Honi and Hanina do not present them as miracle workers: the miracle-worker legends may have grown as a Jewish response to miracle-stories about Jesus (Powell, 1998: 63). “Vermes’s acritical use of sources undermines his whole argument” (Meier, 1994: 587). The distinction between the Synoptics and John is not as marked as he thinks: the Synoptics are the product of theology as much as history. Mark “was more concerned with the deeper theological significance of what was happening than a carefully worked out biographical, chronological or geographical framework (Stanton, 2002: 41), while John “may be at least as historically reliable as the synoptic traditions and sometimes more so” (Stanton, 2002: 103).

2.6.2 E P Sanders

Sanders’s aim is to develop a hypothesis,

- which makes sense of Jesus’s place within 1st Century Judaism
- which explains the rise of early Christianity and
- which links Jesus’s activity and his death (Willitts, 2005: 66).

In contrast to the concentration on the sayings-traditions by the Jesus Seminar (below 2.6.6), he begins from “indisputable facts” (Witherington, 1997: 119f) about the life and ministry of Jesus. The most secure fact is the Temple controversy, providing “the bedrock” (Sanders, 1985: 10) on which to establish a context for the activity of Jesus into which other traditions may be placed to build a more comprehensive picture. Having secured the context, the Gospel traditions are evaluated according to the criteria of Cross-examination, Uniqueness, Multiple Attestation, and Views Common to Friend or Foe (Willitts, 2005: 66). The resultant picture is of a Jesus who saw himself as the last eschatological prophet before the coming of the Kingdom, was executed for the

Temple demonstration and went to his death disappointed. The resurrection is not part of the historical Jesus story, but belongs to the aftermath of his life (Sanders, 1993: 276).

There are methodological criticisms of Sanders, not least the allegedly indisputable facts (Willitts, 2005: 67f). However, his use of criteria for evaluating gospel traditions harmonises with similar approaches by others (below 5.5), and his reassertion that “the line from John the Baptist to Paul and the other early apostles is the line of Jewish eschatology” (Sanders, 1985: 8) while Crossan and the Jesus Seminar reject it as significant contribution to the debate.

2.6.3 B Witherington

First-century Jews did not think in discrete categories such as prophetic and sapiential (Witherington, 1997: 186) and some intertestamental literature - such as the Parables of Enoch - already offers a blend of categories. ‘Prophet’ is too limited a term for Jesus’s style of ministry: the exorcisms go beyond the role of prophet, and Jesus never used the characteristic ‘messenger formula’ but spoke on his own authority, as did Qoheleth and the author of Proverbs. The calling of disciples and aphoristic teaching derives from wisdom rather than prophecy (Witherington, 1997: 118). Jesus saw himself as “God’s Wisdom in the flesh” (Witherington, 1997: 187), deriving aspects of his theology and method from sapiential tradition, especially creation theology. Feasting rather than fasting, and inviting unlikely guests to his table, echoes Proverbs 9:1-6, where the unwise were invited to learn to be wise and thus be saved (Wisd. Sol.9:18). Judgement is articulated in terms of seekers after Wisdom (Mk.12:42f). He places a high value on children (Mk.9:33f) and exalts marriage (Mk.10:6f). He speaks of himself in terms reflecting Wisdom tradition: Matthew 8:20 is usually interpreted as a comment on itinerancy, but echoes the references to Wisdom in Sirach 24:6-7 and 1 Enoch 42:2 (Witherington, 1997: 188).

A number of the key characteristics of Jesus's teaching have parallels in Wisdom literature:

- His use of Father language for God echoes Sirach 23:1,4; 51:10; Wisdom of Solomon 14:3;
- His language about the Kingdom of God echoes Wisdom of Solomon 10:10;
- His use of Son of Man terminology echoes Daniel, and has parallels in the Parables of Enoch;
- His reputation as an exorcist and healer echoes 1st Century traditions that Solomon was an exorcist;
- His use of female imagery of himself (Mt 25:37-39) echoes female imagery about Wisdom in Proverbs 8,9; Wisdom of Solomon 8-9;
- His use of parables about banquets and eating with outcasts are Wisdom themes encouraging the enjoyment of life, with feasting as a prime symbol of celebration (Witherington, 1997: 193f).

Witherington argues that a sapiential approach most adequately explains why Jesus taught in aphorisms and with independent authority rather than engaging in halakhic discussion, why his message was more universal, and much more besides (Witherington, 1997: 185). This is a counter-order Wisdom similar to Job and Ecclesiastes. It is not that the world is upside-down, as Qoheleth felt, but Jesus proclaims that God is turning it upside-down; so the last will be first, and leaders become servants. Jesus consciously entered into the Wisdom story: he pre-existed, assisted in creation, came to earth, called people back to God, saved some, infuriated others, was rejected and vindicated (Prov.1, 8-9; Sir 24). The sapiential approach explains Jesus's awareness of his special relationship with the Father (Witherington, 1997: 189) and the development of Christology in Wisdom-driven texts such as Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20, and John 1:1f (Witherington, 1997: 194).

No single label adequately explains Jesus (Witherington, 1997: 185); 'sage' alone is too limited. Jesus was a prophet who used Wisdom (Wright, 1996: 312, 315), teaching by drawing on both prophetic and sapiential traditions as appropriate. Witherington uses the sapiential approach to locate Jesus within a Jewish context, specifically that part of Judaism that affirms resurrection, against the Sadducees who do not (Witherington,

1997: 169). His own resurrection is the reason why the Gospels are dominated by the last week of his life, and the early preaching focusses on his death and resurrection (Witherington, 1997: 92). “There would have been no church without Easter.” (Witherington, 1997: 75.)

2.6.4 J P Meier

Meier’s aim is to establish criteria to enable a limited consensus among reasonable people as to what can be known about the historical Jesus (5.5 below). He offers five primary criteria, and notes five further secondary criteria (Meier, 1991: 167ff). His principle sources are canonical; he has little confidence in apocryphal gospels or rabbinic texts as sources for the historical Jesus (Meier, 1991: 140). Like Crossan, he sees ‘stratified’ stages of tradition history, the first from Jesus himself, the second from the oral traditions of the early church, and the third from the redactional work of the gospel-writers (Meier, 1991: 167). The resultant picture is fairly traditional, albeit of a Jesus unique in his contemporary setting. He was an eschatological prophet, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, a teacher and miracle worker, who is understood within the context of 1st Century Palestinian Judaism where he interacted with other Jewish groups and individuals. The important point for Meier is that this interpretation arises from the convergence of historical data, rather than a prior imposition (Willitts, 2005: 79).

Meier sees Jesus as a ‘marginal Jew,’ on the margins of his community because of his own radicalism. He distinguishes between the historical Jesus and the ‘real’ Jesus, between what can be historically shown, and what cannot be shown but is nevertheless true (Witherington, 1997: 199). He also distinguishes between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, arguing that the resurrection was not an historical event in the same way as the resurrection experience was historical, but something discernible only by faith (Meier, 1991: 13). His significance for our present discussion is in his careful setting out of criteria for historical study of the Gospels.

2.6.5 G Theissen

Theissen has made two major contributions to historical Jesus study. The first is a study of the sociology of Galilee, especially the pressure of urbanisation. He illuminates a ferment giving rise to a number of renewal movements: the Jesus movement, the Pharisees, the Zealots, “a reaction to the drift towards assimilation produced by ‘superior’ alien cultures” (Witherington, 1997: 142). Jesus was a charismatic preacher (Theissen, 1998: 185ff), prophet (Theissen, 1998: 240ff), healer (Theissen, 1998: 281ff), poet (Theissen, 1998: 316ff), ethical teacher (Theissen, 1998: 347), the founder of a cult (Theissen, 1998: 405ff), and a martyr (Theissen 1998: 440ff). His followers formed two groups: wandering charismatics seeking to model their lives after Jesus, and settled sympathisers who stayed at home, providing hospitality when Jesus came visiting. The early Church formed the same two groups: radical wandering charismatics, imitating Jesus’s *modus operandi* and responsible for Q traditions (Theissen, 1998: 28); and sedentary Christians who met in house churches and preserved narratives about in-house teaching, community crises and passion narratives. Theissen’s sociological method has generated interest among other scholars, including Crossan (Crossan, 1998: 279f). However, in contrast to Crossan, Theissen accepts eschatology (Theissen, 1998: 249f) and passion narratives (Theissen, 1998: 447) as part of the original tradition, rather than arising from later Christian theology.

The second contribution is a discussion of the criteria of historical Jesus research, arising from the list of criteria outlined by Meier (5.5.11 below). Historical plausibility is applied both broadly and narrowly: a broad application is a test of a comprehensive picture of Jesus, while a narrow application determines the authenticity of individual Jesus traditions (Willitts, 2005: 91). The aim is to demonstrate the plausibility of Jesus within his historical context (contextual plausibility), and as the cause of continuing Jesus-traditions and subsequent events (plausibility of historical effects). Both are necessary. The plausibility of effects demonstrates anything which caused developments to take place, and must be balanced by contextual plausibility to ensure historicity. “The more an image of Jesus can be made understandable on the basis of its Jewish context as a product of Jewish history, the less we can assume it to be the product of early Christian history and imagination” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 183).

2.6.6 The Jesus Seminar

The Jesus Seminar is a group of scholars explicitly working against the “theological tyranny” of fundamentalism (Funk, 1993: 5f). In many ways it is “not really part of today’s Third Quest, but an atavism harking back to the... New Quest” (Evans, 2006: 54). The methodological focus is the criterion of dissimilarity, to the extent that it “guaranteed a non-Christian Jesus” (Powell, 1998: 89). They exclude eschatological material, monologues for which there could have been no audience, and sayings implying that Jesus had foreknowledge of events after his death. The intention was “to review each of the fifteen hundred items (of Jesus sayings-tradition) to determine which of them could be ascribed with a high degree of probability to Jesus” (Funk, 1993: 35). Every canonical or non-canonical document before 300 AD containing sayings of Jesus was examined, to exclude anything which was not certainly attributable to Jesus. Their conclusion that 18% of the sayings *can* be attributed to Jesus is surprisingly positive (Powell, 1998: 80). Most reliably attested sayings are found in Q, with the Gospel of Thomas next.

The resultant picture of Jesus is of a disciple of John the Baptist, who rejected the ascetic lifestyle and apocalyptic message, went on to proclaim a present Kingdom of God, and ate and drank with outcasts in order to celebrate it. He was a “laconic sage” (Funk, 1993: 32f) who used parables and aphorisms, probably did not quote scriptures, and did not speak of himself or God. Because others looked to him for healings and exorcisms, he went along with their beliefs, effecting some psychosomatic cures. He was executed without trial after an unfortunate involvement in an incident in the Temple (Powell, 1998: 82).

Most of the controversy concerns the method of voting with coloured balls, which obscured the real scholarship behind it. Nevertheless, the voting system skews the results into a majority of the minority (Witherington, 1997: 45), and obscures some of the subtleties of the issues. More serious criticisms apply to the methodology and prior assumptions. The criterion of dissimilarity is problematic, tending to produce a Jesus who does not fit his context (5.5.2 below). The stress on orality meant that only short, pithy sayings or aphorisms were deemed authentic. The Gospel of Thomas was accepted as a 1st Century document, alongside reconstructions of Q. The resultant Jesus was effectively the Jesus of Q, with no eschatological dimension. The conclusions were determined by these methodological presuppositions. The picture of

Jesus as a non-eschatological sage is entirely due to the criterion of dissimilarity: each source included eschatology, but because the Church was eschatological, it must be derivative (Powell, 1998: 90). The presuppositions themselves sound like conclusions (Wright, 1996: 32). They produce a Jesus who is historically incredible: if he was as the Jesus Seminar concluded, why would the very different picture of the Christian Jesus emerge? What would give rise to a Church which would produce the Church's Jesus, if not the Church's Jesus? The Jesus Seminar is not a group of liberal apostates conspiring to undermine the Christian faith, but like-minded scholars testing out one hypothesis regarding Jesus as a historical figure (Powell, 1998: 91). This hypothesis may satisfactorily fit the evidence that they are prepared to accept, but it does not explain all the evidence.

2.6.7 J D Crossan

Crossan's primary concern is methodology: the multiplicity of scholarly pictures of the historical Jesus is "an academic embarrassment" (Crossan, 1992: xxviii); proper methodology should be established first. Drawing inspiration from archeology, he examines anthropological, historical, and literary resources (Crossan, 1992: xxviii f) to create an inventory of traditions, evaluates them in terms of multiple and independent attestation (Crossan, 1992: xxxi f), so cataloguing a stratified list of resources (Crossan, 1992: 427 ff). His aim is to use the earliest layers of the Jesus tradition, if necessary reconstructing them. He includes the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Cross Gospel* (contained within the *Gospel of Peter*) and Q, and argues that the earliest layer of the *Didache* came from itinerant prophets in Galilee in the 30s (Crossan, 1998: 383 ff). He gives disproportionately greater weight to hypothetical reconstructions like Q and the *Cross Gospel*, as compared to much better attested canonical texts. He assumes from the outset that canonical material is unreliable, despite testimony from sources like Papias concerning canonical texts, but none at all for *Thomas*, *Peter*, or *The Secret Gospel of Mark*.

Crossan's result is Jesus as an itinerant Jewish philosopher in the Cynic mould. He allows Cynic influence, but gives more weight to the Jewish context (Crossan, 1992: 421 f). Jesus is a Jewish peasant teacher, proclaiming a 'brokerless Kingdom' which needs no mediator to be accessed. It is not eschatological, the point of contrast between Jesus and his teacher John the Baptist. Its most clear demonstration, Crossan argues, is Jesus's 'open commensality:' he is willing to share table-fellowship with anyone in a

way which rejects the purity taboos and redefines shame and honour (Crossan, 1992: 262). Jesus is thus anti-hierarchical (Crossan, 1992: 298).

Crossan argues that there was originally no passion/resurrection narrative. The earliest Christians knew only that Jesus had been crucified, and probably not even where he was buried (he later concedes that the body could have been released to Joseph of Arimathea for burial) (Crossan, 1998: 545, 553). The narratives are not 'history remembered,' but 'prophecy historicised' (Crossan, 1998: 521): rather than the experience leading Christians to search the scriptures for explanation, the story was created entirely from the scriptures.

Crossan's method, and thus his conclusions, is controversial. He depends heavily on the criterion of multiple attestation, which leads him to reject most of the Son of Man sayings as not original. They must therefore originate with the Gospel writers or the composers of their sources. However, the phrase "Son of Man" is peculiar Greek, but excellent Aramaic, which does not prove it goes back to Jesus, but "at least it suggests that the evangelists, who wrote in Greek, were not freely inventing" (Barrett, 1967: 6). By contrast, he argues that the Lord's Prayer cannot be authentic, despite the fact that it satisfies the criterion of multiple attestation, because it is eschatological (Witherington, 1997: 68). The difficulties with the process of stratification and reconstruction of sources will be discussed below (5.2.2; 5.3.4). His refusal to accept canonical texts as historical witnesses flies in the face of current scholarship (Willitts, 2005: 76). The insistence that the passion and resurrection narratives were constructed from the Old Testament ignores the "surprisingly little 'embroidery from the biblical tradition' in the resurrection narrative" (Crossley, 2005: 182). His strength is in his interdisciplinary method based upon cross-cultural anthropology and archaeology (Crossan, 1998: 137f), enabling him to develop a picture of life in Galilee in the years around Jesus's execution.

2.6.8 N T Wright

Wright's method centres upon 'critical realism,' a process which acknowledges the existence of that which is known as something other than the knower (hence 'realism'), but accessible only through a dialogue involving the knower (hence 'critical') (Wright, 1992: 35). The 'known' comes within the context of its own "implicit story" (Wright, 1992: 43), and the process of knowing leads to a hypothesis which is satisfactory insofar

as it “fits all the evidence and convincingly explains data in other related areas” (Willitts, 2005: 83). In the quest for the historical Jesus, the sources of data are the canonical texts. The apocryphal gospels have little historical value; the Gospel of Thomas is probably dependent on synoptic tradition and inhabits a later and different world (Wright, 1992: 442f)). The process of hypothesis and verification does not begin by reconstruction of Jesus-traditions, which already exist as *prima facie* data (Wright, 1996, 88), but by allowing the text to have its own voice (Wright, 1992: 63). Along with their context (the history of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity) the Gospels illuminate what is unknown about Jesus (Willitts, 2005: 85). An hypothesis is offered of Jesus as “a Jewish eschatological prophet who believed the climax of Israel’s history was occurring in and through him, thought of himself as Messiah, believed it was his vocation to die for Israel and the world, and believed himself to be the embodiment of Israel’s God” (Willitts, 2005: 86). The hypothesis reflects the symbolic world-view in which Jesus worked. The Temple was at the centre of Israel, reminding Israel that God ought to be reigning. However, Israel was subject to the wrong rulers: the Herodians, in league with the Romans. Israel was still in exile, in need of restoration eschatology. “Jesus... believed himself to be the focal point of the people of YHWH, the returned-from-exile-people, the people of the renewed covenant, the people whose sins were now to be forgiven.... (This) was a claim to a Messiahship which redefined itself around Jesus’ own kingdom-agenda...” (Wright, 1996: 538). The cross was judgement on Israel, the place of sacrifice, by which the nation’s sins would be forgiven and Israel reconstituted around Jesus the new Temple (Witherington 1997: 229).

Wright’s positive approach to the narratives not surprisingly leads to an affirmation of the historicity of the resurrection. It also leads him to leave open the question of the historicity of Matthew 27:51-53 (Wright, 2003: 636), which has puzzled some (Allison, 2005: 307). He argues that the resurrection is the hypothesis which best explains all the relevant data “by inference to the best explanation” (Wright, 2003: 716). Allison (2005b: 132) demurs, but notes that “if historical reasoning cannot verify the orthodox version of events, neither can it falsify them”. If the Jesus Seminar is open to the accusation that their methodological presuppositions guarantee a non-Christian Jesus, Wright’s method virtually guarantees a biblical Christ (Powell, 1998: 174). However, the double criterion of dissimilarity and similarity (Wright, 1996: 132) provides

sufficient checking with both the originating context in Judaism and the consequences in Christianity.

2.6.9 J D G Dunn

Dunn's major contributions are his reflections on the origins of Jesus tradition as the impact of Jesus on those around him, and his exploration of the developing tradition as a predominantly oral process.

Jesus's ministry was remembered by those who experienced it. "The primary formative force in shaping the Jesus tradition was the impact made by Jesus during his mission on his first disciples" (Dunn, 2003: 882). Easter faith illuminated many aspects of the earlier tradition, but much pre-Easter content was retained (Dunn, 2005: 121). Recognition of pre-Easter origins affects our understanding of the provenance of sources. Rather than hypothesise a post-Easter Galilean Q community which was wisdom-based with no knowledge of Jesus's death and resurrection (Kloppenborg, 1990: 6), the Galilean provenance and lack of passion narrative suggests a pre-Easter collection of Jesus' teachings (Dunn, 2005: 27).

The first stage of the process as oral is necessary (Dunn, 2005: 53) and not controversial. However, given contemporary standards of adult literacy (Dunn, 2005: 90), even literary transmission would be aural: people would hear documents read, rather than reading for themselves. Oral tradition has certain characteristics (Dunn, 2005: 46):

- An oral performance is not like reading a text, but is a transient event.
- Oral performance is communal, the tradition kept alive by the performers.
- The performers are responsible for preserving the tradition, as 'walking reference libraries' within the community. The gathering of blocks of tradition is likely at this early stage rather than a later redactional stage.
- Each oral performance is an original, but does not subvert previous 'editions,' thus allowing for several different but similar versions to be current.

- Oral tradition combines fixity and flexibility. Community memory protects against fundamental change, while repeated performance leads to flexibility of detail.

The implication for gospel tradition is two-fold. First, it allows a different understanding of the movement of tradition. Rather than certain traditions being preserved in one locale until written and circulated, it allows for the possibility of groups of churches all having extensive repertoires of Jesus-tradition, overlapping with other groups of churches, and shared in multiple performances by those travelling between the churches (Dunn, 2003: 883). Second, there is sufficient firmness within the tradition to allow for core characteristics to be widely known and accepted. Stories are less likely to be invented *de novo*, and anything characteristic of the tradition is likely to go back to Jesus's initial impact.

The quest therefore becomes one for the characteristic Jesus, one who fits the Jewish context (but not so completely that his death becomes a puzzle) (Dunn, 2005: 62) and is characteristic of the tradition which has developed from him. The picture develops of a Torah-observant Galilean Jew (Dunn, 2005: 70f), who proclaimed the Kingdom of God in ways distinct both from Judaism and subsequent Christianity (Dunn, 2003: 383f), had a characteristic usage of the Son of Man tradition, and was known as a healer and exorcist whose ministry was linked with John the Baptist. The implication for historical Jesus study is a more positive approach to the tradition: the question is not why something characteristic of the tradition should be attributed to Jesus, but why not (Dunn, 2005: 77).

2.6.10 R Bauckham

Bauckham (2006: 8) argues that the Gospels are based upon eyewitness testimony, comparing them to historians such as Polybius, who wished to hear the authentic living voice of testimony. He sees two indicators of eyewitness tradition.

The first is the role of named persons in the texts as originators and guarantors of tradition, such as the list of women in the Synoptics: "they see Jesus die, they see his body being laid in the tomb, they find the tomb empty" (Bauckham, 2006: 48). Some such as Jairus and Bartimaeus are named in earlier tradition, but not later, suggesting that they were well known in earlier years but not when later texts were written.

Bauckham demonstrates at length (Bauckham, 2006: 84) that names in the Synoptic traditions match usage in Jewish Palestine of the period, but not diaspora Judaism, indicating that they are early rather than later accretions.

The second is the importance attached to those who were with Jesus from the beginning to the end of his ministry, and the device of 'inclusio' used to indicate their importance. It occurs in contemporary historiography: Lucian uses it to make Rutilianus the first and last character to be named in his work on Alexander of Abonoteichus (Bauckham, 2006: 132f). That Lucian has to contrive to make him the first named character indicates a deliberate device. It is first found in Mark (Bauckham, 2006: 114f), setting Peter's name at the beginning (1:16) and the end (16:7) of the story. He also identifies it in John, although there it only works if 21:1-25 is part of the original gospel, which he seeks to demonstrate (Bauckham, 2006: 363ff). While some are deliberately named, others are deliberately left anonymous. The woman who anointed Jesus (Mk.14:3-9) is guaranteed memorial for her acts, yet is recorded unnamed. This could be protective anonymity, indicating the origin of the tradition in the early Jerusalem church at a time and place when she needed protection (Bauckham, 2006: 189f).

The eyewitnesses are not only originators of tradition, but remain accessible as guarantors of the tradition. This challenges the Bultmannian view of form criticism and transmission of oral tradition: a "long period of creative development of the traditions before they attained written form in the Gospels" (Bauckham, 2006: 249) is no longer defensible. It also questions the model of 'informal controlled' oral tradition favoured by Dunn (Dunn, 2003: 205f) and Wright (Wright, 1996: 133f), especially regarding the means of control (Bauckham, 2006: 258). The role of writing as a means of control is posited, since the first Christians included very literate people (Bauckham, 2006: 289). If the eyewitnesses functioned as controllers of tradition, as they began to die out "the Gospels will have stepped into the role of the eyewitnesses... functioning as the guarantor of the traditions, as the eyewitnesses had in their lifetimes and as controls on the tradition" (Bauckham, 2006: 289).

The result is testimony as "both the historically appropriate category for understanding what kind of history the Gospels are and the theologically appropriate category for understanding what kind of access Christian readers of the Gospels thereby have to Jesus and his history" (Bauckham, 2006: 473). It has its own authority, and therefore

invites trust, but not uncritical trust, rather “critical appraisal” (Bauckham, 2006: 478). Testimony to the resurrection would be particularly powerful: the memories underlying the traditions were recalling memorable events, and were stabilised by frequent repetition (Bauckham, 2006: 346). The accounts lack the “standard Jewish formulae ... We seem to be shown the extraordinary *novum*, the otherness of resurrection, through the eyes of those whose ordinary reality it invaded” (Bauckham, 2006: 505).

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The quest for the historical resurrection is determined by the same factors as the quest for the historical Jesus. Attitudes range from the thoroughly sceptical (whom Wright describes as being on the *Wredebahn*, as non-eschatological successors to Wrede and Bultmann) to the thoroughly positive (whom Wright places on the *Schweitzerbahn*, with a broadly eschatological and biblical view) (Wright, 1996:28, 80). Our survey has indicated some of the issues which will affect our exploration of the question.

▪ Prior assumptions.

The reason Reimarus concluded that the disciples stole the body was less to do with the texts, and everything to do with his presupposition that a supernatural event such as resurrection was impossible (Wedderburn, 1999: 26). Tyrrell’s description of scholars looking down a well and finding their own reflections (Dunn, 2003: 48 n108) could as well apply to those who have followed him, hence Theissen’s wry comment on the Jesus Seminar: “The non-eschatological Jesus seems to have more Californian than Galilean local colouring” (Theissen, 1998: 11). The post-Bultmannian focus on the present relevance of Jesus’ preaching often made him sound like an existentialist philosopher (Witherington, 1997: 11). Prior assumptions range between the minimalism of Crossan and the Jesus Seminar, accepting little of the text as authentic, to the positive confidence of Wright allowing the text to have its own voice (Wright, 1992: 63).

▪ Sources

Crossan regards *Thomas* as more reliable than the canonical gospels, while Sanders, Meier, Dunn and Wright effectively ignore it. The relative value of Mark and Q, along with the hypothetical nature of the Q reconstructions and further hypotheses concerning the Common Sayings Source, “the corpus of

material common to the Q Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas” (Crossan, 1998: 254) will be discussed below (5.1-3).

- **Criteria**

Without careful method, prior assumptions can select the sources, dictate conclusions and lead searchers back to Tyrrell’s well. “Historical questions quickly become questions about one’s world-view” (Allison, 2005b: 133). The primary concern of Sanders and Meier was to determine the proper tools with which to tackle the texts, so as to discern the historical data within the tradition. This will be discussed at 5.5 below.

The quest for the historical Jesus began from the assumption that he would be different from the Christ of faith. Kähler notes that it is documents about the latter which are the prime sources of information about the former (Witherington, 1997: 10). The New Testament is the expanding ripple of tradition beginning from Jesus, and the energy which drove its composition and expansion is the proclamation of the resurrection. The resurrection has been variously categorised as myth by Bultmann (Tinsley, 1973: 73), as midrash by Spong (1995: 19) and historical event by Wright (Stewart, 2006: 21f). Our quest will reveal whether the faith claim contains sufficient history for us to decide the historicity of Jesus’s resurrection.

seemed to (man) incongruous that a being of his intellectual stature ...should be subject to death” (Toynbee, 1968: 63), and fuels beliefs in post-mortem existence (Grainger, 1988: 14f).

3.1.1 The State Of The Dead

Hebrew anthropology thought “not of a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit, or a dichotomy of body and soul-spirit, but an essential unity” (Russell, 1964: 154). While *nepeš* is distinguished from *nep̄ša* (F Brown, S R Driver, and C A Briggs, 1978: 659), the body is indispensable to the soul, not its prison. Without the body, the soul cannot live. Ancient beliefs held that the dead were “strengthless obliterated beings, condemned to drag out a gloomy existence in the world of the dust” (Martin-Achard, 1960: 36).

Death (*twemf*) is opposed to life, a personified power (compare the Ugaritic god ‘*motu*’) (VanGemerén, 1997b: 887); (below 3.2.3). It is fearful, the just deserts of the wicked (so *twem-Nbe*, 1 Sam.20:31). The different terms describe something less than a person, but with vestiges of personality and power:

- *Myhilo*v (1 Sam. 28:13) echoes Canaanite beliefs in the divinity of the dead (Wright, 2003: 93). The dead have demonic power, including the ability to know the future (in Isa 8:19, *wyhilo*)v could mean either “their gods” or “their dead”) (Martin-Achard, 1960: 33). The root meaning of *lo* is ‘mighty’ (VanGemerén, 1997a: 398).
- *twObwO* from *bw%* ‘to return’ means ‘ghosts,’ spirits able to possess the living and speak through them (Lev.20:27). The LXX $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$ suggests a link between necromancy and ventriloquism, or using a deep voice when speaking in a possessed state (VanGemerén, 1997a: 200).
- *Myni(od;%yi)* from (*dayf* ‘to know,’ the ‘knowing ones’ can inform the living. In Isa.8:19 it is paralleled with *twObwO*)hf, suggesting reference to mediums (VanGemerén, 1997b:414)(Lev.19:31; 20:6).
- *My)ipfr*; (RSV ‘shades’) inhabit the underworld. They are no longer able to praise (Ps.88: 10). In Isaiah 26:14 it is paralleled with *Mytim*;hf, where the *My)ipfr*; do not rise (VanGemerén, 1997c: 1176), and in Proverbs 2:18 with *twemf*.

3.1.2 The Place of the Dead

לְוֵי (lw) is the place of the dead (Gen.37:35), a vast subterranean region and the antithesis of the highest heaven (Job 11:8; Prov.9:18); (VanGemerén, 1997d: 6). Those who go there go against their will. Other terms are:

- *breqe* ‘the grave’ (Ps.88:12); the tomb is always unclean. When used metaphorically (Ps.5:9) it carries negative overtones (VanGemerén, 1997c: 867).
- *rwOb* ‘the pit,’ a cistern dug for the storage of water (Lev.11:36) or prisoners (Gen. 37:22), and metaphorically the place of the dead (Ps. 28:1), especially in juxtaposition to לְוֵי (lw) (Ps. 30:3; Isa. 14:15); (VanGemerén, 1997a: 620);
- *NwOdbj*a ‘perdition,’ a place of destruction, paralleled with לְוֵי (lw) (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11) and *braqf* (Ps. 88:11), and personified as denizens of the underworld (Job 28:22); (VanGemerén, 1997a: 226);
- *txa#\$a* a pit or grave, paralleled with לְוֵי (lw) (Ps. 16:10) and *rwOb* (Ps. 7:15); the literal grave and the underworld are not distinguished (Job 33:24); (VanGemerén, 1997d: 93)
- *Cre)e* (Ps. 22:29) and *hmfdfj* (Dan. 12:2) ‘earth’ or ‘dust’ refer both to the realm of the dead (Ezek. 26:30) and to the state of the corpse (Gen. 3:19); (VanGemerén, 1997a: 270);
- *tyiba* ‘the house’ (Job 17:13), *d(wmo:-t"b* (Job 30:23) and *MlfwO(-ty"b* ‘the eternal home’ (Eccles.12:5), the dwelling place of the dead (VanGemerén, 1997a: 657).

Mighty and humble are equal in death (Job 3:19), although distinctions are possible: the uncircumcised, suicides and executed criminals might be deeper in Sheol than those buried with honour (Isa. 14:9-11; Ezek. 28:10). Much later, moral distinctions were drawn, and good and evil dead were believed to await resurrection and judgement in separate zones (1 En.22:1f; 103:5f; 4 Ezr.7:35; Lk.23:43).

Death is a power diminishing life-energy, connected with sleep, fatigue and illness (Ps.30:2-3; 86:12-13). God has dominion over death, and can deliver from its power, but from premature or evil death rather than the destruction of death itself.

Death may be understood as a natural part of the created order (Martin-Achard, 1960: 20). Israel was corporate: the Israelite dies, but Israel lives on. Descendants guarantee

that the deceased remains part of Israel, a “full quiver” of children the guarantee of a future (Ps.127:3-5). The birth of a son is a blessing (Jer.20:15; Job.3:3) and sterility a shame (Gen.30:1-24). Levirate marriage preserved the family and guaranteed the future of the deceased through his descendants (Gen.38:6f), although it was forbidden by later legislation (Lev.18:6; 20:21) and replaced (Num.27:1f). A good death after a long life was natural, to be accepted in quiet resignation (2 Sam.14:14).

Alternatively, death may be seen as unnatural, present because of sin (Cullman, 1958: 28). It is natural in Greek dualism, where “bodily sickness is a corollary of the fact that the body is bad in itself and is ordained to destruction” (Cullman, 1958: 29). Death is the enemy of the God of life. However, to argue that death would not exist if not for the Fall is to argue that humans would otherwise be immortal. Only God is immortal, with power over life and death (2 Kings 5:7). Increasingly, God’s gift of life becomes the hope at the heart of Israel’s religion (Martin-Achard, 1960: 14). Life takes its meaning from a future with God. Death can only be natural in a provisional sense.

3.2 THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

3.2.1 National Community

Israel’s hope was communal, “with the establishment on earth of an everlasting kingdom in whose untold blessings righteous Israel would share” (Russell, 1964: 366). It was articulated against the background of the vicissitudes of Israel’s history. Hope was concerned with the survival of the people in the land: “... the land is the place where the gracious approach of God is known” (Zimmerli, 1971: 77). The Deuteronomic History is Israel’s story from gaining the Promised Land to losing it. Even after defeat by Babylon, there was the possibility of hope, “the ‘perhaps’ of Lamentations 3:29, even in the days after the destruction of Jerusalem” (Zimmerli, 1971: 84). The Chronicler’s work, following exile and return, revised Israel’s history based on the conviction that Israel was called to be a worshipping community centred on Zion (Anderson, 1986: 514). The “return to the charter of Judaism handed down from David” (Anderson, 1986: 515) established the hope of a future. The future, however, remained corporate. There was no thought of God delivering his people from death. God’s promise to Abraham (Gen.17:7) defined hope in terms of descendants, rather than personal survival. “The idea of a future resurrection of the dead was not

thought of as long as the individual was entirely absorbed in the people” (Pannenberg, 1968: 83).

For the prophets the question was the survival of Israel in the face of extinction, through a combination of outside agency (Assyria, the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, Babylon) and the failure of the people. The prophetic word was expressed in a variety of forms: songs, liturgical formulae, cultic hymns, not only expressing but shaping the message. “Form cannot be separated from content” (von Rad, 1965: 39). Election traditions articulated the belief that Israel was the people of God. Northern prophets used the language of the exodus and the Holy War tradition of the Day of Yahweh (Wolff, 1977: 255). Election was popularly believed to be a guarantee of safety, but Amos turned it into judgement. “Election carries... responsibilities... and these Israel had failed to fulfil” (Mowvley, 1979: 50). Southern prophets used the already established Zion and David traditions. Like Amos, Isaiah inverted the security which people derived from their election: God’s plan involved defeat (Isa.10:5ff) before exaltation. God was believed to be active in history, so Nahum interpreted the fall of Nineveh as a redemptive act on behalf of Israel. Zephaniah announced the destruction of everything proud and self-exalted, looking with Amos and Isaiah for a surviving remnant (Zeph.3:12f; Am.3:12; Isa.10:20f).

After destruction by Babylon, the prophets sought a future for Israel. Jeremiah looked for the survival of the community (Jer.31:15-17) and the promise of a new covenant (31:31f). He bought land in occupied Anathoth (Jer.32:15), in faith of a future in the land. Ezekiel went with the first deportees in 597, firmly announcing doom (7:3, 5f). After 586, he became the prophet of hope who “undoubtedly helped... to prevent the collapse of the people lost in exile and to turn them to face a new future” (Zimmerli, 1971: 117). He echoed Amos’s announcement of the end (Ezek.7:3f; Am.8:2), and Hosea’s announcement of a new exodus (Ezek.20:32ff; Hos.11:11). The oracles of the new sanctuary on the holy mountain of Israel (Ezek.20:40f; ch’s 40-48) proclaim that the future of Israel would be the survival of the people in the land. Similarly, Deutero-Isaiah’s main theme from his opening oracle (40:3-5) to his conclusion (55:12) was the new exodus, far surpassing that from Egypt. A new age of salvation was offered, centred upon Yahweh who had returned to his Temple (52:7f) and including all nations (45:22f). The goal was the return of the people to the land.

The historical starting point for most post-exilic prophecy was the re-establishment of the Jerusalem Temple. “The period after the return... and all its problems were what concerned these prophets” (von Rad, 1965: 279). Joel addressed a specific crisis, articulating the remedy in Yahweh’s reshaping of the community of Israel (Wolff, 1977: 15). Salvation was the restoration of the damage done by the locust swarm and drought (2:23f RSV). The eschatological promise of the outpouring of the spirit and the coming of the Day of Yahweh issued finally in the people dwelling in the land (3:20-21 RSV).

The major theme of hope in the prophets was the future of the people in the land, rather than the fate of the individual. Nevertheless, a number of passages describe Yahweh’s power over death and Sheol. These became signposts along the route to a belief in resurrection, by which it is first hoped for, and then finally asserted (Martin-Achard, 1960: 74).

3.2.2 Hosea.6:1-3

The presenting problem was the 735-4 Syro-Ephraimite War; Hosea diagnosed the problem as spiritual rather than political and called for a return to Yahweh. This short penitential psalm speaks first of healing, then resurrection. Sickness is an experience of the enfeebling power of death. The nation was sick, and needed healing. The explicit statement of resurrection (6:2) is not of the individual: Hosea sought national restoration, in imagery from popular agricultural beliefs (Hengel, 1973b: 131). The time reference “after two days” (6:2) is proverbial for “soon” (Jon.1:17); (Allison, 2005b:131 n30). Resurrection on the third day was a common idea in pagan nature religions: Osiris, Attis (the counterpart of Adonis), Innana, etc (Martin-Achard, 1960: 82-83). Here, it was not the god in need of new life, but the worshippers (McKeating, 1984: 109). Resurrection from death was a natural idea. The Canaanites deified the forces of nature, explaining the seasonal death and regrowth as the death and resurrection of the gods. Hosea applied a popular image to the restoration of the nation.

3.2.3 Hosea 13:14

The rhetorical question implied that Yahweh did have power to rescue from Sheol, but was ironic, expecting a negative answer. Israel's death sentence was ratified (13:16). Death (tw%*m*) is also the name of the Canaanite summer god, blowing as a hot east wind out of the desert to snuff out life in the most secure places (McKeating, 1984: 150).

Yahweh's power over death raised the possibility of hope after the coming judgement, especially following chapter 14. However, Hosea could see no possibility of repentance; while Yahweh would dearly have loved to rescue his people from Sheol, the possibility "is quite excluded" (Macintosh, 1997: 548). Paul used the (slightly amended) LXX of these verses as a message of hope (1 Cor.15:55), as it was for other Jewish exegetes (Barrett, 1971: 383). For Hosea, there was no hope. However, death was one of Yahweh's subjects, a tool for his use. The premises of Paul's assurance were taking shape in the background to a message of doom: Yahweh does have power over death and Sheol.

3.2.4 Ezekiel 37:1-14

When Ezekiel heard of Jerusalem's fall (33:21f), his role changed from messenger of doom to pastor of the exiles. His hearing the news introduces a major section of his book (chs. 33-39) concerning the remnant of Israel, including the vision of the valley of dry bones. It was interpreted by the Church Fathers as evidence for the resurrection, but by the Targums as concerning the restoration of the northern tribes and their reunion with Judah (Martin-Achard, 1960: 93). It describes an old battlefield, with the utterly dry bones of long-unburied dead. Remaining unburied was a curse in Yahweh's judgement upon Judah (Jer.8:1-3); (Carley, 1974: 247), although Jeremiah was describing the removal of remains from their tombs, and Ezekiel's vision probably recalled the battlefields after the Babylonian invasion. The image is of abundant death.

The question "Can these bones live?" expected a negative answer. They were completely dry, no tissue attached, no spirit with them: they could not live. Although Yahweh's sovereign power implied the possibility of a positive answer, Ezekiel could not give it. He did not expect a literal resurrection. What follows pictures the restoration to the dead bones of everything that they were lacking for life: flesh, sinews, and breath/spirit (xaw%*r*). The oracle contains its own application (vv.11-14). Ezekiel's concern was not individuals, but the future of Israel. The promise of the

opening of the graves (vv.12-13) may be a later insertion (Carley, 1974: 248), but could refer to the prisons in which the exiles were held (Martin-Achard, 1960: 97). Death and the grave were metaphors for the destruction of the people, so resurrection was a metaphor for the rebirth of the nation.

Ezekiel prophesied national resurrection. He had no belief in personal resurrection, but his imagery later became important. “The question of actual resurrection was not raised before Ezek.37, but by Ezek.37” (Martin-Achard, 1960: 99). Belief in resurrection was still some way off.

3.2.5 The Servant of Yahweh

The identity of the servant in the Songs has been much discussed. Israel is referred to a number of times as Yahweh’s servant (Isa.41:86; 42:10), suggesting that the Servant is Israel (Knight, 1984: 3). Alternatively, it may be the prophet himself (Whybray, 1975: 71). Others suggest a future ideal figure (McKenzie, 1967: 1 ii), or conclude that, since the songs both reveal and conceal the Servant (Westermann, 1969: 20), exegesis should not be determined by the question of identity (Westermann, 1969: 92).

The subject of resurrection is raised by the promise of vindication (52:13-53:12). The song opens with a dialogue: a lamentation concerning the servant’s suffering is answered by oracles of Yahweh’s approval. The servant will be vindicated, and his enemies confounded. He dies prematurely, yet will prolong his days. His fellowship with Yahweh is restored, and so he will have a share in the spoils (53:12, recalling Isa.9:3). The question is how the martyr can be vindicated, and see his offspring:

- If Israel is the servant, the song informs them of the meaning of their sufferings; no real issue of death or resurrection is raised.
- If the servant is an individual, death and burial is not metaphor but reality. At the end of the songs he is not in the grave, but alive. The song would refer to the resurrection of a martyr.

The resurrection of an individual would have had considerable impact, both on the people of Israel at the time and on the development of the doctrine of resurrection. There is no record of such an event. The servant of Yahweh was most likely Israel, and the image of vindication of the martyr after death metaphorically applied to the nation.

The issue is not resurrection but vindication, which would also feature in future matters of martyrdom.

3.3 A DEVELOPING HOPE

Israel's hope began as communal survival, with no consideration of the possibility of individual survival beyond death. Two pressures led to consideration of the question of resurrection:

- the sovereignty of God over death and Sheol: if God really was omnipotent, his power could not be limited even by death (Hengel, 1973a: 196);
- the question of vindication, and the awareness that it was often the wicked who seemed to prosper: "Life beyond the grave... provided a solution to the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the misery of the righteous" (Neusner, 2002: 133).

3.3.1 Yahweh's dominion over death and Sheol

Hosea's rhetorical question (13:14) is one of many references to Yahweh's power over death and Sheol.

3.3.1.1 Enoch and Elijah

Enoch is listed among antediluvian patriarchs, each ending "and he died", except for Enoch, who "was not, for God took him" (Gen.5:24 RSV). He was extraordinarily devout, and rewarded as the "unexplained exception" (Wright, 2003: 94) being delivered from death. The latter point became important for later tradition (Ecclesiasticus 44:16) and intertestamental literature such as 1 Enoch, the Similitudes of Enoch, and Jubilees. Genesis has no understanding as to what happened to him (Westermann, 1987: 42), only that he was with God, exemplifying a communion with God that cannot be broken even by death.

Elijah's 'translation' (Martin-Achard, 1960: 69) (2 Ki.2:1-14) links the Elijah and Elisha story cycles. Elijah was so close to God that he was taken directly to heaven without experiencing death (Robinson, 1976: 23). He was recognised as the first and greatest prophet, representing the prophets alongside Moses in the Transfiguration (Lk.9:30), and as the herald of the Day of Yahweh (Mal.4:5 RSV).

These are the only 'translations' in the Old Testament. Later tradition speculated that Moses escaped death (Deut.34:5-6 is explicit that he did die; the mystery is the whereabouts of his grave), or that his soul was raised to heaven (Martin-Achard, 1960: 71). Such stories indicate exceptional servants of God. Yahweh could intervene and deliver from Sheol, but this would not be the experience of the ordinary believer.

3.3.1.2 Deuteronomy 32:39

This chapter is "a long widely ranging poem which came into existence quite independently of Deuteronomy" (von Rad, 1966: 195). It purports to be a speech by Moses, extolling Yahweh's perfect ways, contrasting his power with the impotence of idols, and includes the statement that he is able both to kill and make alive. This is a poetic construction denoting the power of Yahweh: if he can accomplish totally antithetical things, then he can accomplish all things.

3.3.1.3 1 Samuel 2:6

"It is God alone who has the power to give or withhold life" (Ackroyd, 1971: 31). The assertion of power over Sheol is another antithetical statement of faith that Yahweh can accomplish all things. There is no expectation of restoration of the dead, since no-one has died. Rather, it concerns the power of Sheol as experienced in sickness or weakness. Hannah's deliverance from childlessness was an experience of being raised up from Sheol (Martin-Achard, 1960: 55).

3.3.1.4 1 Kings 17:17-24

This is one of a sequence of stories of 'resurrections' by prophets, illustrating that Yahweh rather than Baal is the giver of life (Robinson, 1972: 203). Giving hospitality to a man of God should have brought blessing. Instead, there is calamity. The death of a widow's son would negate the family's hope for the continuing of the name; her life and marriage were wasted. Elijah stretches himself on the child three times; the child breathes again, and is restored to his mother. The point of the story is her response: she accepts that Elijah is a prophet of the true God.

3.3.1.5 2 Kings 4:31-37

This Elisha story echoes the Elijah story (1 Kings 17:17f). The birth is prophesied, removing the curse of barrenness (Gen.18:11-15; 1 Sam.1:4-8). The child later dies, and the woman seeks help from Elisha. The child is secretly left in the

prophet's room, partly to leave him in a place which may have some residual holiness, and partly to keep his death secret: people would conclude that Elisha was a false prophet or that the woman was a sinner. Elisha's reputation was at stake (Robinson, 1976: 44). The healing technique compares with the Elijah story, the detail emphasising the complete physical contact by which his vitality could be transferred to the child. The child sneezes, indicating that breath (xaw%r) has returned to his body. The sevenfold repetition means complete restoration.

3.3.1.6 2 Kings 13:21

This "legend" (Robinson, 1976: 125) illustrates the high regard in which Elisha was held. "Throughout his ministry, Elisha was a source of life, and he remained a source of life after his death" (Leithart, 2006: 235). The arrival of Moabite raiders meant there was no time to dig a grave, but the dead man could not be left unburied. Elisha's grave was conveniently to hand, so he was hastily buried there. On contact with the prophet's bones, he miraculously revived.

These stories relate exceptional events, and describe resuscitation as distinct from resurrection. The children died unnaturally, so the prayers of the prophets were against premature death. The man who died was newly dead, and came into contact with Elisha's still-powerful bones before his soul had gone to Sheol, from whence it could not return: the Hebrews believed that the soul lingered nearby for three days (Barrett, 1978: 401). Each revived person would eventually die again. Nevertheless, in the short term, Yahweh was shown to have power over death.

These examples express the conviction that Yahweh has power over life and death, whether actual death or the power of Sheol manifested through illness or weakness. The translations of Enoch and Elijah are unique. The resuscitations show the power of God manifested not against death itself, but unnatural or premature death. They were experiences of Yahweh's delivering power, but not of the destruction of Sheol (Martin-Achard, 1960: 64). There was no expectation of resurrection of the dead. Yahweh is in principle capable, but not in fact expected to do so.

3.3.2 Vindication of The Righteous

3.3.2.1 Job 19:25-27

The book of Job concerns the problem of the suffering of the righteous. Job's problem is not his alleged sins, nor his friends' inadequate explanations, but God's silence. God should be his *l)egO* or redeemer (Exod.6:6), but Job feels that it is God who has perpetrated the injustice, so he seeks someone to stand in the court of heaven to vindicate him in the fair trial he craves (Habel, 1975: 104). The Hebrew *NwOrxj)a* means the point at which all others have abandoned him, and the moment of divine intervention has come. 'Upon the earth' (*rpa(a-l(a)* means that Yahweh will reveal himself here: Sheol is not the issue. Job rejects the possibility of resurrection (14:14-20), expecting only oblivion (10:21-22). He expects to see God and be declared innocent before he dies.

The book of Job wrestles with the problem of unjust suffering. While rejecting the possibility of resurrection, it maintains that it is unjust for the righteous to be finally cut off from Yahweh. Job looks for vindication, and makes an affirmation which raises questions about life after death. Other texts raise the same question, and suggest a different answer.

3.3.2.2 Psalms 16:9-11

This is a psalm of confidence at being in communion with Yahweh, dating from after Zerubbabel but prior to Nehemiah (Briggs, 1906a: 117-8). The psalmist expects to die and go to Sheol, but is confident that Yahweh will not leave him there. He distinguishes *lwO)#\$;* from *txa#\$\$a*; *txa#\$\$a* means the Pit, the deeper area of Sheol reserved for the wicked (Briggs, 1906a: 122, 126). The psalmist is a devoted *dysixa*, therefore Yahweh cannot abandon him to the same place as the wicked, nor allow death to destroy their communion. He has no understanding of resurrection, but whatever postmortem existence there is includes Yahweh. There is no exploration of whether this means a form of immortality in communion with Yahweh, or the presence of Yahweh in Sheol. The psalmist simply celebrates his communion with Yahweh. He foresees no end to it, does not understand how that works, but is content to leave that question with God.

3.3.2.3 Psalms 49:15

This Wisdom psalm from the late Persian or early Greek period (Briggs, 1906a: 406) addresses the problem of those who ignore Yahweh yet are successful. Wise and foolish alike will die (vv.1-12), and after death the perceived injustice of this life will be redressed (vv.13-20). Sheol will be the permanent home of the wicked as shades. The wise, however, will be “received” by Yahweh (v.15). The verb *xqalf* suggests a link between communion with Yahweh beyond death and the translation-stories of Enoch and Elijah (Gen.5:24; 2 Ki.2:9, 10) (Martin-Achard, 1960: 156). There is no understanding of resurrection, but Yahweh must resolve the scandal of the prosperity of the wicked after death since it is not resolved before death. Death must be the end for the wicked, but not for the righteous.

3.3.2.4 Psalms 73:23-28

This psalm suggests a commercial period when the ethical problems of prosperity and unfairness would be acute (Briggs, 1906b: 142). The psalmist is aware of the injustice of the prosperity of the wicked and confesses himself embittered by it (vv.2-3). Only in worship do things take their proper perspective. His hope (vv.24f) concerns the blessings of being with Yahweh (vv.25-26), and the utter loss of being without him for ever (v.27). The latter verses could apply equally to long life or eternal life, except for *xqAlf* (v.24), which may imply translation (Gen.5:24) (Briggs, 1906b: 147). There is no clear belief in afterlife, but the psalmist begins from perceived injustice and concludes that Yahweh will be able to redress the imbalance, death notwithstanding: “Wherever the living God is accepted, death is effaced, its power is blunted, and it is rendered irrelevant” (Martin-Achard, 1960: 165).

The conviction was growing that Yahweh must exercise power over Sheol and death to redress the injustice which remains at the end of this life. There was as yet no belief in resurrection of the dead; even examples of the defeat of death did not reach that far. However, the conviction was developing that death is impotent against those living in close communion with God. The dead still went to Sheol, but Yahweh’s presence was a blessing which could not be taken away.

3.4 THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Israel's faith did not develop in a vacuum. They lived among Canaanites, and were exposed to Canaanite beliefs and practices: syncretism was a major issue during the early monarchy. The prophets attacked grosser examples, but more subtle influences remained: so Elijah's chariot of fire may derive from Canaanite sun-god myths (Robinson, 1976: 26). The concept of resurrection existed in Canaanite nature religion and cults of dying and rising gods (Osiris in Egypt, Tammuz in Babylon, Baal at Ras Shamra), but was very different from that which would develop in Hebrew thought. First, the resurrection of the deity did not imply the resurrection of the faithful. The god might die and rise with the seasons, but believers would simply die. Second, pagan mythologies interpreted natural forces, while Hebrew mythologies concerned salvation history: "History itself took on the mythical function of the primal age which provided the basis for the present age" (Pannenberg, 1973: 31). The prior existence of pagan concepts of resurrection might even have delayed Jewish acceptance of the idea, as pagan mythology incompatible with Yahwism.

During the Babylonian exile, the Jews were influenced by prolonged contact with the highly developed religious cult. Judaism is "indebted to Zoroastrianism for angelology, satanology, and... eschatology which, especially after the Exile, assumes the character of a cosmic drama concerned... with the destiny of the whole universe" (Martin-Achard, 1960: 189). The idea of resurrection existed by the fourth century, attested by Theopompus (Hengel, 1973a:196). There are differences between Persian ideas and developing Hebrew ideas. Persian beliefs were dualist: the soul went to the world of the departed, where the body was irrelevant, while in Hebrew thought the soul needs the body (3.1.1 above). Persian eschatology comprised the destruction and renewal of the universe, so resurrection was part of the physical recreation of the universe and necessarily universal. By contrast, Jewish ideas began as the hope for a small group of Mydiysixa, an eschatology based upon faith in a holy and righteous Yahweh. It required a response to religious and moral criteria, and was therefore restricted to those meeting the requirements.

Canaanite myths were compromised by their pagan context, although their influence can be seen. "Iranian influence... must be neither exaggerated nor denied" (Martin-Achard, 1960: 193). Judaism borrowed details from Persia, especially post-biblical Judaism, but the defining content was Hebrew: resurrection meant awakening from

sleep, the re-animation of the corpse, rather than a reconstitution of the body from the elements. The determinative factor was Israel's experience of God.

3.5 THE DAWNING HOPE

The questions of Yahweh's sovereignty over Sheol and the need for vindication, fuelled by prophetic imagery, led to increasingly explicit statements about the possibility of resurrection.

3.5.1 Isaiah 24-27

The so-called 'apocalypse of Isaiah' is a later interpolation, possibly late Third to Fourth Century BC (Russell, 1964: 367), late post-exilic or Hellenistic (Kaiser, 1973: 173), or the first half of the Fifth Century, arising "in the growing feeling of frustration and disappointment that greeted the exiles who returned from Babylon... the prophecies of Isaiah... were reviewed and re-interpreted in the belief that they disclosed the key to understanding God's future for his people" (Clements, 1980: 199-200). This world is later than Isaiah's: 587 is past (27:3); it concerns world-scale judgement, not Yahweh's dispute with Jerusalem (24:1f); the city in the oracles is not Jerusalem (24:7f); the song of the new vineyard contrasts with Isaiah's original oracle (27:2f; 5:1f); there is a clear expectation that Yahweh will abolish death. It is redactionally placed at the end of the 'foreign prophecy' oracles (13-23) to show the ultimate fate of the nations.

3.5.1.1 Isaiah 25:8

The great festival banquet in which the nations finally share Yahweh's blessings recalls the tradition of the nations' pilgrimage to the mountain of the Lord (Isa.2:1-4; Mic.4:1f). Final salvation means the removal of the veil of suffering over the world, including Yahweh's ultimate victory over death. The interruption of the rhythm of vv.6f by v.8aα suggests that this is a later gloss (Kaiser, 1973: 201), but it must at least predate the Qumran MSS (Martin-Achard, 1960: 129). Either way, by this late post-exilic time, the eschatological rule of Yahweh was believed to involve the removal of death. Victory over death means no more will die, but nothing is said about those who have already died.

3.5.1.2 Isaiah 26:19

Addressing the problem of those who have already died, the prophet proclaims (v.16f) that Yahweh's dead will be raised in the final age. This is a lament psalm in which the assurance (v.19) comes in response to the lament. The Jews have suffered under tyranny (v.13f), but their oppressors are now reduced to My)ipfre (3.1.1 above). Death is a weapon in Yahweh's hands so he is able to determine that they will stay dead. The significance of that threat comes when it is declared that Yahweh's dead will rise bodily (v.19). The brevity of the reference to resurrection suggests that the idea was familiar (Kaiser, 1973: 216). It is a clear statement of bodily resurrection, but only for the righteous. This oracle combines the two pressures leading to resurrection, the need for justice and the need for continued communion with God. The faithful cannot have the same fate as the enemies of God.

Prophetic hope had long expected Yahweh to protect the nation and guarantee its future survival. Resurrection language was sometimes used to picture the deliverance of the people. By the late Persian and early Greek period, it was no longer enough to seek the survival of the righteous nation, but also that of the righteous individual (Russell, 1964: 366).

3.5.2 Daniel 12:2

Daniel dates from the Maccabean revolt, but before the decisive successes against the Seleucids (Hammer, 1976: 5). Stories from the Babylonian crisis illustrate God's ability to deliver in this present crisis, followed by apocalyptic visions of victory. Daniel 12:1-4 is part of the account of the climax of history, containing the most explicit picture yet of resurrection of the dead. For the first time, resurrection is to reward or punishment (Hammer, 1976: 116), driven by the need for justice, more than communion with Yahweh. It is necessary not only that the Mydiysixa receive their reward, but that tyrants and traitors receive their punishments. Daniel 12 goes further than Isaiah 26:19. The guilty must not simply be denied life, but punished; so they rise to everlasting shame (MlfwO(NwOrdil;) (Martin-Achard, 1960:142). There is no expectation of a general resurrection. Only some (Nmi) of those in the dust will be raised. The best and worst are raised, the indifferent left in Sheol.

Through the Old Testament period, hope developed from concern for the future of the nation (Hosea, Ezekiel) through concern for the vindication of those who served God (Deutero-Isaiah) to the fate of those who died before God's final victory. Both the Apocalypse of Isaiah and Daniel envisage the resurrection of the Mydiysixa, although the former is praying for it and the latter is making a confident assertion. Hebrew hope developed through a crucible of experience, gradually discovering the implications of Yahweh's concern for a just future for his people and his dominion over everything including death and Sheol.

3.6 INTERTESTAMENTAL BELIEFS

The Hellenistic world had many ideas about life after death, in which resurrection was only marginal. Where stories explored resurrection, it meant "coming back into something like the same sort of life that humans presently experience" (Wright, 2003: 33), not final or eternal destiny. Homer anticipated a bleak future in Hades, as 'a ghost, phantom' with 'no real breath of life' (Il.23:99f) (Eagles, 1990: 562f). However, the burial of toys, adornments or toiletries in graves suggests popular hope that there might be an afterlife analogous to the present. Plato taught that death was not something to regret, but "the moment when, and the means by which, the immortal soul is set free from the prison house of the physical body" (Wright, 2003: 48). This reverses the Homeric belief in which the soul was in a half-life, and the body the self which died; now the soul was the essential self, and the corpse the discarded shell.

The mystery cults grew in this soil, offering a blissful spiritual existence beyond death. Resurrection was an unnecessary encumbrance. Where it occurs in story and myth, it tends to be a short-lived return, or a literary device enabling a description of the afterlife, such as Plato's story of Er (Waterfield, 1993: 371ff). A return to a body would be a retrograde step, interrupting the progress to eternal bliss. The only belief system which expected a return of the soul to a body was transmigration. However, the migrating soul was not believed to return as the person it used to be, and there was no continuity between earlier and later bodies.

For those who believed in immortality, returning to a body was a "return to jail" (Wright, 2003: 79). By contrast, for those who believed in resurrection, a newly

embodied life was something for joyful anticipation, not a return to this life but a new life beyond. Further, the individualistic emphasis of immortality did not sit easily with the Jewish concern with the continuation of the people (Hengel, 1973b: 131). The result in Judaism was a range of ideas from resurrection to immortality of the soul via various combinations in between (Bryan, 2005: 157f): “Immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body were originally separate ideas: resurrection entered Judaism from Persia, immortality from Greece. But by the first century they were often combined” (Sanders, 1993: 170).

The Pharisees faced persecution because of their affirmation of resurrection (Martin-Achard, 1960: 224). The Sadducees rejected it because there was no support in the Torah (Rowland, 1985: 68). The continuing sapiential tradition in Ecclesiasticus had no belief in resurrection or afterlife (Ecclus.7:17; 11:26; 14:16; 17:28), but believed that rewards and punishment “take place not in the afterlife but only in the present life” (Di Lella, 1986: 260). Judith, Tobit, Baruch and 1 Maccabees make no mention of resurrection, but it is asserted by 2 Maccabees, parts of the Enoch literature (1 Enoch, the Similitudes of Enoch, and Jubilees), the Psalms of Solomon, the Testament of the XII Patriarchs, 4 Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Baruch (Martin-Achard, 1960: 224). Some LXX translations strengthen passages which were ambiguous about resurrection, while moving away from more Platonic interpretations (Wright, 2003: 150). In some traditions, $\iota\omega\omicron\#\$$; (Gk ὡς ἐν ᾧ) was developed from simply the place of the dead to become a place where souls awaited judgement (Ps.Sol.14; Wisd.2:1; 3:1) (VanGemeren, 1997a: 888).

Resurrection expectation took various forms (Russell, 1964: 369-370). Sometimes the righteous are raised to a kingdom on this earth, sometimes to a new earth. Sometimes the resurrection is limited to a period awaiting the dawning of the Messianic age. Some describe a heavenly Messianic kingdom, in which resurrection may or may not play a part. Some contemplate the resurrection of the righteous alone (Pss of Sol; 1 En.83-90) and do not mention the future of the wicked. Most anticipate the resurrection of both righteous and wicked. Some distinguish between sinners who have been punished in Sheol and are not raised, and those who have not been punished in Sheol and are raised to be thrown into Gehenna (1 En.6-36). Some writers believe in a general resurrection, followed by a day of judgement. Some do not expect resurrection, but immortality (Jubilees 23:31) or a resurrection of the spirit alone (1 En.103:4) (Russell, 1964: 372).

The Wisdom of Solomon envisaged immortality of the soul followed by resurrection (Wright, 2003: 171), although the underlying Platonism makes this less clear (Bryan, 2005: 166). Most Qumran texts “say nothing about the future fate of the dead” (Bryan, 2005: 166), some looked for a resurrection of the soul from the Pit (Hymns III) to cleanse the spirit and join it with the community of heaven (Vermes, 1962: 158). Other texts looked for faithful covenantors to be raised to a future in an ideal Jerusalem, or a future in paradise (Bened.III:25f; IV.25f). Graves at Qumran were dug so that the dead would rise facing the north, where the Essenes believed paradise to be (Russell, 1964: 374).

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter began with the question as to how far the kerygma was shaped by the event at its source, and how far by the traditions in which it was expressed.

The idea of resurrection developed over a considerable period from a number of threads within Old Testament literature. It addressed the question of injustice unresolved before death, and was implied by Yahweh’s sovereignty over Sheol. Some of the details of the doctrine show Canaanite or Babylonian influence, but the idea itself is firmly rooted in Hebrew thought, “if not without being influenced, at least without being borrowed” (Martin-Achard, 1960: 192).

Resurrection was part of the expectations available to Jesus’s disciples, should they be seeking a device to maintain the movement after losing their leader (thus Reimarus 2.3 above). Prototypes even existed for the idea of the resurrection of an individual (Bryan, 2005: 169). Spong (1994: 8) suggests the resurrection narratives are midrash, “the Jewish way of saying that everything to be venerated in the present must somehow be connected to a sacred moment in the past”. What appears to be historical narrative is a retelling of the event or experience in terms echoing past revelatory events. Similarly, Crossan explains the resurrection narratives as ‘prophecy historicised’ not ‘history remembered’ (Crossan, 1998: 520f), meaning that the structure of the stories is dictated by biblical parallels, rather than historical memories. There was no actual resurrection, but the story was written to express the perceived significance of Jesus.

However, the argument for resurrection fulfilling tradition is much clearer after the event (Wedderburn, 1999: 41). While the idea of resurrection was available, the form which it took in the Jesus tradition was radically transformed from existing ideas. There were no expectations of a “dying Messiah” (Wright, 2008: 59). The various forms of belief in resurrection by Jesus’s time were eschatological, relating to the day of judgement and the end of history. Christian thought radically transformed the idea of resurrection into an event which was both historical and eschatological: a prolepsis of the final resurrection, anticipating the general resurrection of all (1 Cor.15:21f; 1 Th.4:14).

While Jesus’s followers had the ingredients for a resurrection story in their scriptures, that does not account for its radical transformation, nor its occurrence. What was the historical ‘trigger’ for such a story? There was no need to create a resurrection story to continue the group, or preserve Jesus’s teachings: they only needed to venerate their martyred leader. Instead, they insisted on a resurrection. Bultmann argues “how the Easter faith arose in individual disciples has been obscured in the tradition by legend and is not of basic importance” (Bultmann, 1952: 45). While it is clear that the Easter experience has been overlaid by later tradition, without the Easter experience there would be no tradition; it is therefore of considerable importance.

Something happened to Jesus’s followers in the days after the crucifixion, an Easter moment, “an experience so real that earthbound words could not capture it” (Spong, 1995: 238). That experience led them to the proclamation of Jesus’s resurrection, in ways which developed and radically transformed existing ideas of resurrection. The Hellenistic idea of immortality, although it would have been much easier to communicate as the new faith spread through the Mediterranean world, was not appropriate to the Jewish understanding of hope in Yahweh, and (decisively) was not adequate to explain the disciples’ experience. “The whole thinking of the New Testament is governed by belief in the Resurrection” (Cullmann, 1958: 26). The next chapter will examine the place of resurrection in New Testament traditions.

CHAPTER 4: THE IDEA OF RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Having established in the last chapter that there were resurrection traditions available to the disciples, this chapter will explore the New Testament in order to identify resurrection traditions and how they are used. We begin with Paul as the earliest writer, and proceed to the narrative traditions in the Gospels, exploring how much depends upon an event and how much upon an idea. It may be true that “the whole thinking of the New Testament is governed by belief in the Resurrection” (Cullmann, 1958: 26). An examination of New Testament traditions will show that its governance is variable.

4.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

4.1.1 The Shape of the Canon

The canonical order of books suggests a purpose: to tell the story of Jesus, and explain its meaning. The Gospels tell the story of his ministry, death and resurrection. Luke’s account continues with the growth of the early Church and Paul’s ministry as far as Rome. Letters to churches set out how to live “in Christ” and the gospel arising from his death and resurrection. The canon ends with visions of ultimate victory.

4.1.2 Hidden Complexities

This simple outline conceals a number of complexities.

- First, the Gospel narratives are developed theological reflections. Each draws upon earlier collections of sayings and stories, shaping the tradition to explain the significance of Jesus. “Whether Gospel or Epistle, each work bears the mark of an address to a particular church community, concerned with the issues relevant to the needs of a local situation. At the time of writing, there could hardly be an awareness of anything like a ‘systematic theology’; each writer addressed a ‘grassroots’ situation” (Gillingham, 1998: 33).
- Second, the first books in the canon are among its latest and most developed. The letters which ‘explain’ the Gospels were mostly written decades earlier. The Gospels rely upon traditions concerning both the appearances of Jesus to his disciples and the empty tomb. Paul uses appearance traditions, but not the empty tomb. The question is whether Paul knew of the empty tomb, in which case why he did not use it needs to be

explained, or whether the story is a later tradition, possibly composed by Mark (Goulder, 1996: 57), so not available to Paul.

4.2 PAUL

4.2.1 Paul's Importance

Paul's theology is definitive for later Christian doctrine. His writings form the largest part of the canon. His personal impact was considerable, being legendary by the time Luke wrote (Grollenberg, 1978: 13). His teachings may have provoked the writing of Mark's Gospel, to supplement the Pauline kerygma (Martin, 1972: 156ff). The earliest definitive list is the Muratorian Canon (Bettenson, 1967: 28); the earliest surviving collection is p46 from c200 (Kümmel, 1975: 518). Paul's letters were often intended to be shared (Col.4:16), and collections formed as they circulated around the churches.

4.2.2 Paul's Theological Roots

By his own testimony he was brought up as a strict Jew (Rom.11:1) within the Hellenistic city of Tarsus. He would be exposed to Greek philosophies and the influences of Hellenistic culture, but his thinking is unquestionably Jewish. Common ground is "found in that large area of belief and language which was shared by Jew and Gentile alike" (Whiteley, 1974: 3). What distinguishes him from contemporary Hellenistic Judaism is his response to Christ. They probably never met: "ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς" (2 Cor.5:16) means regarding Jesus "from a human point of view" (NIV) rather than having met Jesus 'in the flesh.' Saul the Pharisee was transformed into Paul the apostle on the Damascus Road (Gal.1:13-17). Placing his experience within the resurrection tradition (1 Cor.15:8) validates his apostolic status to his critics, but also bases his call in his encounter with the Risen Jesus. The result is a Christ-centred theology. Christ's death and resurrection fulfil the Law (Rom.8:1f), enabling those who are 'in Christ' to be children of God (Rom.8:15f). Because of the cross and resurrection, final salvation is assured (Rom.8:31-39).

4.2.3 Paul's Knowledge of Jesus

Paul's letters discuss theology, rarely considering historical origins. This contrast to the narrative theology of the Gospels has led to arguments that Paul knew nothing of the historical Jesus: Jesus of Nazareth was no longer important for the kerygma (Bultmann, 1952: 188, 189). The resurrection is mythology or midrash, to which Paul could supply no historical information because there was no historical event. However, he makes enough references to the historical Jesus to show that he knew of his existence:

- Jesus was born of a woman;
- He was born under the Law (Gal.4:4);
- He was a descendant of David (Rom.1:3-4);
- He had brothers (1 Cor.9:5; Gal.1:19);
- He had followers, including the Twelve (1 Cor.15:3);
- He ministered to the Jews (Rom.15:8);
- His character was meek and gentle (eg 2 Cor.10:1);
- He instituted the Lord's Supper (1 Cor.11:23-26);
- He was crucified and buried (1 Cor.15:4);
- His death was brought about by the Jews (1 Th.2:15).

Paul knew that Jesus and his ministry were historical, and that salvation was based upon events rather than fables. He probably knew more than he put in his letters. Damascus Road was where "he learned the truth (of the Gospel) by unmediated disclosure from heaven" (Bruce, 1982: 88). He emphasised his independence from the Jerusalem apostles (Gal.1:16f), but admits to "getting acquainted" (Gal.1:18 NIV) with Peter. The facts about Jesus were given to him after his conversion by those who knew them. Jesus-traditions were circulating: it is unlikely "that Paul's churches would remain ignorant of the historical Jesus until they got Mark" (Dunn, 1998: 187). There are clues that Paul did know of Jesus's teaching. For example, the abba prayer (Rom.8:15-17; Gal.4:6-7) was characteristic; the Aramaic word indicates its early provenance. Paul quotes a version of the Passion Narrative close to Luke's version (1 Cor.11:26f) (Trocme, 1983: 50). Similarly, 1 Th.4:15-17 quotes a "word from the Lord," a saying attributed to Jesus, a close parallel to sayings in the synoptic tradition (Mt.16:27f; 24:27f) (Sanders, 1993: 180f). Genre is significant: Paul wrote letters, and did not include everything he had already taught. The subject matter is governed by the situation. The letters were not to pass on Jesus tradition, because he had already done it (Dunn, 1998: 189). If there was no issue concerning Jesus tradition, it was not

Ex.32:6 LXX). The statement reflects the basic data from which all Christology developed: Jesus's death and resurrection (Wanamaker, 1990: 168). The resurrection addresses the concern of the Thessalonians about the fate of those who have died before the parousia: just as God raised Christ, so he will raise those who have died in Christ (4:13-18). Our resurrection is linked with his, although the verb changes from $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\blacksquare\mathfrak{M}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{z}$ to $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\boxtimes\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{H}$, moving the focus from the (presupposed) resurrection of those who have died to their being led into heaven.

4.2.4.2 1 Corinthians

Paul had a lengthy correspondence (Barrett, 1973: 208f) with Corinth. This is a response to a letter from the church (1 Cor.7:1) and reports by those who brought it. There were a number of issues, not in any given order, but he is concerned most with the threat of division (Kümmel, 1975: 272).

The resurrection is foundational: the gospel is based on the risen Christ, and the resurrection illuminates every issue in the letter. The eschatological age began with the resurrection, so attitudes to wisdom, sex and marriage, food, idols, worship are radically affected by the "need to live in the present age by the light... of the age to come" (Wright, 2003: 286). Paul defends his apostolic status by reference to the resurrection (1 Cor.9:1f). Like the other apostles, he has seen the risen Christ, which is the key to apostleship.

The letter contains Paul's most sustained treatment of the resurrection (1 Cor.15:1-58). Some Corinthians have denied the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor.15:12). Paul takes this as a denial of all hope: their practice of baptism on behalf of the dead, and indeed religion and morality are pointless without a future reward or judgement. However, the Corinthians may not have been dismissing Christian hope. Greek religious hopes commonly expected immortality, and death as a liberation of the soul (Cullman, 1958: 20). To have the newly-liberated soul confined in a new body would be absurd (Wright, 2003: 79). They were probably articulating their faith in the familiar language of immortality. This would answer Paul (15:29-34): baptism on behalf of the dead made sense, because they were concerned about their friends' eternal souls, and religion and morality were still open to reward and judgement in immortality.

If Paul had misunderstood them, they also misunderstood him, thinking he was teaching “the resuscitation of an immense number of corpses” (Barrett, 1971: 378). Paul explains that resurrection means transformation. It is part of the tradition he handed on to them (1 Cor.15:3), and that is where he begins his argument.

He reminds them of something they should not have forgotten. He did not originate the tradition, but was a link in the chain of transmission. The message is summarised in a series of clauses introduced by $\square\odot\blacklozenge\text{X}$, each having the same status: the death and burial are historical events, so the resurrection and the appearance to Peter are equally historical. Peter was the probable source of the tradition, as it included his meeting with the risen Jesus, and the original tradition ends here: the reference to the five hundred and subsequent appearances were Paul’s (Bruce, 1982: 98). The language is significant: $\text{et}\square\text{M}\square\text{et}\blacksquare\text{M}\blacksquare$ and $\text{M}\text{et}\blacklozenge\text{et}\text{X}\approx$ are aorists, while $\text{M}\text{et}\text{yo}\approx\text{yo}\text{M}\square\blacklozenge\text{et}\text{X}$ is perfect. The raising has happened, and is still in force: “He died, but is not dead; he was buried, but is not in the tomb; he was raised, and is alive now” (Barrett, 1971: 340). --- ..

Resurrection is not negotiable. Whatever the Corinthians’ philosophical objections, it has already happened, and cannot be denied (15:12). Moreover, there are serious implications for the validity of the faith. Without resurrection, the faith is vain and based upon a lie ($\text{O}\text{et}\blacklozenge\text{et}\text{X}\text{et}$ means useless and powerless). The fact, however (15:20 $\blacksquare\blacklozenge\blacksquare\text{X}$ $\triangle\text{M}$), is that Christ has been raised. Paul’s argument progresses in two directions, exploring the apocalyptic framework in which our resurrection will take place (remembering the problem of those who died before the Parousia: 1 Th.4:15f), and explaining the resurrection body as a transformed ‘Spirit-animated’ (not ‘Spirit-composed’) body (Wright, 2003: 352). Whether we die before the Parousia or not, the end result is the same: “We shall all be changed” (15:51).

Paul and his opponents are probably arguing at cross-purposes, neither completely understanding the other. His teaching develops in apocalyptic and mythological terms. However, beneath the mythology is the belief that the resurrection of Jesus was an historical event, and the whole superstructure depends upon that foundation.

4.2.4.3 2 Corinthians

Continuing troubles with Corinth meant a second letter, perhaps twelve months later (Barrett, 1973: 4f). The literary unity of the letter is questionable, with parts of the present letter possibly representing the continuing correspondence. The first letter was partly successful: some problems are not mentioned again. It was unsuccessful in establishing Paul's apostolic authority, due to the arrival of a new group with letters of commendation (Kümmel, 1975: 284).

This letter is painful, reflecting the very difficult time he has been having. The thanksgiving expresses profound feelings after a deliverance from death (1:8-9): possibly the Ephesian riot (Acts.19:23-40), which may have been more dangerous than Luke suggests, or Paul's illness (12:7). Thus reminded of his mortality, he is thrust back upon the God who raises the dead. The whole epistle "moves on this boundary line between life and death... it contains so much questioning of all human security, and is so uncomfortable a document" (Barrett, 1973. 65). It is more than a statement of tradition or reiteration of Christian conviction: Paul has been weaned away from his considerable self-confidence (11:22f) to trust in God who alone can sustain him in the face of such threat.

A more considered treatment of resurrection (5:1-10) reflects on the earthenware vessels which contain the gospel treasure. The tent (†&⋈■□<) suggests impermanence, and was a common picture for the temporary dwelling of the soul. Paul does not wish to argue for a Greek dualist liberation of the soul, but to move from the temporary †&⋈■□< to the permanent □†er&□□○⋈. He mixes metaphors between buildings and clothing to develop the ideas which he expressed earlier as a resurrection body. The same distinction is found as in 1 Cor.15 between those who die before the Parousia and the living, now expressed in terms of the Jewish horror of nakedness. Philosophers longed for the nakedness of the soul: stripping was necessary to enter the highest heaven (Barrett, 1973: 154). Paul is horrified at the idea of being naked at the Parousia: either the shame of exposure in terms of judgement, or a concern at the prospect of a period of bodiless existence between death and the Parousia, a 'bare grain' which has been sown but not yet given the spirit-driven body (1 Cor.15:44). He hopes for the Parousia, rather than death, because he wants immediate transformation. He

draws practical inferences from his experience: because God can to sustain him in the face of death, he can bring him through death, therefore Paul can be confident in his discipleship.

4.2.4.4 Galatians

One of the four ‘capital letters’ of Paul, along with Romans and 1 & 2 Corinthians (Bruce, 1982: 1), Galatians reflects the mid-50s controversy leading to the council of Jerusalem (Acts.15:1ff). Paul has heard of visitors to ‘his’ Galatian churches who insist on circumcision as a prerequisite for salvation, and also cast doubt on his apostolic credentials. He is furious at the perversion of the true gospel (Gal.1:7): the problem is not the practice of circumcision, but its implication (5:6; 6:15): if circumcision is essential to salvation, then the whole Law is essential to salvation.

Paul’s response is an angry letter, without the usual opening pleasantries and including harsh invective (Gal.5:12; *ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὑμῖν ὡς ἐστὶν ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ κυρίου* concerns the making of eunuchs). His strategy is to refute the challenge to his apostolic status, and to set out the true gospel of justification by faith. He addresses the former through an autobiographical sketch (1:11-2:10); his claim to apostleship is based upon his claim to have seen the Lord (1 Cor.9:1). It is no less a resurrection appearance than those to the other apostles (1 Cor.15:3ff).

The resurrection is part of his testimony. Paul the Pharisee would acclaim God as the ‘raiser of the dead’ (in the second of the Eighteen Benedictions: *Mtim;ha hyeham;*); (Bruce, 1982: 73). However, this belief was not because of previous beliefs, but because he had met the risen Christ: a traditional theological conviction was now a central plank of his testimony and theology. God was raiser of the dead (Rom.4:17; 2 Cor.1:9) because that was what he had done to Christ, opening the eschatological age to believers because they share the resurrection life of Christ (2:19f) through the Spirit, “who is the guarantee ... and very principle of resurrection life” (Bruce, 1982: 246). Resurrection becomes a fluid metaphor, describing the present experience, eschatological perspective, and continuing transformation of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The metaphor is true because it is based upon the historical fact that God did raise Jesus from the dead.

4.2.4.5 Romans

Paul's magnum opus is his manifesto to a church which he has not visited. He is preparing to visit, with Rome as his primary destination (1:15) or as a stage on the way to Spain (15:24). He has two underlying concerns:

- He is reflecting for the benefit of the Roman Christians upon issues which he has already faced: how Jews and Gentiles relate within the new Christian community; how they relate to their Jewish roots; food ethics (issues at Rome are similar to those at Colossae: Rom.14:1ff compare Col.2:16f) (Barrett, 1962: 257); matters raised by the recent Galatian controversy (Phil.3; 2 Cor.3-6).
- He is looking ahead to his visit to Jerusalem, and the gift of the collection from among the Gentile churches for the Jerusalem church. He anticipates controversy (Rom.15:30f), even rejection of the collection which is so important to him (Dunn, 1977: 256-7).

On the one hand, Paul is looking for support in a very difficult situation. The Galatian controversy and the apostolic conference indicate strong tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul must have known how dangerous his situation was and how close the movement was to serious schism. He would be seeking as much personal support as he could. On the other hand, Rome may have suffered the same tensions. Claudius's expulsion of the Jews was probably due to controversy caused by the preaching of Christ among the Jewish community: hence Suetonius' misunderstanding of the riots as due to "Chrestus" (Barrett, 1987: 14). That was some fifteen years earlier. Some expelled Jewish Christians may have returned to find 'their' Christian community predominantly Gentile. This would explain Jewish-Gentile controversy within the Roman church, and thus the theological exposition with which Paul introduced himself (Ziesler, 1989: 13-14).

The letter contains a rhetorical argument with an hypothetical Jewish opponent, demonstrating by stages that the Christian account of God's work of salvation is the only adequate one. The argument flows thus:

- 1:18-3:20 Jews and Gentiles alike suffer from the power and guilt of sin.
- 3:21-31 The death and resurrection of Jesus is the answer to sin, therefore:
- 4:1-5:22 a) there is no condemnation for those united in Christ by faith;
- 6:1-23 b) there is no longer bondage to sin;
- 7:1-25 c) there is no longer the divided self, diagnosed but not cured by the Law;

12:1-15:13 Ethical instructions, including food regulations and civil obedience.

The opening address defines Jesus in terms of his earthly life and the resurrection, possibly quoting an earlier credal statement, containing two complementary statements about Christ. He was born as a descendant of David & 𐤠𐤥𐤌𐤠 𐤠𐤮𐤏𐤥𐤠, meaning 'according to the realm of the flesh (that is humanity)' (Barrett, 1962: 18). He was 'appointed' (𐤠𐤡𐤏𐤥𐤠 𐤠𐤌𐤠𐤥𐤠) Son of God & 𐤠𐤥𐤌𐤠 𐤠𐤌𐤠𐤥𐤠 through his resurrection from the dead. Primitive christologies often sounded adoptionist, deriving from enthronement psalms (Acts 13:33; Ps.2:7). This is the source of the title 'son of God' as applied to Kings of Israel (2 Sam.7:14). Hellenistic thought used the term for someone charismatic or powerful. Paul did not believe that Jesus became Son of God at the resurrection (Gal.4:4; Rom.8:3, which suggest that he had a view of Jesus as pre-existent). The resurrection was a "confirmation of his existing position and status" (Marshall, 1976: 120). The phrase 𐤠𐤡𐤏𐤥𐤠 𐤠𐤌𐤠𐤥𐤠 𐤠𐤮𐤏𐤥𐤠 is a Pauline addition to the original credal formula, intended to soften the adoptionism of the quotation. Jesus always was the Son of God but without the manifestations of power: "God, in the person of his Son, disclosed himself in weakness and humility that we might know him and live by faith only, without the confirmation of sight" (Barrett, 1962: 20). The resurrection is the key to understanding what it means to affirm Jesus as Lord (Rom.14:9; Acts 2:31-36).

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Paul's theology centres on the idea that believers are *in* Christ and participate in his death and resurrection, dramatically acted out in baptism (6:4). Death is now the gateway to new life because of the resurrection. Paul's language echoes the mystery religions, but is crucially different: his dying-and-rising ritual is based on an historical event in the recent past, not on a mythical figure, and he talks not of death and rebirth but of death and resurrection. The language is eschatological, rather than mystical, derived not from Hellenistic mystery religion, but the Jewish replacement of the old Adam with the last Adam, "eschatological humankind" (Dunn, 1998: 242). The death into which the believer is baptized not only represents, but brings about the end of the old age, and the resurrection not only represents, but brings about the beginning of the new age. However, Paul does not say that Christians have been raised with Christ: Christ has died and has been raised, while believers have died with him and will be raised (6:8). Our new life will be the struggle to live out our future freedom in the present; our resurrection is still future, but its effects will be evident in the present. Although we still face the struggle, we are in fact living the "life in the Spirit of which the resurrection of Jesus is the sign" (Ziesler, 1989: 201). Although the believers have not yet been raised, they have the assurance that they will be, through the Spirit who is at work in them. In 2 Corinthians 1:22 the Spirit is the guarantee of what is still to come; in Romans 8:23, it is the first-fruit of resurrection.

The resurrection is a powerful metaphor in Romans for new life in the Spirit. Behind the metaphor is always the historical event by which Jesus was appointed Son of God.

4.2.4.6 Philippians

This is very personal, written from prison to give thanks for the help Paul has received, to bring them up to date regarding his own situation, and to offer help which he cannot give in person. His reflections arise from his experience of struggle for the faith, both in his earlier visits to Philippi (1:30) and in his current imprisonment. Facing a possible death sentence, Christ's death and resurrection are ever-present themes in his thinking. He has found a degree of detachment in the face of death (1:21f), because the Christ he serves has conquered death. Because Christ's resurrection is 'rooted in the dark night of the cross' (Collange, 1979: 20), Paul knows that his own sharing in Christ's sufferings are the key to his victory (3:10).

He illustrates his thinking with a Christological hymn, not of his own composition since the theology differs. It expounds the $\mathcal{E}\mathcal{M}\blacksquare\diamond\mathcal{H}\mathcal{X}$ of Christ, offering his self-emptying as an example for the Christian, and the exaltation and glory of Christ as the promise for the ultimate victory of the Christian. It refers to exaltation rather than resurrection, and considers death as $\mathcal{E}\mathcal{M}\blacksquare\diamond\mathcal{H}\mathcal{X}$, but not as ‘death for us’.

4.2.4.7 Colossians

Dates vary from c56-58 or 58-60 (Kümmel, 1975: 348), to the Roman imprisonment c60 (Moule, 1957: 25). The occasion is the so-called Colossian heresy, a local blend of Jewish and Greek ideas, possibly deriving from Plato or Pythagoras (Bruce, 1984: 17), tending towards Gnosticism. Rather than challenging the heresy directly, Paul expounded the gospel of salvation through Christ. He had never been to Colossae personally, but knew that Epaphras taught them well (Col.1:7), and so underlined what it means to have died and been raised with Christ.

Christ’s resurrection is at the heart of Colossians. Because the believers are “in Christ” (Col.1:2) they are incorporated in his death and resurrection, and their new life is enabled by the same power which raised Jesus from the dead. The role assigned to the Spirit in other letters is assigned here to the risen Christ (Rom.8:23; 2 Cor.5:5 describe the indwelling Spirit as the pledge of glory; Col.1:27 describes the indwelling Christ as the hope of glory). “The Spirit conveys what Christ bestows: theoretically and in principle the Spirit and the risen Christ are distinguishable, but practically and in experience they cannot be separated” (Bruce, 1984: 28). Because Christ is raised, there are ethical implications for those who are in Christ. We live a new life, empowered from the glory in which he now lives. The resurrection is the key to Paul’s argument in Colossians. It answers ‘vain myths’ because it is something which he believed really happened.

4.2.4.8 Philemon

The letter is brief, regarding the slave Onesimus. Paul mentions the gospel, but makes no reference to the resurrection. However, the new relationship between slave and master is contingent upon their both being followers of the risen Christ. Onesimus is not just a slave, but a brother in the “lived-out gospel of the resurrection” (Wright, 2003: 241). The resurrection is not discussed, but is implicit in the Christian life.

4.2.4.9 Ephesians

Ephesians may be Pauline, written to instruct new Gentile churches in the Lycus valley on the meaning of their baptism, or a post-Pauline preface to a collection of authentic Pauline letters, as a commentary on the Pauline mission and message (Bruce, 1984: 242) following renewed interest in Paul after the publication of Acts.

The resurrection is proof of the power working for us (1:19), and the model of our transformation (2:5f). “If the death of Christ is the supreme demonstration of the love of God... so the resurrection is the supreme demonstration of his power” (Bruce, 1984: 271). Three verbs compounded with ♦◆■- link our experience with the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ: ♦◆■ℳ⌘♦□□□⋈≈♦ℳ■⌘ ♦◆■ℳℳ⋈□ℳ■, and ♦◆■ℳ&⌘⋈♦ℳ■. Our present salvation is determined by our being “in Christ”, so that our still future hope (sitting in the heavenly places) is so determined by Christ’s past experience that our own hopes can be articulated in a past tense (Mitton, 1973: 89). The Spirit is the ‘downpayment’ of future blessing (1:14).

4.2.4.10 The Pastoral Letters

The authorship of the Pastorals is a matter of debate: “The prevailing view is that the letters as they stand derive from the sub-apostolic age” (Kelly, 1963: 5). The biographical detail in the Pastorals contradicts that contained in the undisputed Pauline letters, and they differ in style, vocabulary and theology. Kelly nevertheless defends Pauline authorship from the early 60s, after Paul’s Rome house-arrest, suggesting he has been released and travelled in the West, before a final arrest and death. However, the hypothesis that Paul has changed because he is much older and has been influenced by his travels in the Latin-speaking West is unconvincing. He is unlikely to have changed so much in only a decade. Other possible dates are the early Second Century (Kümmel, 1975: 387); or later in the first half of the Second Century (Houlden, 1976: 42f). The letters were probably written pseudonymously to demonstrate that the tradition begun with Paul was still alive and valid as a counter to contemporary false teachings.

If this is Deutero-Pauline tradition, it is conscious of its origins, not least in using biographical material possibly dating from Paul. An oblique reference to the resurrection (2 Tim.1:10) refers to the saviour who has destroyed death, using the same

verb (ἁγιάσθητε) as 1 Cor.15:26. The resurrection itself is referred to metaphorically by φωτισμός, as the illumination revealing the true nature of life in Christ: it is characterized by ἀφθαρσία or incorruptibility, which Paul used of the resurrection body (1 Cor.15:42). The language is deliberately Pauline, but the discussion gives it a later flavour, like the work of an old master given a coat of varnish by a pupil.

The resurrection has relatively little significance compared to the Pauline corpus. It occurs in credal material (2 Tim.2:8, 11), but is not expounded. The most significant occurrence concerns the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim.2:18), the claim that the resurrection has already taken place. This may be a mystical understanding of baptism, physical resurrection being unnecessary because the ‘real’ resurrection had already taken place. It became a spiritual experience rather than a future hope (Wright, 2003: 207), undermining true faith, leading to self-salvation through ascetic practices (Kelly, 1963: 184)

Titus does refer to future hope (2:13), but with no specific reference to resurrection. The apostle himself would surely have argued more passionately for the reality for which he argued at such length with the Corinthians.

4.2.5 Paul and Resurrection

For Paul, the resurrection is crucial. “If the cross of Jesus stands at the centre of Paul’s theology, so also does the resurrection of Jesus. Christ crucified is also he whom God raised from the dead” (Dunn, 1998: 235). It determines his understanding of the crucifixion and of Jesus as ὁ ἀναστὰς. He did not invent it, but it is there because of the confluence of his Damascus Road experience with the ἀναστάσις he had received. In addition to the tradition he received from Peter, he uses earlier credal material (1 Th.4:14) confirming that the resurrection was part of the faith before Paul. It became a creative myth in his hands, but the mythological superstructure stands on an historical foundation. He had received the tradition of the resurrection appearances; he personally knew of them as events, not mythical metaphor. Paul believed that Jesus’s resurrection was a real, historical event, which had changed reality and had both mythological and historical implications.

4.3 THE GENERAL LETTERS

4.3.1 Hebrews

Hebrews was very early linked with Paul, but there is little to link it with him or any writer. The structure, style and content are very different from Paul's letters. It is certainly a First Century document, since it was quoted in 1 Clement. The author heard the gospel from those who heard Jesus (2:3). If the Temple is still standing, the letter was written during the time of Claudius, before the trouble in Rome in 64 (Bruce, 1965: xliii). If the Temple is in ruins, but remains a timeless symbol, circumstances fit the time of Domitian (Kümmel, 1975: 403). The purpose of the letter is "to establish the finality of the gospel by contrast with all that went before ... as the way of perfection" (Bruce, 1965: lii).

The writer is pursuing an exegesis of Psalm 110:1, 4 (Bruce, 1965: 411). The concentration on priestly sacrifice means it focusses on Jesus's death and exaltation, and says little about resurrection. The principal moments in the sacrifice were the shedding of the victim's blood and the presentation of the blood in the sanctuary. They correspond to the death of Christ, and his appearance at God's right hand: resurrection is implied rather than given a key place in the scheme (13:20). Resurrection demonstrates that Jesus's sacrifice has been accepted by God and is the means to his exaltation, but the exaltation is more important in this schema.

4.3.2 James

Ascribed to James the brother of Jesus, this letter must date before his martyrdom in 62. It parallels much of the Sermon on the Mount. It "... reads as the gospel of Jesus rather than the Gospel about Jesus" (Williams, 1965: 86). There is no evidence for James being a believer or not during Jesus's ministry (Williams, 1965: 78), but there would be some evidence if he had been part of the group of disciples. After the resurrection, he had a leading position in the Jerusalem church (Acts.12:17). Paul preserves a tradition that the risen Jesus appeared to James (1 Cor.15:7), for which he is the only canonical source (Bruce, 1982: 100). It must have been the resurrection which changed James's understanding of Jesus. It is surprising, therefore, that the letter attributed to him contains no reference to the death or resurrection of Jesus. The traditional authorship has been challenged on such grounds (Kümmel, 1975: 411f). However, it compares

with collections of sayings and teachings intended to stand alongside the kerygmatic traditions about the death and resurrection (Williams, 1965: 87), or the kind of teaching which survived into documents like the Didache. The question remains whether there is no reference to the resurrection because the letter was intended to complement those traditions, as paraenesis for converted believers rather than dogmatic explanation of the Gospel, or whether it represents a Christian tradition which was not centred on belief in the resurrection. “It would be rash to conclude that James did not believe... just because the letter does not mention it” (Wright, 2003: 461).

4.3.3 1 Peter

The letter was written to encourage persecuted Christians. The difficulty is in identifying which Christians and which persecution: Domitian’s threatened persecution in the early 90s (Kümmel, 1975: 421), or local rather than imperial persecution before Peter’s death in 64 (Kelly, 1969: 27f). The polished Greek style, the lack of personal allusions to Jesus, the possibility of trial $\diamond \odot \times$ $\mathbb{P} \square \star \diamond \star \infty \blacksquare \square \times$ (4:16), and the lack of reference to Paul in writing to churches where he is known argue against Petrine authorship. However, if the Greek style is too sophisticated for a Galilean fisherman, it would fit a skilled scribe such as Silvanus (5:12) (Selwyn, 1947: 11). Further, church government is relatively undeveloped as compared to the Pastorals or Ignatius, the theology is relatively primitive, and the positive view of the state (1 Pe.2:13-17) would be unlikely if the state was the agent of persecution. An early date and Petrine authorship are more likely, but not conclusive.

Resurrection is important as a theological idea and as pastoral encouragement to the recipients. God is defined in terms of resurrection (1:3, 21), and OT texts are prophetic of Christ’s resurrection (2:4; Ps.118:22). Jesus’s resurrection is the reason for baptism: all the mysteries of salvation arise from his victory over death (1:3). Just as the exodus was the saving act for the old Israel, so the resurrection of Jesus is the saving act for the new Israel (2:9). Hymns and credal formulae show that the resurrection became a developed theological idea relatively early (1:21, compare Rom.8:11; 2 Cor: 4:14; also 3:18 compare Rom.1:3f; 1 Tim.3:16). It is not a myth of a life-giving God, but is based upon the fact of Jesus’s resurrection, confirming that God is indeed able to give life. Encouragement for threatened Christians is in the assurance that God who raised Jesus from the dead will be able to raise the believer.

Christ is described as preaching to “spirits in prison” (3:19f). If this is between his death and resurrection, it contradicts the totality of his death: a $\blacksquare \mathfrak{M} \& \square \square \times$ (1:3) is in no position to do anything. If he was not ‘really’ dead because he was the Son of God, that suggests implicit Docetism, or a synthesis of Hebrew ideas of resurrection and Greek ideas of immortality, as in Wright’s ‘two-step’ theory of “life after life after death” (Wright, 2003: 31), thus allowing Jesus freedom of action in the spirit before the resurrection. The reference to the time of Noah concerns the myth of the punishment of the rebellious angels (Gen.6:1-4; 1 Enoch 10; 18:13-15). The period immediately before the Flood (Selwyn, 1947: 198) was believed by the Western fathers to be the time of activity of the pre-existent Christ before the incarnation (Kelly, 1969: 153). The flood was typologically linked with baptism, as salvation by water from wrath. The passage ends in a stylized affirmation of resurrection leading to Christ sitting at the right hand of God (3:22). The only historical referent of the myth is the conviction that Christ was historically raised and had defeated death.

4.3.4 Jude

Jude is a letter, but not addressed to any specific community. The true faith is threatened by libertine Gnostic arguments that life in the Spirit is not affected by the activities of the flesh (vv.4-8). This incurs judgement, illustrated from the Old Testament (v.7; Gen.19) and intertestamental apocalyptic (v.14f; 1 En.1:9). The remedy is the maintenance of the apostolic faith in the face of false teaching (v.17f), a characteristic theme in First Century exhortation (Acts 20:29f; 1 Tim.4:1-3; compare Did.16:3). The writer hopes for perseverance and ultimately gaining “the blessed life in God’s Kingdom, which is in store for the righteous at the resurrection” (Kelly, 1969: 287). The context is eschatological: the false teaching is evidence that the last days have begun (v.18). Resurrection is not mentioned, but is assumed as part of the apostolic faith.

4.3.5 2 Peter

2 Peter is dependent upon Jude (Kelly, 1969: 235), and quite different in language and style from 1 Peter. The principal problem is increasing scepticism over the delay of the parousia. The writer dismisses opponents as misleading and unfruitful, urging his readers to true Christian living in order to enter the Kingdom of Christ. There is no

specific reference to resurrection, although hopes of a new heaven and new earth (3:13) normally imply resurrection (Wright, 2003: 462).

4.4 THE LETTERS OF JOHN

The Johannine Letters address problems faced around the last decade of the 1st century. The first two are written to the community, the third to an individual named Gaius. The problem is false teaching from some who have left to establish a rival community, discernible in the claims which are denied in the letters. Resurrection is not mentioned, "... although John clearly assumes it" (Marshall, 1978b: 15). Christ's death is given more importance (1:7; 2:2). In John's Gospel the cross is the moment of Christ's glory (13:1) and the consummation of his work (19:30). The resurrection is used to "add 'solidity' to the Lord's 'fleshlyness'" (Houlden, 1973: 21). The risen Jesus is shown as touchable, eating, cooking, even though he appears out of thin air. Jesus's humanity is emphasised in the denial of the heretical denials (4:2; 2 Jn.7), rather than by recourse to narrative.

4.5 REVELATION

John's apocalyptic compares with that of Daniel: both books arise from similar crises, offering a similar message of endurance, with a promise of ultimate victory and resurrection to everlasting shame or everlasting life (Dan.12:2; Rev.20:4f). Revelation has the most developed doctrine of resurrection of its time (Wright, 2003: 472), beginning with Messiah, the "first-born from the dead" (1:5), then the "first resurrection" of martyrs (20:4), and ultimately the resurrection of all to judgement (20:12-13). Jesus's resurrection was proleptic, the beginning of the general resurrection: in Jewish thought, the first of a series included the whole (Sweet, 1990: 65). Because Jesus was raised, all will be raised. Resurrection is the key to the encouragement offered to suffering churches (2:8f), and is even parodied by the enemy (13:3, 12) (Caird, 1966: 164).

Resurrection occurs frequently as a theme in the letters, as a motif illustrating new life in the Spirit (Col.1:27), the lordship of Christ (Rom.14:9), the future blessing of the believer (Rom.6:8) or the mythological rationale for baptismal mysteries (1 Pet.1:3). The value of the motif is that it derives from a historical event. There is no narrative of Jesus tradition, because letters are to remind readers of what has already been given (Dunn, 1998: 189). Narrative is more appropriate in the gospel traditions.

4.6 THE GOSPELS AND ACTS

4.6.1 The Narrative Traditions

Superficially, the Gospels follow the same story. Jesus is born in unusual circumstances, but apart from rare signs in childhood does nothing until baptized by John. This inaugurates a public ministry indicating that Jesus is the One expected from God, although this is not universally accepted. Increasing conflict with the authorities results in arrest, trial and execution, which he expected and predicted. Following his burial, the tomb is found to be empty, and the risen Jesus appears to various combinations of disciples, before ascending into heaven. Luke's second volume continues the story, describing the spread of the new Church, preaching the risen Christ in the power of the Spirit.

The Gospels are not simply narratives 'telling the story of Jesus,' but sophisticated treatments of a story written under the influence of its ending, often coloured by the hindsight of the writers, who drop heavy hints to the reader concerning the conclusion. "Luke's purpose is evidently to show that the way of Jesus was understood only in the light of the event and of the scriptural knowledge which the disciples acquired after Easter" (Marshall, 1978a: 393).

The Easter message has influenced all the Gospels. The action on the stage is often illuminated by the glory still waiting in the wings, especially in John's Gospel. "The Fourth Evangelist presents us with an account of the earthly Jesus which is at times hard to distinguish from an account of, and a witness to, the heavenly and exalted Lord" (Wedderburn, 1999: 162). The synoptic style may be different from the Johannine, but the first three Gospels have similar aims to the fourth.

4.6.2 Resurrection In The Synoptics

4.6.2.1 Resurrection of the dead is a prior belief.

In common with most Second Temple Judaism, resurrection from the dead is assumed to be possible (Wright, 2003: 129). Following the Baptist's death, Herod wonders whether he has been brought back to life (Mk.6:14f; Mt.14:1f; Lk.9:7f). Resurrection is a source of Jewish theological controversy (Mk.12:18-27; Mt.22:23-33; Lk.20:27-40). The Lucan parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk.16:19-31) assumes a form of resurrection to illustrate the unbelieving response to Jesus's resurrection.

4.6.2.2 Jesus is shown to have power over life and death

Jesus raises two people from the dead: Jairus's daughter (Mk.5:21-43; Mt.9:18-26; Lk.8:40-56) and the son of the widow in Nain (Lk.7:11-17).

4.6.2.3 Jesus predicts his death and resurrection

The cross and resurrection are explicitly and implicitly predicted. The first explicit prediction follows Peter's declaration of faith (Mk.8:31-9:1; Mt.16:21-28; Lk.9:22-27). All three place responsibility on the $\square\square\mathfrak{M}\cdot\mathfrak{L}\blacklozenge\blacklozenge\mathfrak{M}\square\cdot\blacksquare$ $\&\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{H}$ $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{H}\square\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{M}\square\mathfrak{M}\cdot\blacksquare$ $\&\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{H}$ $\mathfrak{H}\square\mathfrak{C}\bigcirc\bigcirc\mathfrak{C}\blacklozenge$ $\mathfrak{M}\cdot\blacksquare$; and all mention the resurrection, although Matthew and Luke correct Mark's $\bigcirc\mathfrak{M}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{C}$ $\blacklozenge\square\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{M}\bigcirc\bigcirc\mathfrak{M}\square\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{X}$ to $\blacklozenge\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{C}$ $\blacklozenge\square\mathfrak{H}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{C}$ $\mathfrak{M}\bigcirc\bigcirc\mathfrak{M}\square\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{H}$. In the second prediction (Mk.9:30-32; Mt.17:22-23; Lk.9:43b-45), Matthew follows Mark with the same correction, but Luke omits the reference to the resurrection, dwelling instead on the disciples' failure to understand. The third prediction (Mk.10:32-34; Mt.20:17-19; Lk.18:31-34) refers specifically to Jerusalem (fitting into Luke's 'last journey' motif) and to Jesus's betrayal $\blacklozenge\square\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{C}\square\blacksquare\mathfrak{M}\cdot\mathfrak{H}\blacksquare$. Luke does not omit the reference to the resurrection, but refers again to the disciples' failure to understand, as part of his concern with the fulfilment of OT prophecy (Marshall, 1978a: 689).

The sign of Jonah (Mt.12:38-42; Lk.11:29-32) is more enigmatic. The associated passage in Mark (8:11-12, compare Mt.16:1-4) describes Jesus's refusal to give a sign, but the Q tradition gives this saying. There is no explicit reference to Jonah's deliverance or to Jesus's resurrection, but the limitation of the time in the tomb to three days indicates that the saying is intended to allude to the resurrection (Schweizer, 1976: 293).

The parable of the tenants in the vineyard (Mk.12:1-12; Mt.21:33-46; Lk.20:9-19) predicts Jesus's death and the subsequent judgement of his killers. Each account quotes Psalm 118:22 (117:22 LXX), which is out of place: the parable is about the punishment of the wicked tenants rather than the vindication of the messengers (Hooker 1991:274f). The psalm is used elsewhere to refer to the resurrection (Acts 4:1-11; 1 Pe.2:7). This suggests an addition to the original parable, completing Jesus's prediction of his fate with an oblique reference to the resurrection.

The anointing at Bethany (Mk.14:3-9; Mt.26:6-13; Jn.12:1-6) is portrayed as a preparation for Jesus's death. Resurrection is not mentioned, but it is connected in Mark through his explanation that the women went to the tomb to anoint the body (16:1; in Mt.28:1 there is no reference to spices or anointing) but could not do so because the tomb was empty. Jesus uses the episode to predict his death; Mark implies the resurrection. The woman's action is a summary of the gospel for those who know the end of the story (Hooker, 1991: 328).

After the last supper, Jesus looks beyond his death to the possibility of drinking wine in the Kingdom (Mk.14:22-26; Mt.26:26-30; Lk.22:14-20). Passover raised eschatological expectations, and Jesus would at least hope as a Jew that he would be raised on the last day. Belief in resurrection is implied, but there is no reference to resurrection on the third day. The request of James and John (Mk.10:35-45; Mt.20:20-28) also assumes resurrection and 'after-existence.'

While predicting Peter's denial (Mk.14:27-31; Mt.26:31-34; Lk.22:31-34), Jesus predicts his resurrection and meeting with the disciples in Galilee. Luke's version differs, including a discussion about Peter's failure, and does not mention the resurrection. Luke may have a non-Markan source (Marshall, 1978a: 818), preferring it to Mark for his own editorial reasons.

Under interrogation by the Sanhedrin (Mk.14:53-65; Mt.26:57-68; Lk.22:54-55; 63-71), Jesus answers a question about his identity in eschatological terms, in language drawn from Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:15. The saying contrasts his present situation and future vindication. It implies resurrection and future existence, but in general eschatological terms rather than a specific expectation of resurrection on the third day.

4.6.3 John's Gospel

John may have known Mark (Barrett, 1978: 43f) and Luke (Kümmel, 1975: 203), but his gospel is very different from its predecessors. The polemical situation is different, referring to “the Jews” as part of the unbelieving world without the distinctions of Jesus's day. The structure and method of the gospel differ, and the chronology of Jesus's ministry is different, taking several years rather than one (Barrett, 1978: 195). The specially Johannine sayings may be secondarily adapted from synoptic traditions (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 178). Other sayings are more assimilated: synoptic pericopes are independent units edited into their present positions, whereas John has continuous sermons within which some logia may be found, and no parables. While the synoptic Jesus engages in rabbinic debate, John describes conversations and teaching often arising from misunderstandings of Jesus's statements. The synoptics deal with numerous themes: the Kingdom of God/heaven, the son of man, the time of the end, etc. John has a single theme: the person of Jesus, the fact of his presence, the nature of his claim, and how we are to relate to him (Bultmann, 1971: 4). This highlights the hindsight from which the gospel was written: the Jesus who brings light into darkness, proclaiming himself in “I am” sayings, and revealing himself as the new Temple and the fulfilment of Judaism, is none other than the risen Christ.

4.6.4 Resurrection in John

4.6.4.1 The cleansing of the Temple

As in the synoptics, the Jews challenge Jesus to justify his actions. His answer is “a dark saying which the Jews misunderstood and the disciples only understood after the resurrection” (Barrett, 1978: 194). Placing the cleansing at the beginning rather than the end of Jesus's ministry follows theological rather than historical criteria: it is unlikely that there were two such events, or that he would have been free in ministry for so long afterwards. John places the story here to show Jesus at the outset as the fulfilment of Judaism. His own body, destroyed and raised, will become the true Temple. The prediction of the destruction of the Temple is more explicit than in the synoptics (Mk.13:2; 14:58; 15:29). John 2:18f parallels a Q saying (Mt.12:39; Lk.11:29), and applies it explicitly to the resurrection. No doubt John includes himself in his comment about understanding after the resurrection (2:22).

4.6.4.2 Jesus does the same work as the Father

In a discourse arising from a healing, Jesus discusses his authority, and establishes a parallelism between the Father and the Son (5:21f). Power over life and death is the prerogative of God. Now the Son will enjoy the same authority: he will raise the dead on the last day (1 Th.4:16). This is both metaphorical of the raising from the death of sin and corruption (5:25 compare Rom.6:4) and the literal authority which will be demonstrated in the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is the one who will give eternal life in this life and resurrection on the last day (6:39).

4.6.4.3 The raising of Lazarus (11:1-44).

Word is sent of his friend's illness in the expectation that he will go. The disciples do not understand his delay, and his answer (11:11) makes no sense to them. When he eventually returns, Lazarus is dead. He has been dead for four days, so is really dead: Jewish tradition held that the soul left the body after the third day. His sisters' orthodox resurrection hope introduces a note of expectation, dramatically heightened by Jesus's $\aleph \epsilon \gamma \diamond \aleph \chi \epsilon \gamma \circ \chi$ saying. His command to open the tomb surprises his hearers, and prepares for the high moment of the command to Lazarus to come forth, and his emergence. For John, the story illustrates 5:21, anticipating what will happen on the last day (Barrett, 1978: 388). It comes at the point in the synoptic narrative occupied by the cleansing of the Temple, making the subsequent plot to kill Jesus historically credible. John's symbolism has the plot to kill Jesus initiated by his raising of Lazarus, because that reveals Jesus for who he was, and the unbelieving Jews cannot accept that authority, so must remove it.

4.6.5 The Burial and Resurrection Narratives

For all the gospel writers, the burial is the bridge between the passion and resurrection narratives. In the synoptic burial story (Mk.15:42-47; Mt.27:57-61; Lk.23:50-56) Jesus was definitely dead, the women knew where he was buried, and they expected his body to be there when they returned to anoint him. Mark's use of $\square \diamond \diamond \circ \in$ (15:43) emphasises the brute reality of death (Hooker, 1991: 381). The burial is hasty because of the impending Sabbath, hence the lack of anointing, which Mark has anticipated at Bethany. Matthew does not mention anointing; Luke has the women noting the tomb's location and returning to prepare spices for later anointing. By contrast, John's burial account (19:31-32) notes an extravagant quantity of spices supplied by Nicodemus. This is a demonstration of eschatological glory in abundance, like the immense quantity of wine at Cana (2:11) (Barrett, 1978: 558). The women do not feature in John's

account. Matthew adds his own story of the guards at the tomb (27:62-66), and their report to the chief priests (28:11-15).

All four narratives follow the burial with the discovery of the empty tomb (Mk.16:1-8; Mt.28.1-10; Lk.24:1-12; Jn.20:1-18) and initial resurrection appearance.

- **Mark** does not describe the resurrection, or give a Christophany. He recounts an empty tomb and a message entrusted to the women for the disciples, who have apparently fled to Galilee (16:7). The women link to the burial account, although the names do not tally (15:40, 47). Only Mary Magdalene is constant. Coming to anoint the body implies no expectation of resurrection. They receive the message in terror: $\mathfrak{M} \text{ } \mathfrak{e} \text{ } \mathfrak{r} \text{ } \mathfrak{g} \text{ } \mathfrak{O} \text{ } \mathfrak{O} \text{ } \mathfrak{M} \text{ } \mathfrak{O} \text{ } \mathfrak{O} \text{ } \mathfrak{H}$ (only in the New Testament in Mark) describes the awe-struck terror of an encounter with divine power (9:15; 14:33). Those confronted with God's presence at the transfiguration (Mk.9:2-13) do not know how to react. A devout Jew would understand resurrection as a prelude to judgement (Lane, 1974: 591). The women are so afraid that they say nothing. Ironically, when Jesus commanded people to keep quiet, they disobeyed; now they can talk, but keep silent (Hooker, 1991: 387).
- **Matthew** follows and develops Mark. The opening of the tomb by angelic beings is described, whereas in Mark it has already happened. Mark's young man is now explicitly angelic. The women come to see the tomb, not to anoint the body. The guards are included (v.4), and the message to the women modified. The women do not enter the tomb, but leave in fear and joy, at which point they meet Jesus. He is described in realistic terms, and the women grasp his feet in devotion. This is not primarily anti-docetic, but arises naturally from the narrative (Schweizer, 1976: 525).
- **Luke** follows Mark, with some modification. He retains the theme of anointing, and does not describe the opening of the tomb. There are now two angels, like the two angels at the ascension and the two visitors at the transfiguration (Marshall, 1978a: 885). The promise to meet in Galilee is replaced by something Jesus said in Galilee. The women are named (24:10), following Mark with respect to Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James. The women are

not silent, but tell the disciples, who do not believe them. Peter enters the story by running to the tomb and seeing the discarded grave-cloths.

- **John** is comparable to Luke. Anointing is not mentioned. Mary Magdalene comes alone to the tomb, which is already open. Peter comes into the story with the beloved disciple, and they enter the tomb and see the discarded cloths. Mary remains outside, where she meets the risen Jesus.

Stories about further appearances (except in Mark) form the pattern of appearances to individuals, followed by appearance to the group, and final commissioning.

- **Matthew** has the eleven in Galilee, following Jesus's instructions (28:10, 16), where they meet him on a mountain: they worship, although there is still doubt (28:17). Jesus's final words are a commission to a world-wide mission. The basis of the mission is the eschatological authority of the risen Jesus in his Kingdom (compare the link between the resurrection and the Kingdom in hymnic material in 1 Tim.3:16; Rom.16:26). The mission is now to all Gentile nations, in contrast to the earlier restriction of the mission to Israel (Mt.10:5-6). There is no proclamation to Israel (Schweizer, 1976: 530). This could imply fulfilment of the prophetic visions of the Gentiles coming to Zion at the *eschaton* (Isa.2:2-4; Zech.14:10f), or deteriorating relationships between Christians and Jews in Matthew's own time. Matthew's Gospel ends with the resurrection and the resultant Christian mission as the fulfilment of all God's purposes. There are no references to the reality of Jesus's corporeal presence (Lk.24:39), table fellowship (Jn.21:9-10, 13), the gift of the Spirit (Acts.1:4, 8; Jn.20:22f) or his vanishing at the end (Lk.24:31; Acts 1:9).
- **Luke's** story of the Emmaus encounter (24:13-35) is unique. This is the first appearance described, although he indicates an earlier appearance to Peter (24:34). The story guarantees the fact of the resurrection, by the eventual recognition of the risen Jesus and its fulfilment of scripture (Marshall, 1978a: 891). In Jerusalem (24:36-43), Jesus appears in a locked room, but eats food, confirming both the physicality and incorporeality of his presence. Jesus's death and resurrection are again affirmed as fulfilment of scripture. The last verses speak of the promised power from on high and set the scene for the departure from Bethany in a very abbreviated form of the story which opens Luke's second volume (Acts 1:1-12).

- **John** has two upper room appearances. The story of Jesus appearing to the eleven behind locked doors (20:19-23) contains the Johannine Pentecost (20:22f) and the commission from the soon-to-depart Jesus. Thomas is absent, so a second appearance happens a week later, for the benefit of Thomas and those readers who have no direct experience of the risen Jesus. The first story is close to Luke 24:36-49, addressing some of the same questions. Jesus is sufficiently corporeal to display his wounds but sufficiently immaterial to appear behind closed doors. The appearance to Thomas leads to the culminating confession of the gospel:  (20:20). Following the original conclusion (20:30-31) come two further episodes concerning Peter and the beloved disciple. A Galilee resurrection appearance includes a shared meal, with a conversation between Peter and Jesus enabling the reversal of Peter's threefold denial, then a further conversation concerning the fate of the beloved disciple.

The evangelists share an accepted narrative framework. The burial story sets the scene for the discovery of the empty tomb. There follow encounters between the risen Jesus and selected individuals, a meeting with the whole group of disciples, and a final commissioning encounter.

4.6.6 Resurrection Appearances in Acts

Acts opens with a fuller version of Jesus's final appearance to his disciples. He appears over an extended period, "... in a manner which could leave no doubt that he was risen from the dead" (Bruce, 1977: 33). The tradition that he ate with them is repeated (Acts 1:4; Lk.24:42; Acts 10:41), as is the instruction not to leave Jerusalem until they receive power (Lk.24:49; Acts 1:5, 8). Both volumes overlap; Luke 24:50-52 is an abbreviated version of Acts 1:6-11, and Acts 1:3-5 is an abbreviated version of Luke 24:1-49.

The ascension story (1:6-11) opens with the final appearance of old Kingdom expectations: Jesus speaks instead of a greater promise than political power. Luke has already had him teaching about the Kingdom of God (1:3), possibly explaining the implications of his death and resurrection for the message of the Kingdom (Lk.24:45-47)(Bruce, 1977: 35). "The Kingdom of God" is shorthand for the Christian kerygma,

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Luke describes Paul as proclaiming the Kingdom (Acts.19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31), whereas in Paul's letters the term is infrequent (Rom.14:17; 1 Cor.4:20; Gal.5:21; Eph.5:5; Col.1:13; 1 Th.2:12) and not dominant in his thinking (Ziesler, 1989: 333). Most of the shorthand terms used for the Christian kerygma do not in themselves speak of resurrection, but rather imply it. By comparison, Paul's preaching in Thessalonica is summarised explicitly in terms of the resurrection:
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 ✠☩ ✠er& ✠✠&□✠✠ (17:3).

Acts.1:8 is programmatic for Luke's account of the Christian mission. His purpose is to "trace the spread of the Gospel of Jesus from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth" (Williams, 1964: 56). Galilee is omitted, despite attestation to Galilee as the starting-point (Mt.4:15f; Jn.2:11; Acts 10:37). Luke sets the resurrection stories around Jerusalem, replacing Galilee-traditions in the other Gospels (Lk.24:13f; Mk.16:7; Mt.28:16). Acts begins in Jerusalem (chs 1-7), moves through Judea and Samaria (8:1-11:18), and progresses to the centre of the Empire. (Psalms of Solomon 8:16 describes Rome as 'the end of the earth' (Barnett, 1997: 30 n5)). Jesus's disappearance recalls the transfiguration and synoptic predictions of the parousia (Mk.9:26 and parallels; Mk.13:26; Mk.14:62). The cloud is the *Shekinah*, the visible presence of God's glory (Ex.33:7-11; Lk.1:35; Mk.10:7). The pair dressed in white echo the angels at the empty tomb and the visitors at the transfiguration (Marshall, 1978a: 885). They dismiss the disciples with the promise that Jesus will return as he has departed. There will be an interval between ascension and parousia, during which the Spirit will be God's active presence and pledge of the final fulfilment. Thus Luke marks a transition between two stages of the story of Jesus and his mission, by the ascension illustrating the Christian tradition of exaltation (Acts 2:33; Eph.1:20; 1 Pe.3:22; 1 Tim.3:16; Heb.9:24).

Paul's Damascus road vision is different from the other resurrection appearances, but it functions for him in the same way as resurrection appearances functioned for the other disciples. Luke underlines its importance by triple repetition (9:1f; 22:4f; 26:9f) (Williams, 1964: 122). Nothing is visibly recognisable as Jesus, but Paul was quite clear that it was Jesus whom he heard and saw (22:14; 1 Cor.15:8). The vision was not internalised but objective, although not intelligible to his companions (Davis, 1998: 137). The primary datum is its consequence, the transformation of Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Apostle of Jesus.

4.6.7 The Resurrection in the Speeches in Acts

The speeches generally include a direct address to the specific audience, an appeal for attention, reference to the misunderstanding which has given rise to the occasion, reference to scripture, christological kerygma, proofs from scripture, the reply to the misunderstanding, the proclamation of salvation, and the focussing of the message to the specific audience (Schweizer, 1968: 211). Not all elements occur in all speeches, and order and emphasis vary, but it is the same structure and argument, suggesting that the speeches are Luke's compositions. Conversely, Paul's insistence that his message was the same as that of all the apostles (Bruce, 1977: 277) indicates a common kerygmatic pattern in part due to the Old Testament '*testimonia*' used by early preachers. However, the brevity of the existing text of Peter's Pentecost sermon suggests that Luke is not offering the actual text. His introduction is stylistically close to classical historians such as Thucydides and Herodotus, who offered their own versions of speeches from the past (Williams, 1964: 36). Luke is writing salvation-history, following the narrative style of the LXX (Bruce, 1952: 26). This is his version of what preachers must have said, based on his own experience of Christian preaching and his source.

Jesus's resurrection is key in Luke's accounts of early preaching. Peter presents it as a historical event to which the apostles are witnesses (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39). Paul's first speech in Pisidian Antioch refers to it (13:31). This is not Luke portraying Paul as

inferior to the original apostles, but occurs in Paul's own discussions of the early kerygma (1 Cor.15:1-8) (Williams, 1964: 164); he is also a witness in his own right (22:15). The status of witness emphasises the correctness of the testimony, and the veracity of the fact (Arndt and Gingrich, 1979: 492f). In Athens, Paul offers the resurrection as historical proof of the gospel (17:31).

The resurrection vindicates Jesus, contrasting his treatment by the Jews and by God (2:23-24, 36; 10:39-40; 13:29, 30). "The sentence which Jesus's human judges passed upon him... has been reversed... by a higher court" (Bruce, 1977: 70-71). Jesus's resurrection leads to his exaltation (5:31) and the possibility of forgiveness in his name (10:43; 13:38). The blame for his death is squarely on the Jerusalem Jews: Peter's speeches in Jerusalem accuse them directly (2:36; 4:10; 5:30), his address to Cornelius (10:39-40) and Paul's speech in Antioch (13:28f) both blame Jerusalem. Pilate's responsibility has been reduced to Rome representing the nations raging in fulfilment of prophecy (Ps.2:1; Acts.4:25), suggesting pro-Roman apologetic motives (Bruce, 1977: 21).

Further, because it was prophesied in scripture, the resurrection proves Jesus is Messiah. Psalm 16:8-11 (LXX) applies to Jesus rather than David, since David died, was buried and remained buried, whereas Jesus died, was buried, but did not see corruption (2:24; 13:32). Luke sees Jesus's death and resurrection as the prophetic focus of all the scriptures (26:22-23; Lk.24:27).

Acts reflects general controversy about resurrection. Paul exploits the division between the Sadducees and Pharisees to plead support for his belief in the resurrection of the dead (23:6f). Luke informs readers that the Sadducees would oppose him on those grounds, before any discussion of Jesus's resurrection. In Athens, Paul experiences the difficulty of preaching a resurrection-centred kerygma in a Gentile world. He is misunderstood when preaching Jesus and the resurrection (17:18): □☉ er♂✱□◆♂✱ &☞✱ ☿☉ ☞er■☞◆☞☞✱ could be misheard as ☞er☞☞✱ (healing) or er♂✱◆ (the Ionic goddess of health) and a consort goddess (Bruce, 1977: 351 n21). He is ridiculed when his sermon culminates in the resurrection: he is preaching where Apollo (in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*) states categorically that there is no resurrection (Wright, 2003: 32). The resurrection is a ◆&☞■☞☞●□■ to both Jews and Greeks (1 Cor.1:23).

Paul's later speeches contain his Damascus road testimony (22:1-21; 26:2-23). He outlines his faithfulness as a Jew and his hatred of the Jesus movement, before describing meeting the risen Jesus (22:6f; 26:12f). Luke's presentation fits Paul's own account (Gal.1:13f) and his belief that his encounter was as much a resurrection appearance as any of the others (1 Cor.15:5-8).

Stephen's defence (7:1-53) is the only speech with no reference to the resurrection. It is not a defence seeking acquittal or apologetic for Christian faith, but a polemic against Israel (Williams, 1964: 102). It answers charges of blasphemy (6:11f) by a presentation of salvation history showing the Christian faith rather than the temple system as God's chosen way. Moses was rejected by Israel, so it is no surprise that they rejected Moses's successor. They murdered the prophets, so they murdered the One whom the prophets foretold. The speech stops at Jesus's death, not the resurrection. Where other speeches refer to God raising the One they had killed, this has Stephen's dying vision of the exalted Jesus (7:56; Mk.14:62). There are deliberate echoes with the trial and death of Jesus: both were falsely accused of plotting to destroy the Temple (Mk.14:56f; Acts.6.13f), surrendered their spirits to God (Lk.23:46; Acts.7:59) and forgave their executioners (Lk.23:34; Acts 7:59-60).

4.6.8 Resurrection in the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts contains two approaches to the resurrection. It narrates resurrection appearances from the ascension to the Damascus road, and illustrates early preaching in which the resurrection was significant. The speeches are compositions by Luke representing what he thought must have been preached, but contain early credal material, distinguished by "brief, theologically unadorned language" (Habermas, 2005: 143). The least that can be said is that Luke believed that the apostles believed that Jesus was raised from the dead. Luke's own version of the kerygma may have been reading back into earlier days a theology from his own day, which had good reason to suppose that the resurrection was a key element in early kerygma. If he was a companion of Paul, he knew the preaching and letters of one for whom resurrection was a major theme (Bruce, 1977: 25 n30). If his sources included Peter, Barnabas and others in his account, he would know the nature of the original kerygma, even if he then put it in his own words. Even if his contact with the tradition was not so direct, he would have known Paul's letters, so

would know the importance of the resurrection. If he was reading a later theology into the kerygma, it is consistent with what is known of the early kerygma, and arguable that later theology developed from that same kerygma. The resurrection remains a major theme.

4.6.9 Questions Raised by the Resurrection Narratives

The resurrection narratives are related variations on the same theme. However, within that common framework, there are differences and discrepancies which raise significant historical questions. If Jesus had predicted his resurrection, why did the disciples not expect it? Where (and when) did the resurrection appearances take place? Who met the risen Jesus? Why does Mary Magdalene not feature in Paul's appearance tradition? What was the time-scale for the appearances? Where a story occurs in only one Gospel, was it written by that evangelist? If the style does not imply composition, but redaction (Marshall, 1978a: 890), where did the story originate? Why are the further appearances limited to Luke and John? These questions will be addressed in a closer examination of specific texts in ch.6.

4.7 EXTRA-CANONICAL TRADITIONS

We have noted that some texts make little of the resurrection, raising the question whether there was a Christian tradition which did not know of it. Some Christian texts, which did not become canonical, have become important to the present discussion. Texts regarded as heretical (the Gospel of Thomas), or originating later than the canonical texts (the Didache), have been used to argue for earlier or independent traditions (Crossan, 1998: 241f, 384f). A fuller discussion of this issue will follow in chapter five. Suffice to note here that some traditions make very little of the resurrection, thus raising the historical question as to how much the earliest stratae of tradition themselves knew of or depended on the resurrection.

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter set out to examine the place of the resurrection in New Testament traditions. "The reality of this resurrection of Jesus fills the New Testament. Every

book in it either specifically affirms it or assumes it" (Mitton, 1973: 69). However, not all traditions give the resurrection the same importance, and some say nothing about it.

It is argued, consequently, that traditions about Christ's exaltation rather than his resurrection are the earliest, and that resurrection theology or narrative was added later (Spong, 1995: 127). Against this, there are other reasons for concentrating on exaltation. Revelation focusses on exaltation rather than resurrection, but certainly believes that Jesus was raised from the dead (Rev.1:5): exaltation depends upon resurrection. Hebrews speaks in terms of exaltation for exegetical reasons: resurrection traditions were known, but were reinterpreted in the language of exaltation to fit Old Testament paradigms, especially Psalm 110 (4.3.1 above). Paul certainly knows about the resurrection, but chooses to use material which speaks of exaltation rather than resurrection (Phil.2:6-11). The existence of one does not preclude knowledge of the other.

Similarly, it is argued that the Gospels grew out of early sayings-traditions, and that the passion and resurrection stories developed and were added later (Funk, 1993: 128). The narratives may be midrash and therefore non-historical (Spong, 1995: 14f). The Gospels may consist of stratae, but it is premature to conclude that the narrative layer is late and non-historical. Composition of the Passion Narrative may predate the death of Caiaphas in 37: Mark never mentions the name of the high priest before whom Jesus appeared, while Matthew, Mark and Luke identify him. It would make sense "if the writer of the account used by Mark wished to avoid antagonizing Caiaphas" (Barnett, 1997: 141 n43). If the events of Jesus's arrest and execution are at all historical, we would expect the story to be a firm part of the tradition very early in its development. "The fundamental reason for the extensive harmony between the four gospels in their passion narratives was... the actual history" (Reicke, 1986: 143).

While it is clear that Jesus's resurrection is important to the New Testament, there still remain many questions. The traditions were developed in the hands of the early churches, and not all traditions may have been known everywhere. How can we ascertain which traditions are original and which were developments in the early church? What are the implications of the non-canonical Christian texts and possible earlier stratae of tradition? By what criteria can the traditions be examined to reveal the truth of the resurrection?

That will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 THE QUESTION OF SOURCES

In the previous chapter, it was established that Jesus's resurrection is central to New Testament tradition, both as historical event and as theological metaphor. There are two main strands of early tradition: appearance stories and stories about the empty tomb. The earliest witness is Paul, who uses the appearance-traditions and makes only a passing reference to the tomb (1 Cor.15:4 $\mu\epsilon\rho\ \diamond\ \tau\omicron\ \chi\ \alpha\ \nu\alpha\ \nu\alpha$). Tomb stories enter New Testament writings later through Mark and develop through the Gospel traditions. The question as to how New Testament traditions may be sifted for historical material necessitates an evaluation of the criteria used for this purpose. The prior question is whether the New Testament is the only or best source of material about the resurrection.

Some early Christian writings were chronologically close to later canonical writings. The First Letter of Clement dates from c96 (Staniforth, 1987: 20), and the Didache could have begun late in the first century (Kleist, 1948: 5). The Gospel of Thomas was composed before the Oxyrhynchus papyri (c140), but after 70 (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 38). Since most patristic writings are later than canonical writings, dependence has been assumed (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 40). However, some may have preserved earlier forms of tradition than canonical texts (Staniforth, 1987: 189), and possibly more faithfully. Crossan "does not count any of the canonical Gospels as primary sources, preferring the earliest stratum of the Gospel of Thomas, the Egerton Gospel, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Logia source and a 'Cross Gospel' reconstructed from the Gospel of Peter" (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 11). Crossan's stratification of sources (Crossan, 1992: 427ff) is discussed below (5.2.1); he argues his case further in engaging with some of his critics (Crossan, 1998: 114ff).

This chapter will explore the nature and relationship of the sources of the Jesus tradition, and seek to clarify the implications of their relationship for the transmission of the tradition. It will also examine the criteria which are used to examine the tradition for authenticity.

5.2 SOURCES AND CANON

There are Christian and non-Christian sources about Jesus (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 17ff). Canonical status has no direct implication for historical value, but necessarily indicates awareness of Jesus tradition. Some sources are more closely related to the canon than others.

5.2.1 Cataloguing the Sources

Theissen groups Christian sources in four groups. He does not include Paul as a principal source of Jesus tradition, although the letters incidentally include information about Jesus. Paul did not use the letters to pass on the Jesus tradition, because he had already done it (Dunn, 1998: 189).

- i. Synoptic sources: the Logia source (Q), and the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke;
- ii. Gospels close to Gnosticism: the Gospels of John and Thomas (5.3.2.1 below);
- iii. Jewish-Christian Gospels: the Gospels of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, and Hebrews; the Gospels of the Ebionites and Hebrews are known only from patristic references (Kloppenborg, 1990: 77);
- iv. Gospel fragments with Synoptic and Johannine elements: Pap. Egerton 2, the Gospel of Peter, the Secret Gospel of Mark, and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840.

The Jewish-Christian Gospels all depend on canonical Gospel traditions. The Oxyrhynchus papyrus may be related to synoptic material, but is too fragmentary for firm conclusions (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 51).

Non-Christian sources (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 61ff) are Josephus's "Testimonium Flavianum," rabbinic comments about Jesus, the Stoic Mara bar Sarapion, and Roman comments on the founder of the Christian sect. They help to confirm Jesus's existence (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 85). The only reference to the resurrection is in the Testimonium Flavianum, which is either a Christian interpolation, or a comment on what Jesus's followers believed (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 65ff).

Crossan (1992: 427ff) attempts to stratify sources chronologically in four stratae: 30-60, 60-80, 80-120, and 120-150. He believes Jesus's tradition must be excavated to identify the layers at which material developed. His method is:

- inventory (identifying texts in their historical situation)
 - stratification (positioning texts in chronological sequence) and
 - attestation (determining independence or interdependence of sources)
- (Crossan, 1992: xxxi).

5.2.2 Difficulties With Stratification

First, the boundaries are arbitrary. The first two stratae contain twenty years, the third forty, and the fourth thirty, implying "that a document written in 81 belongs with one written in 119 rather than one written in 79" (Wright, 1996: 49 n102). Q and Mark, or Mark and Luke, are closer than appears because Crossan puts them into separate stratae (Allison, 1998: 18). The divisions are artificially sharp and do not relate to history: the catastrophe of 70 CE is a more likely break than Crossan's first break in 60 CE (Allison, 1998: 16). Similarly, if the Caligula crisis in 40 generated the "Little Apocalypse" (Moule, 1966: 117), it could have stimulated other documents. A break in 40 might mark the transition from collation of oral traditions to compilation of hortatory documents. Further breaks depend on how many boundaries can realistically be proposed: "Why not three, or five, or six?" (Allison, 1998: 14.)

Second, precise dating of sources is difficult to establish. The Gospel of Thomas dates from "any time between the birth of the Jesus movement and the end of the 2nd C" (Kloppenborg, 1990: 88). Even if Q is a document (Wright, 1996: 48), Crossan's first stratum is mainly sayings-gospels, whose lack of controlling narrative framework allows the tradition to develop as a cumulative collection, raising the question of which form of the text should be dated (Kloppenborg, 1990: 89). Dating significantly affects Crossan's stratae: if Q is 60s rather than 40s, one-third of his first stratum is now second stratum (Allison, 1998: 16). Accused of deliberately choosing the earliest dates for extra-canonical sources and the latest dates for intra-canonical sources Crossan (1998: 115) claims scholarly consensus. There is little consensus: Mark could be prewar (Cranfield, 1977: 8) or postwar (Kümmel, 1975: 98). Luke may be early postwar (Marshall, 1978a: 34f) or as late as 90 (Kümmel, 1975: 150f). Crossan appears to choose convenient voices in the consensus. "Paul, Mark, and Q are probably our

earliest sources, and nothing non-canonical can be confidently placed before 70 CE” (Allison, 1998: 17).

Third, stratification indicates the date of a text, but not the provenance of the contents. “A unit from the fourth stratum could be more original than one from the first stratum” (Crossan, 1992: xxxii). Early tradition could be preserved in a late document (such as Luke) because the source was reliable, while an earlier document (such as Mark) may preserve a less original version. Earlier forms of oral tradition are not superseded by later forms, but earlier tradition could be preserved in later documents (Dunn, 2003: 336). Problems with Crossan’s stratae compare with geological problems such as inverted stratae and thrust faults (Allison, 1998: 19).

By comparison, Dunn argues for an oral traditioning process like a series of performances, rather than layers. “An oral retelling of a tradition is not like a new literary edition” (Dunn, 2003: 248). The default mindset of modern western culture has trapped scholarship into a literary paradigm, preventing scholars from recognising how differently oral cultures operate (Dunn, 2003b: 139).

Crossan’s model is helpful, given the difficulties in establishing correct dates and stratae. It stresses the dating of a document, but overshadows the links between documents in different stratae. A better model would be the bands in a rainbow, or a family tree, illustrating links and influence across the stratae. Stratification is helpful, but is too firm to accommodate the more fluid relationship of oral tradition and documentary tradition suggested by Dunn.

5.3 CANONICAL SOURCES

Crossan has stratified many sources, from complete texts through manuscript fragments to hypothetical sources for which no document exists. We will concentrate on the major sources, and simply note in passing the existence of a number of papyrus fragments, too fragmentary to be of help (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 51).

5.3.1 The Logia Source 'Q'

A huge edifice stands on hypothetical foundations. Streeter posited a missionary handbook containing an ethical supplement to the kerygma; Bultmann asserted an expansion from an Aramaic original into a Greek eschatological document (Kloppenborg, 1990: 18f); most define it as a sayings-gospel within the genre of sayings-collections like Proverbs, Pirke Aboth, and the Gospel of Thomas (Kloppenborg, 1990: 21). Robinson distinguishes it as a "discourses source" because the material is already in clusters, whereas Thomas has no apparent train of thought (Kloppenborg, 1990: ix). The structure is thought to be better preserved in Luke. The different types of material may represent different redactional stages. There is no awareness of 70; Theissen sees links with the crisis of 39-40, and the Pharisees as persecutors suggests the 40s or early 50s (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 29). It may originate from a "Q community" in Northern Galilee (Kloppenborg, 1990: 6).

The theology of Q depends on the redaction of different levels. One view, perhaps influenced by Thomas, posits an early Christian community picturing Jesus as a "teacher of aphoristic, quasi-Gnostic, quasi-Cynic wisdom" which "knows nothing of an apocalyptic future expectation, and is silent about 'the coming of the son of man': the End ... has come with the teaching of Jesus... of a special and hidden wisdom which sets his hearers apart from the rest of the world" (Wright, 1992: 437). Later redaction added the apocalyptic parts of the document known by Matthew and Luke, transforming a sapiential collection into an apocalyptic text and realized eschatology into "a future orientated, much more Jewish, eschatology" (Wright, 1992: 438). Reconstruction of redactional stages is hypothetical, and conclusions based upon the final primarily eschatological redaction (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 28). It begins with John the Baptist's eschatological preaching, continues with the beatitudes, and ends with parousia sayings. It was not simply a supplement to the kerygma, but proclaimed an independent understanding of Jesus' eschatological significance (Kloppenborg, 1990: 19).

No documentary evidence exists for Q. The term defines the material common to Matthew and Luke but not in Mark. It is argued that it can be explained by Luke's use of Matthew as a source (Goodacre, 2002: vii), although this was rejected by Streeter (1924:183). Even allowing the two-source hypothesis as the best solution of the synoptic problem, Q is less firm than apparent. "We know the Q Gospel itself for sure when Matthew and Luke agree exactly in their separate presentations of it - when, in

other words, they fail to redact it at all. If one but not the other redacts it, or if both redact it differently, we lose any secure base text for comparison and cannot be sure what was in the Q Gospel and what was done to that gospel by either or both evangelists” (Crossan, 1998: 384). Further, if Matthew or Luke used Q material which the other did not, it would be impossible to know it was Q (Streeter, 1924: 185). If they treated the Q material the same way they did Mark, Q could have been twice as long as currently thought (Wolter, 2004: 117). Reconstructing Q and especially making firm evaluations of its theology becomes increasingly tenuous.

The supposed Q-material varies. The preaching of the Baptist (Mt.3:7-10 = Lk.3:7-9) is virtually verbally identical (Huck, 1963:10-11), the faithful and wise servants (Mt.24:45-51 = Lk.12:42-46) less so (Huck, 1963:178), and the talents (Mt.25:14-30 = Lk.19:12-27) very loosely paralleled (Huck, 1963: 179f). If Matthew and Luke worked from a manuscript, all parallels should be equally strong. The differences suggest a family of sources, documentary sources and “different cycles of oral tradition... where verbal resemblance is small” (Streeter 1924:184).

A Q-community or movement is likely, since the handing on of tradition is a community function (Dunn, 2003: 150). The community is not defined by the document, as if it had no other document and the document completely encompassed the community’s theology. The assumption that the Q-community did not know or care about Jesus’s death because there is no passion narrative is a significant argument from silence (Dunn, 2003: 151). Jesus’s death was known (Q.6:22-23; 13:34-35; 11:49-51; 14:27) and they may have had other documents containing passion-traditions.

There are further questions about redaction-history. Kloppenborg suggests a sapiential original, with eschatological texts in the second redactional layer (Kloppenborg, 1990: 22), assuming that they belong to different periods. If the final redactor mixed genres, the primary redactor may have mixed them (Dunn, 2003: 152). Schiavo (2002:164) argues contrary to Kloppenborg that Q is a strongly eschatological document, that apocalyptic elements are at its core rather than later additions. Material defined as secondary might be primary. Similarly, redaction demonstrates previously collected clusters with no unifying motif (Dunn, 2003: 156f). The clusters (Sermon on the plain 6:20-23, 27-49; teaching on discipleship and mission 9:57-62; 10:2-11, 16; teaching on prayer 11:2-4; 9-13; encouragement to fearless confession 12:2-7; 11-12; the right

priorities 12:22-31, 33-34; more teaching on discipleship 13:24; 14:26-27; 17:33; 14:34-35) may contain teaching from meetings of the communities. The collection need not have happened until final redaction into the source(s) used by Matthew and Luke. Material brought in at the redactional stage could be older (Dunn, 2003: 158). Apocalyptic sayings could be earlier tradition, rather than later community creations.

Rather than an alternative kerygma to that of the Pauline communities, Q represents a number of tributaries flowing into the mainstream and is not as distinct as suggested.

5.3.2 The Common Sayings Source

The Common Sayings Source is found by comparing Q, Thomas, and the Didache, being “the corpus of material common to the Q Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas ... redacted quite divergently by each gospel according to its own particular theology” (Crossan, 1998: 254). Crossan’s method, having defined Q as redactionally apocalyptic and Thomas as Gnostic, is to identify the characteristics of the original sayings. “The original sayings tradition contained neither Gnosticism nor apocalypticism, but required redactional adaptation toward either or both of these eschatologies” (Crossan, 1998: 255). The original character of the sayings tradition, and thus Jesus’s teaching, is defined as sapiential.

This reconstruction is circular. Both redactional tendencies are assumed as unique to the document concerned and different from Jesus’s own approach. On the basis of Crossan’s prior reconstruction of Jesus as an aphoristic teacher (Crossan, 1992: 422) apocalyptic material is by definition later and redactional. If, however, Jesus did use apocalyptic eschatology (Sanders, 1993: 182), apocalyptic material is not necessarily due to redaction. If a saying has two different redactions, one of which is apocalyptic, the original may have been non-apocalyptic, but it is equally possible that an apocalyptic original was changed. Jesus may have used apocalyptic eschatology, but certainly did not use Gnostic teaching. However, if Thomas-gnosticism found a sapiential source, wisdom sayings of Jesus may have been adapted by a Gnostic redactor. Original Jesus sayings may have been either apocalyptic or sapiential, thus not so distinctive from the redactional tendencies of Q and Thomas. Crossan’s method of discerning the Common Sayings Tradition should be treated cautiously.

Caution is necessary with such sources. While there is documentary evidence for the Gospel of Thomas, Q is no more than a hypothesis. Reconstructing a hypothetical sayings source from a hypothetical sayings gospel is stretching credulity.

5.4 EXTRA-CANONICAL SOURCES

5.4.1 The Gospel of Thomas

Before 1945, *Thomas* was only known through critical references in the Fathers (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 37). It belongs to the literary genre of “sayings-gospel,” containing 114 sayings, about half of which have synoptic parallels. The Nag Hammadi manuscript is 2nd C, but initial composition could be any time from the birth of the Jesus movement via the decades of the canonical Gospels (Kloppenborg, 1990: 88) to late 2nd C Gnosticism (Gärtner, 1961: 271).

Final redaction is no more a clue to the age of the contents than in the canonical Gospels. The question is whether Thomas is dependent upon the canonicals or is independent Jesus-tradition. There are five instances of possible synoptic influence in Thomas (Kloppenborg, 1990: 86), meaning dependence on synoptic tradition, or scribal harmonisation. Only five possible dependences out of seventy parallels is no strong case for dependence.

Material developed according to community theology. Thomas 11:1-4 has Gnostic tendencies, including a speculative cosmology (Funk, 1993: 479) and the belief that Adam was androgynous; the Fall caused sexual differentiation until the restoration of non-sexual perfection (Kloppenborg, 1990: 98). Thomas 22:4-7 begins from a parallel to a canonical saying (Mk.10:14-15). Comparison indicates both the possible original and its development into later Thomas-Christianity. By comparison, Thomas 9:1-5 (Funk, 1993: 478) and Thomas 65:1-7 (Mk.12:1-12) contain versions of parables arguably more original than the canonical versions: the Synoptics show further allegorical development (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 39) lacking in Thomas.

Thomas is very different from the canonical Gospels, and represents early Gnosticism (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 40). If the sayings in Thomas are more original than the canonical versions, they represent an earlier stage in gospel development. They may indicate an alternative non-eschatological wisdom ‘kerygma’, which became Gnostic. However, the absence of future eschatology does not necessarily mean that it was later, but original Jesus tradition excised from Thomas due to Gnostic theological motivation (Dunn, 2003: 164f).

5.4.1.1 Thomas and John

Kloppenborg (1990: 106f) suggests links with Johannine Christianity:

- Words are the source of life (Thom.1; Jn.6:68);
- Jesus is the redeemer who descends to earth, and has a special relationship with the Father (Thom.61:3; Jn.13:3);
- John’s discourses all begin from single sayings; Thomas might have preserved the originals (Kloppenborg, 1990: 109): Thom.13:5; Jn.4:14; 7:37-38; Thom.24:1-3; Jn.11:9-10; Thom.92:1-2; Jn.16:23-24; Thom.38:1-2; Jn.7:33-34; 8:21; 13:33.

John’s dualism of light and dark, spirit and flesh, has affinities with Gnosticism and thus Thomas. They might have shared sayings-traditions, or John might have known Thomas. Thomas the disciple features more in John’s Gospel than elsewhere (Barrett, 1978: 393), but this may be coincidence (Kloppenborg, 1990: 90).

5.4.1.2 Thomas and Paul

Since Thomas is entirely composed of sayings, and Paul uses few sayings, there appear few connections. However, Paul spent fifteen years in Syria, where the sayings-tradition was at its strongest (Kloppenborg, 1990: 110). He must have been aware of it, and could have been influenced:

- Thomas 53 believes that circumcision is useless. There is no parallel in canonical Jesus-sayings but many in Paul (Rom.2:25-29; Phil.3:3; Gal.6:5). Ideas like “circumcision in spirit” may have come from the sayings tradition (Kloppenborg, 1990: 111), or later, from Gentile influence (Funk, 1993: 504).
- While the sayings tradition doesn’t explicitly exclude women from leadership, Thomas 14 may address opposition to women’s ministry by making them

‘honorary males.’ Paul’s inclusion of women in his organisation may have been influenced by Thomas communities (Kloppenborg, 1990: 112).

Thomas may also illustrate why Paul eschewed the sapiential approach. Some of the Corinthian problems concerned claims of special wisdom (4:8; 6:12). Paul used their own words against them (1 Cor.2:9-10a), echoing Thomas 17. His opponents may have anticipated the eschatological Kingdom (Thom.3; 113; 51). 1 Cor.4: 8b may be an ironic response to a saying like Thomas 2:4. Paul’s Corinthian opponents were not Thomas-Christians (Wright, 1996. 62f), but there are similarities. Thomas shows how the sayings tradition could produce views similar to Gnosticism. Paul was not ignorant of the sayings (Dunn, 1998: 185), but rejected a method based upon them because it led to unacceptable theology.

Thomas certainly illustrates aspects of the development of gospel tradition. To argue that it is earlier than the canonical gospels (Crossan, 1992: 427ff) is going further than the evidence permits. Lack of resurrection tradition similarly does not signify ignorance of the stories, but could indicate either tacit acceptance or theological excision due to later Gnostic influence.

5.4.2 The Didache

The Didache is a community rule, comparable to Qumran (Crossan, 1998: 365), consisting of instructions based on sayings of Jesus, for pagans intending conversion (Kleist, 1948: 3). It contains a development of the Two Ways treatise in the Epistle of Barnabas, and instructions for early Christian community (Staniforth, 1987: 188). Organisation is relatively primitive (Eph.4:11; 1 Cor.12:28); charismatic leaders are prominent (Did.11:3; especially 13:3) and in contrast to 1 Clement to the Corinthians does not distinguish the presbyterate from bishops and deacons (Kleist, 1948:6). The finished document dates from the mid-1st C to the 3rd C (Staniforth, 1987: 189).

There is no link between the Didache and Pauline or Johannine tradition, but connections with synoptic tradition. Opinions range from dependence on common sources, to dependence on Matthew and Luke, to total independence (other than Did.1:3b-2:1, arguably a later insertion). Crossan (1991: 433) placed Didache 1:1-3a, 2:12-16:2 in his Third Stratum (80-120 CE), and 1:3b-2:1 in the Fourth Stratum (120-150 CE), but later identified problems:

- it assumed a long-lasting written constitution and training programme with no Jesus tradition;
- it doesn't explain why editors chose only these sayings from Matthew and Luke, leaving eucharistic and apocalyptic material;
- the gospel texts were becoming normative, yet the insertions were freely edited;
- the sayings were never cited as sayings of Jesus (Crossan, 1998: 386f).

Comparison with Q suggests a mini-catechism, centred on a non-violent interpretation of the Golden Rule (Lk.6:36; Mt.5:48), embedded in "a very traditional form of ethical catechesis known as the Two Ways - the ethical way of life versus the unethical way of death" (Crossan, 1998: 396). Crossan argues that this section of Didache is early. He attempts to trace Jesus's sayings through the Common Sayings Tradition into Q and the Gospel of Thomas. The Didache "crosses the Q Gospel's trajectory at a very early stage - certainly closer to its Common Sayings Tradition roots than to its finished apocalyptic consummation emphasizing the Son of Man" (Crossan, 1998: 407).

5.4.3 The Gospel of Peter

Peter was written after 70, but before the letter of Serapion in 190 (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 49). Crossan (1992: 433) places it in the Fourth Stratum (120-150 CE), as a composite of earlier traditions including the "Cross Gospel", from his First Stratum, argued as the single source of all intracanonical passion accounts (Crossan, 1992: 429). Crossan's reconstruction (1992: 465f) demonstrates commonality with the empty tomb narratives, but has nothing comparable to the upper room, Emmaus or Galilean appearances. It appears to be derivative. Dunn (2003: 170) accepts that the Gospel of Peter may witness to earlier (oral) sources for the canonical Gospels, but dismisses "the so-called Cross Gospel". Meier (1991: 117f) rejects Crossan's method as self-contradictory, as both the Gospel of Peter and the hypothetical Cross Gospel show dependence on the Synoptics. Craig considers Crossan's approach "idiosyncratic", and the Gospel of Peter "even if it contains some independent tradition (to be) a composition basically compiled from the canonical gospels" (Craig, 1998: 251). The Cross Gospel is an unfounded hypothesis, but if its existence is agreed, then the burial account meets Crossan's criterion of multiple attestation (Craig, 1998: 270).

5.4.4 Jewish Christian Gospels

Theissen lists three (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 51f):

- i. **The Gospel of the Nazarenes/Nazoreans** is mid 2nd C, dependent upon Matthew, and composed in Aramaic or Syriac in Coele Syria. It contains legendary and novelistic developments and emphasises ethical and social aspects beyond the synoptic tradition.
- ii. **The Gospel of the Ebionites** is a Transjordanian revision of Matthew in Greek. Adaptations reveal Ebionite theology.
- iii. **The Gospel of the Hebrews** has mythic-Gnostic tendencies. Theissen dates it early in the second century (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 53), whereas Crossan argues that it was composed independently in Egypt by the 50s (Crossan, 1992: 429). It is fragmentary, known mainly through patristic quotations.

5.4.5 Summary of Sources

The New Testament is the main source for resurrection traditions. Other sources have varied relationships with canonical tradition. Most are later, apart from Q, which seems to be entirely contained within the synoptics. Many later documents are dependent upon canonical traditions. Some develop them, others diverge for theological reasons, especially Gnostic texts like the Gospel of Thomas. Extracanonical texts may contain early versions of canonical traditions, indicating how far later levels have developed from the original. However, what is thought typical of earlier tradition may be formed by later theological preferences.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION

The earliest traditions in Q and the extracanonical documents contain nothing about Jesus's appearances or the empty tomb. The significant exception is the hypothetical Cross-gospel. Q and Thomas are sayings-gospels with no narrative framework, therefore no Passion or Resurrection Narrative. There are neither prediction-sayings nor reference to a passion kerygma. Sayings-gospels imply Christian wisdom in which Jesus is present in his spoken words (Kloppenborg, 1990: 25): salvation comes through Jesus's words, rather than his death and resurrection. Crossan posits two early Jesus

traditions: a sayings-based Life Tradition; and a passion-based Death Tradition (Crossan, 1998: 415). The sapiential Life Tradition is an alternative to the passion kerygma (Kloppenber, 1990: 21) and knows nothing of death and resurrection, so resurrection traditions must be later midrashic development. The Didache's eucharist tradition has no reference to the body and blood (Crossan, 1998: 434), suggesting a Common Meal Tradition alongside the Common Sayings Tradition in the earliest Christian tradition.

Against this, the passion traditions are among the best-attested in the New Testament. Jesus's execution and burial are deeply rooted in the tradition: the burial story is unadorned by theological or apologetic development (Bultmann, 1963: 274), indicating historically early knowledge about Jesus's end. The possession of other documents containing early passion and resurrection tradition would explain the non-inclusion of such clear knowledge (Dunn, 2003: 150): sayings-gospels were not expected to contain everything. Q may not have been a supplement to the passion kerygma (Kloppenber, 1990: 19), but could have been a companion volume. Elsewhere, there were theological reasons for exclusion: Thomas's Gnostic tendency would militate against resurrection sayings being preserved. They were known, but on theological and philosophical grounds thought irrelevant. Theologically-motivated excision would be very likely (Dunn, 2003: 165).

The argument that the burial and resurrection traditions were later theological, or midrashic innovations, is unsafe (Spong, 1995: 229, 282). First, the communities transmitting the sayings-gospels would have had access to other sources. Second, appearance stories and arguably the empty tomb occur in the earliest material (1 Cor.15:4), suggesting a basis in history. The next task is to establish criteria by which historicity can be tested.

5.6 CRITERIA

Most texts contain material of varying historicity, necessitating techniques to test and identify provenance. The post-Enlightenment quest for the historical Jesus became a form of the criterion of dissimilarity: "... that which contradicted the later church's exalted view of Jesus was considered especially authentic" (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 1). The "New Quest" used the same criterion to discover the authentic Jesus by

distinguishing him from both early Christianity and his Jewish background (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 3): they were “theological projects masquerading as historical projects” (Meier, 1999: 463). Meier offers five primary criteria, with five less useful secondary criteria (Meier, 1991: 167ff). They have not enabled a consensus (Crossan, 1998: 144); only two are strictly criteria of authenticity, the others being source evaluation arguments (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 18). Meier’s criteria are as follows.

5.6.1 The Criterion of Embarrassment

Certain sayings would not have been created by Christian tradition because they undermined the Christian case (Meier, 1991: 168). Embarrassing material such as Jesus’s baptism by (his inferior) John would probably be softened or suppressed, so is more likely to be historically authentic.

What appears embarrassing to us might not have been to early Christians. Paul was clearly not embarrassed by his Damascus Road experience: both in his own writings and in Luke’s accounts, his experience of humiliation and exaltation is central. Allegedly embarrassing material survived in the Gospel traditions, so was evidently not embarrassing enough to be expurgated (Allison, 1998: 6). Jesus’s last words are a groan in the earliest tradition (Mark), replaced by references to the psalms (Ps.31:5 see Lk.23:46; Ps.22:1 see Mt.27:46), and a cry of triumph in John. However, Passion Narratives use psalms to reflect on the narrative of the cross, so the use of Psalm 22 may be theological interpretation rather than the replacement of an embarrassing image. Jesus might have quoted Psalm 22 on the cross, although the criterion of embarrassment cannot establish it (Meier, 1991: 171). As a criterion, it cannot stand alone.

5.6.2 The Criterion of Discontinuity or Dissimilarity

Searching for “words or deeds of Jesus that cannot be derived from Judaism at the time of Jesus or from the early Church after him” (Meier, 1991: 171) became programmatic for the “New Quest” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 3). It was believed to provide an irreducible minimum of authentic material: not only were sayings which satisfied the criterion authentic, but they were the only ones that could be known to be authentic (Dunn, 2003: 82). However, difficulties exist.

First, it presupposes clear knowledge of the background from which Jesus may be distinguished (Meier, 1991: 172). Proving that Jesus's teachings were without analogy in Judaism, or even that "particular ideas and motifs were in principle inconceivable in Judaism" (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 185), is impossible. Second-Temple Judaism contained significant variation.

Second, Jesus's distinctiveness is an *a priori* dogmatic assumption, (Theissen & Winter, 1998: 115) rather than evaluation of the historical Jesus. Jesus may differ to some degree from his forebears, but the more revolutionary he was, the more likely he would be to have imitators, and it is not possible to argue for him being unique from his followers (Meier, 1991: 174).

Most seriously, it produces "a strange creature, with anything which links him to the religion of his people or the teaching of his followers ruled out of court" (Dunn, 2003: 82). If he were completely discontinuous, he would be unintelligible (Meier, 1991: 172). ...Wright reverses this criterion, arguing that if something "is credible within Judaism (though deeply subversive) and credible as the implied starting point (though not the exact replica) of something in later Christianity, there is a strong possibility of our being in touch with the genuine history of Jesus" (Wright, 1996: 132). Dissimilarity must be a matter of degree. The Jesus Seminar suggests that "Jesus's sayings and parables cut against the social and religious grain" (Funk, 1993: 31). It is reasonable to visualise Jesus as a radical interpreter of Jewish tradition, but even radicals conform at some point. Something characteristic or unusual (Meier, 1991: 174) is more likely than uniqueness. While Jesus might well have stood out from his context, making that the key to authenticity goes too far.

5.6.3 The Criterion Of Multiple Independent Attestation

The more attestations of tradition in independent literary sources and literary genres (Meier, 1991: 174), the more likely the tradition is to be authentic. Sources must be independent: the same saying in Mark and Luke normally illustrates Luke's dependence on Mark, unless the Lucan version is different from the Markan original in ways not accountable by Lucan redaction.

The Jesus Seminar rules of attestation (Funk, 1993: 26) seek to identify tradition that is traceable to the oral period, roughly two decades between the life of Jesus and the writing of the earliest Gospel traditions (Funk, 1993: 25). Crossan (1991: 427ff) uses multiple independent attestation to develop an inventory of the Jesus tradition, showing that the earlier the stratum and the more independent attestations, the more likely is the tradition to be authentic.

There are difficulties in both method and assumptions. Crossan's inventory identifies first-stratum multiply-attested material which must therefore be more authentic. Apocalyptic traditions about Jesus's return fall into this category (Crossan, 1991: 427), but he rejects them on the grounds that Jesus did not use apocalyptic (Crossan, 1991: 238ff). Either the strength of the tradition counters the grounds on which he rejects apocalyptic, or his rejection of apocalyptic calls into question the value of multiple independent attestation.

Further, Crossan's inventory can only trace material back into the early period of tradition, and does not guarantee original Jesus tradition. Multiple independent attestation can indicate very early tradition, but is unable to distinguish between a very early Christian prophet and Jesus himself (Allison, 1998: 21f).

The criterion assumes that multiple attestation guarantees a higher degree of authenticity. A text may be singly attested simply due to the loss of supporting manuscripts (Wright, 1996: 51). Authentic tradition may have lost its place for other reasons. Each gospel includes traditions not known to others. Traditions may have posed theological problems to some (Q.9:59-60), or be no longer understood (Q.16:16), or be irrelevant beyond dialogue with Pharisees (Q 11:39-52) (Allison, 1998: 26). "The relative reliability of Q when it is backed up by other witnesses should encourage us to trust it when it is not so backed up" (Allison, 1998: 27).

Multiply attested texts may indicate popularity rather than authenticity (Eve, 2005: 29). Singly-attested texts may be authentic, even if consistent with the theological concerns of the writer (the criterion of the tendency of the tradition; 5.6.9 below): the text may have been selected because it was consistent with his needs and purposes. The state of the surviving manuscripts leaves insufficient evidence to evaluate the case (Kloppenber, 1990: 116). Some Pauline tradition supports Gospel tradition (1

Cor.15:3f), but other allusions may be less obvious. “Paul’s letters must be interpreted as theological reflection on the first-order kerygmatic narrative about Jesus” (Hays, 2004: 221): allusions are more difficult to compare than Gospel parallels, but may be significant. Attestation may be missed simply because the evidence is no longer clear. There is also the possibility that evidence of attestation is missing by choice. The fact that Paul says very little about the empty tomb may suggest that it is a tradition which he does not know (that is, tradition originating with Mark), or it may suggest that it is a firm historical tradition which he knows but chooses not to use because it is not appropriate to his rhetorical needs at that point.

5.6.4 The Criterion of Coherence

Once enough authentic Jesus-tradition is collected, it becomes possible to identify material coherent with the existing database (Meier, 1991: 176). This does not guarantee authenticity, because it would be coherent with the tradition and not necessarily with Jesus. It assumes a coherence in Jesus’s own teachings which was not necessarily there. The Semitic mind enjoyed paradox, so while Jesus is defined as either eschatological prophet (Allison) or wisdom teacher (Crossan), he could have been both according to audience and situation. Material may be rejected as not coherent, when it was simply coherent with a different part of Jesus’s teaching.

Further, there must have been collections of known Jesus tradition against which Christian prophecy could be tested (Dunn, 2003: 191). The Jesus Seminar argues that sayings which contrast with the gospel tradition must be older tradition, but that does not guarantee authentic tradition (Funk, 1993: 24). Existing tradition has a conservative force, militating against innovation or addition. Major problems in the early churches did not lead to the creation of relevant sayings: there are no alleged sayings of Jesus concerning the circumcision of Gentiles (Meier, 1991: 187f n13).

Coherence is open to the same difficulties as dissimilarity. It assumes a sufficiently established database of knowledge of the tradition, and assumes the tradition to be consistent. Any variety in Jesus’s teaching or gaps in knowledge of that teaching weaken the value of the criterion.

5.6.5 The Criterion of Jesus' Rejection and Execution

This looks for reasons for Jesus's violent end. The death of Christ is not a mythological construct developed from Christian theology, but is itself the historical event which was the source of that theology. Certain portrayals of Jesus (cynic philosopher, wisdom teacher, healer) do not explain violent opposition. "A Jesus whose words and deeds would not alienate people, especially powerful people, is not the historical Jesus" (Meier, 1991: 177).

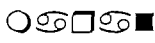
This criterion demands too high a degree of consistency, namely that Jesus was *only* a wisdom based teacher or miracle-working healer. If he varied styles of ministry, it breaks down. If he were a charismatic prophet who occasionally used politically innocuous wisdom, he could have been crucified on the basis of the former, but traces of the latter which would not explain his death would nevertheless be authentic.

5.6.6 The Criterion of Traces of Aramaic

The assumption of an Aramaic original leads to the search for a more original version (Vermes, 1973: 128), via Semitisms in the existing text (Jeremias, 1966: 173f). Similarly, if there are no traces of Aramaic, the saying is not from Jesus (Meier, 1991: 178).

Two problems arise. First, traces of Aramaic may reach back into very early tradition, but not to Jesus. The saying could indicate an Aramaic-speaking Christian prophet (Allison, 1998: 7). “The criterion ... cannot distinguish between an Aramaic-speaking Jesus and an Aramaic-speaking church” (Dunn, 2003: 83). “What if early disciples ... imitated the rhetorical style of the Master they had listened to for a number of years?” (Meier, 1999: 474.)

Second, it depends upon the quality of translation. Skilful translation may remove all traces of Aramaic in a rendition into fluent, idiomatic Greek. By comparison, a poorer translation may be more “wooden” (Meier, 1991: 179), like the “slavishly literal” Greek Old Testament of Aquila (Bruce, 1963: 152). Some Greek is deliberately Semitic, imitating the LXX (Marshall, 1979: 55). Similarly, authentic Aramaisms could be remembered as typical of Jesus: $\text{ܕܢܗܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܚܐ ܕܡܝܚܐ}$ (Mk.5:41) or $\text{ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܚܐ ܕܡܝܚܐ}$, attributed to Jesus only in Mark 14:36, but found in Greek-speaking Christian tradition

(Rom.8:15-17; Gal.4:6-7) with  (1 Cor.16:22) testifying to its importance. Aramaisms may not necessarily indicate original Jesus-tradition, but later compositions remembered from elsewhere (Funk, 1993: 62). However, it is arguable that Aramaic tradition was remembered as typical of Jesus precisely because it was (Dunn, 2003: 738).

Aramaisms may indicate a later imitation, while a text with none may be a well-translated original. Aramaic alone is no guide to provenance, but could support material verified by other criteria (Meier, 1991: 180).

5.6.7 The Criterion of Jesus's Palestinian Environment

Material reflecting Jesus's Palestinian environs is thought more likely to be authentic. This is dubious, since the cultural background of the 30s would not differ significantly from the late 20s (Meier, 1991: 180). Like Aramaisms, it cannot distinguish between Jesus and his immediate followers.

5.6.8 The Criterion of Vividness of Narration

Liveliness or concrete details may suggest eyewitness account (Meier, 1991: 181f), but it can only reveal the skill of the narrator, not his identity. "Vivid details are part and parcel of an omniscient narrator's perspective in good storytelling" (Lincoln, 2002: 5). Dunn argues that the tradition should be examined from the standpoint of frequent performances of oral tradition, rather than redaction of written texts (Dunn, 2003: 223f). Vivid narrative does not indicate authenticity.

5.6.9 The Criterion of the Tendency of the Developing Gospel Tradition

The remaining criteria are "highly questionable" (Meier, 1991: 182). Here, he questions whether critics can 'reverse-engineer' authentic Jesus-tradition. Where redactional trends are discernible, sayings "massively suffused" with the evangelist's language and thought can be excluded (Meier, 1991: 182). The Jesus Seminar argues that words of Jesus in "Christian language" were created later. "The inclination of the evangelists... was to make Jesus himself affirm what they themselves believed had come to pass" (Funk, 1993: 24). Statements like Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33 allegedly reflect Paul's gospel (1 Cor.15:3-5) and are therefore created by later tradition.

Against this, particular words entered Christian tradition because they were words which Jesus used. These Markan sayings look like creations of the tradition because they betray knowledge of things that happened after Jesus's death (Funk, 1993: 25). Jesus could have anticipated his death, and may have expressed hope in resurrection. The question is how far the sayings were created, and how far adapted from original sayings.

Adaptation may have taken place during mnemonic gathering of sayings into clusters according to key words (Funk, 1993: 19), and the creation of narrative contexts for aphorisms. Wright argues the contrary that the natural way for Jesus's stories to be told was through Jewish controversy stories. The original context would be the immediate retelling of the event. It would be repeatedly retold during his lifetime and further in post-Easter tradition. Stories could have been "smoothed down over time into something more like Hellenistic *chreiai*" (Wright, 1992: 432). The structure of sayings in the Gospel of Thomas could have so developed, rather than Thomas containing more primitive forms than the synoptic equivalents (Wright, 1992: 432 n43). The addition of a narrative context may appear more plausible than its removal, but that depends on the purpose of the genre: the theological purpose of sayings-gospels (5.4.1 above), suggests a theological agenda for the removal of narrative framework.

Development exists, but it is stretching the argument to make it a general principle.

5.6.10 The Criterion of Historical Presumption

The issue is whether the burden of proof lies in denying or affirming historicity (Meier, 1991: 183). A long traditioning process suggests that the burden lies in affirming historicity; suggested eyewitness origins of tradition suggests that the burden lies in denying historicity. In fact, the burden of proof lies in attempting to prove anything. This is one of the least valuable criteria, especially in the "convoluted case of the canonical Gospels (where) such a criterion simply does not exist" (Meier, 1991: 183).

The holy grail of historical objectivity will probably never be found. Sanders (1985: 321) sets out a spectrum between 'certain' and 'incredible' and seeks the most probable solution. Crossan argues for honesty rather than "unattainable objectivity" (Crossan, 1992: xxxiv). Meier's comprehensive survey shows that there is no "magic key unlocking all doors" (Meier, 1991: 184). At best, they will "produce judgements that

are only more or less probable; certainty is not to be had” (Meier, 1991: 167). So Theissen suggests a criterion of historical plausibility.

5.6.11 The Criterion Of Plausibility

This is a correction of the criterion of dissimilarity. Evidence for Jesus will not be found by separating him from his context. “The historian is interested in determining the material relation of Jesus to his context and to the history of his effects, in which there will be both points in common and points of disagreement, both lines of continuity and gaps of discontinuity” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 173). The aim is to discover a Jesus who could plausibly have existed within his historical context (1st C Judaism), and plausibly given rise to known historical effects (the early Christian movement). Puig I Tàrrach (2000: 189) describes the criterion of plausibility through four sub-criteria as axes: impact and context (developing the criterion of discontinuity) and coherence and incoherence (developing the old criterion of coherence). Theissen rewrites Meier’s criteria as subcriteria of the criterion of the plausibility of historical effects. The tendency of the developing tradition becomes ‘opposition to traditional bias’ (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 174f); multiple independent attestation becomes ‘coherence of sources’ (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 179f). ‘Contextual appropriateness’ examines correspondence to the Jewish context rather than difference from it, standing “the traditional criterion of dissimilarity on its head” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 180). ‘Contextual distinctiveness’ refines dissimilarity, allowing for “distinctive individual traits of Jesus within the Judaism of his own time” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 185). The method is tested by contextual plausibility and plausibility of historical effects. Both are necessary. Plausibility of effects demonstrates no more than a myth which caused certain developments to take place, and must be balanced by contextual plausibility. “The more convincingly we can uncover the connections of Jesus to his Jewish context, the more certain we will be that we are penetrating behind the post-Easter Christian pictures of Jesus in order to find the historical reality prior to Easter, and that Jesus is not a product of the history of early Christianity, but of Judaism” (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 241). Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that it is only helpful so far, only taking us back to the “early, primarily Jewish, stage of the tradition. It does not necessarily take us back to Jesus of Nazareth” (Willitts, 2005: 95).

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

A survey of sources reveals the complex roots of tradition and texts. Despite contrary arguments, the extracanonical texts do not significantly alter the landscape. The New Testament texts are still the best sources for the resurrection. Where no resurrection traditions exist (Thomas) that may be for reasons of theology (a Gnosticizing tendency leading to excision) or tacit acceptance (the community has resurrection stories elsewhere). Where there is extracanonical resurrection material (the so-called Cross Gospel) it is dependent on canonical tradition. The majority of scholars prefer canonical to non-canonical sources for Jesus tradition, and even Crossan, who apparently prefers non-canonical sources, ends up with a surprisingly synoptic Jesus (Willitts, 2005: 98)

Each attempt to picture the historical Jesus has utilised criteria following the preferences of the writer. No criteria have yet enabled a conclusive picture of Jesus. All have strengths and weaknesses and should be used in conjunction with each other. It will nevertheless be impossible to achieve certainty. All that can be sought is a satisfactory degree of plausibility. In the following chapter, New Testament resurrection traditions will be examined in the light of the foregoing discussion, to evaluate their historical plausibility.

CHAPTER 6: THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS'S RESURRECTION

6.1 THE RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

"The reality of this resurrection of Jesus fills the New Testament. Every book in it either specifically affirms it or assumes it" (Mitton, 1973: 69). However, not all give the resurrection the same importance, and some ignore it. For Paul, it is central. "If the cross of Jesus stands at the centre of Paul's theology, so also does the resurrection of Jesus. Christ crucified is also he whom God raised from the dead" (Dunn, 1998: 235). Hebrews, however, does not mention resurrection, led by its exegesis of Psalm 110:1 to the image of exaltation (Bruce, 1965: 50f). Arguments that the earliest layers of tradition know nothing of death and resurrection (Crossan, 1998: 415), and related discussions about the development of resurrection tradition (Fuller, 1980: 170ff) suggest that Hebrews represents an earlier layer of tradition. The importance of the historical question is therefore clear: if the resurrection traditions are not historical, then non-resurrection traditions may reveal earlier and more authentic theological tradition. On the other hand, if a historical basis for the resurrection traditions can be demonstrated, non-resurrection tradition will be otherwise explained. A wide range of opinion has developed around this issue.

- At one extreme is the argument that both the event and the traditions are primarily historical. Examples in conservative Christian thought are Morison (1930), Anderson (1969) and McDowell (1972). A more critical approach is Evans (1996), who defends the study of the supernatural within history on philosophical grounds.
- At the other extreme is the argument that neither event nor traditions are historical. It assumes naturalist rather than supernaturalist explanations for the resurrection traditions. Resurrection cannot happen; therefore the stories must originate in the experience of the disciples. Examples of this approach are Crossan (1992, 1998), Spong (1995), and Luedemann (1994, 2000). The approach is akin to demythologisation, deconstructing the New Testament traditions to excavate to the original layer of tradition and identify the core.

There are problems in both extremes.

- Assuming each tradition to be primarily historical leads to conflicts: who first saw the risen Jesus? Where did the appearances take place? The accounts do not agree, and are difficult to harmonise.
- Assuming each tradition to be primarily theological begs the historical question: why was the theology necessary? What was the origin of the idea of Jesus's resurrection? What was the historical 'trigger' for empty tomb and appearance stories?

Study of the resurrection traditions works mostly between the two extremes. Sanders (1993: 276) regards the resurrection as an epilogue, on the grounds that "the resurrection is not ... part of the story of the historical Jesus, but rather belongs to the aftermath of his life". Fuller understands it as an event on the border of history and meta-history (Fuller, 1980: 22), between this age and the age to come. Pannenberg suggests that the origins of primitive Christianity could be traceable to events which can only be understood in the context of an eschatological hope in resurrection of the dead, concluding that "an event which is expressible only in the language of eschatological expectation is to be asserted as a historical occurrence" (Pannenberg, 1968: 98). The majority, such as Meier (1991), Theissen & Merz (1998), Wright (2003), and Dunn (2003) argue for a historical core which gives rise to variant developments.

Although the resurrection itself is not accessible to historical study, resurrection belief is a firm historical phenomenon. The New Testament is the concrete form of that resurrection belief and the best source of evidence for its origins.

6.2 IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

The survey of New Testament traditions in chapter 3 revealed extensive use of the resurrection, but not always as an historical event. Many references use it in other ways, for example as a metaphor for life in the Spirit (Ziesler, 1989: 201). Our concern in this chapter is with the historical resurrection; the first step is to identify traditions that purport to be historical.

6.2.1 Paul

The earliest written witness to the resurrection is Paul, for whom it is fundamental. It becomes a frequent metaphor for the experience of the believer (Gal.2:19f), and a key to Jesus's Christological status (Rom.1:4). The metaphorical and mythological function is based upon the fact of the resurrection. It is central to Paul's own experience (Gal.1:12, 16) and his claim to apostolic status (1 Cor.9:1).

Paul has two sources for his understanding of the resurrection: his Damascus Road experience, and the traditions he has received concerning the events of the first Easter. He speaks from relatively close to the event, from information arising from his Jerusalem visit perhaps 6-8 years after the event (Pannenberg, 1968: 90).

- I. The Damascus Road experience was crucial for Paul's religious experience, but does not connect directly to the resurrection itself. Paul is definite that it was the risen Christ (1 Cor.9:1; 15:8); that can only be his interpretation of the experience: "...the encounter with the risen Christ (as he perceived it) ...formed that fulcrum and hinge (that is, of his whole theology)" (Dunn, 1998: 179). Luke describes it as an $\square\epsilon\tau\alpha\lambda\upsilon\psi\iota\varsigma$ (Acts 26:19) which Paul never does. Luke does not regard Paul's experience as a resurrection appearance like the others, because they ended with the ascension (Barrett, 1994: 82). This is not to downgrade Paul's experience, rather to accommodate it within his own theological schematization of history, and to follow his deliberate echoing of the LXX, where $\square\epsilon\tau\alpha\lambda\upsilon\psi\iota\varsigma$ occurs nine times (Bruce, 1952: 446). In Galatians 1:15, 16 it is more than a visionary experience, rather a revelatory experience not capable of ordinary apprehension (Fuller, 1980: 47). Nevertheless, Paul's testimony is primarily a datum for resurrection faith, and only secondarily for the resurrection itself.
- II. Paul Uses Pre-Pauline Resurrection Traditions Which Reveal Resurrection Belief From Earlier Decades.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 is Paul's most sustained treatment of the resurrection, beginning from 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, earlier tradition to which he has added a list of subsequent appearances. This may date from earliest Christian teaching (6.3.1.1 below).

- Romans 10:9 links the early credal $\text{ἐξ ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἠγὼρισται}$ with the proclamation of the resurrection. The verse is shaped by Dt.30:14 (Barrett, 1962: 200), either Paul's own editorial touch or earlier formulation by Jewish Christian tradition.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:14 refer to the event of the resurrection. While 1:10 uses Paul's preferred verb ἐγερθεῖς , 4:14 uses $\text{ἐγέρθη$, indicating earlier tradition (Wanamaker, 1990: 168).

6.2.2 The General Letters

The resurrection is sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit. It occurs both in the writer's own thinking and in cited credal formulae, providing evidence of earlier resurrection belief.

- Hebrews 1:21 is Hebrews' only reference to the resurrection, demonstrating the acceptability of Jesus's sacrifice (Bruce, 1965: 411). Historicity is assumed rather than argued. The important thing is the meaning of the resurrection, which thereby underlines the reality of the event: the resurrection would not be proof of the victory of the cross if the writer did not believe it happened.
- Resurrection is important in 1 Peter, as assurance and comfort for persecuted Christians. 1 Peter 1:21 may quote a credal formula (Selwyn, 1947: 147), earlier material expressing established faith in the resurrection.
- James, Jude, 2 Peter do not mention resurrection, but are concerned with the maintenance of the apostolic faith (Jud.17), which in credal formulae elsewhere includes belief in the resurrection.

While they are evidence of resurrection belief, nothing in the general letters contains tradition going back to the event itself.

6.2.3 Gospel Traditions

The Gospel narratives are shaped in the light of their triumphant conclusion. Traditions relating to the resurrection are:

- Stories showing Jesus having power over life and death, especially raisings of others: Jairus's daughter (Mk.5:21-43; Mt.9:18-26; Lk.8:40-56), the widow's son in Nain (Lk.7:11-17), and Lazarus (Jn.11:1-44).

- Explicit resurrection predictions (Mk.8:31-9; Mk.9:30-32; Mk.10:32-34 and parallels). In Mark 14:27-31= Matthew 26:31-34 Jesus predicts his resurrection and meeting with the disciples in Galilee. This is very terse as compared to other references to the resurrection in Mark. If this shaping of the tradition reveals Mark's greater interest in the passion than the resurrection, the absence of resurrection stories may be deliberate, rather than accidental (Perrin, 1977: 27). Matthew follows Mark very closely, but Luke places the prediction of Peter's betrayal elsewhere, and omits the Galilee-prediction in keeping with his emphasis on Jerusalem-traditions and exclusion of Galilee-tradition. (Wedderburn, 1999: 26).
- Symbolic resurrection predictions: the sign of Jonah (Mt.12:38-42; Lk.11:29-32)(compare Mk.8:11-12; Mt.16:1-4); the parable of the tenants (Mk.12:1-12; Mt.21:33-46; Lk.20:9-19); the anointing at Bethany (Mk.14:22-26; Mt.26:6-13; Jn.12:1-6).
- Gospel narratives which may be transposed resurrection stories (Fuller, 1980: 161): the miraculous draft of fish (Lk.5:1-11), the stilling of the storm (Mk.4:35-41), the walking on the water (Mk.6:45-52), the feeding of the crowd (Mk.6:32-44; 8:1-10), the transfiguration (Mk.9:2-8), the "you are Peter" saying (Mt.16:17-19).
- Burial and resurrection narratives and subsequent appearances.

The deconstruction begins by noting the differences in the traditions, seeking to separate earlier material from later development. Amongst the disunity of detail, there is "an impressive unity in their diversity" (Wedderburn, 1999: 27); the variety of voices witness to the independence of the sources and thus the reliability of the underlying claim.

6.2.3.1 Jesus Raising Others From The Dead

Miracles are attested in all the Jesus traditions (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 298), not due to Messianic expectation (Sanders, 1993: 133), but because miracle stories are part of the earliest traditions, including Aramaic traces (Mk.5:41). Stories of raisings illustrate Jesus's role as a prophet like Elijah and Elisha (Wright, 2003: 404), having power over life and death. They are resuscitations rather than true resurrections; the persons raised would die later. It is impossible to know whether they were actually dead (although the

writers believed they were: Jn.11:17, 38) or comatose. Jairus's daughter is in all the synoptics, in a linked pair of stories. The linking may be a Markan editorial device, or due to historical recollection (Cranfield, 1977: 182), and is followed by Matthew and Luke. The widow's son is only in Luke, in a form similar to several Hellenistic miracle stories (Marshall, 1979: 283), but most closely paralleled in the Elijah and Elisha stories. While the stories are clearly shaped for theological ends, a historical kernel is not impossible.

The raising of Lazarus is more problematic. The story is carefully shaped and placed. Jesus delays long enough to exclude the possibility of Lazarus being comatose (Jn.11:6, 13, and 17). The raising illustrates the "I am" saying in 11:26, and provokes the plot to kill Jesus (11:45-57). In the synoptics, the cleansing of the Temple occupies that position in the Passion Narrative: this story is placed there to symbolise the underlying reason for official opposition to Jesus (11:48f), and because if Jesus is who he claims to be, then the Temple and everything dependent upon it must go. It is full of theological significance, portraying Jesus as conqueror of death. However, it is surprising that such a significant event is absent from the synoptics. Luedemann dismisses historicity on the *a priori* grounds that raising the dead is impossible (Luedemann 2000: 37, 513), which begs the question as to whether Jesus was able to do the unique. "To reject the supernatural... just because it is supernatural... is as unscientific as to accept it uncritically" (Bruce, 1952: 17). The story probably has its origins in John's knowledge of the friendship of Jesus with Mary and Martha (Lk.10:38-42) and the parable in Luke 16:19-31 (Barrett, 1978: 46, 389), alongside other resuscitation traditions. Lazarus is only named in John's Gospel; the only other Lazarus is the character in the Lucan parable. The memory that the raising of a man named Lazarus had failed to move people to faith could have provided the basis for Luke's parable. It may be that the story was omitted and Lazarus not named in the synoptic traditions because of 'protective anonymity' (Bauckham, 2006: 196).

6.2.3.2 Resurrection Predictions

Resurrection predictions are usually explained as *vaticinia ex eventu*: "Predictions of the death and resurrection ... have long been recognised as secondary constructions of the church" (Bultmann, 1963: 152). All three Markan predictions are followed by Matthew and Luke. The structure suggests that the Markan predictions have been edited in the light of the passion. Luedemann argues from the strongly Markan language that the

predictions were composed by Mark in preparation for his own passion narrative, including vocabulary anticipating the later narrative (Luedemann, 2000: 71). However, Mark usually uses ἐξομολογήσεται , like much early confessional material (Rom.4:24-25; 1 Cor.15:4f), but the verb used here is ἐξομολογήσεται (Evans 1999: 94), suggesting non-Markan composition. The church was not so quick to invent sayings of Jesus (Wright, 1992: 421). Jesus could have anticipated death as a result of his confrontation with the authorities (Sanders, 1993: 264), not least because of the fate of John the Baptist (Evans, 1999: 87). Such a fate was consistent with the “proverbial fate of the prophets” (Dunn, 2003: 797). The parable of the wicked tenants (Mk.12:1-12) suggests an awareness of the possibility of martyrdom. The criterion of embarrassment suggests Jesus’s fear of arrest (Mk.14:36) is more likely to be authentic, especially in contrast to the serene Johannine Jesus. The same martyr theology which would have informed his speculation about his possible death would also have led to speculation about resurrection (2 Macc.7; 4 Macc.8-17, especially 2 Macc.7:9, 14). At the last supper, Jesus looks beyond his death to drinking wine again in the Kingdom (Mk.14:22-26; Mt.26:26-30; Lk.22:14-20), possibly expressing Jewish hopes of being raised on the last day. His affirmations of belief in resurrection in debate with the Sadducees (Mk.12:18-27) are plausible. The least that can be claimed is that he probably anticipated martyrdom, and if so would have expected vindication: “resurrection (in the Maccabees) is never a description of death, but always its overthrow and reversal” (Wright, 2003: 152). He probably expected to rise at the End in the general resurrection. Reshaping of his expectations into predictions of a resurrection after three days could have taken place at any stage in the traditioning process. The rewriting of the predictions was the *vaticinium ex eventu*, rather than the original composition.

6.2.3.3 Resurrection Symbols

These are sayings or events alluding to the resurrection.

The sign of Jonah occurs in various forms. The simplest is a request for a sign, which Jesus refuses (Mk.8:11-12). The Pharisees are the real descendants of the faithless wilderness generation (Marcus, 2000: 503); there is no reference to the sign of Jonah. In Matthew’s parallel (Mt.16:1-4) Jesus offers only the sign of Jonah, without explanation. Fuller explanation comes in a different form (Mt.12:38-42 = Lk.11:29-32). Matthew parallels the time Jonah spent in the fish with the time Jesus spent in the tomb. Luke has no reference to the three days and nights. If the Q version is authentic, Mark

may be omitting the reference to the sign of Jonah in order to retain the messianic secret (Keener, 1999: 422). Since Luke would probably not delete a reference to the resurrection, the reference to three days and nights must be a Matthean expansion (Marshall, 1979: 485). Jesus's original saying may have alluded to the sign of Jonah's preaching rather than his deliverance from the fish, since the Ninevites probably did not know about the fish (Jonah.3:1-4; 3 Macc.6:8): the point was that they repented without a sign, but Jesus's opponents refused to repent despite many signs (Keener, 1999: 367 n86). With hindsight, it was an ideal illustration of the resurrection, so gospel tradition shaped it accordingly. It is not evidence for Jesus's expectations of resurrection, but for later resurrection faith. It is clearly intended to allude to the resurrection (Schweizer, 1976: 293).

The parable of the tenants in the vineyard (Mk.12:1-12; Mt.21:33-46; Lk.20:9-19) concerns Jesus's death and the judgement faced by his killers. Resurrection is mentioned obliquely via Psalm 118: 22, used elsewhere to refer to the resurrection (Acts.4:1-11; 1 Pe.2:7; Rom.9:32f; Eph.2:20). It could be an addition to the original parable (Marshall, 1978a: 732), or could derive from Jesus's anticipation of martyrdom, a warning to the authorities that has taken on added significance since his resurrection (Cranfield, 1977: 369).

The anointing at Bethany (Mk.14:3-9; Mt.26:6-13; Jn.12:1-6) anticipates Jesus's burial, and only refers to resurrection by implication. Mark connects it to resurrection through his statement that the women went to the tomb to anoint the body, but could not because the tomb was empty (16:1; Mt.28:1 has no reference to anointing). The anointing at Bethany replaces the anointing that Jesus's resurrection prevents.

6.2.3.4 Transposed Resurrection Stories

Fuller identifies four common features of resurrection appearance stories: the absence of the risen Christ; he makes a supernatural entrance; he is recognised; he delivers a charge (Fuller, 1980: 161).

- **The miraculous draft of fish** (Lk.5:1-11) has been suggested as a resurrection story because of the similarity with Jn.21:1-14. Dependence is probably in the opposite direction: John knew and used Luke, or possibly an independent source also used by Luke (Barrett, 1978: 46, 578). Against this, Creed argues that although the Johannine story is more developed than the

Lucan form, it has a more natural (therefore original) framework: the disciples are already at sea, and do not sail especially to find the miraculous catch; Peter's reaction would be a more likely response to a meeting with the risen Christ than to a miracle (Creed, 1942: 73). It would however be a natural reaction of a Galilean fisherman to the supernatural. Nevertheless, the form of the story does not fit the common shape of resurrection appearances, and the risen Jesus does not perform miracles in any other appearance story.

- **The stilling of the storm** (Mk.4:35-41) could have belonged to a pre-Markan cycle of "boat miracles" (Mk.3:7-12; 4:35-5:43; 6:31-56). The story revolves around three "*mega's*:" the great storm (4:37), the great calm (4:39), and the great fear (4:41). Jesus is portrayed as the eschatological conqueror of the sea, with a hint of the resurrection in $\aleph \epsilon \tau \nu \rho \aleph \chi (\square \square \blacklozenge \blacklozenge) \chi (\blacksquare)$ (4:38). The story culminates in the question "Who is this?", and is answered in terms of the creator, overcoming the chaos-monster of the deep (Isa.51:9-10; Job.26:10-13; Ps.104:5-9). However, this authority is provisional, since the power which Jesus overcomes in the sea is waiting for them on land in the person of the demoniac, and in 6:45-52 the sea has returned to its demonic state and must be subdued again by "a renewed epiphany of the godlike Jesus" (Marcus, 2000: 340). Together with the complete lack of appearance criteria, the provisionality of Jesus's authority suggests it is not a resurrection story, but proleptic of the kingdom of which all miracles are signs.
- **The walking on the water** (Mk.6:45-52) has some appearance criteria: Jesus is absent at the start, and appears in a supernatural way, but from the land rather than heaven. There is no charge or instruction. The drama revolves around Jesus's separation from the disciples, explicable by his finding solitude rather than a post-resurrection absence. The story has been shaped to speak to Mark's beleaguered congregation: sea and storm were common imagery in Jewish apocalyptic for end-time distress (Marcus, 2000: 430), and the appearance of Jesus in the fourth watch (from 3.00am to 6.00am) when darkness was beginning to lose its grip would be significant to oppressed faithful looking for the parousia. The story is more likely to be

from Jesus's earthly ministry, shaped by $\square\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{X}\square\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\blacksquare\mathfrak{M}\square$ (divine man) christology (Fuller, 1980: 164).

- **The feedings of the crowd** (Mk.6:32-44; 8:1-10) are gift-miracle stories similar to the Elijah-Elisha cycles (1 Ki.17:8-16; 2 Ki.4:1-7, 42-44). "In those days" (8:1) is a common eschatological formula, and the renewing of the gift of manna in the wilderness was common in Jewish apocalyptic (2 Apoc. Bar.29:3-8 expects manna to be given again and Leviathan to become a meal for Israel)(Marcus, 2000: 419). Both bread and fish (Num.11:22) are part of the eschatological wilderness feeding expectation. Three days without food (8:2) may foreshadow the display of eschatological power in the resurrection, or proclaim God's help for his people on the third day (Hos.6:2). The feeding events are part of the eschatological prophet tradition, interpreting the earthly Jesus rather than the risen Christ (Fuller, 1980: 164). The emphasis is eschatological, but not in terms of resurrection.

The transfiguration (Mk.9:2-8) has been described as the retrojection of the post-Easter Jesus into the pre-Easter narrative: "The tradition can with good reason be designated an Easter story" (Luedemann, 2000: 61). However, while the story has been shaped by resurrection faith (Mk.9:9), the transfiguration differs significantly from the resurrection appearances. In the transfiguration, he is not absent and does not make a supernatural entrance. His shining appearance contrasts with the descriptions in the appearance stories (Wright, 2003: 604). The charge is given by the voice from heaven rather than the risen one. The transfiguration may be "symbolic of the post-resurrection situation" (Perrin, 1977: 28), but it is not a misplaced resurrection appearance.

The "you are Peter" saying (Mt.16:17-19) is Matthean in its parallelism and vocabulary:

$\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{e}\square\square\mathfrak{E}\square\mathfrak{X}\square\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}$ $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\square\mathfrak{M}\blacksquare$ $\bigcirc\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{D}\square\mathfrak{X}\square\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{A}$
 $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}$ $\square\odot\blacklozenge\mathfrak{X}$ (16:17; 5:3-10), and
 $\square\odot$ $\square\mathfrak{E}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{M}\square$ $\bigcirc\square\blacklozenge$ $\square\odot$ $\mathfrak{M}\blacksquare$ $\blacklozenge\square\mathfrak{X}$ $\square\blacklozenge\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\square\mathfrak{E}\blacksquare\square\mathfrak{X}$. The use of $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{r}\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{E}\bullet\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{D}$ (attributed to Jesus only here and in Mt.18:17) is Matthean, balancing "my church" against "their synagogues" (Mt.13:54 = Mk.6:2). "The two expressions are counterparts." (Gundry, 1994: 331.) It is a Matthean composition, possibly a rephrased commissioning statement (Fuller, 1980: 167) from a resurrection appearance, but this encounter lacks any of the features of such an appearance.

Gospel tradition was shaped against a background of eschatological expectation following the resurrection and experience of increasing opposition. Stories retold in the light of resurrection faith are not necessarily post-resurrection in origin. Features which have led to their being labelled as misplaced resurrection appearances have other explanations.

6.2.3.5 Burial and Resurrection Narratives

The accounts follow the narrative sequence. Comparison of parallels shows the development of the tradition.

- **The burial of Christ:** Mk.15:42-47; Mt.27:57-61; Lk.23:50-56; Jn.19:38-42

In Mark, Joseph of Arimathea took charge and sealed Jesus's body in a stone tomb, and the women were there to note the location. Matthew adds that the tomb belongs to Joseph. Luke adds positive comments about Joseph's character and the fact that the tomb was unused. The women were preparing spices to treat the body after the Sabbath, implying that they didn't expect an immediate resurrection. John's account is similar to Luke's, with the addition of Nicodemus. The two men provide a prodigious amount of spices, and wrap the body.

- **The guard at the tomb:** Mt.27:62-66

Only in Matthew, this is the first stage of his alleged Jewish plot to explain the resurrection as grave-robbing.

- **The resurrection:** Mk.16:1-8; Mt.28:1-10; Lk.24:1-11[12]; Jn.20:1-18; (Mk.16:14-20)

The story has a stable core (Dunn, 2003: 829) around which details vary. The women find the tomb empty, and are informed by an angel (angels) that Jesus is risen and will meet them in Galilee. Mark's women say nothing for fear, and his gospel ends there. Matthew includes the guards, with another earthquake; his women go to tell the disciples. Luke changes the message about Galilee to a memory of Galilee; his disciples did not believe the

women, but Peter visited the tomb. John focusses on Mary Magdalene, and has the other disciple with Peter at the empty tomb.

- **The bribing of the soldiers:** Mt.28:11-15

Only in Matthew, this is the second stage of his account of the Jewish alternative explanation.

- **The Emmaus appearance:** Lk.24:13-35

Only in Luke, this story depicts two disciples meeting Jesus near Jerusalem.

- **Jerusalem appearances:** Mt.28:8-10; Lk.24:36-49; Jn.20:19-29

Matthew's women experience a Christophany at the tomb. Luke describes a meeting in the upper room, to demonstrate the physicality of the resurrection and to underline the point that everything that has happened is in fulfilment of scripture. John has a similar episode, including the giving of the Spirit and the appearance to Thomas, who only appears in John's Gospel.

- **Galilean appearances:** Mt.28:16-20; Jn.21:1-23 (Mk.16:9-13)

Matthew sets the final appearance and great commission on a mountain in Galilee. John combines a miracle story and a lakeside breakfast, in which Peter reverses his denials.

- **The ascension:** Lk.24:50-53; Acts.1:1-11

Luke provides an abbreviated account in the Gospel of Jesus's departure, more fully narrated in the Acts. Jesus departs while blessing the disciples near Bethany, who return to Jerusalem. The fuller account suggests a longer period of appearances, and points to Pentecost in terms programmatic for the mission in Acts (Acts.1:8).

The question is how far the gospel traditions reflect Jesus's own expectations, and how far their portrayal of events is shaped by later resurrection faith. Jesus probably shared contemporary beliefs about martyrdom, vindication, and eschatological resurrection. Was later resurrection faith retrojected into material which did not originally contain it?

The gospel traditions suggest that they have been reshaped in a way which presents earlier material in the light of later faith, but not all resurrection faith is later.

6.2.4 Comparing Traditions

There are differences in the earliest layer of traditions: Mark speaks only of the empty tomb and has no resurrection appearances, while Paul refers only to appearances and does not mention the empty tomb. The separateness of the two branches of tradition has led to suggestions that the tomb tradition is a later development (Barclay, 1996: 20). It is arguably not important for Paul (6.3.1.2 below), but very important for the Jerusalem community: for them, the proclamation could be falsified by the existence of a corpse. That suggests the need to create a story in order to answer the objections. The prior question is whether the evidence in fact supports the claim that the empty tomb is not part of early tradition.

6.2 EXAMINING THE TEXTS

The above survey shows that a significant part of the New Testament treats the resurrection as an historical event. Paul refers to his own encounter with the risen Christ, and employs earlier material which assumes the historicity of the resurrection. The gospel accounts prepare for and then narrate the events of the death and resurrection. The question to be addressed now is whether this historicity is true. The exploration in chapter 5 examined the criteria developed to test for authentic Jesus-tradition, working from Meier's list (Meier, 1991: 167ff) together with Theissen's criterion of historical plausibility (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 173f). The criterion of plausibility seeks a Jesus who could plausibly have existed in that historical context, and plausibly given rise to known historical effects. The question now raised is that of the plausibility of the unique. If the resurrection happened, it was a unique event, posing problems for the historian seeking analogy. First, this may indicate the limits of "scientific historical method" in the light of a "new creation" (Wright, 2008: 77f). Second, while the principle of analogy may fail to find supporting evidence in the past, it is open to eschatological verification (Wright, 2008: 76).

The question is whether these texts, and the traditions developing within them, are plausible effects and sufficient evidence for that event.

6.3.1 1 Corinthians 15:3f

6.3.1.1 The Text

Paul quotes a credal formula in a series of clauses introduced by $\square\odot\diamond\text{X}$ (4.4.2.1 above), extending the sequence of appearances to culminate in one to himself. It is clear from the structure where the original tradition ends and Paul's addition begins: $\mathfrak{M}_{er}\square\mathfrak{M}_{\text{X}}\diamond\text{X}$ introduces two further appearances probably in chronological order (Dunn, 2003: 855n130), and ending with his own. The rhythm of the text changes with the first $\mathfrak{M}_{er}\square\mathfrak{M}_{\text{X}}\diamond\text{X}$. The technical terms emphasise that it is a tradition handed on: $\square\text{X}\square\mathfrak{M}_{\bullet}\text{X}\square\blacksquare$ and $\square\text{X}\square\mathfrak{M}_{\text{X}}\diamond\&\text{X}$ equate to the rabbinic Nm lbq and l rsm (Fuller, 1980: 10). The non-Pauline vocabulary indicates citation: $\square\odot \text{X}\diamond\text{X}\&\text{X}$ only occurs here (Barrett, 1971: 341). The structure suggests Aramaic origins (Jeremias, 1966: 102f), indicating composition within a few years (Wright, 2003: 319) (Luedemann, 1994: 38) and arguably months (Dunn, 2003: 855) of Jesus's death. The tradition reflects on the meaning of Jesus's death and resurrection. His death is for our sins, and both death and resurrection are $\&\text{X}\diamond\text{X} \diamond\text{X}\text{X} \text{Y}\square\text{X}\text{X}\text{X}$. The burial is not $\&\text{X}\diamond\text{X} \diamond\text{X}\text{X} \text{Y}\square\text{X}\text{X}\text{X}$, but is necessary and confirms both (Barrett: 1971: 339). Scripture is fulfilled in the death: Mark 9:31 shows the influence of Daniel 7:13, 25; 12:2, and Mark 10:45 alludes to Isaiah 53:10, 11 (Dunn, 2003: 813). The burial could have been linked with Isaiah 53:9, but its function was not primarily to fulfil scripture but to confirm the fact of death (Wright, 2003: 321).

6.3.1.2 The Tomb

Did Paul know of the empty tomb? It has been argued that because there is no explicit reference to the empty tomb, Paul must either not have known of it or not have been interested in it (Wedderburn, 1999: 87), therefore it must be later tradition originating in Mark. However, Paul would not have needed to make a specific reference to the tomb: "the sequence death, burial, resurrection demands that the tomb was empty" (Lane, 1974: 588). "A mere vision would not have justified the technical verb 'raise' ($\mathfrak{M}_{er}\text{Y}\mathfrak{M}_{\text{X}}\square\text{X}\diamond\text{X}$)" (Rowland, 1985: 190). Crossan's argument that Jesus was

probably not properly buried (Crossan 1992: 392) is countered if *Μετὰ τὸν ἥλιον* is historical, since burial implies a grave. The only reason for a specific mention would be to counter those who argued that Christ was not raised by emphasising that the tomb was empty (Swinburne, 2003: 161); the fact that Paul does not suggest that it is implicit. Crossan later concedes that Paul may have known of the tomb, “but left that fact implicit between ‘buried’ and ‘appeared’” (Crossan, 1998: 550). To the Jewish mind, resurrection “naturally suggested resurrection from the grave” (Fuller, 1980: 73). A specific reference would be tautological (Wright, 2003: 321). Burial emphasises the reality of death and can be assumed as deliberately implied. Acts 3:15; 10:39-40 moves directly from death to resurrection, and Acts 13:28-31 specifically mentions the tomb. Acts 2:29 implies an empty tomb that could still be examined (Lane, 1974: 588). The empty tomb was known among the earliest Easter traditions (Dunn, 2003: 781f, 839). Inclusion depends upon the emphasis of the passage.

The key is the rhetorical purpose of the conversation. Some have denied the resurrection (1 Cor.15:12), so Paul intends to prove it by appealing to a series of witnesses, especially 15:6 (Pannenberg, 1968: 89). His extensions to the original paradosis build a series of appearances, culminating in his own (Fuller, 1980: 29). A sideways step to consider an empty tomb would interrupt the flow. The rhetorical purpose of arguing from the empty tomb would be to invite opponents to check for themselves. That would relate to early Jerusalem believers, whose claim to faith could be easily falsified by the existence of a corpse (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 500), but be less relevant to believers years later in Corinth. That suggests the empty tomb story developed early rather than late, and even its pointlessness years after the tomb could be examined (Pannenberg, 1968: 100). The rhetorical purpose of the list of witnesses, especially the comment that many still live (15:6), is the implicit invitation to seek confirmation from them (Wright, 2003: 325).

6.3.1.3 The Witnesses

The appearances have no timescale. Luke’s forty days (Acts 1:3) is probably a symbolic round figure rather than historical (Cranfield, 1977: 57), ending within the fifty days defined by Pentecost (Bruce, 1977: 53). The appearances to Peter and the Twelve are very soon after the resurrection. James did not believe during Jesus’s lifetime, but became the leader of the Jerusalem church: this appearance may have been the reason he came to faith. Paul probably received that story from James himself

(Gal.1:19). His own encounter is variously set at about three years (Pannenberg, 1968: 97) and eighteen months (Dunn, 2003: 855) after Jesus's resurrection. "All the apostles" is an undefined group, obviously more than the Twelve. An apostle is one who has seen the risen Jesus (Wright, 2003: 325), so "all the apostles" is almost an umbrella term for many in the early church (e.g. Rom.16:7). The appearance to five hundred has been linked with Pentecost, as two variants of the same underlying tradition (Luedemann, 1994: 101ff), but this does "as much violence to Luke's account of Pentecost as to Paul's account of a resurrection appearance" (Wright, 2003: 325). Paul's point is that those who are still alive can be questioned, as reliable witnesses to the fact of the resurrection.

6.3.1.4 The Nature of the Appearances

The gospel traditions narrated the appearances (6.3.6.5 below). Paul did not, but simply stated that Jesus "appeared" (□etʾ□≈). His encounter is listed (1 Cor.15:8) with the same formula as for the other appearances, and he argues (Gal.1:16; 1 Cor.9:1) that his meeting with the risen Jesus was the same as those of the other apostles (Allison, 2005: 287). The significance was the same, as a legitimating formula (Luedemann, 1994: 37), but the lack of description contrasts sharply with the gospel accounts. The passive □etʾ□≈ implies that there was something to be seen: it was not created by the act of seeing (Dunn, 2003: 872). What was seen is not described. Some see no difference between encountering the risen Christ and experiencing the Spirit, hence the argument that the appearance to the 500 refers to the same event which underlies Acts.2 (Luedemann, 1994: 100f). While being "in Christ" and having the indwelling Spirit were closely related in his understanding of salvation (Dunn, 1998: 414) Paul nevertheless maintains the initial encounter with the risen Christ as distinct and different from other ecstatic experiences (2 Cor.12:2f)(Wedderburn, 1999: 77).

Pannenberg (1968: 94) argues that such visions were extraordinary and not visible to everyone. Similarly, Fuller explores the way □etʾ□≈ was used in the LXX for revelatory visions, translating the niphal of h)r with l, meaning a this-worldly event through which an eschatological event is mediated in history. The visions are historical, but the reality which they mediate is trans-historical (Fuller, 1980: 30f). Carnley (1987: 208) suggests that the visions were all from heaven rather than something which happened on earth. However, Wright underlines the normality of the seeing: of the eighty-five occurrences of □etʾ□≈ in the LXX, while just over half refer to Yahweh

or Yahweh's glory; thirty-nine refer to people appearing in a non-visionary way (Wright, 2003: 323). Davis argues that the meaning is defined mainly by the context: $\square\odot\square\ominus\circ\ominus$ and $\square\epsilon\text{r}\square\blacklozenge\ominus\blacklozenge\text{r}$ are more likely to be used for revelatory visions, and while $\square\epsilon\text{r}\text{X}\square\approx$ can refer to divine revelation, it can equally be used for ordinary seeing (Davis, 1998: 134). It is nonsense to argue for something as an objective experience for those who have it, but not accessible to others; Paul is firm that this was objective.

6.3.1.5 Provenance and Plausibility

Paul's case for the resurrection rests upon eyewitness accounts. None can be precisely dated, but the series allegedly goes back to the very beginning. Peter's centrality agrees with his place in resurrection narratives (Jn.20:3f; Lk.24:34), and may connect the paradosis with Peter as part of the instruction Paul received from him (Gal.1:18). Some of the later material may have come from James (Habermas, 2005: 142). Together with the Aramaic background of the original, that allows a high degree of confidence in the very early provenance of the tradition.

Establishing the historicity of the reported events raises the problem of assessing the plausibility of an historically unique event. There is some confusion within the tradition, especially as compared to the narrative traditions, together with some difficulty in describing clearly what happened: surely if it was Reimarus's conspiracy or deception, they would have made a better job of it. Whatever the difficulty of explaining how it happened or what it means, the most compelling note in Paul's argument is his appeal to witnesses who could verify or falsify his testimony. He is inviting his readers to share in something which, although almost indescribable, is something which happened to other reliable witnesses. Shared testimony increases plausibility.

6.3.2 Mark: Mk.16:1-8 - The Empty Tomb

6.3.2.1 The Text

Mark's abrupt ending is problematic. The best manuscript evidence indicates that it ended at 16:8 (Metzger, 1975: 126). Theories explaining why range from the unlikely (the author died at that point, raising the question why no-one else finished it), through the improbable (mutilation of the manuscript, which must have happened before any copies were made, raising the question why he did not rewrite his ending), to the difficult (that this is a deliberate ending, leaving the question why Mark chose to finish

like that)(Fuller, 1980: 64f). Ending a sentence with $\mathfrak{M}_{er}\mathfrak{X}\square\delta\square\blacklozenge\blacksquare\blacklozenge\square\ \mathfrak{Y}_b\mathfrak{G}\square$ was “grammatically barbarous” (Perrin, 1977: 21), but not impossible. Gen.18:15 LXX is an example of the same ending; perhaps Mark was using the literary device of a suspended ending (Wedderburn, 1999: 137). If there was anything after Mk.16:8, the divergence in the synoptic tradition suggests that Matthew and Luke did not both know it (Wedderburn, 1999: 70).

Against this, Gundry (1994: 591) argues that Matthew 28:9-10 is dependent on a lost ending of Mark (5.3.3.4 below) in which the women receive a command from Jesus enabling them to break their fearful silence, without which the Galilean seeing of Jesus never takes place despite two advance notices (Mk.14:28; 16:7). The divergence would then be due to Luke’s theological emphasis on Jerusalem rather than Galilee.

However, this does not fit the textual evidence. If Markan material existed in a form accessible to Matthew, it would have been accessible to others. The alternative endings depend on other gospel traditions: vv.9-11 echo John 20:11-18, v.12 echoes Luke 24:13-35, vv.14-18 echo Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-23, and Matthew 28:16-28 (Cranfield, 1977: 472); the vocabulary and style are non-Markan (Metzger, 1975: 125). A collection of Easter accounts used as an Easter catechism may have existed by the start of the 2nd C (Luedemann, 2000: 115). It came to be expected that “a gospel would end with a resurrection appearance with a confession of faith, or an expression of joy among those who saw the risen Lord” (Lane, 1974: 591). This was lacking in Mark, so the catechism was used to “plug the gap” (Wright, 2003: 619).

6.3.2.2 The Narrative

The key event is the discovery of the empty tomb by the women, seeded by Mark in the passion and burial accounts (15:40, 47). They anticipate difficulty in gaining access, but find it already open and empty. A $\blacksquare\mathfrak{M}_{G}\blacksquare\mathfrak{H}\cdot\&\square\mathfrak{X}$ announces the resurrection and instructs them to tell the disciples that Jesus will meet them in Galilee. The same word describes the young man who fled (14:51), but this one is clad in a $\cdot\blacklozenge\square\bullet\mathfrak{Z}\blacksquare\ \bullet\mathfrak{M}_{\blacklozenge}\&\mathfrak{Z}\blacksquare$; white garments signify a heavenly presence (Mk.9:3; Ezek. 10:2, 6-7 LXX; Dan.7:9 LXX). They then depart in fear and silence.

The story was shaped by Mark to interpret the tomb. The tomb needs explanation, rather than itself being an explanation for resurrection appearances (Wright, 2003:

628). The meaning is illustrated by the women's response. They were the only ones present: anointing was normally performed by women, and the men had fled to Galilee. The reference to Galilee (16:7) may attempt to justify the disciples' flight by tracing it to a command of Jesus (Schweizer, 1970: 367). The silence has been taken as the reason why the empty tomb had not already become known (Goulder, 1994: 65), but material such as 1 Corinthians 15:3f indicates the silence was broken very early. The command which the women disobeyed is not the command to proclaim the empty tomb, but to tell the disciples to meet him in Galilee. Just as the instruction to keep silent in Mark 1:44 proved to be conditional, so 16:8 could mean they said nothing to anyone except the disciples (Allison, 2005: 303f). Their silence is due to fear (16:8), interpreted as the antithesis of faith (Spong, 1995: 61) or a continuation of the failure and blindness of the disciples (Schweizer, 1976: 372). Alternatively, it may have only been for a limited time (Cranfield, 1977: 469). Fear is a typical Markan response to the transcendent (9:6), underlined by the accumulation of *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8), *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8), *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8), *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8), *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8), and *Μετὰ τὸ ἔλεος* (16:8). This is not weakness and failure but eschatological dread of impending judgement arising from the announcement of the resurrection. It is a fitting closing comment to the account of the coming of the Son of God (1:1) (Lane, 1974: 590).

Given the significance of the resurrection, the brevity is surprising: only eight (8) out of six hundred and sixty-five (665) verses (Spong, 1995: 59). Jesus's death and the confession of the centurion (15:39) is more of a climax (Perrin, 1977: 19). However briefly the resurrection is treated at the end, Mark points to it numerous times: 8:31, 38; 9:9, 31; 10:34; 12:10-11, 18-27, 35-37; 13:26-27; 14:28, 58, 62; 16:6. "Did he need to say more?" (Fenton, 1994:6). What is more surprising, knowing the place of the appearances in the gospel tradition, is that Mark has none. He would have known of their existence in pre-Pauline tradition, so must have suppressed them for theological reasons (Perrin, 1977: 23, 85). The first prediction passage ends with reference to the parousia (9:1). Parousia-expectation is important in Mark, and it is possible that impending trouble suggested that the time was near: Lane places the gospel in Rome during the Neronian persecution of 64 (Lane, 1974: 13f).

One possible reason for excluding resurrection stories is that they were a distraction for a community that must be called to remain faithful to survive the coming troubles: “The

life of the community is of paramount significance ... only as it endures through tribulation will it enter the life of the world to come (13:30)” (Kee, 1977: 150f). Affirmations of the resurrection may support those facing tribulation; Mark possibly thought not.

The story is shaped by Mark’s theological emphases. The silence is “of a piece with the secrecy motif” (Dunn, 2003: 830 n14). The resurrection is the *terminus ad quem* for the messianic secret (9:9). Now the secret can be unveiled, and is done so most appropriately by an angel. Appearances are unnecessary embellishments.

6.3.2.3 Provenance and Plausibility

The question of provenance has a number of possible solutions:

- Mark made up the story (Luedemann, 2000: 114);
- it originated in pre-Markan tradition, possibly as a liturgical celebration at the site of the tomb (Dunn, 2003: 831);
- it derived from eyewitness tradition (Dunn, 2003: 841).

It is unlikely to be free Markan composition. Compared with Mark’s passion narrative, there is little intertextuality, and very little theological development, which militates against 16:1-8 being “free Christian fiction” (Allison, 2005b: 124), but suggests Mark is using earlier tradition. Also, it is inconceivable that Mark would invent women as witnesses, even as part of his theme of the disciples’ failure to understand (Martin, 1979: 133). The story centres upon the women and their response. Women could not testify as witnesses (Wright, 2003: 607 n55), so they must have been historical. A later apologetic story would have had the largest possible number of good witnesses.

The empty tomb was part of the earliest Easter traditions (6.3.1.2 above). It would have to be early enough for there to be a tomb whose emptiness could still be verified. A later liturgical form would have remained more stable (Dunn, 2003: 832); the variety of treatments suggest that the tradition goes back to the event itself.

The question of plausibility is more complicated, because of the uniqueness of the event. The criterion of plausibility has two principle tests: contextual plausibility and plausibility of historical effects (5.5.11 above).

The tomb itself is plausible. Having earlier argued that Jesus was not properly buried (6.3.1.2 above), Crossan notes a persistent tradition that Jesus was seen to be buried in a particular place by Joseph of Arimathea (Crossan, 1998: 553), possibly acting from Jewish piety (Allison, 2005: 362). The tradition is well-supported (Craig, 2006: 143). There is also a persistent tradition that the tomb was later found to be empty, known in pre-Pauline (therefore pre-Markan) tradition. The existence of the story is itself an historical effect. It is “extremely implausible” that the resurrection could be proclaimed in Jerusalem while the body was still there (Pannenberg, 1996: 70). It is therefore likely that Mark derived the core of the story from existing tradition, and adapted it to fit his own purposes.

Angelic appearances are generally implausible. However, given the test of contextual plausibility in the context of the unique event of resurrection, it is difficult to rule anything in or out. The nature of the resultant traditions suggest something profound took place.

It is certainly implausible that the women remained permanently silent, especially when other appearances (as reported in 1 Cor.15:3f) began to happen.

6.3.3 Matthew

Matthew’s resurrection narrative is a “radical use” (Fenton, 1963: 450) of Mark 16:1-8, adapted to his concerns, interspersed with his material concerning Jewish fears of tomb robbery.

6.3.3.1 Matthew 27:62-66; 28:11-15 - The Deception of The High Priests; The Guards At The Tomb

Perrin identifies three sections (Perrin, 1977: 48):

- i. **27:62-66** - the Pharisees negotiate with the Romans for a guard on the tomb;
- ii. **28:4** - the guards see the angel and are terrified;

iii.28:11-14 - the guards report the resurrection, and are bribed to tell the story still current in Matthew's day.

The contrasts are dramatic: the deceitfulness of the Jewish authorities in their statements about the resurrection contrasts with Jesus's truthfulness; they address Pilate as Lord while describing Jesus as a deceiver; the women's vigil at the tomb contrasts with the authorities' request for a guard (Gundry, 1994: 582f). Matthew pre-empts accusations of deception, having Jesus watched by Romans on the cross and in the tomb (Fenton, 1963: 447). His anti-Jewish polemic reflects the relationship between his church and the Jewish community (Fuller, 1980: 73).

6.3.3.2 Matthew 28:2-4 - The Angel at the Tomb

Mark's $\blacksquare \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{D} \blacksquare \mathfrak{H} \mathfrak{E} \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{X}$ has become an $\mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{E} \mathfrak{Y} \mathfrak{b} \mathfrak{Y} \mathfrak{b} \mathfrak{M} \bullet \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{X} \mathfrak{E} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{H} \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{D}$ accompanied by a theophanic earthquake. Instead of finding the tomb already open, Matthew shows the event, not to release Jesus, but to display that the tomb is already empty. The angel's appearance is traditional: his face is like lightning (Dan.10:6), Mark's $\blacklozenge \mathfrak{Q} \bullet \mathfrak{z}$ becomes $\blacklozenge \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{E} \mathfrak{H} \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{O} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{E} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{Q} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{D}$, the garment of the Ancient of Days (Dan.7:9); Matthew underlines the divine nature of the event (Gundry, 1994: 587). The guards, not the women, were afraid, and in ironic reversal Jesus is alive while the guards appear dead.

6.3.3.3 Matthew 28:1, 5-8 - The Women at the Tomb

Matthew redacts earlier parts of Mark's story to prepare for the women's role at the tomb. His redaction of the women at the cross (27:55-56) tidies up details. The account of the women at the burial (27:57-61) is significantly redacted to improve Mark's portrayal of the disciples. Joseph is identified as a disciple, taking a key role in the burial and changing the function of the women (Perrin, 1977: 44f): they go to continue their vigil (Gundry, 1994: 586), rather than to complete the burial rites (Fuller, 1980: 76). The message to the women follows Mark, with the two clauses reversed and linked with $\mathfrak{Y} \mathfrak{D} \mathfrak{Q}$, so that the resurrection is the reason why Jesus is not there. The women's response contrasts to that in Mark: they leave in joy rather than terror. Mark's whole atmosphere has been changed: "...fear ... has been swallowed up in the great joy of the women" (Fenton, 1963: 450).

6.3.3.4 Matthew 28:9-10 - The Appearance to the Women

The Christophany has no Markan parallel. The style and vocabulary are Matthean (Gundry, 1994: 592), $\text{ἰδοὺ ὁ υἱ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ echoes $\text{ἰδοὺ ὁ υἱ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ in the previous section (28.8); Matthew has stylistically assimilated his sources. The messages of the angel and risen Jesus are almost parallel, laying emphasis on Galilee (Perrin, 1977: 48). This repetition, and interruption of the flow of action, suggests a separate tradition inserted by Matthew. There is no reason to invent it to bolster the words of the angel (Allison, 2005: 248). John 20:11-18 looks like an independent development of the same story (Fuller, 1980: 78)(6.3.5.1 below).

6.3.3.5 Matthew 28:16-20 - The Great Commission

Matthew's final scene in Galilee has no parallel in the other gospels. "The combination of worship and hesitation (provide) a majestic and numinous context" (France, 1989: 314) for the message. The discourse is "a compendium of important Matthean themes" (Gundry, 1994: 593): Jesus the greater Moses "on the mountain looking out over the promised land" (Wright, 2003: 642 n33), his deity, the authority of his commands, his presence with his disciples, and the direction of hope to the final consummation. Jesus is risen with $\text{ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ υἱ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ (28:18): Mark's Jesus is in heaven waiting for the parousia, Matthew's Jesus already exercises his authority through the church. The eschatological glory of the Son of Man already glimpsed (13:41-43; 16:27f; 19:28; 24:30-31; 26:64, especially 25:31-46) is a present reality (France, 1989: 315). The risen Jesus addresses the church of Matthew's day (16:18; 18:17): the commands to teach, baptise and make disciples of all nations indicate the later date (Gundry, 1994: 596).

The appearance fulfils the promise to meet in Galilee (28:16), which Mark understood as pointing to the parousia (Perrin, 1977: 49); Matthew took it literally. If Mark saw the resurrection as the prelude to the parousia, Matthew saw it as inaugurating the age of the church which will end with the parousia. Matthew probably intends the doubt to refer to others ὁ υἱ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου rather than the Eleven (McNeile, 1928: 434); it is likely to be part of the original experience rather than fictional (Wright, 2003: 643f), and now fits the distance between Matthew's generation and the original testimony. Expressing it in the text enables his readers to respond to Jesus's words in their day (Luedemann, 2000: 255).

6.3.3.6 Provenance and Plausibility

The question of provenance: Mark may have been Matthew's principal but not only source for knowledge of the empty tomb. The story of the guards suggests a current debate. Luedemann proposes a tradition-history beginning with visions interpreted as resurrection, in support of which stories of the empty tomb were composed. The Jews countered by claiming that the body must have been stolen by the disciples. Matthew's riposte is the story of the guards. The rumour is historical, but not the theft (Luedemann, 2000: 254). The tomb itself is no longer the issue. However, if the accusation of grave-robbery was current in anti-Christian polemic, it still needed to be countered. Anti-resurrection arguments assumed the original tomb was empty (Pannenberg, 1968: 101). The debate probably originated in Jerusalem in the early years (6.3.2.3 above). It could have arisen between Mark and Matthew (Allison, 2005: 312), but more probably when the empty tomb was first proclaimed, as the "oldest alternative explanation" (Dunn, 2003: 838). Even if Matthew had not Mark's story as a source, the polemic he answered would make him aware of the tomb tradition. Resurrection implied an empty tomb (Fuller, 1980: 73) (6.3.1.2 above).

- **The description of the angel, the opening of the tomb, and the earthquake** are all Matthew's creativity, changing Mark to highlight the glory of the event and counter Mark's belief that the disciples failed. The resurrection is the climax of God's redemptive activity, so he adds details "more suitable to the supreme hierophany" (Perrin, 1977: 46).
- **The sealing of the tomb and the placing of the guard** are unknown to Mark (Lane, 1974: 586), suggesting Matthean composition.
- **The Christophany to the women** is the earliest example of a resurrection appearance in Jerusalem. While it retains the tradition of a Galilean appearance (28:10) it may be the first sign of a tendency to relocate primary appearances (Lk.24:13f; Jn.20:1f) (Fuller, 1980: 79). The memory persists of a first appearance to women in Jerusalem (Dunn, 2003: 843).
- **The great commission** is based upon the Galilee-appearance tradition. The discourse is Matthean in style, and probably in origin. The missionary charge (28:19-20a) may be derived from charges during Jesus's ministry (10:5f), but has been expanded in scope, the command to go only to Israel replaced by one presupposing the mission to the Gentiles (Fuller, 1980: 84). Jesus probably did not utter those words (Fenton, 1963: 453). The discourse is singly attested, and relevant to Matthew's church rather than the early Jerusalem community.

The question of historical plausibility reflects the complex of material. Stories about the discovery of the empty tomb are plausible, since the tomb is a persistent early tradition (6.3.2.3 above). Many of the changes are literary and not historical. Matthew's portrayal of the women's joyful reaction is more plausible: Mark's account fits his theme of failure, and is less likely. Those sections which are apparently Matthew's own composition are less likely to have happened in that way. The trial during the feast and the Sabbath is not a difficulty; serious cases might still be tried and sentenced before "all the people" (Deut.17:13) (Jeremias, 1966: 79). The presence of guards at the tomb is not impossible, although the silence of the other gospels counts against it. For the Jewish authorities to ask Pilate for troops would entail serious loss of face. The troops' admission of failure is unlikely, as it would certainly cost them their lives (Gundry, 1994: 585). The story is probably Matthew's own composition, but may reflect a contemporary debate about the provenance of the empty tomb (Schweizer, 1976: 519). Matthew's community was engaged in 'rancorous... dialogue" with a "strong Jewish community" (Perrin, 1977: 49). The debate continued unresolved because the argument that the disciples stole the body presupposes that there had been no body to be found: "Otherwise, the story lacks a reason for being" (Gundry, 1994: 585). The controversy worked both ways.

The historical plausibility of resurrection appearances depends on prior assumptions about their possibility. What can be evaluated here is the form of Matthew's accounts. The great commission is built upon existing tradition of a resurrection appearance in Galilee. The present story is Matthean in style and singly attested. This is how Matthew imagined a final appearance rather than how it was remembered (Luedemann, 2000: 256). The appearance of the risen Jesus to the women is the first account of a tradition that bases resurrection appearances in Jerusalem (6.3.6.3 below). Both appearance stories, however, are restrained in their description of Jesus. In contrast to the 'building-up' of the angel's description (Gundry, 1994: 587), Matthew does not give any details of the risen Jesus, suggesting that neither Christophany is his composition, but derives from earlier tradition.

6.3.4 Luke-Acts

6.3.4.1 Luke 23:49-56 - The Burial

Luke's account does not differ from Mark's in any important point. The story explains Jewish burial practices, and points out that the women knew where the tomb was.

6.3.4.2 Luke 24:1-12 - The Empty Tomb

The outline follows Mark 16:1-8, with notable differences.

- **The women find the body gone before they see the angels.** The angels explain what the women have found rather than lead them to it.
- **There are two angels instead of one.** This is stylistically Lucan, paralleling the pair at the transfiguration (9:30) and the ascension (Acts.1:10), doubled to provide two witnesses (Marshall, 1978a: 885).
- **The angelic message has changed.** They are rebuked for looking in the wrong place, informed of the resurrection, and the promise to meet in Galilee is replaced by a recall of a resurrection prediction made in Galilee. Luke moves all appearances to the Jerusalem area. The prophecy is from Mk.14:41; 16:6 (Marshall, 1978a: 886).
- **The response of the women is different.** Like Mark, and unlike Matthew, they meet only the angels, not Christ. They tell the disciples, only to meet disbelief. Luke echoes Mark's motif of the failure of the disciples (Perrin, 1977: 64), but does not include the women, possibly reflecting his emphasis on Jesus's attitude to women (Marshall, 1979: 139f). The disbelief of the disciples is widely reported (24:41; Mt.28:17; Mk.16:11; Jn.20:25, 27).
- **The names of the women are different.** Mary Magdalene is in all the lists, and Mary the mother of James is agreed with Mark and Matthew (who refers only to "the other Mary"). Mark's Salome becomes Joanna, elsewhere found as a companion of Jesus in Galilee (8:3).
- **Peter goes to the tomb.** This qualifies the disciples' disbelief (Marshall, 1978a: 888), and further witnesses to the emptiness of the tomb.

Luke's narrative is smoother than Mark, more restrained than Matthew, with the same purpose: reflection on resurrection traditions a generation after Mark (Perrin, 1977: 63). Like Matthew, "he feels himself free to shape (the traditions) ...but... he does not feel free to modify substantially what must be considered very early tradition" (Wright, 2003: 646).

dead hero who had become a spiritual being in the pantheon (Perrin, 1977: 69). The risen Jesus eating with his disciples is well-attested tradition (Jn.21:13; Acts 1:4; 10:41). The speech is Lucan; thematic links with Matthew (28:16-20) and John (20:21-23) may be due to the context of final words from the risen Lord, but it looks like common material, congenial to Luke, but derived from tradition (Marshall, 1978a: 904).

Pre-Lucan tradition knew of resurrection appearances in the Jerusalem area, hence Matthew (28:9, 10) and John (20:11f) (Fuller, 1980: 120). Luke suppresses Galilee-tradition in favour of Jerusalem-tradition, on grounds of stylistic unity (Marshall, 1979: 155f) and salvation history (24:47; Acts.1:8) deriving from Isa.2:2f (Marshall, 1978a: 906). His foundation myth replaces Jerusalem as sacred centre with the Christian church (Perrin, 1977: 77).

6.3.4.5 Luke 24:50-53 - Departure

From 24:46, Luke summarises Acts 1:1-11. Acts1:2 refers back to this scene, 1:4 paraphrasing Luke 24:48. The two could refer to different appearances (Marshall, 1978a: 907), but are probably complementary accounts of the same event. This version is shaped so that the Gospel begins and ends in the Temple (Fuller, 1980: 121).

6.3.4.6 Acts 1:1-5 - Forty Days Appearances

Contemporary historiography required a resumé of the previous volume followed by a statement of the contents of the present volume (Fuller, 1980: 124). The ministry up to the ascension is in 1:1-2, and a slightly expanded summary of the post-Easter period in 1:3-5. The scene is set for the ascension.

6.3.4.7 Acts 1:6-11 - Final Charge And Ascension

The disciples are still thinking in old ways. Their question is pointedly not answered; Jesus's promise from Luke 24:48 is repeated, but more fully and providing a table of contents (1:8).

The ascension is simply stated with little drama. He is lifted up, and they see it happen. The vocabulary is down-to-earth: $\phi \bullet \mu \square \mu \times \blacksquare$ suggests the ascension could be seen in the normal manner like any event in Jesus's life, and $\mu \epsilon \square \phi \square \mu \times \blacksquare$ means lifting up in the normal sense (Barrett, 1994: 81f). The appearance of 'two men in white' heightens the drama. The same phrase ($\phi \epsilon \blacksquare \omega \square \mu \times \blacksquare \blacklozenge \square$) describes the two figures at the tomb: angels appear at the beginning and end of the forty-day period of

appearances, marking the whole event as significant, (Barrett, 1994: 83) The angelic message promises the parousia, indicating a delay between Jesus's going and his coming.

6.3.4.8 Provenance and Plausibility

Luke's principal source is Mark, to which he adds everything following the appearance of the angel at the tomb. All material is shaped to suit his purposes:

- **The angels** frame the forty days; the pair of angels in John 20:12 raises the question of whether there was an earlier and common tradition (Marshall, 1978a: 885), or whether John used Luke.
- **The angelic message** now accommodates Luke's relocation of the appearances to Jerusalem, excluding the possibility of a command to go to Galilee.
- **The women's account** is changed. They enter the tomb before meeting the angels, respond with joy rather than fear, and the names differ.
- **Peter visits the tomb.** Only Peter is mentioned in 24:12, but 24:24 implies more than one person. John 20:3 includes the beloved disciple. Luke apparently knows that two went to the tomb, but has omitted the beloved disciple (6.3.5.1 below).
- **Two resurrection appearances** occur in the Jerusalem area: the Emmaus story and the appearance to the eleven. 1 Corinthians 15:5 does not specify locations; Mark indicates a Galilee appearance which he does not describe; and Matthew has one Jerusalem appearance and his finale is a Galilean appearance. Traditions exist for both Jerusalem and Galilee appearances. The kernel of the upper room appearance is a memory of appearances to all the apostles, which Luke has made a church-founding and mission inaugurating finale to his gospel (Fuller, 1980: 119). The emphasis on preaching to the Gentiles in the speech of the risen Jesus is consistent with Paul, so could represent early tradition (Marshall, 1978a: 906).
- **Emmaus** is peculiar to Luke. A pre-Lucan story is discernible (Allison, 2005: 253), and an original appearance may lie beneath the layers of tradition, so Luke's distinctive style indicates redaction rather than composition (Marshall, 1978a: 890). If appearing "to all the apostles" (1 Cor.15:7) includes more than one appearance, Emmaus could be one of several Judean appearances (Fuller,

1980:108), and have “a nucleus of history” (Marshall, 1978a: 891). There are indications of older tradition (Dunn, 2003: 848f). The contemporary Emmaus (modern Nicopolis or Amwas) is too far away (Luedemann, 1994: 146). Luke describes Emmaus as a ܐܡܘܨܐ (village), distinguishing it from the ܐܡܘܨܐ of the same name (Thiede, 2005: 34). The Crusader site of Castellum Emmaus was probably not known as Emmaus in the first century. Josephus refers to the Roman military colony established at the modern Kaloniye or Motza (Marshall, 1978a: 892f): it is close enough to Jerusalem to be the most likely location (Thiede, 2005: 160, 191). There is a possible link between Cleopas and Jesus’s cousin Clopas (Jn.19:25) (Luedemann, 1994: 145), although Allison is more cautious (Allison, 2005a: 254).

- **The ascension** occurs only in Luke-Acts, but there is evidence that Luke was reshaping traditional material. ܐܪܥܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ is unusual, as ܐܪܥܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ became the usual word for the ascension (Marshall, 1978a: 909); it may indicate an early Aramaic stratum in which the resurrection included assumption into heaven (Fuller, 1980: 123). Similarly, “was taken up to heaven” (Acts.1:2) appears to refer to his death. Earlier traditions (1 Cor.15:3f; Mk.16:1f) know nothing of ascension as separate from resurrection. Matthew 28:16-20 is a final resurrection appearance, but it has no ascension. Only in Luke-Acts is it separate, through Luke’s schematization of history (Perrin, 1977: 75). “Luke was probably writing up in his own way and for his own purposes a piece of traditional material” (Barrett, 1994: 81).

The question of historical plausibility reflects the variety of material. The differences in the lists of women at the tomb will be considered below (6.3.6). That the tomb was reported to be empty and that those reports were disbelieved is highly plausible. Embarrassing accounts of the disciples dismissing the women’s reports (24:11) would not have been invented (Lane, 1974: 589). The existence of appearance traditions for both Galilee and Jerusalem is not in itself implausible: whether they were subjective visions or objective realities, the key is the number of places to which disciples fled (6.3.6 below). A journey from Jerusalem to Thiede’s Emmaus is certainly plausible. The location of the ascension is also geographically plausible, Bethany being on the east

side of the Mount of Olives (Marshall, 1978a: 908); a sabbath day's walk (Acts.1:12) was about 1200 yards (Bruce, 1952: 72). A departure story was theologically necessary: it met the conviction that Jesus now reigns in heaven (often articulated in terms of Ps.110:1). He must have vanished after every appearance; one of the disappearances proved to be the last (Barrett, 1994: 64). The event was remembered, to become the core tradition which Luke shaped into his ascension story.

6.3.5 John

Chapter 20 is a frame at the end of the Gospel comparable to the Prologue at the beginning, drawing together themes that have run throughout the book (Wright, 2003: 667, 669ff). These themes do not continue into chapter 21, added after the original conclusion, possibly by a different author (ⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓ for the disciples suggests the same hand as 1 Jn.2:14, 18), in response to the death of the beloved disciple. The narrative sets the scene for two conversations, establishing the positions of Peter and the beloved disciple as church leaders: Peter is the pastor and martyr (21:15-19), while the beloved disciple is the guarantor of authentic tradition through eyewitness testimony (21:24) (Luedemann, 2000:587).

6.3.5.1 John 20:1-18 - The Visit to the Tomb and the Appearance to Mary Magdalene

The story is recognisable from synoptic accounts, but is substantially revised. Only Mary is mentioned, although her report is in the plural (ⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓ ⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓ 20:2). John reports that she found the stone removed, although it is not mentioned in 19:38-42. There are no angels. The story of the race to the tomb is interwoven with the story of Mary at the tomb. The beloved disciple is first to believe, rather than Mary (Luedemann, 2000: 576).

The race of the men to the tomb (20:3-10) echoes Luke 24:12 (Luedemann, 1994: 152), with significant changes. Luke 24:12 mentions only Peter, but 24:24 implies more than one person, suggesting that Luke has omitted the beloved disciple from John's more original account. John gives the beloved disciple priority over Peter, in contrast to Mark 8:29 and Matthew 16:17-19: possibly evidence of rivalry between John's church and the Petrine churches (Luedemann, 1994: 153) (compare also Jn.21:20f). Rivalry certainly existed (1 Cor.1:12f), probably affecting the shaping of tradition, but John's

narratives are primarily influenced by theological concerns, such as seeing and believing, and Jesus's ascent to the Father (Barrett, 1978: 561).

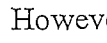
Mary's Christophany (20:10-18) follows John's technique of "enlightenment through initial misunderstanding" (Barrett, 1978: 564). The two stories are woven together, with Mary unable to keep up with the men and arriving at the tomb after they have left. Crossan (1998: 560f) argues that John's account is dependent on Matthew, but the two versions share few words (Allison, 2005a: 247), and are probably independent versions of the same tradition. Christ takes over from the angels and repeats their question, bringing Mary into the conversation by which she will recognise him. Her failure to believe at first was a foil for the faith of the beloved disciple (Fuller, 1980: 135). Having now seen Jesus, her formal declaration (*Μὴ σέθενε*, 20:18; 1 Cor.9:1) legitimates her as a witness (Luedemann, 1994: 156).

John's concern with the nature of the resurrection body is woven into the story, in the description of the grave-clothes through which Jesus was raised, and Jesus's concern that Mary should not hold on to him. Resurrection is "a stage in the process... by which Jesus ascended to the Father" (Barrett, 1978: 561). John does nevertheless differentiate between the different aspects of Jesus's glorification: he does not "collapse the whole thing into simply a death which is also a moment of glory" (Wright, 2003: 665).

6.3.5.2 John 20:19-23 - The Risen Christ before the Disciples

The tradition is firm that Jesus appeared to his disciples on Easter Day (1 Cor.15:5). John follows Luke 24:36f in locating the appearance in the locked room in Jerusalem, and in Jesus showing his hands and feet. The disciples have not asked to see, but it prepares for the next scene with Thomas (Luedemann, 1994: 161). Although transformed, Jesus is the same person (Barrett, 1978: 567). The Johannine Pentecost is a commissioning: "It is probable that to the first Christians the resurrection of Jesus and his appearances to them, his exaltation ... and the gift of the Spirit, appeared as one experience, which only later came to be described in separate elements and incidents" (Barrett, 1978: 570). "Binding and loosing" (20:23) occurs in Matthew 18:18 in a section on community discipline. The mission context in John 20 may suggest granting or withholding baptism on the acceptance or rejection of the kerygma (Fuller, 1980: 141).

6.3.5.3 John 20:24-29 - Thomas

The preceding appearance gave no sign that anyone was missing (Luedemann, 2000: 582). However,  could indicate any number including the 'outer circle' (Barrett, 1978: 568). The story, unique to John, has two points. The first repeats that Jesus's body is sufficiently corporeal to show the wounds and be touched, but sufficiently non-corporeal to appear in a locked room. The second addresses the motif of doubt (Mt.28:17). Thomas seeks firm proof, and Jesus offers it. We are not told whether he actually touched Jesus; perhaps being able to believe without touching speaks to later generations troubled by doubt (Wedderburn, 1999: 125).

6.3.5.4 John 21:1-14 - The Appearance on the Lakeshore

"Afterwards" (21:1) raises the question of when this appearance could have taken place. The apostles would hardly have returned to their earlier lives and work after the apostolic commission. It may arise from an early Galilean appearance (Mk.16:7), chronologically earlier than the Jerusalem appearances in Jn.20 (Barrett, 1978: 579). The appearances which John places on the first Easter day may not have all been then, rather are a schematic conflation of several appearances. The location of the appearances is discussed below (6.3.6).

Inconsistencies suggest a conflation of accounts: they have no fish, yet fish are cooking before the catch is landed; Peter jumps overboard, yet seems to arrive after the boats (Luedemann, 2000: 584). Possibly Peter got ashore first, and v.11 shows him stepping back into the beached boat to help land the net. The narrative appears to be composite, related to Lk.5:1-11 with a sudden recognition echoing Lk.24:31; both stories may depend on a memory of a Galilean appearance to Peter (Dunn, 2003: 846). The details suggest that it is to be read allegorically. The number of fish (153) is a triangular number signifying completeness: the fishing expedition portrays the apostolic mission, and the fish caught represent the full total of those caught by the apostles. Nevertheless, the net is not broken: the apostolic church remains one, despite its variety and number (Barrett, 1971: 581f). The meal has eucharistic overtones.

6.3.5.5 John 21:15-19 - The Risen Christ and Peter

Peter's affirmations reverse his denials (Jn.18:17; 25-27), and enable his commission as the shepherd of the flock. The conversation legitimates Peter's leading status in the church despite his denial: the charcoal fire on the beach (21:9) recalls the fire at the high

priest's house (18:18) (Wright, 2003: 676). He is commanded to follow, and the audience is reminded of his martyrdom. The tense of the statement reveals it as a *vaticinium ex eventu*: "when you were young" (21:18) spoken from the narrator's present would have been "while you are still young" in the narrative situation (Luedemann, 2000: 586).

6.3.5.6 John 21:20-23 - The Beloved Disciple

This conversation addresses eschatological concerns after the death of the beloved disciple. The parousia was expected to happen while some of the initial generation were still alive (Mk.9:1f; 1 Th.4:15; 1 Cor.15:51). Peter and Paul died in the 60s, provoking speculation that may have found expression in Mark 13 (Barrett, 1978: 139). The death of the beloved disciple necessitated the assurance that it did not mean the failure of the parousia hope. Jesus's response is both a rebuke and a challenge to concentrate on the task of discipleship and avoid useless speculation.

6.3.5.7 Provenance and Plausibility

The question of provenance and authenticity is linked with the identity of the beloved disciple, since the authorship of the Gospel is attributed to him (Barrett, 1978: 561). Eyewitness testimony may lie behind the text, but has been rewritten and reshaped, and in some cases derived from other sources:

- **The visit to the tomb** is edited from a number of accounts; the plural $\square \chi \epsilon \rho \alpha \nu \tau \epsilon \sigma \tau \epsilon \nu \tau \epsilon \nu$ suggests a non-synoptic source, as $\square \chi \epsilon \rho \alpha \nu \tau \epsilon \sigma \tau \epsilon \nu$ does not occur there (Barrett, 1978: 563). It may indicate narration rather than redaction, possibly Mary speaking as the reporting representative of the women (Dunn, 2003: 832). There are connections with synoptic tradition, particularly special Lucan material, but not enough to show dependence (Fuller, 1980: 132). Luedemann notes verbatim agreements with Mark 16 and with Matthew 28/ Luke 24 (Luedemann, 2000: 576). While he clearly knew their texts, John's version is "in substance independent" (Barrett, 1978: 561).
- **The appearance to Mary Magdalene** may have begun from Matthew 28:9-10, but has been completely rewritten. It is a recognition narrative (Luedemann, 1994: 155), shaped to address the question of the nature of the resurrection body. Mary's consistent place in the tomb accounts is a strong argument that she was the one who discovered the empty tomb (Schweizer, 1970: 369).

- **The Risen Christ before the disciples** echoes Luke 24:36f. This may be a common tradition of a Jerusalem appearance (6.3.4.4). Luke addresses the nature of the resurrection body, alleviating the disciples' fear. There is no fear in John's version, and the issue of doubt is addressed in the following Thomas-scene.
- **Thomas** has a definite role in John; in the other gospels he is simply named (Mt.10:3; Mk.3:18; Lk.6:15). In John he becomes "the vehicle of misunderstanding and doubt" (11:16; 14:5) (Fuller, 1980: 142). Doubt features in all the gospels (Mt.28:17; Mk.16:14; Lk.24:11, 25, 37, 41), but this episode is unparalleled. Both appearances (to 'the ten' and to Thomas) take place on Sundays, suggesting the Lord's presence on the Lord's Day (Barrett, 1971: 476). Thomas's great confession is in fulfilment of 1:18. The story clearly originates with John.
- **The appearance on the lakeshore** is related to Luke 5:1-11. The miraculous catch is not originally a resurrection story (6.2.3.4 above), but is here combined with a recognition story to provide a platform for the conversations that follow. The allegorical features suggest that the story has been specially composed (Luedemann, 2000: 586).
- **The Risen Christ and Peter** demonstrates Peter's restoration as leader. Peter could not have been the apostle he was without being reconciled to the one he betrayed, and to those who accepted him as leader. The original story may have been a resurrection appearance during a meal in Galilee, during which Peter is given charge of the church with the three-fold commission (Fuller, 1980: 153).
- **The beloved disciple** is the reason for the story. This episode is probably not historical, but seeks to explain his death and answer the questions it raised. They partly concern beliefs about the parousia (Wright, 2000: 675), and partly the guarantee of the Christian tradition, which has been handed on as testimony and now written in the gospel (21:24). The beloved disciple has been an eyewitness at key moments in Jesus's ministry. He is both in the narrative and the omniscient narrator (Lincoln, 2002: 19). His testimony is the Fourth Gospel, and his role as witness and interpreter makes it the guarantee of authentic Christian teaching, a guarantee not lost at his death.

women found the tomb empty and thus realised that Jesus was alive. Angelic figures function as literary devices to vocalise the significance of the event.

- **The women** are crucial to the gospel accounts, but not mentioned at all in Paul's appearance-tradition (1 Cor.15:3f). Mark could have inserted the women into the tradition (Crossan, 1998: 551, 557), but creating women witnesses is so improbable that they must have been historical (Wright, 2003: 607-608). The real danger to male followers of a condemned rebel made it likely that the disciples would flee, so only the women could be present at the crucifixion. The prominent role given to women by Jesus possibly made them more acceptable witnesses; Mark had no option but to include them (Crossley, 2005: 184f). Against this, "It is... the hallmark of legends to sin against established facts" (Allison, 2005b: 128). Mark could have introduced male witnesses whatever actually happened, but had women witnesses because there were in fact women witnesses. Paul may have omitted them because of problems with women at Corinth (Crossan, 1998: 550), or because their testimony would be "not an asset but a liability" (Allison, 2005b: 124). To have included Mary would have given her the same authority as Peter (Theissen & Merz, 1998: 497): her central role, combined with stories of her deliverance from demon possession, would explain Paul's removing them from his list (Dunn, 2003: 833). His reluctance to include women may also have been part of wider suppression in favour of male disciples (Lieu, 1994: 34f). Whatever the motive, it is more likely that the prominent role of the women was original and suppressed than that it was a later accretion (Wedderburn, 1999: 60). The core of the narrative "admits that women were the only first-hand human witnesses" (Allison, 2005a: 329), later supported by male disciples. There are different but overlapping collections of women at the tomb witnessing the burial and arriving on Easter morning. Mary Magdalene is a constant. Mary the mother of James and Joses is in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Mark names Salome, Matthew adds the mother of Zebedee's sons, and Luke adds Joanna and 'others.' John has Mary alone on Easter morning, but Jesus's mother, his mother's sister, Mary wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene as witnesses to the burial. Behind the divergences, there is a persistent memory of a first appearance to women (Dunn, 2003: 843), and especially to Mary Magdalene (6.3.6.3 below).

- **The guards:** The story of the guards at the tomb is only in Matthew, and is most likely his own invention (6.3.3.1 above). It is unlikely that such a tradition would be unknown to Mark or deliberately omitted by him (Dunn, 2003: 830 n15).

6.3.6.2 Galilee Appearances

Paul's appearances-tradition has no locations, but there may be a common tradition behind the appearance to five hundred (1 Cor.15:6) and Matthew's finale (Wright, 2003: 325). Mark promises but does not report (Mk.16:7), while Luke redacts them out for theological reasons. Matthew's mountain is a scene of revelation (Mt.5:1; 15:29; 17:1; 24:3; 28:16) (Dunn, 2003: 853 n116), and the speech is a Matthean development of the Easter message (Fuller, 1980: 92), but the underlying motif is the Galilean appearance promised in Matthew 26:32; the first vision may have been in Galilee (Luedeman, 2000: 256).

The appendix to John's Gospel was composed to meet questions arising from the deaths of Peter and John (6.3.5. 4-6 above), structurally dependent upon Luke 5:1-11. The construction is Johannine, but its foundation is a memory of a Galilean appearance. Fuller hypothesises an original pericope of an appearance during a fellowship meal in Galilee, containing a three-fold commissioning to Peter (Fuller, 1980: 153).

The memory of a Galilean appearance is persistent: even Luke has to account for the tradition in a way consistent with his redactional interest (Lk.24:6) (Marshall, 1979: 887).

6.3.6.3 Jerusalem Appearances

Equally persistent is the tradition of appearances in Jerusalem. Mark reports only the angelophany, but the tomb becomes a focus. Matthew adds the tomb Christophany (28:9f; Jn.20:14f) to Markan tradition.

Mary is reported as first at the tomb (Mt.28:1, 9f; Jn.20:1, 14f), and first to meet the risen Jesus. The two sources (Allison, 2005a: 247f) provide multiple independent attestation, and thus high reliability. This conflicts with a tradition that Peter was first to get there (Lk.24:12), or first to enter (Jn.20:6). There is an early tradition of an

appearance to Peter (1 Cor.15:5; Lk.24:34), which may lie behind John 21:15f (6.3.6.4 below), later developed by concerns with authority and leadership.

The upper room features strongly in the Jerusalem traditions, and is probably linked to Paul's unlocated appearance to the Twelve (1 Cor.15:5; corrected to Eleven Lk.24:33). No appearance is located in Jerusalem prior to Luke, who is followed by John. Luke places appearances in Jerusalem for theological reasons, probably theological reflection on historical events rather than invention. The Emmaus tradition is particularly firmly located. While the narrative is completely Lucan, it could have "a nucleus of history" (Marshall, 1978a: 891). John uses the upper room appearance to set the scene for his story of Thomas. The issue of doubt is plausible: if the stories were simply fiction, it is unlikely that doubt would be included. However, while Thomas is established in the gospel traditions (Mt.10:3; Mk.3:18; Lk.6:15; Jn.11:16; 14:5) this scene is singly attested.

Similarly, Luke's accounts of Jesus's departure from the Jerusalem environs are singly attested. There are connections between Luke 24:36f and John 20:19f (Jesus stood among them, greeted them, and showed his hands and side) (Dunn, 2003: 849), but no connection with the final appearances in the Galilee tradition. There is a strong memory of all appearances as commissionings (Dunn, 2003: 859).

6.3.6.4 The Location of the Appearances

The traditions have developed along two routes. The first is from Mark via Matthew, developing Mark's promise of a Galilean appearance. The second is from Mark via Luke to John, developing the Jerusalem traditions, with the Galilee traditions reappearing in a Johannine appendix. The question arises as to the original location of the appearances. Both Galilee and Jerusalem are plausible: there is no reason why a risen Christ could not appear in widely separated locations. The disciples were more restricted in their movements. While there are strong traditions for early appearances in both Galilee and Jerusalem (Allison, 2005b: 131n30), it is impossible for all the disciples to have travelled to Galilee and back in a few days (Schweizer, 1970: 370). The timescales are clearly redactional: John sets everything on the first day, as does Luke's Gospel, but Acts.1:3 reports an extended period. Matthew gives no specified time for the journey to Galilee.

The tradition is firm that the women were at the tomb (6.3.6.3 above). It is very likely that the men fled for their lives when Jesus was arrested (Crossley, 2005: 184f). Some may have tried to return to Galilee, while others hid in Jerusalem (Jn.20:19). The initial appearances were to the women at the tomb, and later in the upper room to those disciples who remained. It is usually inferred that $\text{O}\text{E}\square\approx\diamond\text{E}\text{H}$ in John (20:19f, 24f) means all the disciples, but it is not specific, and does not identify which disciples met Jesus in Jerusalem. Whichever of the men had returned to Galilee met the risen Jesus there, possibly during a lakeside meal (Fuller, 1980: 153), which formed the basis for the tradition of Galilean appearances developed in Matthew 28 and John 21 (Dunn, 2003: 865).

6.3.6.5 The Nature of the Appearances

Paul insists that it was Christ he saw (1 Cor.9:1), but gives nothing concerning the content of the appearance (6.3.1.4 above). The only narrative of Paul's experience is Luke's, subject to Luke's interpretation (6.2.1.1 above). All the accounts of seeings include "an element of critical discernment" (Dunn, 2003: 874), and Luke's interpretation is signalled by his separation of Paul's encounter from the others by the ascension (Wedderburn, 1999: 73). The Christophany was for Paul alone, not seen in the same way by his companions, although Luke's different versions leave unclear exactly what was seen or heard (Acts 9:7; 22:9) (Dunn, 2003: 873). The Damascus road event is sufficiently different to be unhelpful in deciding whether the disciples objectively saw or subjectively visualised Jesus (Davis, 1998: 139).

The gospels emphasise the physicality of the appearances. They are literary constructions, and the question of provenance concerns what memories or experiences lie behind the narrative. Some argue that the visions were hallucinatory (Luedemann, 1994: 100), part of the grief process of the disciples (Spong, 1995: 192, 197) or the associated resolution of a perceived bleak future (Goulder, 1996: 50f). While apparitions to the bereaved are not uncommon, that is not enough to account for the response of the disciples (Allison, 2005a: 284). Further, some appearances (Saul and possibly James) are not explicable by wish-fulfilment: (Davis, 1998: 131).

The tension is between the “plain sense of the narrative” (Davis, 1998: 129) that it was about normal vision rather than visualisation, and the trend from “less literal to more literal” (Allison, 2005a: 289) or from “the intangible to the tangible and thus to the demonstrable” (Wedderburn, 1999: 73) suggesting that what was seen was anything but normal. Where physicality is stressed, the seeing is a normal seeing. However, Jesus was not always recognised, some doubted, and he appeared in a locked room; Jesus’s presence was not a normal physical existence (Dunn, 2003: 872). The trend to increasing corporeality has been explained as anti-Docetic (Luedemann, 2000: 414), but that is a different question: Luke’s agenda was to demonstrate proof from scripture (24:27, 44) and John’s was to nurture faith that believes without sight (20:29) (Muddiman, 1994: 132). The primary stress is on identity: the disciples recognise Jesus, even if not immediately (Lk.24:16). Mary Magdalene mistakes him through her tears, but sees a man nevertheless (Jn.20:15). The Risen One is identifiable as Jesus (Marshall, 1978a: 891).

6.3.6.6 Provenance and Plausibility

The empty tomb is a persistent early tradition. A limited number of possible explanations existed, of which the most popular alternative was grave robbery. Even if there were guards, so the disciples did not have the opportunity to remove the body, they were probably too shocked and afraid to have tried. It also appears from their responses to sighting reports that no-one actually expected the resurrection. There is no point in faking what was not expected (Vermes, 1973: 40)

The appearances are not imaginary (Allison, 2005a: 288), but are integral to all the resurrection traditions. The narratives are often explained as later developments of Pauline kerygma (Fuller, 1980: 170f). However, the lack of location in 1 Corinthians 15:3f and the early provenance of both Jerusalem (6.3.6.3 above) and Galilee traditions (6.3.6.4 above) argues against dependence, and indicates multiple independent attestation.

It is impossible to establish the plausibility of resurrection appearances as such, but the responses suggest real experiences. “We do not need the physical resurrection of Jesus to explain the apostles’ change from beaten men to heroes; that is fully accounted for by their having been converted - that is what conversion means” (Goulder, 1994: 63). Goulder’s argument against Christian faith nevertheless acknowledges the remarkable

transformation in the disciples; his interpretation is dictated by his worldview, just as the New Testament interpretation is shaped by its own worldview (Allison, 2005a: 340). The witnesses' experience may be inaccessible to us, but their testimony is a firm historical datum. The texts are a part of the history of Jesus's own effects, pointing back to the historical Jesus (Theissen & Winter, 2002: 208). The response of the disciples and the explosive growth of the Jesus movement originate in what are claimed as encounters with the risen Christ. If approached without a materialistic predisposition, there is nothing in the accounts to determine what happened in the appearances (Allison, 2005: 298). If resurrection is ruled out as *a priori* impossible, the claim is implausible. Resurrection is inherently so implausible that this low prior probability ought to overwhelm the argument (Davis, 1993: 170). However, if the alternatives are ruled out, resurrection must be allowed as a possibility, plausible, if unlikely. "To reject the supernatural... just because it is supernatural... is as unscientific as to accept it uncritically" (Bruce, 1952: 17).

The resurrection traditions are a complex of elements, in a traditioning process with several beginnings (Dunn, 2003: 865). The traditional elements of appearances, witnesses and tomb are intertwined by the process, but appear to be related prior to the process, and appear to be part of the events which initiated the process. The texts are part of the evidence for that process. There is further evidence which corroborates the witness of the texts.

6.4 EVIDENCE BEHIND THE TEXTS

6.4.1 Breaking of Bread on the First Day of the Week

Christians met for worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor.16:2), which came to be known as "the Lord's day" (Rev.1:10; Did.14:1), because it was the day when the resurrection happened (Bruce, 1977b: 406). The New Testament gives no reason, but it is argued in Justin's *Apology* (Rowland, 1985: 239). The practice was very early (Dunn, 2003: 860): the earliest reference (1 Cor.16:2) concerns an accepted practice rather than arguing for an innovation. Continuing the community meal as a Jesus commemoration would probably have happened on Thursday because of the Last Supper (Swinburne, 2003: 165). Alternatively, Friday would have been appropriate as a

memorial of his martyrdom. The only reason for gathering on the first day of the week was the association with the resurrection (Wedderburn, 1999: 49).

6.4.2 The Fact of the Disciples' Belief in the Resurrection

The rise of a triumphant faith from a shameful death is an "historical enigma" (Küng, 1978: 345). Belief in resurrection is itself evidence, if there is no other explanation for that belief. Wright argues that the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances are necessary and sufficient conditions for the early Christian belief in the resurrection. Neither the empty tomb alone (which would be a puzzle) nor the appearances alone (which could be vision or hallucination) are sufficient to account for Christian belief; taken together they are necessary and sufficient conditions for the rise of Christian belief in the resurrection. It is "highly probable" that Jesus's tomb was empty and that "the disciples did encounter him giving every appearance of being well and truly alive" (Wright, 2003: 687). "The Easter appearances are not to be explained from the Easter faith of the disciples; rather, conversely, the Easter faith of the disciples is to be explained by the appearances" (Pannenberg, 1968: 96).

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to examine the resurrection traditions for traces of an underlying historical event. Historicity concerns probability rather than certainty (Wright, 2003: 687n3). Examination of the provenance of the traditions has shown that, while material has been adapted or created where appropriate, there is a persistent core tradition. The historical plausibility of that tradition is the question. If the impossibility of the supernatural or miraculous is presupposed, then certain traditions will be implausible, and alternative explanations must be found. However, the very nature of the claim of the tradition challenges that presupposition (Bauckham, 1987: 33). The New Testament offers a diverse but consistent testimony to Jesus's resurrection. The resurrection traditions are plausible effects of that event. Only if the event is ruled impossible must an alternative explanation be found.

Most reductive explanations focus on the post-mortem experiences of the disciples, arguing for hallucination (Luedemann, 1994: 100), psychological resolutions (Goulder, 1996: 58), midrash (Spong, 1995: 254f, 282), or a sense of "continuing presence after the crucifixion" (Crossan, 1992: 404). These are doubtful. Post-mortem experiences

would be no more likely to lead to resurrection theories then than now (Allison, 2005a: 284). Apparitions or visions alone might have led to a belief in exaltation (Stewart, 2006: 37). Reflections on the injustice of Jesus's death could have been informed by existing martyr-theology deriving from Maccabean tradition (6.2.3.2 above). Resurrection was expected in parts of Judaism as an eschatological phenomenon, not as a present or proleptic event. None of the prophets or Maccabean martyrs had been so vindicated after martyrdom. The claim that Jesus was raised was without precedent, and requires some other factor to explain why it was the preferred response. The astonishment of the disciples suggests they did not expect it. If they had invented an explanation for their continued faith, resurrection was not the most likely one to choose.

The most likely explanation for their claim is that Jesus was raised, generating a core tradition persisting through the diversity of New Testament traditions (Dunn, 2003: 862). Our only access to the event is through the testimony of witnesses and the effects... of the event. These are:

- appearance stories;
- empty tomb stories;
- alternative explanations for the empty tomb;
- resurrection as a dynamic metaphor for spiritual life;
- worship-gatherings on the first day of the week.

The testimony of the witnesses is subject to an extensive traditioning process, but the key elements probably go back to the beginnings of that process (Dunn, 2003, 865).

The simplest reconstruction of the original sequence of events might be as follows:

Following the last supper, Jesus is arrested, tried and executed. Between the arrest and execution, the male disciples flee. Some lie low in Jerusalem, others go back to Galilee.

The women remain to see him die and be buried by Joseph of Arimathea.

Following the sabbath, Mary Magdalene and some other women find the tomb empty, and have a revelatory experience convincing them that Jesus is alive.

Over the next few days, in and around Jerusalem and in Galilee, scattered groups of disciples have similar revelatory experiences convincing them that Jesus is alive.

The experiences are such that Peter is reconciled and James is convinced. All have a powerful sense of commission.

The disciples gather again in Jerusalem, sharing a new experience of Jesus's presence, culminating in the establishment of a new Spirit-filled community.

Although the phenomenon itself is inaccessible, the effects may be detected, and the nature of the phenomenon identified by the nature of its effects. In this case, the effects are the testimony at the heart of the New Testament traditions, together with underlying practices (such as the breaking of bread on the first day of the week) and the explosive growth of the Jesus movement. At the very least, this is evidence for the existence of resurrection faith. Given that resurrection was no more likely an event in the minds of people then than now, something must have made that claim sufficiently acceptable to account for the rapid growth of the early church.

That something was the authentic testimony of witnesses, together with the transformed lives of all who followed the risen Jesus. It is impossible to prove the resurrection, and there remains the modern assumption that the miraculous is itself impossible. However, "by inference to the best explanation" (Wright, 2003: 716), we are driven to conclude that the unique has probably happened. Given the shape of the gap at the centre of the puzzle, the piece which fits best is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

CHAPTER 7: TOWARDS A CONCLUSION -

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

7.1 THE ARGUMENT FOR THE RESURRECTION

This study begins with an anecdote of an evangelistic conversation in a Christian coffee bar (1.1), raising two questions: the historicity of the resurrection and the evidence that might support it, and the consequences of historical proof for Christian apologetics (1.4 above). Our primary concern has been the first of these issues.

The second chapter surveys the quests for the historical Jesus, noting the assumptions and issues that both shaped and arose from the discussion, and that formed the context for our present enquiry. In many cases, the question of the historical Jesus arose because the biblical picture was thought incredible: miracles and resurrection were deemed impossible, so there had to be an alternative explanation.

The third chapter traces the development of the concept of resurrection, noting the twin imperatives of 'relationship with God' and justice, points of foreign influence, leading eventually to the distinctively Hebrew idea of eschatological resurrection. This idea developed late in Judaism, was not universally held, and was not central to Jewish beliefs and expectations. There was certainly insufficient material for the construction of the myth of a risen Jesus as 'prophecy remembered.'

The fourth chapter explores all New Testament texts to examine the use of the idea of resurrection. Most books refer to it, some explicitly referring to the event, others developing it as a metaphor for new creation and spiritual life. A small number of books do not mention it, some preferring the idea of exaltation. Generally, the New Testament either argues for or presupposes the historical event.

The fifth chapter addresses the question of sources, asking whether the New Testament is the best source of evidence for the resurrection. It concludes that extra-canonical texts have little to help the historical enquiry, so canonical texts remain the best sources for resurrection tradition. It explores the criteria by which historicity can be tested, and concludes that the best test is the criterion of historical plausibility.

The sixth chapter focusses on the New Testament traditions which purported to be historical, and examines them in terms of their provenance and plausibility to evaluate their historicity. There is a clear historical core to the traditions, indicating that the claim that Jesus was raised goes back to the very earliest days. It is highly implausible that it was created out of existing tradition. Resurrection was not a dominant idea in the Old Testament, nor in intertestamental Judaism, so was not the natural place for the disciples to begin either to invent a survival myth or to explain visions of their lost leader. The astonishment of the disciples at the appearances suggests they did not expect resurrection. They would have been more likely to adopt a martyr-theology response to his unjust execution, or to have explained 'visions' as ghostly appearances, possibly including instructions to continue their Kingdom-ministry. They explained what happened in terms of resurrection because that was what they believed happened.

The conclusion reached in the last chapter is that the most plausible explanation is that the resurrection did actually happen: that Jesus was buried, that the tomb was found to be empty, and that Jesus was raised from the dead. Plausibility rather than certainty means room for doubt, but since the alternatives are implausible, resurrection is the more plausible explanation. It is plausible enough for Vermes to agree that the women found an empty tomb (Vermes, 1973: 41), and for Lapidé to agree that Jesus was raised from the dead as a 'paver of the way for the King Messiah' (Lapidé, 1983: 152), although neither accepts the implications as understood by Christians.

Christian thinking about resurrection has always seen implications for Christology (Rom.1:4), ecclesiology (Eph.2:19-22), eschatology (1 Th.4:13f), and ethics (Rom.6:3-14; Col.3: 1ff). As Jesus's resurrection has been variously demythologised or re-interpreted, so have its implications. In my research proposal, I raised the question of the implications of an historical resurrection for the understanding and proclamation of the faith today (1.3 above). This question may now be considered briefly.

7.2 RESURRECTION AND THEOLOGY

The resurrection radically influences the theological landscape. As myth or metaphor, it may be replaced or disregarded as convenient. As core historical event, it determines the shape of all theological exploration. It fundamentally affects studies of the historical Jesus: he was clearly much more than Vermes's charismatic *hasid* (above 1.6.6.1),

Sanders's disappointed prophet (1.6.6.2), Crossan's quasi-Cynic philosopher (1.6.6.7) or the "laconic sage" of Funk and the Jesus Seminar (1.6.6.6): no portrait which does not include the resurrection will be adequate. It illuminates consideration of the God who raised Jesus from the dead, and thereby initiated a new creation. It determines ecclesiology, defining the church as followers of the Risen One.

7.3 RESURRECTION AND ESCHATOLOGY

The resurrection marks the breaking in of the future into the present. Resurrection had come to be understood by Jesus's day as eschatological; consequently, Jesus's resurrection was understood in terms of apocalyptic eschatology, as part of the events of the end of history.

Apocalyptic generally arises in times of crisis: Daniel and the Maccabean Revolt, the synoptic apocalypse and Caligula, Revelation and Domitian, Lactantius and the ferment of the conversion of the Roman Empire, Pseudo-Methodius and Adso of Montier-en-Der and the rise of Islam and the struggle for Byzantium, and Joachim of Fiore following the collapse of Jerusalem to Saladdin. In each case, the expectation that God would intervene from outside history to redeem the situation went unfulfilled.

The resurrection means that God has already intervened within history. The end may not be yet, but the process of the end has begun, an inaugurated eschatology illustrated by Jesus's parables of a Kingdom which is both present and future, already but not yet. The Kingdom is a new divine order, arising out of God's final triumph over the forces of evil. In the present it is not unchallenged; the shadows of the present evil obscure and deny the promise of the future. The fact of the resurrection confirms God's victory in the present, and guarantees the promise of the future which is already being lived by his people.

7.4 RESURRECTION AND APOLOGETICS

Apologetics is the reasoned defence of faith to outsiders in engagement both with unbelief and with other beliefs. Since both unbelief and other beliefs assume that the resurrection did not happen, the claim that it did must change everything. In engaging with unbelief, it becomes firm evidence for the claims of the Christian faith, for the existence of the God who raised Jesus, and when lived out in the lives of believers, for the real effects of the Risen Jesus among his people. It has implications for justice, ecology, sexuality, and pastoral theology. The Kingdom inaugurated in the resurrection may be articulated politically, bringing freedom in Christ to oppressive situations, as explored by liberation theology.

The historicity of the central saving event of Christianity sets it in contrast to other faiths, being based upon an event rather than an idea. In the resurrection, God confirms the pre-Easter activity of Jesus, and expresses something of his own nature. Christians have in Jesus's resurrection grounds for confidence in dialogue with other faiths, albeit balanced with the humility arising from the challenge that the resurrection brings to the Church, which has not always lived as the disciples of a Risen Lord.

The conversation involves engagement with a world shaped by modernism and largely influenced by materialist assumptions. To a world convinced that resurrection is impossible, the claim that it has in fact happened is a huge challenge. The claim is one of probability rather than certainty, but it must nevertheless give confidence to engage with contradiction, as well as the grounds to challenge the reasons for contradiction.

7.5 RESURRECTION AND POSTMODERNISM

The challenge of the resurrection to modernist assumptions is only one of many. Postmodernity is more a turning away from modernity than a turning to something else. Modernity may be described as the Enlightenment attempt to bring scientific method to bear on all general understanding of humanity. Postmodernity is iconoclastic towards absolutes such as Reason, Truth, History, and Self: rather than other disciplines determined by rationalism, reason is now decentred, all is relative. Metanarratives are rejected as totalitarian ideology.

While apparently threatening, this is potentially liberating. Modernity controlled by excluding that which did not fit, especially religion and the supernatural or non-rational. Postmodernity seeks to let the 'other' be rather than forcibly absorbing it. In rejecting rationalism, it stimulates 'post-secular' thought. Numerous postmodern theologies and methods have emerged: deconstructive theology; reconstructive theology, beginning from the perceived need to reconcile religion and reason in an approach which is essentially metaphysical; postmodern feminist theology; radical orthodoxy, seeking to mediate politics, ethics, philosophy and aesthetics without accommodating modernism.

The encounter is at least a dialogue, to which theology may bring a voice and even a challenge. The Other anticipated by postmodernity may be defined Christologically by the resurrected Jesus. The resurrection traditions are pre-eminently narratives (as opposed to metanarrative), thus appropriate to a postmodern conversation. The conversation is also between theology and its sources; since the sources critique theology as much as theology critiques its sources, it is important to trust the biblical narrative and allow the sources a proper voice.

Postmodernity has at least liberated religion from the strident secularism of modernism, in which the impossibility of resurrection is a postulate rather than a conclusion. A discussion of the resurrection may no longer need to deal with attempts to explain away the impossible, but must allow the possibility of the inexplicable. The New Testament worldview is able to critique the sceptic's worldview just as much as he critiques that of the New Testament. The historical positivism which has determined limits for biblical and historical scholars should be challenged. With specific regard to the resurrection, the reductive explanations employed to dismiss it are themselves shown to be false, since it really happened. The implications for naturalistic explanations are profound.

CONCLUSION

Cosmologists are able to work back to the time and place of the Big Bang by calculating the trajectory and velocity of the galaxies moving out from the originating event. They cannot mathematically recreate the Big Bang, because it is no longer there. It is nevertheless discernible in its effects. A forensic scientist may be able to discern size and type of explosive by examining the crater, scattered fragments, and residue. He will not thereby recreate the explosion, but it will be discernible through its effects.

Similarly, Christian tradition and history are the effects travelling out from the originating event. We may retrace the trajectory of tradition, and discern that the resurrection was the event that generated and continues to energise the movement. We cannot recreate the resurrection-event, because it is no longer there, but it is discernible through its effects, and is the only single event capable of producing that combination of effects.

Resurrection faith has been the driving force behind most Christian thinking and proclamation from the very beginning. As a myth or idea, it has been open to reinterpretation or rejection, along with every other myth and metaphor. Seen as a historical event, it carries much more weight, and is not so easily dismissed. This thesis has explored the evidence for the resurrection, and has concluded that although it is impossible to prove that it happened, it is the most plausible explanation for the evidence which has been left. This conclusion is itself only the beginning of further explorations into the implications, some of which have been introduced above.

Not so easily dismissed does not mean it cannot be dismissed, or even that once accepted it necessarily leads to acceptance of the Christian faith, as illustrated by the opening anecdote (1.1 above). There is always room for choice, and for a need for a response of faith. The anecdote asked whether it is possible to prove the historicity of the resurrection, and if so, how that may help in the apologetic and evangelistic task. The task of this thesis was to address the first question by examining the evidence for the resurrection. Our conclusion is that the evidence allows us to confidently affirm that "Christ has *in fact* been raised" (1 Cor.15.20 JB) and thus to engage with the further issues which have been raised.

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