



**The risen Christ: A bodily or spiritual
resurrection? The empty tomb as historical
evidence in favour of the bodily resurrection of
Jesus**

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DECLARATION

In respect and recognition of the requirements of the university regulations, I hereby state unequivocally that this work has not been presented at any other university or any other institution of higher learning other than the North-West university and that unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text it is my original work.

DEDICATION

This scholarly work is dedicated to my late parents, Mrs Sinkala Namugala Rose who introduced me to Christianity during my early childhood, and Mr Sinkala Davies for the support proffered (their soul, spirit, and bodies rest in eternal peace). Both motivated me to work extra hard and remain committed to the Christian faith and academic cosmos. My immediate and extended family members, wife (Tina Sinkala), children (Emmanuel Sinkala, Rose Salifyanji Sinkala and Sechelani Faith Sinkala), brothers and sisters and my in-laws for their support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has been and remains a topic of debate among New Testament scholars. Accepting that some form of resurrection occurred, the central question remains: Was the resurrection of Jesus bodily or spiritual? This study is biblical research in the field of the New Testament (NT). Hence, I will attempt to answer the stated question from an exegetical perspective within the reformed tradition, which accepts Scripture as the supreme authority. The aim of the study is to demonstrate that there is reliable historical evidence that the discovery of the empty tomb with empty burial linen favours the bodily resurrection. Therefore, the investigation will include a discussion of two opposing views about the resurrection, death, burial, the eyewitnesses, the empty tomb, the missing corpse and the resurrection of Jesus taking the gospel accounts as point of departure.

In addition, other literature will be analysed, relevant Old Testament (OT) passages, extra-biblical and non-biblical sources will provide substantive data regarding the subject of the resurrection. The extra-biblical sources are sources or literature that was written by earlier Christians other than the evangelists while the non-biblical sources are sources from writers that did not believe in Jesus. Thus, non-biblical sources including evidence from Jewish and Roman historians namely Flavius Josephus and Cornelius Tacitus, among others. Thus, an exegetical framework of the passion narratives of the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17) will facilitate an explicit comprehension of the resurrection event and provide a basis for discussion and investigations. The historical-critical method, more specifically source criticism, will be used to investigate the credibility, historicity and facticity of the passion narratives.

Key terms: Resurrection, Jesus Christ, bodily, spiritual, historical evidence, empty tomb.

ACRONYMNS

ASC	Altered State of Consciousness
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
LXX	Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament)
MEF	Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation
Q	Quelle
TF	Testimoniun Flavianum

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

I am of the opinion that it is necessary to undertake an investigation about the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. I note that the resurrection of Jesus is a fundamental dogma in Christianity on which the Christian faith is founded. In Christianity, it is explicit that without the resurrection of Jesus the Christian faith is futile (1 Cor. 15:17). Thus, it is of interest to establish the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Furthermore, the resurrection of Jesus is accompanied by the post-resurrection encounters as reported in the passion narratives of the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17). There exist some texts in the Old Testament literature that point to the descriptions of the reports of the passion narratives of the gospel accounts (Psa. 16:10, 49:15, 73:23-28, 22:1...; Isa. 53:10-11; Dan. 12:2-3; Hos. 6:2). Therefore, this investigation will seek to establish the reliability, credibility, facticity and historicity of the reports of the gospel accounts. The Greek text will be taken from the Greek New Testament by Nestle (1904).

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Gospels: Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-17

The above mentioned four gospel accounts in the canon of the reformed tradition are arranged in the order of the Matthean account being the first one (Mounce, 1991:1). The Matthean account is first due to its structure, with the specific purpose as a gospel for the growing Church with its need to instruct the new converts in the life and teaching of Jesus (Mounce, 1991:1). The Matthean (Mtt.), Markan (Mk.) and Lukan (Luk.) accounts are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels. However, each gospel account has some unique characteristics. For instance, the Markan account attracts readers based on vivid narrative and Luke appeals to those of broad and benevolent concerns. Matthew is the gospel that over the years has shaped the life and thought of the Church (Mounce, 1991:1). Among other reasons Matthew is first because of the canonical order; that is the arrangement of the books in the New Testament that was established by tradition and authority (Marshall, 2021). In addition, Matthew is first because of the apostolic

priority, which entails the preference for the gospel account written by a direct apostle of Christ over a non-apostle (Marshall, 2021).

The Johannine (John) account is a personal testimony of an eyewitness identified as its author. The four gospel accounts have reported about the discovery of the empty tomb with empty burial linen due to the missing body of Jesus (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17). Therefore, it is important to note that the passion narratives of the four gospels emerge from a precise context and historical background. Thus, addressed in this study is the context of the resurrection. In this light, Matthew reports that the mention of the Sabbath which had ended at sundown on Saturday entails the renewal of Matthew's emphasis on the succession of days that eventually eventuates in the resurrection of Jesus as a fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies foreseeing that the resurrection event shall occur on the third day (Psa. 16:10; Dan. 12:2-3; Hos. 6:2).

Matthew 28:2 states that suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.¹ The Matthean account reports the manifestations of Jesus's majesty demonstrated in an earthquake caused by the descending angel of the Lord (cf. Exo. 19:18; Jgs. 5:5; Psa. 68:7-8), rolls back the stone in front of the tomb, sits on it, and announces that Jesus had been raised. Matthew 28:3-7 reports that ³his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him, the guards shook and became like dead men ⁵But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you.'² These words agree with Daniel 7:9 and 10:6-7 regarding the appearance of the angel-like lighting, flashing brightly (Dan. 10:6). His clothing was white like snow (Dan. 7:9) and the earthquake caused the guards to be fearful and

¹ Mtt. 28:2; ²καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ Κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

² Mtt. 28:3-7; ³ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπή, καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών.⁴ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσεισθήσαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί. ⁵ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναῖξιν Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο. ⁷καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε. ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

became like dead men. The angel rolled away the stone, described as large in Matthew 27:60, reads as follows ⁶⁰ “and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away³,” causing the earthquake. In addition, Matthew 1:20 reports that; ²⁰“but just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit’⁴; ²⁴“when Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife”⁵; Matthew 2:13: ¹³“Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him’⁶; Matthew 2:19-20: ¹⁹“When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.”⁷ The angel gives both an explanation and instructions. “From heaven” points to their divine origin, “...rolled back the stone...,” explicitly entails the exposure of an empty tomb with burial linen. “...sat on it...” indicates the completion of the divine work of the resurrection, the need for an explanation, and task for the women (to tell the news to the disciples).

Thus, Matthew 28:1-10 states that: ¹“After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning and his

³ Mtt. 27:60; ⁶⁰καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ ὃ ἐλατόμησεν ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ, καὶ προσκυλίσας λίθον μέγαν τῇ θύρᾳ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήλθεν (Nestle, 1904).

⁴ Mtt. 1:20; ²⁰ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυεὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου, τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου (Nestle, 1904).

⁵ Mtt. 1:24; ²⁴ἐγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος Κυρίου, καὶ παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

⁶ Mtt. 2:13: ¹³Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν, ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ’ ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων Ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἂν εἶπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό (Nestle, 1904).

⁷ Mtt. 2:19-20: ¹⁹Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου, ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου φαίνεται κατ’ ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ²⁰λέγων Ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ πορεύου εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ· τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου (Nestle, 1904).

clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, He has been raised from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you' ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'⁸ Matthew 28:1-10 agree with Mark 16:1-8 regarding bodily resurrection of Jesus and Mark 16:1-8 adds the presence of a young man at the tomb dressed in a white robe that told the women Jesus had been raised. Hence, the need to inform the disciples.

Mark 16:1-8 states that “ ¹When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will

⁸ Mtt. 28:1-10: ¹Ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων, ἦλθεν Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον. ²καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ Κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. ³ἦν δὲ ἡ εἶδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπῆ, καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιῶν. ⁴ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί. ⁵ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναῖξιν Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο. ⁷καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε. ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν. ⁸καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ταχὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου μετὰ φόβου καὶ χαρᾶς μεγάλης ἔδραμον ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ. ⁹καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων Χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ. ¹⁰τότε λέγει αὐταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Μὴ φοβεῖσθε· ὑπάγετε ἀπαγγεῖλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου ἵνα ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, κάκεῖ με ὄψονται (Nestle, 1904).

see him, just as he told you.’ ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”⁹

Thus, Mark’s report includes similar details as the Matthean account except for a few such as “..., they bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him,” and “..., the young man”. In addition to Matthew 28:1-2 as discussed [on page 3](#) , Mark 16:1-2 as [stated on page 3](#) clearly mentions the sole purpose of the visit of the women to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Traditionally, no one would think of giving a victim of crucifixion the dignity of an anointing because such a practice was only performed to those who died without shame and was usually performed with olive oil (Gundry, 2010:219).

Furthermore, only kings and other dignitaries got their corpses anointed with spices (2 Chr. 16:14). Therefore, the three women’s buying such spices is an indication of the removal of the disgrace associated with Jesus’s crucifixion to restore his Messianic dignity (Gundry, 2010:219). Mark 16:5-7 states that ⁵“As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.’¹⁰ This agrees with the explanation and instructions of the angel in Matthew 28:5-7: ⁵“but the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly

⁹ Mk 16:1-8: ¹Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμη ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν. ²καὶ λίαν πρῶτῃ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμα, ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου. ³καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἑαυτάς· Τίς ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου; ⁴καὶ ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν ὅτι ἀνακεκύλισται ὁ λίθος· ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα. ⁵καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιαῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν. ⁶ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦς ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρητὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ⁷ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι Προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν. ⁸καὶ ἐξελθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις· καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰ Mk. 16:5-7; ⁵καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιαῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν. ⁶ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦς ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρητὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ⁷ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι Προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you.'¹¹ It is important here to observe that other ancient literature, both Jewish and Christian, uses "young man" for "an angel" (Gundry, 2010:219). Mark 16:2 calls the angel "young man" to recall the young man mentioned in Mark 14:51-52: "⁵¹A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵²but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked" ¹².

Luke 24:1-10: "¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered his words ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles."¹³ This passage agrees with the Matthean and Markan passion narratives and add the two men in cloths that gleamed like lightning stood beside the women as they wondered about the whereabouts of the corpse of Jesus due to the discovery of the empty tomb.

¹¹ Mtt. 28:5-7., ⁵ἀποκριθεις δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναῖξιν Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο. ⁷καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε. ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

¹² Mk. 14:51-52: ⁵¹Καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνηκολούθει αὐτῷ περιβεβλημένος σινδόνα ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, καὶ κρατοῦσιν αὐτόν· ⁵²ὁ δὲ καταλιπὼν τὴν σινδόνα γυμνὸς ἔφυγεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹³ Luk. 24:1-10; ¹τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ὄρθρου βαθέως ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμα ἦλθον φέρουσαι ἃ ἠτοίμασαν ἀρώματα. ²εὔρον δὲ τὸν λίθον ἀποκεκλισμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, ³εἰσελθοῦσαι δὲ οὐχ εὔρον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. ⁴καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτουσίῃ· ⁵ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν, εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν; ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. μνησθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἐτι ὧν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, ⁷λέγων τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι. ⁸καὶ ἐμνήσθησαν τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ, ⁹καὶ ὑποστρέψασαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήγγειλαν ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἑνδεκα καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς λοιποῖς. ¹⁰ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννα καὶ Μαρία ἡ Ἰακώβου· καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς ἔλεγον πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ταῦτα (Nestle, 1904).

Thus, in this instance the absence of the corpse prepares for a later demonstration of the physicality of Jesus's resurrection (Gundry, 2010:342). Hence the two men interpreted the resurrection in the light of the fulfilment of Jesus's self-prophecies as indicated in Luke 9:22 saying: "²²The Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised"¹⁴: "⁴⁴Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands"¹⁵ 17:24-25 : "²⁴for as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵But first he must endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation."¹⁶ 18:31-32: "³¹then he took the twelve aside and said to them, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³²For he will be handed over to the gentiles, and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon.'¹⁷

Like the Synoptic accounts, John 20:1-12 states that "¹early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the

¹⁴ Luk. 9:22; ²²εἰπὼν ὅτι Δεῖ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵ Luk. 9:44: ⁴⁴Θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους· ὁ γὰρ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁶ Luk. 17:24-25; ²⁴ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπὴ ἀστράπτουσα ἐκ τῆς ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰς τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν λάμπει, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ. ²⁵πρῶτον δὲ δεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷ Luk. 18:31-3: ³¹Παραλαβὼν δὲ τοὺς δώδεκα εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Ἴδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ τελεσθήσεται πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν τῷ Υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· ³²παραδοθήσεται γὰρ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ ἐμπαιχθήσεται καὶ ὕβρισθήσεται καὶ ἐμπυσθήσεται (Nestle, 1904).

dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.” ¹⁸ In the reported resurrection narrative there is an addition of that two angels informed the women that Jesus was raised from the dead (Joh. 20:11-12). The linen clothes lying there are clear evidence that Jesus’s body had not been taken by grave robbers or by his disciples or by his enemies who would have not taken the time to remove these clothes (Joh. 19:40: “⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.”¹⁹). The position of the clothes suggests that Jesus unwrapped these clothes from his body when he awakened from death and left them behind (Joh. 20:6). The reference to the face cloth being folded up in one place suggests that Jesus himself had folded it neatly (Joh. 20:6-7). The presence of the two male disciples, namely, Peter and John when the tomb and burial linen were discovered empty was equivalent to evidence acceptable under Jewish law (Deut. 17:6). Thus, the legal requirement of at least two witnesses had been met (Joh. 8:17: “¹⁷In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid.”²⁰). The apostle John was an eyewitness.

¹⁸ Joh. 20:1-12; ¹Τῆ δὲ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρῶτῃ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἡρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. ²τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἴδραν τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ³Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς, καὶ ἦρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. ⁴ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ⁵καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. ⁶ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, ⁷καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον. ⁸τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν· ⁹οὐδὲπω γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. ¹⁰ἀπῆλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί.

¹¹Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ¹²καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῆ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹ Joh. 19:40; ⁴⁰ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν (Nestle, 1904).

²⁰ Joh. 8:17; ¹⁷καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται ὅτι δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν (Nestle, 1904).

1.2.2 Views of the scholars

1.2.2.1 Views against bodily resurrection

In this study, it is accepted, based on the passion narratives of the Gospels, that some form of resurrection took place as stated in the passion narratives of the Synoptics and the Johannine accounts as discussed above respectively. However, the question remains whether the reported resurrection was bodily or spiritual. Thus, Craig (2006) defines bodily resurrection as the physical raising of the body from the dead while Carrier (2006) states that spiritual resurrection entails a rise from the dead with a new, and immaterial body. The stated definitions of bodily and spiritual resurrection will be used in this study respectively. According to Wayne (2017), Jesus did not come from the tomb in a physical form because he was dead. The resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter and accepting the bodily resurrection of Jesus is a violation of natural law (Wayne, 2017).

Borg (2011) agree with the opinion of Wayne (2017), Borg (2011) argues against the bodily resurrection of Jesus because of the common meaning of terminologies “bodily” in modern English entails fleshly, molecular, protoplasmic, and corpuscular existence. However, the risen Jesus is not in this sense a physical or bodily reality, but rather a spiritual being as described in the New Testament (Borg, 2011). For instance, the risen Jesus appeared in the locked room (Joh. 20), travelled with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luk. 24), appeared to Stephen in his dying moments (Acts 7), appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), and to the author of Revelation (Rev.) on an island off the coast of Turkey in the late 90s of the first century (Rev. 1), among others. The stated texts do not indicate Jesus being restored to his previous life as a physical being (Borg, 2011).

Ludemann (1994:161-175) adds that the historicity of the physical resurrection of Jesus is a nonissue. A decaying corpse which is already cold and without blood in its brain cannot be made alive again. The women and Peter, among others were victims of the self-deception based on hallucinations. Peter’s experience of Jesus’s appearance was a re-acceptance by the one whom he had repudiated. The claimed encounters of the risen Jesus in the gospel accounts as discussed earlier were based on the process of grieving which facilitates the sensing, hearing, and seeing of the deceased’s loved ones.

The sounds can be as vague as creaking, seeing as a shadow, or even as precise as a smiling figure who can be touched.

Furthermore, the experiences of the disciples regarding the risen Jesus are reported in the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17) and that the relationship between the disciples and Jesus was coloured by a sense of profound ambivalence. Hence, violent, unexpected and sudden death of Jesus was a blow to the disciples. The resurrection was not the transformation of the corpse, but rather metaphoric and happened within the context of the individuals and was later interpreted as an occurrence to the many (Ludemann, 1994:161-175). Crossan (1994:126-127) agrees with the views of Ludemann (1994:161-175) and submits that the reported resurrection of Jesus did not involve the corpse; instead bodily resurrection is metaphoric.

In agreement with the above views, Craffert (2002:89-107) argues that human brains do not need external stimuli to create physical or material visionary bodies. The disciples of Jesus identified and experienced him in a bodily form such as ate, spoke, and walked with him does not favour any physical and material body (Craffert, 2002:89-107). The disciples experienced an Altered State of Consciousness (ASC) during the appearance of the risen Jesus. Culturally, visions and dreams were normal events that were regarded as real. Thus, when the disciples experienced Jesus appearing to them in a vision, such was judged as a subjective ontological appearance of the physical Jesus reported in the gospel accounts (Craffert, 2002:89-107). It was real culturally but it was incapable of being captured, for instance, by a video camera due to its lack of an objective ontological appearance (Craffert, 2002:89-107). Hence, Craffert (2002:89-107) maintains that Jesus experienced a spiritual resurrection.

In addition to the views of Craffert (2002:89-107), Casey (2010:490) contends that the resurrection of Jesus was spiritual and not a physical experience. All this means that the closest followers of Jesus during the historic ministry were much more likely to have visions of him after his death than other people. The visionary experiences were interpreted as an appearance of the risen Jesus (Casey, 2010:490). Casey (2010:490) maintains that the stories of Jesus's resurrection appearances reported in the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-9; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17) fall within the range of the Second Temple Judaism beliefs characterised by visionary experiences that were

traditionally, socially, culturally, and religiously interpreted as real (Casey, 2010:490). Eisenberg (2016:141) adds that the risen Jesus was just a composite of mythical figures and not a real person. After all, belief in the physical resurrection of the buried body and appearances evolved later.

In this discussion about whether the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily or spiritual event, Carrier (2006) concurs with the above views and argues that the resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter, a personal experience, and not a physical event. The evidence strongly suggests that there may have been no early tradition of appearances in the flesh. Hence, appealing to the discovery of an empty tomb does not guarantee bodily resurrection because there were grave robbers (Carrier, 2006). There is reliable evidence that dozens of mummies are missing from tombs looted thousands of years ago due to theft because the corpses were used by sorcerers, especially parts like the skull, on the black market and the skull of a sorcerer or holy man were even more valuable. Therefore, the empty tomb discovered on the third day may be associated with planned theft (Carrier, 2006).

1.2.2.2 Views in favour of bodily resurrection

In contrast to the above views on spiritual resurrection, Licona (2010:583) notes the claim that God raised Jesus from the dead is incapable of verification because it must have been supernatural. However, the incapability of the stated verification does not imply the event did not occur or that it was a subjective ontological appearance. Therefore, the resurrection hypothesis is a supernatural event in which Jesus appeared to several, individuals, groups and friends in his body as a normal person people could see and touch (Licona, 2010:583).

Like Licona (2019:583), Dunn (2019:2) supports the resurrection, honourable burial, the empty tomb and series of the post-mortem appearances of Jesus to friends and foes alike. Dunn (2019:2) places emphasis on the belief of the disciples in bodily resurrection and also the testimony of the apostle Paul (Dunn, 2019:2). The testimony of Paul is described in Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:3-8: “³for I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me”²¹ in which the sequential list of resurrection appearances is mentioned (Dunn, 2019:11). Wright (2003:10) adds that Jesus was raised from the dead and the event involved the revivification and transformation of the corpse.

In support of the views in favour of bodily resurrection, Allison (2005:311) submits that the disciple’s experiences of the risen Jesus were physical: Jesus appeared before their eyes after being raised bodily from the dead. Hence, the tomb was discovered empty. The gospel accounts of the historical vacancy of the empty tomb favours bodily resurrection (Allison, 2005:342-348). Ignatius untiringly noted that the New Testament was the fulfilment of the Old Testament and insisted upon the reality of the human nature of Jesus. Ignatius argues that the passion of Jesus, his death and resurrection were a vital guarantee of “life everlasting” in the risen Christ (Bieler, 2024).

Ignatius wrote to the Trallians Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Jesus was raised from the dead in response to Jesus’s prophecies, a demonstration of an assurance for all people that those who believe in Jesus will be raised up after death through him (Kirby, 2024). Furthermore, in a letter to the Smyrneans, Ignatius argues that after the resurrection Jesus appeared in the flesh to Peter and other disciples and told them to touch his body as explicit demonstration of his physical appearance. Ignatius maintains that Jesus ate and drank with the disciples after the resurrection (Richardson, 2023). Ignatius was arrested by the Roman authorities based on the proclamation of Jesus’s resurrection. Instead of being executed in his home town of Antioch, Ignatius was escorted to Rome by a company of ten Roman soldiers and he stated that from Syria even unto Rome he fought with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, by which he meant a band of Roman soldiers (Richardson, 2023). In addition, during the journey to Rome Ignatius was put in chains. Tradition places the martyrdom of Ignatius in the reign of Trajan, who

²¹ 1 Cor. 15:3-8; ³παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, ⁴καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, ⁵καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ, εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα· ⁶ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν· ⁷ἔπειτα ὤφθη Ἰακώβῳ, εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν· ⁸ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερ εἰ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κάμοι (Nestle, 1904).

was Emperor of Rome from 98 to 117 AD. Ignatius's remains were carried back to Antioch by his companions after his martyrdom-he sacrificed his life for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus (Richardson, 2023). Voorst (2000) argues that there exists reliable evidence for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the non-biblical sources other than the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Lk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17). For instance, the Jewish and Roman historians, namely, Josephus and Cornelius, among others (Voorst, 2000). Voorst (2000) concludes that the resurrection of Jesus was historical.

A survey of critical scholarship to the resurrection of Jesus suggests reliable historical evidence that early Christians experienced real encounters of the appearances of the risen Jesus (Habermas and Licona, 2014). Furthermore, all the reports of the gospel accounts present Jesus as risen from the dead (Habermas and Licona, 2014). Among others, the transformation of Paul is well documented, reported by Paul himself, as well as Luke, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, and Origen that Paul converted from being a staunch opponent of Christianity to one of its greatest proponents (Habermas and Licona, 2014). In addition, Paul established a lot of Churches, which suggests the significance and physicality of his encounter with the risen Lord (Habermas and Licona, 2014). Similarly, after the death and burial of Jesus, the conviction of the disciples were based on the reported encounters with the risen Jesus (Habermas and Licona, 2022). Lennox (2014:2-3) argues that it is incorrect to conclude that the laws of nature make it impossible for human beings to believe in the supernatural intervention of God in the history of humanity. Craig (2006) contends that Jesus experienced bodily resurrection because there is reliable historical evidence that a physical body did disappear from the tomb. If the resurrection was spiritual, what happened to the body and its remains?

In addition, Wright (2003:10), Foulkes (2001:260), Stott (2006:38, 85), Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:140), Köstenberger (2009:257-258), Cabal (2014:122) and Siniscalchi (2011:727) all agree with the views of both Lennox (2014:2-3), and Craig (2006). The stated scholars maintains that the post-mortem appearances of the risen Jesus to his followers and others were meant to convince them that Jesus was alive again. Mary Magdalene was the first eyewitness of a post-mortem appearance, testifying that she

had an encounter with Jesus (Joh. 20:16: “¹⁶Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ [which means Teacher]).” ²²

1.3 Problem Statement

The debate of the stated scholars about the nature of the resurrection of Jesus demands further investigation into the two opposing arguments, namely, bodily or spiritual resurrection arising from the gospel accounts. Therefore, the problem statement is whether the resurrection of Jesus was bodily or spiritual.

1.4 Preliminary literature review

The topic of the resurrection of Jesus has been and remains a contentious issue among scholars since the first century. As mentioned earlier, it is of great importance to note that in the foregoing investigations of this study, all scholars accept that some form of resurrection occurred as reported in the gospel accounts. However, the debate centres on whether the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily or spiritual event, subjective or objective. Therefore, the two opposing viewpoints will be examined. For instance, Wayne (2017), Ludemann (1994:161-175), Eisenberg (2016:141), and Carrier (2006), among others argue against the bodily resurrection of Jesus by explicitly stating that it was simply a spiritual event and not something which took place in the public arena of history. Ludemann (1994:161:175) maintains that the historicity of the physical resurrection of Jesus is a nonissue due to a decaying corpse which is already cold and without blood in its brain.

Other scholars include Köstenberger (2009:257-258), Cabal (2014:122), Siniscalchi (2011:727), Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:140) who states that history discloses Jesus was raised from the dead, appeared to Mary Magdalene and she became the first eyewitness to the bodily resurrection. Craig (2006) observes that the theories of spiritual resurrection had failed to produce evidence regarding what had happened to the body which had disappeared from the tomb. It is rather cardinal to note that scholars, for or against the bodily resurrection, do not deny the resurrection event. The debate is

²² Joh. 20:16; ¹⁶λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς Μαριάμ. στραφεῖσα ἐκείνη λέγει αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί· Ῥαββουνεὶ (ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε) (Nestle, 1904).

centred on whether resurrection was spiritual or physical. Thus, the question remains: What was the form of the resurrection of Jesus?

Therefore, the arguments presented both for and against bodily resurrection facilitate the necessity for further investigations into the nature of the risen Jesus. Hence, the exegesis of the gospel accounts taken as primary sources of investigations remain of paramount importance in this study. For instance, Craig (2006) argues that the resurrection accounts are not presented in metaphoric language but as historical fact. Therefore, the credibility, facticity, and historicity of the reports of the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17) about the resurrection of Jesus will be investigated within the context of the resurrection.

1.5 Possible gaps

With reference to the views of the scholars as discussed above, I have observed some gaps in the arguments against the bodily resurrection as discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.5.1 Spiritual resurrection

Carrier (2006) argues that the resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter, personal experience, and not a physical event. The evidence strongly suggests that there may have been no early tradition of appearances in the flesh. Hence, appealing to the missing body and an empty tomb does not guarantee bodily resurrection because there were grave robbers (Carrier, 2006). The views of Carrier (2006) do not present the historical evidence about the whereabouts of the corpse of Jesus or its remains. However, Carrier (2006) is certain that Jesus had died and was buried. An investigation, regarding the death and burial of Jesus is therefore inevitable in the study to create a point of departure.

1.5.2 The stolen body theory

According to Carrier's theory (Carrier, 2006) maintains that the resurrection was spiritual. The discovery of an empty tomb does not guarantee bodily resurrection because there were grave robbers. My observation here is that besides possible grave robbers, this theory implicates that the disciples stole the body of Jesus (Carrier, 2006). In order to

prevent possible grave robbery or missing of the body, the reports of the Gospels indicates that on the second day after the burial, the tomb was secured by putting a seal on the stone at the entrance and a guard of soldiers (Mtt. 27:62-66) stated that, “⁶²the next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, ‘Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴Therefore, command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception would be worse than the first,’ ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.’ ⁶⁶So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.”²³

In addition, in the quest for their security, most of the male disciples had ran away during the trials of Jesus performed by both the Sanhedrin and the Roman authorities as reported in John 18:17-27: “¹⁷the woman said to Peter, ‘You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police made a charcoal fire because it was cold and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. ¹⁹Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, ‘I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.’ ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, ‘Is that how you answer the high priest?’ ²³Jesus answered, ‘If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?’ ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, ‘You are not also one of his disciples, are you?’ He denied it and said, ‘I am not.’ ²⁶One of the slaves

²³ Mtt. 27:62-66; ⁶²Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον, ἣτις ἐστὶν μετὰ τὴν Παρασκευὴν, συνήχθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πρὸς Πειλᾶτον ⁶³λέγοντες Κύριε, ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἐπὶ ζῶν Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι. ⁶⁴κέλευσον οὖν ἀσφαλισθῆναι τὸν τάφον ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας, μὴ ποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ κλέψωσιν αὐτὸν καὶ εἴπωσιν τῷ λαῷ Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χεῖρων τῆς πρώτης. ⁶⁵ἔφη αὐτοῖς ὁ Πειλᾶτος Ἔχετε κουστῶδιον· ὑπάγετε ἀσφαλίσασθε ὡς οἴδατε. ⁶⁶οἱ δὲ πορευθέντες ἠσφαλίσαντο τὸν τάφον σφραγίσαντες τὸν λίθον μετὰ τῆς κουστῶδιος. (Nestle, 1904).

of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?”... ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.²⁴

Further, it was reported that the tomb where the body of Jesus was lying was under maximum security applied by the Roman soldiers as stated earlier in Matthew 27:62-66 discussed [on page 16](#). The soldiers could not make or allow any mistake in their operations which could cost their lives. Hence, the questions: Why should the disciples highly conscious of their security and safety, risk their lives by stealing the body of Jesus from a tomb that was highly secured; even stand boldly and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus and eventually give up their lives as martyrs? How could theft and martyrdom be harmonised in the context of the subject of the resurrection? Hence, the necessity to investigate the relationship between the empty tomb and the missing body. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that the convictions of the apostles were not based on secondhand testimony or faith only, but from the belief that they had seen the resurrected Christ with their eyes, experienced both personal and collective encounters. Thus, the apostle’s conviction was based on historical evidence. McDowell (2017) argues that even though the apostles were crucified, stoned, stabbed, dragged, skinned, and burned, every apostle of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection until his dying breath, refusing to recant under pressure from the authorities. This indicates the apostle’s willingness to die for their convictions (McDowell, 2017).

1.5.3 Post-resurrection appearances are immaterial encounters

The spiritual resurrection theory (Carrier, 2006) entails that the post-resurrection appearances were immaterial encounters because Jesus was not raised to life in a real physical form. My observation of the spiritual resurrection theory is that it does not account for a historical explanation of the discovery of the empty tomb but argues against the post-resurrection appearances. Thus, I note that the arguments that the post-resurrection appearances were immaterial encounters should be justified concerning the empty tomb due to a missing body. Why was the tomb empty? If it was a

²⁴ Joh. 18:25-27: ²⁵Ἦν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος ἐστῶς καὶ θερμαινόμενος. εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ Μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶ; ἠρνήσατο ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν Οὐκ εἰμί. ²⁶λέγει εἷς ἐκ τῶν δούλων τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, συγγενῆς ὧν οὗ ἀπέκοψεν Πέτρος τὸ ὠτίον Οὐκ ἐγώ σε εἶδον ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μετ’ αὐτοῦ; ²⁷πάλιν οὖν ἠρνήσατο Πέτρος, καὶ εὐθέως ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν (Nestle, 1904).

spiritual resurrection, what had happened to the physical body that was placed inside the tomb? Why was the body missing? Why was burial linen lying inside the empty tomb? The proponents of the spiritual resurrection theory of the ancient times never presented any possible historical explanation in light of the whereabouts of the body of Jesus after the discovery of the empty tomb.

I further observe that even current research and the body of literature today do not provide historical evidence regarding the body of Jesus after the tomb was discovered empty with the burial linen. The stated observation suggests the value of investigating the reported “raise from the dead” concerning the post-resurrection appearances. Thus, the mentioned gaps indicates the uniqueness of this research and suggests the necessity of undertaking the investigation of the resurrection of Jesus to present reliable historical evidence in favour of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, this biblical research in the field of New Testament study is approached from an exegetical perspective. I will attempt to fill the stated gaps by providing reliable historical evidence from the gospel accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17) as the primary sources under investigation, other relevant Old Testament texts and extra-sources, namely, non-biblical and extra-biblical sources that indicate the tomb was discovered empty with burial linen and will substantiate other findings. The sources from the medical perspective, according to modern research, will support the historical fact that Jesus died at the cross and was buried after that.

The passion narratives of the gospels will be investigated in the light of the reports of the discovery of the empty tomb Matthew 28:9-10: ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’²⁵ Mark 16:9 : ⁹[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.²⁶; Luke 24:2-6 ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they

²⁵ Mtt. 28:9-10; ⁹καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων Χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ. ¹⁰τότε λέγει αὐταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Μὴ φοβεῖσθε· ὑπάγετε ἀπαγγείλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου ἵνα ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, κάκεῖ με ὄψονται (Nestle, 1904).

²⁶ Mk. 16:9; ⁹Ἀναστὰς δὲ πρῶτῃ σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρῶτον Μαρίας τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, παρ’ ἧς ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια (Nestle, 1904).

did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee.’²⁷ ; John 20:1-2: “¹early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.’) ²⁸.

The uniqueness of this study is that the investigations about the historical evidence of the bodily resurrection of Jesus will demonstrate that the natural law and supernatural events should recognise and appreciate each other’s existence, characteristics and possible influence on human life. The interventions of the supernatural are present in human life and should not be ignored because their manifestations are observable.

1.6 Research question

Therefore, the central research question is: What is the exegetical historical evidence in favour of the bodily resurrection of Jesus rather than spiritual resurrection? Thus, out of the research question arise the following specific research sub-questions:

- 1.6.1 What are the two opposing views regarding the resurrection of Jesus?
- 1.6.2. What is the value of the exegetical historical evidence in favour of the death and burial of Jesus?
- 1.6.3. Who were the eyewitnesses to the death and burial of Jesus?
- 1.6.4. What is the relationship between the empty tomb and the missing corpse of Jesus?
- 1.6.5. What is the exegetical historical evidence of Jesus rising from the dead?

²⁷ Luk. 24:2-6; ²εὔρον δὲ τὸν λίθον ἀποκεκυλισμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, ³εἰσελθοῦσαι δὲ οὐχ εὔρον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. ⁴καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ. ⁵ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν, εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτὰς τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν; ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἔτι ὡν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ (Nestle, 1904).

²⁸ Joh. 20:1-2; ¹Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρῶτὴ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἠρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. ²τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἦραν τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν (Nestle, 1904).

1.7 Aim and objectives

1.7.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to present reliable, exegetical historical evidence of the discovery of the empty tomb in favour of the bodily resurrection of Jesus based on the passion narratives of the Gospels rather than a spiritual resurrection.

1.7.2 Objectives

1.7.1.1. To discuss the two opposing views about the resurrection of Jesus.

1.7.1.2. To discuss the value of the exegetical historical evidence in favour of the death and burial of Jesus.

1.7.1.3. To describe the eyewitnesses and discuss their views of the death and burial of Jesus.

1.7.1.4. To discuss the relationship between the empty tomb and the missing corpse of Jesus.

1.7.1.5. To discuss the exegetical historical evidence of Jesus rising from the dead.

1.8 Central theoretical argument

The main argument in this study is that there is reliable exegetical and historical evidence that the tomb was discovered empty due to the bodily resurrection of Jesus as reported in the passion narratives of the Synoptic and the Johannine accounts.

1.9 Methodology

The historical-critical method will be used in this New Testament study about the resurrection of Jesus. The historical-critical method is a term often used for the whole body of methodologies related to the discipline of biblical criticism (Soulen & Soulen, 2011:97). The term historical-critical method refers to that underlying principle of historical reasoning which came to full development in the nineteenth century that reality is uniform and universal, that it is accessible to human reason and investigation, that all events historical and natural occurring within it are in principle comparable by analogy, and that man's contemporary experience of reality can provide the objective criteria by which what could or could not have happened in the past is to be determined (Soulen &

Soulen, 2011:97-108). Thus, in the nineteenth century, the advocates of the historical-critical method under the aegis of objectivity strenuously tried to avoid any trace of dogma or theological bias (Soulen & Soulen, 2011:98). Furthermore, the historical-critical method has its origins in the epistemological revolution of the Enlightenment that gave birth to scientific study. Thus, the exhilarating freedom brought by the beginnings of the scientific method on hard data and reasoning meant an unrestrained questioning of authority and dogma (Black & Dockery, 1991:83). Hence, the removal of the mystery from nature, thus creating a possible non-ecclesiastical and undogmatic understanding of the Bible (Black & Dockery, 1991:83).

The scientific method had made its impressive advances precisely on the basis of naturalism. The historical-critical method was considered as a naturalistic approach there was no room for the supernatural and conclusions regarding biblical theology were negative (Black & Dockery, 1991:83). However, I am of the view that despite its destructive past as stated above, the historical-critical method remains important in this study because the study demands the historical knowledge and understanding of the ancient text of the gospel accounts. Thus, I argue the quandary is neither to use the historical-critical method as classically conceived nor to abandon it but rather to modify it so that it fits in the study. This modification entails the inclusion of the supernatural occurrences, subject it to historical investigation, and read the biblical text without an anti-supernatural presupposition.

Among other observations, the major one I have noted with the use of the historical-critical method is the exclusion of the possibility of the supernatural as such is unjustifiable. I agree with the views of Black & Dockery (1991:87) who argue that there is no way to know that causation from outside the system we ordinarily experience cannot occur. Therefore, inclusion of the supernatural events does not entail acceptance without critical prejudice. Every historical event is subject to historical investigations, including eyewitnesses to the claim with reliable evidence. For instance, in this study the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, the use of the historical-critical method in this study entails the openness to the possibility of supernatural occurrences in the historical process. The mentioned modification qualifies the historical-critical method as an effective, efficient, and appropriate tool for the study because the gospel accounts are to be investigated and established as historical documents.

The historical-critical approach as a constellation of methods is the approach of choice for biblical scholarship of the twentieth century (Gorman, 2006:15). Therefore, the historical-critical method, specifically source criticism, becomes an essential tool in determining the reliability, facticity, and credibility of the reports of the gospel accounts. The passion narratives of the gospel accounts are taken as the primary source of reliable evidence. The extra-biblical and non-biblical sources will be examined. As biblical research and study in the field of the New Testament, the passion narratives of the Synoptics, and the Johannine account are at the centre of the investigation within the subject and context of the resurrection. Therefore, the historical-critical method is of paramount importance in investigating the credibility, facticity, and historicity of the text, harmonising the narrative reports, and reconciling the perceived disparities in the parallel biblical accounts.

The exegetical framework of the passion narratives of the Synoptic and Johannine accounts (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12 ; Joh. 20:1-17) serve as the basis and point of departure for the investigations respectively. In addition, the exegesis of the gospel accounts will also provide a platform on which the passion narratives will be examined to establish whether they are metaphoric, consistent, or historical. For instance, Carrier (2006), among others, argues that the reports of the passion narratives indicate historical inconsistency. Marshall (1992:128-130) notes that reading narrative accounts raises historical problems such as discrepancies with parallel passion narratives, non-biblical accounts, historical improbabilities, supernatural occurrences, modification by the early Church, literary genre, and insufficient evidence.

However, upon critical examination using appropriate methods of interpretation of the text such as the historical-critical method, the perceived exegetical problems identified as disparities and historical inconsistency in biblical parallel reports are easily understood with clarification and present no problem for the interpreter's open thoughts to the possibility that there exists reliable evidence that points to bodily resurrection being a historical occurrence (Mounce, 1993:264).

The passion narratives of the gospel accounts are historical in their precise context (Krentz, 1975:1) and are subject to the protocols of historical investigations (Black & Dockery, 1991:73-74). Thus, the overall purpose of the historical-critical method in this

study is to investigate what happened in the events and describe the narratives within the context of the text and the subject of the resurrection (Marshall, 1992:126). The historical-critical method in this study will perform a precise role in ensuring that the exegetical problems are adequately addressed, in particular source criticism.

1.9.1 Source criticism

Source criticism is a method whose objective is the quest for the written sources used in the text (Gorman, 2006:15). Furthermore, the task of source criticism is to uncover the various sources available for compelling the text. It exposes the manuscript/s the writer/s used to construct a finished product which in this case are the Gospel texts (Gorman, 2006:200). In addition, source criticism is also referred to as a method that attempts to identify traditions behind the gospel accounts (Black & Dockery, 1991:139). The role of source criticism in this study is to investigate the sources, and the reliability, credibility, and facticity of the reports of the narratives (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-8; Luk. 24:1-10; Joh. 20:1-10). The stated method will question the origin and development of the sources used, authorship, date, place of writing, audience addressed, and precise context (Carson & Moo, 2005:85-86). Its findings and conclusion will help establish the credibility of the narratives. Source criticism will foster a reconciliation of the perceived exegetical and historical problems, also referred to as the Synoptic problem, within the context of the passion narratives of the gospel accounts. The method recognises with appreciation the available sources leading to the diverse gospel accounts (Carson & Moo, 2005:85-86). Hence, the content of each report of the passion narratives depends on its source.

1.10 Ethical consideration

In this research project, it is conceded that the topic of the resurrection of Jesus may express morally and religiously sensitive viewpoints. Therefore, during and after this research, the diverse views regarding death and resurrection are respected. Thus, the views of other cultures, religions, and theological traditions will be appreciated in their precise context. The research will seek to learn from other moral and theological positions on the topic of the resurrection, however will remain responsible for

expressing its own stance in a way that will not cause harm to other views. Thus, the ethical risk is minimal.

CHAPTER 2 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the arguments of scholars regarding the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth in light of the two opposing views, namely, bodily or spiritual resurrection. Wayne (2017), Carrier (2006), and Ludemann (1994:161-175), among others have argued against the bodily resurrection of Jesus that it is against natural law. Instead, Jesus of Nazareth experienced a spiritual resurrection.

Contrary to the above, Lennox (2014:2-3), Craig (2006), and Wright (2003:10), among others, have argued that Jesus of Nazareth experienced a bodily and not a spiritual resurrection. Thus, this chapter will discuss the various views of scholars regarding the historicity of the resurrection. After that possible gaps in the argumentation of scholars as earlier identified in [chapter one](#) will facilitate further investigations into the historical evidence in favour of Jesus's bodily resurrection. Thus, as earlier stated, the gospel accounts are taken as primary sources. In addition, the detailed exegetical framework will create a point of departure.

2.1. Exegetical framework of the passion narratives

Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-17

2.1.1 Matthew

2.1.1.1. Historical background: Authorship, date, place of writing, and audience

The Gospel according to Matthew has traditionally been assigned to Matthew the apostle of Jesus Christ. In the listing of the apostles, only in the first Gospel is Matthew identified as “the tax collector” (Mtt. 10:3: “³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus” ²⁹ (cf. Mk. 3:18: “¹⁸and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James

²⁹ Mtt. 10:3; ³Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος, Θωμᾶς καὶ Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης, Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καὶ Θαδδαῖος (Nestle, 1904).

son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean,”³⁰ Luk. 6:15 ‘¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot.’).³¹ In favour of the apostolic authorship of the gospel is a strong witness of the early Church fathers, namely, Origen, Irenaeus, Eusebius, and Jerome, among others (Mounce, 1991:2). Modern scholarship favours Antioch of Syria as the place in which it was written. Matthew 27:8: ‘⁸for this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day’³² and Matthew 28:15: ‘¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day’³³ suggest that a considerable period had elapsed between the events and the time when the gospel was written down. The pattern of organisation and worship suggests a rather late date for composition around 70-80 AD (Mounce, 1991:2-3).

Its structure is characterised by the extensive use of Old Testament quotations as well as many single words, phrases, and echoes of the Old Testament. Thus, the Matthean account serves as a natural link between God’s people of the old covenant and the new Israel, the Church, and was addressed to the Jewish community (Mounce, 1991:2-3).

2.1.1.1. Socio-political context

The socio-political context of the Matthean account is characterised by a community exhorted to perseverance, endurance, faithfulness, and to practice courageous faith during the midst of the Roman occupation that involved persecution (Luiz, 1985:90). The Matthean account emphasises that a Christian or a Christian community should remain steadfast in their faith, despite the socio-political injustices performed by the Romans (Luiz, 1985:90). Furthermore, the socio-political setting of the Roman occupation facilitated the destruction of the second Temple in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans. Thus, the destruction of the Temple also provides insights into the political and economic context of Matthew’s writing. Although Matthew does not risk open

³⁰ Mk. 3:18; ¹⁸καὶ Ἀνδρέαν καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Βαρθολομαῖον καὶ Μαθθαῖον καὶ Θωμᾶν καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καὶ Θαδδαῖον καὶ Σίμωνα τὸν Καναναῖον (Nestle, 1904).

³¹ Luk. 6:15; ¹⁵καὶ Μαθθαῖον καὶ Θωμᾶν, καὶ Ἰάκωβον Ἀλφαίου καὶ Σίμωνα τὸν καλούμενον Ζηλωτὴν (Nestle, 1904).

³² Mtt. 27:8; ⁸διὸ ἐκλήθη ὁ ἀγρὸς ἐκεῖνος Ἀγρὸς αἵματος ἕως τῆς σήμερον (Nestle, 1904).

³³ Mtt. 28:15; ¹⁵οἱ δὲ λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. Καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίους μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (Nestle, 1904).

denunciation of the Roman Empire, subtle criticisms of Roman rule are present throughout his gospel (Mounce, 1991:2-3). For instance, in the Matthean account political power and influence are exposed in Herod's response to the news of the birth of one child identified by the wise men from the East as the king of the Jews. Herod does not hesitate to murder children at random- an action aimed at destroying the life of the identified child, namely, Jesus (Hauerwas, 2006:28). Jesus was the Jewish Messiah in whom all the prophecies of the prophets were to be fulfilled (Mounce, 1991:2-3). Thus, according to the Jews, Jesus's Messiahship and leadership were interpreted as political liberation. Hence, the kingdom of Jesus was to facilitate the political freedom of the Jews from all oppression by the Romans (Hauerwas, 2006:28).

The coming kingdom of heaven that Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, proclaims stands in stark contrast with the existing regime (Mtt. 4:17: '17from that time Jesus began to proclaim, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.').³⁴ Thus, Jesus's status as Messiah carries political overtones, an entire tradition of apocalyptic thought stretching back to the Maccabean revolt (167-160 AD) promising a "saviour" that will liberate Israel from foreign rule and Hellenistic culture and restore her heritage. The book of the prophet Daniel in the Hebrew Bible is an excellent example of Jewish apocalypticism. Even the death of Jesus by crucifixion, a punishment typically reserved for political rebellion, suggests the threat he presents to the Roman authorities (Mounce, 1991:2-3).

Therefore, Matthew 28:1-10 as discussed [in chapter one](#) reports the resurrection of Jesus with reference to the Jewish apocalypticism in which Old Testament prophecies point to the bodily rise of Jesus from the dead.

Mary Magdalene and Mary had gone to the tomb to renew the vigil they had started late Good Friday afternoon (Mtt. 27:61: '61Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.')³⁵ The mention of the Sabbath which had ended at sundown on Saturday entails the renewal of Matthew's emphasis on the succession of days that eventually eventuates in the resurrection of Jesus as a fulfilment of the Old Testament

³⁴ Mtt. 4:17; ¹⁷Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν Μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (Nestle, 1904).

³⁵ Mtt. 27:61; ⁶¹Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ Μαριάμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία, καθήμεναι ἀπέναντι τοῦ τάφου (Nestle, 1904).

prophecies that discloses that the resurrection event shall occur on the third day (Psa. 16:10; Dan. 12:2-3; Hos. 6:2).

As discussed earlier [in chapter one](#) Matthew 28:3-7 agrees with Daniel 7:9,10:6-7 regarding the appearance of the angel-like lighting, flashing brightly (Dan. 10:6), his clothing was white like snow (Dan. 7:9); and the earthquake that caused the guards to be fearful and became like dead men. Thus, in an ironic reversal, Jesus has sprung back to life while the guards, shaken like the earth itself, dropped to the ground as if dead. It is of paramount importance to note that Matthew's report agrees with the Jewish apocalypticism, for instance, the several allusions to Daniel, a book heavy with amazing revelation, suit the revelation of Jesus's resurrection (Gundry, 2010:133-134).

Hence, the angel tells the women not to fear (Mtt. 28:5: ⁵But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.'³⁶). The emphatic pronoun 'you' distinguishes them from the guards. The guards had a reason to fear while the women did not; the angel knew they were seeking for the body of Jesus (Mtt. 28:1), not as the guards whose responsibility was to secure the tomb to keep away the disciples, grave robbers, and anything that may result in the removal of the body from the tomb (Mtt. 27:62-66).

It is important to note that chapter 28 opens with a statement that the women came "to view the tomb." Thus, the angel's addition that they are seeking Jesus therefore implies that their vigil has a special purpose of awaiting and exposing them to his resurrection, as a result of which they would physically see him (Hauerwas, 2006:246-247). But he's already on his way to Galilee as reported in Matthew 28:7: 'Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you.'³⁷ Therefore, Pilate's scepticism had proved prescient demonstrated in the manner in which the tomb was secured as reported in Matthew 27:65: ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.'³⁸ for the crucified and buried Jesus had

³⁶ Mtt. 28:5; ⁵ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναῖξιν Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε (Nestle, 1904).

³⁷ Mtt. 28:7; ⁷καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε. ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

³⁸ Mtt. 27:65; ⁶⁵ἔφη αὐτοῖς ὁ Πειλᾶτος Ἔχετε κουστωδῖαν· ὑπάγετε ἀσφαλίσασθε ὡς οἴδατε (Nestle, 1904).

experienced bodily resurrection, despite the Jewish authorities having called him a 'deceiver' (Mtt. 27:63: and said, 'Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'³⁹). The resurrection event took place as Jesus had stated before its occurrence (Mtt. 16:21: '²¹from that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.').⁴⁰ ; Matthew 17:22-23: '²²as they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, ²³and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they were greatly distressed.'⁴¹; Matthew 20:18-19: '¹⁸see, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; ¹⁹then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised.').⁴²

Matthew 28:8-10 reports that the women "hurried away" indicates that the women wasted no time to obey the angel's instructions. Given the news of Jesus's resurrection, Matthew describes the joy as great and on their way to the disciples, suddenly Jesus meets, greets, and instructs the women to inform the disciples about the bodily resurrection event and Galilee as the place of meeting. In response to the encounter with Jesus, the mentioned women of Israel, formed by Israel's commandment to worship God only, worshipped Jesus the crucified, who died and yet was resurrected (Hauerwas, 2006:246-247).

³⁹ Mtt. 27:63; ⁶³λέγοντες Κύριε, ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁰ Mtt. 16:21; ²¹ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος εἶπεν Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος (Nestle, 1904).

⁴¹ Mtt. 17:22-23: ²²Συστρεφόμενων δὲ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Μέλλει ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, ²³καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθήσεται. καὶ ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα., 20:18-19: ¹⁸Ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ γραμματεῦσιν, καὶ κατακρυνοῦσιν αὐτὸν εἰς θάνατον, ¹⁹καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι καὶ μαστιγῶσαι καὶ σταυρῶσαι, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθήσεται (Nestle, 1904).

⁴² Mtt. 20:18-19: ¹⁸Ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ γραμματεῦσιν, καὶ κατακρυνοῦσιν αὐτὸν εἰς θάνατον, ¹⁹καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι καὶ μαστιγῶσαι καὶ σταυρῶσαι, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθήσεται (Nestle, 1904).

2.1.2 Mark

2.1.2.1 Historical background: Authorship, date, place of writing, and audience

The Markan account is named after the character whose full names are John Mark as indicated in Acts (Acts 12:12: “¹²As soon as he realised this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying.” ⁴³; Acts 12:25: “²⁵Then after completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.” ⁴⁴; Acts 15:37: “³⁷Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark.”⁴⁵; Acts 15:39 “³⁹the disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.”⁴⁶) and was a close companion of the apostles (Peter and Paul). Mark is the title of the Gospel, but the book itself does not mention the name of the author (Moule, 1965:1). In about 320 AD, Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, wrote in Church history (in Greek) that Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor in about 130 AD states that the Markan account was a translation into Greek of the teaching which the apostle Peter had given in Rome (Moule, 1965:4). However, the book contains no internal reference to any author at all.

It is not personalised in the way the Lukan account is (Luk. 1:3: “³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.”⁴⁷), does not even insist that it’s a personal testimony of a particularly, well-known, and trusted eyewitness as the Johannine account does (Joh. 21:24: “²⁴this is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them and

⁴³ Acts 12:12; ¹²συνιδών τε ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν τῆς Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου Μάρκου, οὓς ἦσαν ἱκανοὶ συνηθροισμένοι καὶ προσευχόμενοι (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁴ Acts 12:25; ²⁵Βαρνάβας δὲ καὶ Σαῦλος ὑπέστρεψαν, ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ, πληρώσαντες τὴν διακονίαν, συνπαραλαβόντες Ἰωάννην τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Μάρκον (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁵ Acts 15:37; ³⁷Βαρνάβας δὲ ἐβούλετο συνπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μάρκον (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁶ Acts 15:39; ³⁹ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμός, ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρνάβαν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μάρκον ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁷ Luk. 1:3; ³ἔδοξε κάμοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε (Nestle, 1904).

we know that his testimony is true.”⁴⁸); nor does it claim that it’s based on a careful second-hand compilation of all available first-hand evidence as the Lukan account does (Cole, 1989:21). Mark was closely linked with at least three major apostolic figures, namely, Paul, Barnabas, and Peter, and associated with several early centres of Christian tradition, namely, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, among others (Cole, 1991:89; 24-25).

Mark, a common name in the Roman Empire, appears several times in the New Testament, but never in the Gospels. Mark is not listed as one of the apostles. Notably, Paul mentions a “fellow worker” called Mark (Philemon 24; cf. Colossians 4:10: “¹⁰Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him.”⁴⁹, Philemon 24: “²⁴and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.”⁵⁰), 2 Timothy 4:11: “¹¹only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.”⁵¹, both regarded as deutero-Pauline), Acts 12:12: refers to a Mark as the son of Mary of Jerusalem and a companion of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25; 15:37; 39). Furthermore, the late and pseudonymous 1 Peter 5:13: (1 Pet. 5:13: “¹³your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.” ⁵²) ends with a greeting from the apostle and “my son Mark” from the Church in Babylon (an early Christian code word for Rome).

Early Christian tradition regards all these “Marks” as the same figure: The Mark of Jerusalem who initially accompanied Paul, Silas, and Barnabas but who, along with Barnabas, parted ways with the others after an argument over the young man’s perceived unreliability. Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them. But Paul decides not to take Mark with them because he deserted them in Pamphylia and had not

⁴⁸ Joh. 21:24; ²⁴Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν (Nestle, 1904).

⁴⁹ Col. 4:10; ¹⁰Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρνάβα (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁰ Philem. 24; ²⁴Μᾶρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου (Nestle, 1904).

⁵¹ 2 Tim. 4:11: ¹¹Λουκᾶς ἐστὶν ὁ μόνος μετ’ ἐμοῦ. Μᾶρκον ἀναλαβὼν ἄγε μετὰ σεαυτοῦ· ἐστὶν γὰρ μοι εὐχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν (Nestle, 1904).

⁵² 1 Pet. 5:13: ¹³Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ υἱός μου (Nestle, 1904).

accompanied them in their work. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company (Beavis, 2011:6-7). Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus (Acts 15:37-39).

Mark wrote his Gospel in the city of Jerusalem (Beavis, 2011:9) and addressed the community of Jewish people that worshipped the God of the Jewish scriptures, attested to the prophets like Isaiah (Mk. 1:2: “²as it is written in the prophet Isaiah, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.’⁵³; Mark 7:6: “⁶he said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’⁵⁴); and Elijah (Mk. 6:15: “¹⁵but others said, ‘It is Elijah.’ And others said: ‘It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.’⁵⁵, Mk. 8:28: “²⁸and they answered him, ‘John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’⁵⁶ Mark 9:4-5: “⁴and there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’⁵⁷; Mark 9:11-13: “¹¹then they asked him, ‘Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ ¹²He said to them: ‘Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah had come and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him.’⁵⁸, Mark 15:35-36: “³⁵when some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ ³⁶And someone ran,

⁵³ Mk. 1:2: ²Καθώς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ Ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁴ Mk. 7:6; ⁶ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Καλῶς ἐπροφήτευσεν Ἡσαΐας περὶ ὑμῶν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, ὡς γέγραπται ὅτι Οὗτος ὁ λαὸς τοῖς χεῖλεσίν με τιμᾷ, ἡ δὲ καρδία αὐτῶν πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁵ Mk. 6:15; ¹⁵ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἡλείας ἐστίν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον ὅτι προφήτης ὡς εἷς τῶν προφητῶν (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁶ Mk. 8:28; ²⁸οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι Ἰωάννην τὸν Βαπτιστὴν, καὶ ἄλλοι Ἡλείαν, ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι εἷς τῶν προφητῶν (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁷ Mk. 9:4-5; ⁴καὶ ὠφθη αὐτοῖς Ἡλείας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συνλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ. ⁵καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ Ῥαββεί, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὥδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἡλείᾳ μίαν (Nestle, 1904).

⁵⁸ Mk. 9:11-13; ¹¹καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες Ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι Ἡλείαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον; ¹²ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῖς Ἡλείας μὲν ἐλθὼν πρῶτον ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα· καὶ πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πολλὰ πάθη καὶ ἐξουδενηθῆ; ¹³ἀλλὰ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ Ἡλείας ἐλήλυθεν, καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν (Nestle, 1904).

filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”⁵⁹; Mark 1:44: “⁴⁴saying to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’⁶⁰ ; 7:10 “¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’⁶¹; 10:3-5: “³He answered them, ‘What did Moses command you?’⁴They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.”⁵But Jesus said to them: “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you.”⁶²;12:19: “¹²Teacher, Moses wrote for us that ‘if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child,’ the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.”⁶³; 12:26: “And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’⁶⁴ ; Mark 2:25: “²And he said to them, ‘Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food?’⁶⁵; 10:47-48: “⁴⁷then he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy

⁵⁹ Mk.15:35-37; ³⁵καί τινες τῶν παρεστηκότων ἀκούσαντες ἔλεγον Ἴδε Ἡλείαν φωνεῖ. ³⁶δραμῶν δέ τις καὶ γεμίσας σπόγγον ὄξους περιθεὶς καλάμῳ ἐπότιζεν αὐτόν, λέγων Ἄφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλείας καθελεῖν αὐτόν (Nestle, 1904).

⁶⁰ Mk. 1:44; ⁴⁴καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Ὅρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης, ἀλλὰ ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς (Nestle, 1904).

⁶¹ Mk. 7:10; ¹⁰Μωϋσῆς γὰρ εἶπεν Τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα σου, καὶ Ὁ κακολογῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτῳ (Nestle, 1904).

⁶² Mk. 10:3-5; ³ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τί ὑμῖν ἐνετείλατο Μωϋσῆς; ⁴οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· Ἐπέτρεψεν Μωϋσῆς βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γράψαι καὶ ἀπολυσαί. ⁵ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν τὴν ἐντολὴν ταύτην, (Nestle, 1904).

⁶³ Mk. 12:19: ¹⁹Διδάσκαλε, Μωϋσῆς ἔγραψεν ἡμῖν ὅτι ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ἀποθάνῃ καὶ καταλίπῃ γυναῖκα καὶ μὴ ἀφῆ τέκνον, ἵνα λάβῃ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ ἐξαναστήσῃ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

⁶⁴ Mk. 12:26: ²⁶περὶ δὲ τῶν νεκρῶν ὅτι ἐγείρονται, οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ Μωϋσέως ἐπὶ τοῦ Βάτου πῶς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς λέγων Ἐγὼ ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβραάμ καὶ Θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Θεὸς Ἰακώβ (Nestle, 1904).

⁶⁵ Mk. 2:25; ²⁵καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυεὶδ, ὅτε χρειαίαν ἔσχεν καὶ ἐπέπεισεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

on me!’⁶⁶; 11:10: “¹⁰blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”⁶⁷; 12:35-37 “³⁵while Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, ‘How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared: ‘The Lord said to my Lord,’sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’ ³⁷David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.”⁶⁸ The Markan gospel was written around 50-70 AD (Hurtado, 2011:8).

2.1.2.2 Socio-political context

The Markan account was written in a socio-political context in which Christians had suffered persecutions at the hands of the Emperor Nero around 64 AD due to the proclamation of bodily resurrection and the performance of miracles and wonders such as healing of the sick and casting out evil spirits, among others in the name of Jesus Christ (Beavis, 2011:12-13). Furthermore, the socio-political context of the Markan account includes the persecution and troubles of the Jewish wars of 66-70 AD, hence an exhortation to local Christians to hold fast during hard situations (Cole, 1989:37). Even after the Emperor’s edict had lapsed, tensions between the synagogues and their Jewish Christian members escalated, leading to the formation of independent house Churches and their incorporation of non-Jewish members. Nero’s famous persecution of Roman Christians after the great fire in 64 AD had driven a deeper wedge between the synagogues and the Church as Jews tried to disassociate themselves from the proclamation of the risen Christ that had erupted in Rome and had caused the horrible deaths of many Christians throughout the Roman Empire but especially in Rome (Beavis, 2011:12-13).

⁶⁶ Mk. 10:47-48; ⁴⁷καὶ ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζαρηνός ἐστιν ἤρξατο κράζειν καὶ λέγειν Υἱὲ Δαυεὶδ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με. ⁴⁸καὶ ἐπετίμων αὐτῷ πολλοὶ ἵνα σιωπήσῃ· ὁ δὲ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἔκραζεν Υἱὲ Δαυεὶδ, ἐλέησόν με (Nestle, 1905).

⁶⁷ Mk. 11:10: ¹⁰Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυεὶδ· Ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις (Nestle, 1904).

⁶⁸ Mk. 12:35-37; ³⁵Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγεν διδάσκων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ Πῶς λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς υἱὸς Δαυεὶδ ἐστιν; ³⁶αὐτὸς Δαυεὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ Ἁγίῳ Εἶπεν Κύριος τῷ Κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου. ³⁷αὐτὸς Δαυεὶδ λέγει αὐτὸν Κύριον, καὶ πόθεν αὐτοῦ ἐστιν υἱός; Καὶ ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ ἠδέως (Nestle, 1904).

In addition, the socio-political context of the Markan account involves the revolt of the Jews against the Romans in 66-72 AD (Hurtado, 1989:7). Mark 13:14-20 states: that “¹⁴but when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; ¹⁵the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; ¹⁶the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. ¹⁸Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! ¹⁹Pray that it may not be in winter. For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no and never will be. ²⁰And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days.”⁶⁹). This report of a great turmoil in Judea is in language borrowed from the Old Testament: “when you see the abomination that causes desolation standing where it does not belong...” (cf. Dan. 9:27), and in this context the passage refers to the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 67-70 AD (Hurtado, 1989: 7). In the socio-political context, Mark 13:14-20 was written in the form of a prophecy of divine judgement by military destruction and those details in passage may indicate that the prophecy did originate well before the war in Judea (Hurtado, 1989:7). Furthermore, the turmoil prophesied and the advice given to flee to the Judean hills, was not what the refugees of the Jerusalem siege did, because the hills surrounding Jerusalem were controlled by the Romans (Hurtado, 1989: 7).

The impression made on the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans is shown by the fact that the triumph of Vespasian and Titus celebrated in Rome in 71 AD was the only triumph ever to celebrate the subjugation of the population of an existing province (Millar, 1993:79). Thus, the text of Mark reflects a fearful community (Mk. 4:40; 6:51; 9:32; 10:32; 16:8), where adherence to Jewish practices was controversial (Mk. 2:1-11, 15-28; 3:1-6; 7:1-23) and the gentile members were accepted (Mk. 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 31-37). The prophetic discourse is designed to assuage anxieties over the war in Judea

⁶⁹ Mk. 13:14-20; ¹⁴“Όταν δὲ ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω, τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη, ¹⁵ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ καταβάτω μηδὲ εἰσελθάτω τι ἄραι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ, ¹⁶καὶ ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἄραι τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ. ¹⁷οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. ¹⁸προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται χειμῶνος· ¹⁹ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι θλίψεις, οἷα οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἢν ἔκτισεν ὁ Θεὸς ἕως τοῦ νῦν καὶ οὐ μὴ γένηται. ²⁰καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκόλωσεν Κύριος τὰς ἡμέρας, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ· ἀλλὰ διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἐκόλωσεν τὰς ἡμέρας (Nestle, 1904).

(Mk. 13:14-23) and the destruction of the temple is expected (Beavis, 2011:10-11). Thus, “the socio-political context of the Markan account is characterised by the shocking prospect of the despoliation of the Holy land, city, temple in the East, and deeper persecution” (Beavis, 2011:10-12).

2.1.2.3 Structures, themes, and theology

The Markan account is completely silent about the birth and childhood of Jesus as compared to the Matthean and Lukan accounts. The Markan account gives its readers the religious significance of Jesus and consistently portrays the human characters who encountered Jesus as seriously defective in their apprehension of him. The theme of mystery and secrecy is a well-known feature and is described as the Markan Messianic secret. The Messianic secret entails the hidden Messiahship of Jesus from the people who witnessed the Ministry of Jesus, however only revealed in the action of preaching the gospel with signs and wonders.

The Markan account more than any other gospel account reports the narratives in which Jesus insisted on secrecy through silencing the demoniacs who acclaimed him (Mk. 1:25: “²⁵but Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent and come out of him!’⁷⁰), commanding those healed not to publicise it (Mk. 1:44; 5:43), and ordering the disciples to keep to themselves the revelations of his glory (Hurtado, 2011:8-9). The Markan account indicates that Jesus of Nazareth was to suffer persecution and that for his name’s sake his followers should be aware of persecution (Mk. 8:27-38). The literary style of the Markan account is explicitly characterised by simple, short, and precise sentences of narratives with the assumption that his readers are familiar with the Jewish scriptures, and literature (Hurtado, 2011:11).

Mark 16:1-8 as stated earlier in [chapter one](#) reports that after bodily resurrection of Jesus, a young man dressed in a white robe appeared and told the women Jesus had been raised. Hence, the need to inform the disciples. Thus, Mark’s report includes details such as the “..., spices for anointing the body of Jesus,” and “..., the young man” as indicated in Mark 16:6-7 discussed in [chapter one](#). In addition to Matthew 28:1-2, Mark 16:1-2 mentions the sole purpose of the women’s visit to the tomb to anointing the

⁷⁰ Mk. 1:25; ²⁵καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτο (Nestle, 1904).

body of Jesus with spices-an action of respect for Jesus despite his crucifixion (Gundry, 2010: 219).

Mark 16:3-4 reports: The dilemma of the women; the removal of the large stone at the entrance of the tomb because of their strength was not enough. However, to their surprise, they found the stone rolled away and inside the tomb was a young man reported in Mark 16:3-5 and discussed in [chapter one](#). Matthew 28:2 states: “²and suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.”⁷¹ These words disclose that it was an angel who rolled away the stone as earlier stated. Mark 16:5-7 agrees with the explanation and instructions of the angel in Matthew 28:5-7 with those of the ‘young man.’

It is important to observe that in other ancient literature, both Jewish and Christian, uses “young man” for “an angel.” Mark 16:5 calls the angel “young man” to recall the young man mentioned in Mark 14:51-52 (Gundry, 2010:219). “Sitting on the right” indicates the young man’s authority, contrasts it with the women’s expectation of seeing Jesus’s corpse lying prone and makes the young man represent Jesus, who at the time of Mark’s writing is sited at the right hand of God in accordance with Mark 12:36 (Gundry, 2010:219). The Markan account (Mk. 16:5: “⁵as they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.”⁷²) identifies the young man as a heavenly figure, an angel, a messenger of Jesus (Gundry, 2010:219). The young man’s interpretation of the empty tomb and instruction to the women completes his identification as an angel and a messenger; for interpretation and instruction are functions of angels, among others. The very meaning of “angel” is “messenger” translated from Greek *ἄγγελος*⁷³ (Gundry, 2010:219).

He has been “raised” echoes “after I have been raised” indicated in Jesus’s prophecy about his resurrection reported in Mark 14:28 (Mk. 14:28: “²⁸but after I am raised up, I

⁷¹ Mtt. 28:2; ²καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ Κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

⁷² Mk. 16:5; ⁵καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιαῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησα (Nestle, 1904).

⁷³ ἄγγελος (Gundry, 2010:219).

will go before you to Galilee.”⁷⁴) and negates the scandal of his crucifixion by noting its undoing in the fulfilment of its prophecy. The words “Look the place where they put him” (Mk. 16:6: “but he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.”⁷⁵) underscore the actual fulfilment pointing to bodily resurrection. Hence, Jesus’s absence from the tomb is due to going to Galilee (Mk. 16:7: “but go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.”⁷⁶). It is of paramount importance to note that in Jewish culture the testimony of women was not credible, especially in the courts of law (Jacobs, 2023). Hence, the inclusion of such a testimony in the passion narratives favours its authenticity because the women and not men discovered the tomb was empty (Jacobs, 2023). The value of the testimony of women seems ironic in that it reveals a historical reality that the early Church and the gospel writers, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John themselves seem to have worried that the Jewish community might cast down their testimony that Jesus had risen from the dead (Jacobs, 2023). Hence, the despised women in the Jewish community were divinely involved as carriers of an amazing testimony.

2.1.3 Luke

2.1.3.1 Historical background: Authorship, date, place of writing, and audience

The Gospel according to Luke is named after its author Luke is credited with writing not only the Lukan account, but also the New Testament book of Acts. He was a physician by profession (Col. 4:14: “⁴Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.”⁷⁷), a disciple of the apostles (Parson, 2015:8), a friend of Paul (Philem. 24: “²⁴and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.”⁷⁸; 2 Tim. 4:9-11: “⁹Do your best to

⁷⁴ Mk. 14:28; ²⁸ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὸ ἐγερθῆναί με προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν (Nestle, 1904).

⁷⁵ Mk. 16:6; ⁶ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν (Nestle, 1904).

⁷⁶ Mk. 16:7; ⁷ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι Προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

⁷⁷ Col. 4:14; ¹⁴ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς (Nestle, 1904).

⁷⁸ Philem. 24: ²⁴Μάρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου (Nestle, 1904).

come to me soon, ¹⁰for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.”⁷⁹), and gentile who, according to Luke 1:1-4: identifies oneself as a Christian who relied on other’s eyewitness testimonies in the process of compilation of the Gospel (Parsons, 2015:5). The Lukan account is addressed to Theophilus, probably a ranking official in the Roman Empire whose name means “lover of God” or “beloved of God,” a new believer in need of assurance of his faith which is why Luke wrote him this Gospel (Ryken, 2009:13-14). It is also addressed to a gentile audience (Parson, 2015:5) and was written around 70 AD (Leaney, 1966:9) in the city of Antioch (Parsons, 2015:8). The city of Antioch was a well-known Greco-Roman community (Parsons, 2015:8).

2.1.3.2 Socio-political context

Luke’s occasion of writing the gospel was the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Parsons, 2015:8). This catastrophe was naturally of immense significance for the Jews both in Palestine and abroad, including Christians. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple provoked a lot of questions (Parson, 2015:8). Thus, the Christians as much as the Jews were interested in finding the answer which was in the ancient scriptures. Luke saw a correlation between the first destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (586 BC) and the second destruction in 70 AD (Parsons, 2015:8).

The language and vocabulary are drawn heavily from the Septuagint’s (LXX) account of the first destruction at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar (Luk. 19:41-44: ⁴¹“as he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon

⁷⁹ 2 Tim. 4:9-11: ⁹Σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ταχέως· ¹⁰Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν· ¹¹Λουκᾶς ἐστὶν μόνος μετ’ ἐμοῦ. Μᾶρκον ἀναλαβὼν ἄγε μετὰ σεαυτοῦ· ἔστιν γάρ μοι εὐχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν (Nestle, 1904).

another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God,⁸⁰; 21:20-24: “²⁰when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; ²²for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written. ²³Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; ²⁴they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,⁸¹; Jer. 6:6; Ezek. 4:4; 26:8). According to Luke, Jerusalem was destroyed a second time because of its failure, like the first time, to heed the prophetic voice and to recognise the presence of God’s salvation or in Biblical parlance, God’s visitation (Luk. 19:41-45 “⁴¹as he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.’ ⁴⁵Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there.”⁸²) It is important to observe that the stated lamentation immediately follows the account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem where he was greeted as king (Luk. 19:29-40). As a king

⁸⁰ Luk. 19:41-44: ⁴¹Καὶ ὡς ἤγγισεν, ἰδὼν τὴν πόλιν ἔκλαυσεν ἐπ’ αὐτήν, ⁴²λέγων ὅτι Εἰ ἔγνωσ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην· νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. ⁴³ὅτι ἤξουσιν ἡμέραι ἐπὶ σέ καὶ παρεμβалоῦσιν οἱ ἐχθροί σου χάρακά σοι καὶ περικυκλώσουσιν σε καὶ συνέξουσίν σε πάντοθεν, ⁴⁴καὶ ἔδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου ἐν σοί, καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσουσιν λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον ἐν σοί, ἀνθ’ ὧν οὐκ ἔγνωσ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου (Nestle, 1904).

⁸¹ Luk. 21:20-24: ²⁰Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἱερουσαλήμ, τότε γνῶτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς. ²¹τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη, καὶ οἱ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκχωρείτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς χώραις μὴ εἰσερχέσθωσαν εἰς αὐτήν, ²²ὅτι ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως αὐταὶ εἰσιν τοῦ πλησθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα. ²³οὐαὶ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις· ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὀργὴ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ, ²⁴καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἱερουσαλήμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν (Nestle, 1904).

⁸² Luk. 19:41-45: ⁴¹Καὶ ὡς ἤγγισεν, ἰδὼν τὴν πόλιν ἔκλαυσεν ἐπ’ αὐτήν, ⁴²λέγων ὅτι Εἰ ἔγνωσ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην· νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. ⁴³ὅτι ἤξουσιν ἡμέραι ἐπὶ σέ καὶ παρεμβалоῦσιν οἱ ἐχθροί σου χάρακά σοι καὶ περικυκλώσουσιν σε καὶ συνέξουσίν σε πάντοθεν, ⁴⁴καὶ ἔδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου ἐν σοί, καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσουσιν λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον ἐν σοί, ἀνθ’ ὧν οὐκ ἔγνωσ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου. ⁴⁵Καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῦντας (Nestle, 1904).

of the Jews (Luk. 19:38: “saying, ³⁸blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”⁸³) Jesus presents himself to Jerusalem, but knowing that he would not be received he weeps for the doomed city (Evans, 2011:2-3).

2.1.3.3 Structure, themes, and theology

Luke’s literary style comes closest to the style of the classical Greek writers. The most obvious example of this style occurs in the opening four verses of his Gospel, known as the prologue (Luk. 1:1-4). The structure is characterised by the three major sources used in the compilation of the Gospel, namely, Mark, Quelle (Q) and the Septuagint (LXX). Two major portions of the Old Testament have played central roles in the composition of the gospel. The large sections of Luke (Luk. 7-10; 22-24) draw in various ways upon the Elijah/Elisha narratives of 1 Kings 17-21, and 2 Kings 1-8. Another large section of Luke, sometimes referred to as the “central section” (Luk. 9:51-18:14), parallels Deuteronomy 1-26 (Evan, 2011:5).

Luke’s theological content describes Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of the world whose purpose is to be fulfilled in the city of Jerusalem. Thus, Jesus enters Jerusalem as king and as a ransom for humanity. Luke reports the crucifixion as a stage towards triumph and the resurrection as proof of it (Leaney, 1966:34-35). In retrospect the suffering of the Lord Jesus is shown as a necessity for entry into glory. The royal progress reveals the effect which the king has upon the people such as healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, raising the dead, forgiveness of sins, among others (Leaney, 1966:34-35). Hence, joy to the world. Therefore, Luke 24:1-10 as discussed in [chapter one](#) agrees with the Matthean and Markan passion narratives, further adds that the two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside the women as they wondered about the whereabouts of the corpse of Jesus based on the discovery of the empty tomb. Here the absence of the corpse prepares for a later demonstration of the physicality of Jesus’s resurrection (Gundry, 2010:342).

The appearance of the two men supports their imminent testimony to Jesus’s resurrection, which was a legal requirement for a testimony to be considered authentic

⁸³ Luk. 19:38; ³⁸λέγοντες Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ Βασιλεὺς ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου· ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰρήνη καὶ δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις (Nestle, 1904).

(Num. 35:50; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Hence, the two men interpreted the resurrection in the light of the fulfilment of Jesus's self-prophecies as indicated in Luke 9:22: "22saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised".⁸⁴, Luk. 9:44: "44Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands."⁸⁵; 17:24-25: "24for as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. 25But first he must endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation."⁸⁶ Hence, a reminder to the women to remember the words of Jesus about his passion and resurrection. Therefore, according to the Lukan passion narrative the resurrection of Jesus is authenticated by Jesus's own words, a basis of the message of the two men confirmed by the women reported in Luke 24:6-8 which states: "6remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." ⁸Then they remembered his words",⁸⁷). Thus, Luke reports the bodily resurrection of Jesus after performing a thorough investigation of the narratives and informatively concludes that Jesus of Nazareth had experienced bodily resurrection (Luk. 1:1-4).

2.1.4 John

2.1.4.1 Historical background: Authorship, date, place of writing, and audience

The Gospel according to John, also referred to as the Johannine account, was written by the apostle John. John was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus (Joh. 1:14: "14and the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of

⁸⁴ Luk. 9:22; ²²εἰπὼν ὅτι Δεῖ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι (Nestle, 1904).

⁸⁵ Luk. 9:44: ⁴⁴Θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους· ὁ γὰρ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων (Nestle, 1904).

⁸⁶ Luk. 17:24-25; ²⁴ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπὴ ἀστράπτουσα ἐκ τῆς ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰς τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν λάμπει, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ. ²⁵πρῶτον δὲ δεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης (Nestle, 1904).

⁸⁷ Luk. 24:6-8; ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὡδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἔτι ὦν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, ⁷λέγων τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι. ⁸καὶ ἐμνήσθησαν τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

a father's only son, full of grace and truth.”⁸⁸; 2:11: “¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”⁸⁹; 19:35: “³⁵he who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.”⁹⁰) also referred to as the disciple Jesus loved (Joh. 13:23: “²³one of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him”.⁹¹; Joh. 19:26-27: “²⁶when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.” ⁹²; 21:24-25: “²⁴this is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”⁹³), son of Zebedee, consistently associated with Peter in the Johannine account and elsewhere in the New Testament documents (Joh. 13:23-24; 18:15-16; 20:2-9; 21; Luk. 22:8; Acts 1:13; 3-4; 8:14-25; Gal.2:9). He lived to a ripe old age (Köstenberger, 2004:6-7). In addition, John was a Palestinian Jew, a first-hand eyewitness to the events recorded, among others. He and his brother James were referred to as the *boanerges* which means the sons of thunder (Mk. 3:17: “¹⁷James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave

⁸⁸ Joh. 1:14; ¹⁴Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ Πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (Nestle, 1904).

⁸⁹ Joh. 2:11: ¹¹Ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐφάνερωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

⁹⁰ Joh. 19:35; ³⁵καὶ ὁ ἑωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε (Nestle, 1904).

⁹¹ Joh. 13:23; ²³ἦν ἀνακείμενος εἷς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Nestle, 1904).

⁹² Joh. 19:26-27: ²⁶Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἰδὼν τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν παρεστῶτα ὃν ἠγάπα, λέγει τῇ μητρὶ Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. ²⁷εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια (Nestle, 1904).

⁹³ Joh. 21:24-25: ²⁴Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν. ²⁵Ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ’ ἓν, οὐδ’ αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσεν τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία (Nestle, 1904).

the name *Boanerges*, that is, Sons of Thunder.”).⁹⁴ They thus described because of their impetuous nature (Bruce, 1994:3-4).

For instance, it was John and James who proposed the calling of fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans (Luk. 9:54), it was John who reported how he and his associates tried to stop a man who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus because he did not belong to their company (Luk. 9:49). John and James incurred the resentment of their fellow-disciples on one occasion by appearing to steal a march on them in a bid to secure preferential status for themselves in the coming Kingdom of Christ (Mk. 10:35-45). Along with Peter, they belonged to an inner group of three disciples (Mk. 5:37: “³⁷he allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.”⁹⁵ ; Mark. 9:2: “²six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them.”⁹⁶; 14:33: “³³he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.”⁹⁷). These verses admit to an exceptionally close association with their master (Bruce, 1994:3-4). John wrote his gospel around 81 AD in Ephesus, was addressed to the Jews in Diaspora and proselytes (Carson, 1991:91).

2.1.4.2 Socio-political context

The apostle John lived until the time of the Emperor Trajan of 98 AD (Bruce, 1993:17). The Johannine account originated within the matrix of the earlier Christian gentile mission, the emergence of the early gnostic thought and finally, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD (Walker, 1996:195), a traumatic event that left Judaism in a national and religious void. It caused Jews to look for ways to continue their rituals and worship. Seizing the opportunity for Jewish evangelism, John presents Jesus as the temple’s replacement (Joh. 2:18-22: “¹⁸the Jews then said to him, ‘What sign can you

⁹⁴ Mk. 3:17; ¹⁷καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου, καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὄνομα Βοανηργές, ὃ ἐστὶν Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς (Nestle, 1904).

⁹⁵ Mk. 5:37; ³⁷καὶ οὐκ ἀφήκεν οὐδένα μετ’ αὐτοῦ συνακολουθεῖν εἰ μὴ τὸν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰακώβου (Nestle, 1904).

⁹⁶ Mk. 9:29:2; ²Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ’ ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν (Nestle, 1904).

⁹⁷ Mk. 14:33; ³³καὶ παραλαμβάνει τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην μετ’ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἤρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν (Nestle, 1904).

show us for doing this?’¹⁹ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’²⁰ The Jews then said, ‘This temple has been under construction for forty-six years and will you raise it up in three days?’²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.”⁹⁸ 1:14; 4:21-24) and the fulfilment of the symbolism inherent in Jewish festivals.

The confession of Thomas for the recognition of Jesus as his Lord and God is intended to evoke associations of Emperor worship under Domitian in 81-96 AD and is a description of profound respect attributed to the risen Jesus Christ whose social status superseded that of the Emperor (Köstenberger, 2004:8). The socio-political context of the Johannine account was characterised by the apostles and new convert’s persecutions based on their proclamation of bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. It eventually led to martyrdom.

2.1.4.3 Structure, themes, and theology

The Johannine account consists of two sections. The first half of John’s narrative sets forth the evidence for Jesus’s *Messiahship* in the form of seven selected signs (Joh. 1:19-12:50; 20:30-31). John also includes Jesus’s seven “I am” sayings, and calls numerous witnesses in support of Jesus’s claims, including Moses and the scriptures, the Father, Jesus and his works, the Spirit, the disciples, and the evangelist himself (Köstenberger, 2004:9). The second major section of John’s Gospel shows how Jesus ensured the continuation of his mission by preparing his new *Messianic* community for its mission. This portion opens with Jesus’s farewell discourse (Joh. 13-17), the new *Messianic* community is cleansed by foot washing, Judas’s departure (Joh. 13), and Jesus’s prayer for his disciples (Joh. 17). Hence, the disciples are made partners in the proclamation of the salvation of Christ (Joh. 15:15-16: “¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my

⁹⁸ Joh. 2:18-22; ¹⁸ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ Τί σημεῖον δεῖκνύεις ἡμῖν, ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ¹⁹ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον, καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν. ²⁰εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν; ²¹ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. ²²ὅτε οὖν ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦτο ἔλεγεν, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Nestle, 1904).

Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name."⁹⁹), their witness being headed by the Spirit (Joh. 15:26-27: "²⁶when the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. ²⁷You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning."¹⁰⁰ ; John 17:20-26: "²⁰I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."¹⁰¹), and taken into the life of the Godhead which is characterised by perfect love and unity (Köstenberger, 2004:9).

The major theme of the Gospel according to John is to present Jesus as the Christ through his name humanity may have life (Bruce, 1993:24). A wide variety of purposes

⁹⁹Joh. 15:15-16; ¹⁵οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους, ὅτι ὁ δοῦλος οὐκ οἶδεν τί ποιεῖ αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος· ὑμᾶς δὲ εἶρηκα φίλους, ὅτι πάντα ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς μου ἐγνώρισά ὑμῖν. ¹⁶οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη, ἵνα ὃ τι ἂν αἰτήσητε τὸν Πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δῶ ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁰ Joh. 15:26-27: ²⁶Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ Παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ· ²⁷καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστε (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰¹ Joh. 17:20-26: ²⁰Οὐ περὶ τούτων δὲ ἐρωτῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν εἰς ἐμέ, ²¹ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν, καθὼς σύ, Πατήρ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κάγω ἐν σοί, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ᾧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. ²²κάγω τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκάς μοι αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ᾧσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἐν· ²³ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σύ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ᾧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἐν, ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἠγάπησας αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας. ²⁴Πατήρ, ὃ δέδωκάς μοι, θέλω ἵνα ὅπου εἰμί ἐγὼ κάκεῖνοι ᾧσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἵνα θεωρῶσιν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν, ἣν δέδωκάς μοι ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

²⁵Πατήρ δίκαιε, καὶ ὁ κόσμος σε οὐκ ἔγνω, ἐγὼ δὲ σε ἔγνω, καὶ οὗτοι ἔγνωσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας· ²⁶καὶ ἐγνώρισά αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου καὶ γνωρίσω, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ κάγω ἐν αὐτοῖς (Nestle, 1904).

have been alleged for the Gospel, among others, these include the Johannine account as a supplement of the Synoptic accounts, combating of Gnosticism and Docetism. Therefore, John writes to bring his readers to faith in Jesus the risen Christ (Bruce, 1993:24). Unlike the Synoptic accounts whose central theme of Jesus is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God (sometimes referred to as the Kingdom of heaven), in the Johannine account, it's Jesus, his mission as the reveller sent by God to make God known and the miracles as God at work (Michael, 2011:12). Like the Synoptic accounts, John 20:1-12 which states that ¹early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet."¹⁰²) John reports the resurrection narrative and adds that the two angels informed the women Jesus was raised from the dead (Joh. 20:11-12: ¹¹but Mary stood weeping

¹⁰² Joh. 20:1-12: ¹Τῆ δὲ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρῶτ' σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἡρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. ²Τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἔβρα τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ³Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς, καὶ ἤρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. ⁴Ἐτρέχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρον καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ⁵καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. ⁶ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, ⁷καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον. ⁸τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν· ⁹οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾗδισαν τὴν γραφὴν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. ¹⁰ἀπήλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί.

¹¹Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ¹²καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῆ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.”¹⁰³).

The linen clothes lying there are clear evidence that Jesus’s body had not been taken by grave robbers or by his disciples or by his enemies who would have not taken the time to remove these cloths (Joh. 19:40 “⁴⁰they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.” ¹⁰⁴). The position of the clothes suggests that Jesus unwrapped these clothes from his body when he awakened from death and left them behind (Joh. 20:6 “⁶then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there.”¹⁰⁵). The reference to the face cloth being folded up in one place suggests that Jesus himself had folded it neatly (Joh. 20:7 “⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.”¹⁰⁶). The presence of the two male disciples, namely, Peter and John at the discovery of the empty tomb with empty grave cloths made evidence acceptable under Jewish law (Deut. 17:6). Thus, the legal requirement of at least two witnesses had been met (Joh. 8:17: “¹⁷in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid.”¹⁰⁷). The apostle John was an eyewitness to the bodily resurrection of Jesus; hence his passion narrative account, and the entire Gospel is based on a personal testimony (Joh. 20:2-5: “²so she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’ ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached

¹⁰³ Joh. 20:11-12: ¹¹Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ¹²καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁴ Joh. 19:40; ⁴⁰ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁵ Joh. 20:6; ⁶ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰσήλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁶ Joh. 20:7; ⁷καὶ τὸ σουδᾶριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁷ Joh. 8:17; ¹⁷καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται ὅτι δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν (Nestle, 1904).

the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.”¹⁰⁸; John 20:8: “⁸then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.”¹⁰⁹).

2.2 Arguments against the bodily resurrection

As stated earlier, all scholars in this investigation about the resurrection of Jesus as reported in the passion narratives agree that Jesus was raised. However, the debate is centred on whether such resurrection was spiritual or bodily (physical). According to Wayne (2017) Jesus did not actually leave the tomb in a physical form because he was dead. The resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter and accepting bodily resurrection is a violation of the natural law.

Strauss (2011) argues that bodily resurrection is myth based on Enlightenment criticism of the miraculous. Strauss (2011) further argues that bodily resurrection was the result of the disciple’s social conditioning and cultural outlook more than a recollection of a real historical event. Thus, while Strauss accepts that the disciples have reported a bodily resurrection his position is that the idea was more an allegory than an event based on reality. Bultmann (1970:15) argues that bodily resurrection is a miracle and miracles are impossible to accept in a modern and scientific age. He also notes that the bodily resurrection as reported in the gospel accounts is a pivotal event of the Christian faith. However, Bultmann (1970:15) maintains that the resurrection was a mythical event and not real.

In addition, Bultmann (1970:15) argues that the real resurrection is faith in the preached word which brings illumination. If the event of resurrection day is a historical event additional to the event of the cross, it is the rise of faith in the risen Lord. Hence, led to the apostolic preaching. The resurrection is not an event of history. This implies that for Bultmann (1970:15), the resurrection of Jesus was not the literal bodily revivification that

¹⁰⁸ Joh. 20:2-5; ²τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἔβαν τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ³Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς, καὶ ἦρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. ⁴ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ⁵καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁰⁹ Joh. 20:8; ⁸τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν (Nestle, 1904).

orthodox Christians accept. Rather, the resurrection of Jesus was simply the continuation of the Christian message after Jesus's death. Therefore, according to Bultmann (1970:15), the body of Jesus still lay in the tomb.

2.2.1 Objections of Carrier

In this discussion whether the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily or spiritual event. Carrier (2006) concurs with the views of Wayne (2017), Ludemann (1994:161-175), Strauss (2011), Bultmann (1970:15), Crossan (1994:126-127), Craffert (2002:89-107), and Eisenberg (2016:141) as discussed above. Carrier maintains that the resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter, a personal experience, and not a physical event. The evidence strongly suggests that there may have been no early tradition of the bodily appearances of Jesus after his death. Carrier (2006) argues that appealing to the missing body and an empty tomb does not guarantee bodily resurrection because there were grave robbers. There exists reliable evidence that dozens of mummies are missing from tombs looted thousands of years ago due to theft because the corpses were used by sorcerers. Therefore, the empty tomb discovered on the third day may be associated with planned theft (Carrier, 2006).

2.2.1.1 The Gospel accounts

In respect of the gospel accounts, Carrier (2006) notes these were not written soon after the death of their main character more likely many decades later. The gospels were also originally anonymous and the names now attached to them were added by speculation and oral tradition half a century after they were actually written. It is therefore, according to Carrier (2006), certainly reasonable to doubt the resurrection of Jesus in the flesh, an event placed sometime between 26 and 36 AD.

Furthermore, Carrier (2006) argues that Luke and Matthew both copied whole phrases from Mark and arranged them in an identical order as found in Mark. Carrier (2006) notes the historical inconsistency of the gospel accounts and submits that a decade or two passed before Matthew 28:1-10 reports that there was a vast earthquake, an angel blazing like lightning descended from the sky and paralyzed two guards, rolled away the stone singlehandedly before several witnesses, and then announced that Jesus had been raised and will appear in Galilee.

In addition, Carrier (2006) argues that there exists a clear case of legendary embellishment in the biblical parallels. Carrier (2006) maintains that the otherwise simple story in Mark is being developed to fit the context of the resurrection. For instance, Matthew reports events like what has been observed as an addition after Mark 16:8 in which, contrary to the angel's announcement, Jesus himself immediately meets Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9: “⁹[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.”¹¹⁰). Matthew is careful to add a hint that this was the physical Jesus, having the women grovel and grab his feet as he speaks (Carrier, 2006).

Then, later in the report of Luke, Carrier (2006) notes that what was a vague and perhaps symbolic allusion to ascension in Mark, has now become a bodily appearance, complete with a dramatic re-enactment of Peter rushing to the tomb and seeing the empty death shroud for himself. Carrier (2006) observes that as Matthew reports, other details have been added to the resurrection narrative. The one young man of Mark, who became a descending angel in Matthew, in the Lukan account, has suddenly become two men, this time not merely in white, but in dazzling clothing. Thus, to make the new story even more suspicious as a doctrinal invention, Jesus dismisses the doubts of the disciples by stating that he was not a vision. Jesus proved it by asking the disciples to touch him and then by eating fish. Unlike both Mark and Matthew whose narratives indicate that the risen Jesus will be seen in Galilee, Luke changes the story and places this experience in the more populous and prestigious Jerusalem (Carrier, 2006).

The gospel accounts are unreliable because the discrepancies keep adding from the one narrative to the following one. For instance, in the account of John, after another decade or more, the legend has come into full flower and instead of one young man, two men, or one angel, now we have two angels at the empty tomb (Carrier, 2006).

Contrary to the Lukan account, John narrates how Jesus proves his appearance in the flesh by showing his wounds. He even obliged the doubting Thomas by letting him put his fingers into the wounds themselves. Like Luke, the most grandiose appearances to

¹¹⁰ Mk. 16:9; καὶ ἐξεληθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις· καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ (Nestle, 1904).

the disciples happen in Jerusalem, not Galilee as Mark originally claimed. In all, John devotes more space and detail than either Luke or Matthew to demonstrations of the physicality of the resurrection, details nowhere present or even implied in Mark. John is trying very hard to create proof that the resurrection was the physical raising of a corpse (Carrier, 2006).

Carrier (2006) challenges the historicity of the reports of bodily resurrection narrative accounts as reported by the Evangelists (Mtt., Mk., Luk., and Joh.). Carrier (2006) notes that not even a single established historian mentions the event until the third and fourth centuries and then only by Christian historians. Carrier (2006) further observes that Christian historians fail to show any wide reading, never cite any other sources, and demonstrate no sign of a skilled or critical examination of conflicting claims. In addition, Carrier (2006) argues that Christian historians have no other literature or scholarship to their credit that can be used to test their skill and accuracy, have an overtly declared bias towards persuasion and conversion. Christian historians present the very worst kind of evidence characterised as biased, uncritical, and unscholarly, based on unknown and second-hand witnesses. Thus, according to Carrier (2006) why trust the New Testament reports?

2.2.1.2 Historical setting

Accepting the bodily resurrection of Jesus may suggest a failure to account for the historical setting of the first century (Carrier, 2006). Carrier (2006) describes the historical setting of the first century as an age of fables, wonder, magic, and miracles. The witches were performing their rituals and the masses had no understanding of science or critical thought. Therefore, the context suggests a spiritual rather than a bodily resurrection. Furthermore, the people were neither equipped nor skilled, nor even interested in challenging an inspiring story, especially a story like that of the bodily resurrection as reported by the gospel accounts (Carrier, 2006).

The differences between society then and now cannot be stressed enough. There did not exist things as coroners, reporters, cameras, newspapers, forensic science, or even police detectives. All the technology, all the people we have pursuing the truth of various claims now, did not exist then. In those days, few would even be able to check the details of a story if they wanted to and few wanted to. Instead, people based their

judgment on the display of sincerity by the storyteller, by his ability to impress them with a show or simply to persuade and sell his story (Carrier, 2006).

2.2.1.3 Martyrdom

Regarding martyrdom, Carrier (2006) disagree with the views of Siniscalchi (2011:727) that the disciples gave up their lives based on their proclamation that Jesus experienced bodily resurrection. Carrier (2006) argues that martyrdom has been misinterpreted because the impression given does not reflect reality. Since none of the Gospels or Epistles mention explicitly anyone dying for their belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus. The first martyrdom event recorded is in Acts 7:59-60; the stoning of Stephen: “⁵⁹while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he died.”¹¹¹) Yet he was not an eyewitness to the resurrection but a later convert. So, if he died for anything, he died for hearsay alone. But Acts 6:9-14 reports that he was not killed for what he believed, but for some trumped-up false charge (Carrier, 2006).

Moreover, in his last breath, Stephen says nothing about dying for any belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus but mentions only his belief that Jesus was the *Messiah*. At that moment he sees Jesus in heaven yet no one else does, so this was clearly a vision, not a physical appearance of Jesus (Carrier, 2006). The second case of martyrdom in the New Testament is that of the apostle James (Acts 12:1-2). James died as a martyr although he was stoned for breaking the Jewish law and not for his belief in a physical resurrection (Carrier, 2006). Just like Stephen he died for proclaiming Jesus as the *Messiah*, who was at that moment in heaven and not a physical being on earth (Carrier, 2006).

Furthermore, Carrier (2006) notes that the martyrdom of Peter was not reported until two or three generations after the event. The martyrdom of Peter was told in only one place, namely, the gnostic Acts of Peter, which was rejected as a false document by

¹¹¹ Acts 7:59-60; ⁵⁹καὶ ἐλιθοβόλουν τὸν Στέφανον, ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. ⁶⁰Θεὸς δὲ τὰ γόνατα ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ Κύριε, μὴ στήσης αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη (Nestle, 1904).

many Christians. Carrier (2006) maintains that even if this account is true, it claims that Peter was executed for political meddling and not for his religious beliefs.

2.2.1.4 Early Christian Tradition

Regarding the early Christian tradition, Carrier (2006) agrees with Eisenberg (2016:141) on the views of the early Christians regarding the resurrection. They argue that belief in a physical resurrection (resurrection of the corpse of Jesus) never existed, but rather that after his death Jesus was taken up to heaven in a new more perfect and spiritual body. Consequently, the spiritually risen Jesus was seen in visions and dreams. Just like the vision Stephen had before he died and Paul on his way to Damascus. This is the spiritual Jesus that they could sometimes not recognise and he vanished into thin air rather than the gospel accounts claiming him to be raised physically (Carrier, 2006).

But most importantly, according to Carrier (2006) a spiritual resurrection is also suggested by the letters of Paul, the earliest source of information on any of the details of the first Christian beliefs. Paul never mentions or quotes any of the Gospels, so it seems clear that these were not written in his lifetime. This is supported by internal evidence that suggests all the Gospels were written around or after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD well after Paul's last surviving letter, which was written around 58 AD. Paul never mentions Jesus resurrected in the flesh. He never mentions the empty tomb and physical appearances. Paul mentions the ascension and it's never tied to the physical appearances and never distinguishes it from the resurrection event itself.

The physical resurrection is a later development because, in Galatians 1, Paul reports a personal encounter with Jesus in a 'revelation' on the road to Damascus, not in the flesh. Therefore, the earliest evidence from the letters of Paul does not appear to witness a physical resurrection but a spiritual one.

2.2.2 Arguments in favour of bodily resurrection: The defence of Lennox

2.2.2.1 The Laws of nature

In contrast to the above views supporting spiritual resurrection, Lennox (2014:2-3) agrees with the views of Craig (2006), Licona (2010:583), Allison (2005:311), Wright (2003:10), Foulkes (2001:260), and Stott (2006:85) argue that Jesus experienced bodily

resurrection as reported in the passion narratives of the gospels (Mtt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-11; Luk. 24:1-12; Joh. 20:1-17). In addition, Köstenberger (2009:257-258), Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:140) Cabal (2014:122), Siniscalchi (2011:727), and Habermas and Licona (2004:74) argue that history discloses that the risen Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene. Hence, she became the first eyewitness to the bodily resurrection. Lennox (2014:2-3) argues that it is incorrect to conclude that the laws of nature make it impossible for human beings to believe in the work of possible changes in the history of humanity.

It is, therefore, inaccurate and misleading to state that changes and miracles such as bodily resurrection, among others 'violate' the laws of nature. We could, of course, say that it is the law of nature that human beings do not rise again from the dead by some natural mechanism. But Christians do not claim that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead by any natural mechanism. Rather, Jesus rose from the dead due to possible changes in his body and the laws of nature cannot rule out that possibility (Lennox, 2014:2-3). Lennox (2014:3-7) agrees with Licona (2010:583) who notes that the claim that Jesus experienced spiritual resurrection is in contrast with the reported physical encounters. The possible change that took place at the resurrection is incapable of verification because it must have been beyond the established natural protocols. However, the incapability of the stated verification does not imply the event did not occur or that it was a subjective ontological appearance. Therefore, after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to several people, individuals, group settings, friends, and foes, in no less than an objective vision (Licona, 2010:583).

2.2.2.2 Historical setting

With reference to the historical setting, Lennox (2014:3) disagrees with the views of Carrier (2016) and submits that the account of Luke makes it obvious that the early Christians were not a credulous bunch and unaware of the laws of nature and therefore were prepared to believe any miraculous story, however absurd. Early Christians also experienced scepticism and difficulty to believe the story of such a miracle just such as the apostle Thomas (Joh. 20:24-29), just like anyone would today. The early Christians believed that Jesus of Nazareth was bodily resurrected because they were convinced by the sheer weight of reliable evidence presented to them, not through their ignorance

of the laws of nature. The claim that Christianity was born in a pre-scientific, credulous, and ignorant world is simply false (Lennox, 2014:3-4). The ancient world knew the laws of nature as well as we do, including the knowledge that dead bodies do not simply exit graves.

2.2.2.3 The empty tomb

In contrast to the views of Carrier (2006), Lennox (2014:4) notes that the tomb was discovered empty. Hence, both the Jewish and Roman authorities could not produce the body of Jesus and never arrested the disciples accused of stealing the body despite the authority to do so. Lennox (2014:4) argues that tomb robbing was a very serious offence and failure to charge the accused disciples is a demonstration that the tomb was discovered empty not because of theft. In addition, Lennox (2014:4) argues that the tomb was under maximum security. Hence, tomb-robbers could neither roll away nor remove the body of Jesus. Rather, it was the way in which the burial linen was laid that convinced John of a miracle (Lennox, 2014:4).

Historically, the report of the guards at the tomb about what had happened to the body of Jesus that Sunday morning provides no other reasonable explanation than that the one they crucified and died had been raised (Foulkes, 2001:260). Lennox (2014:3-4) notes that the early Christians did not simply assert that the tomb was empty. Jesus was crucified and was raised from the dead as attested by the apostolic eyewitnesses (Stott, 2006:38). Bodily resurrection is the best explanation for the empty tomb (Cabal, 2014:122).

2.2.2.4 The post-resurrection appearances

The disciples subsequently had interacted with the risen Jesus intermittently over a period of forty days (Lennox, 2014:3-4). According to Paul's list in 1 Corinthians 15, contrary to Carrier's (2006) argument, Lennox (2014:3-4) observes that there were originally well over five hundred people who at different times saw the risen Christ during that period. But it is not only the number of eyewitnesses who actually saw the risen Christ that is significant. It is also the widely divergent eyewitnesses and the different places and situations in which Christ appeared to them. For instance, some were in a group of eleven in a room, one was by herself in a garden, a group of

fishermen were by the sea, two were travelling along a road, and others were on a mountain. The post-resurrection appearances authenticate bodily resurrection (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 2003:140). Mary became the first eyewitness to the bodily resurrection (Köstenberger, 2009:257-258). Mary testified that she had physically seen the Lord (Joh. 20:16). It is this variety of characters and locations that refutes the so-called hallucination theories.

2.2.2.5 Hallucinations

In contrast to the views of Carrier (2006) regarding the hallucinations, Lennox (2014:4) argues that hallucinations usually occur to people of a certain temperament with a vivid imagination. But Matthew was a hard-headed, shrewd tax-collector and Peter and some of the others were tough fishermen, Thomas a born sceptic, and so on. The disciples were not the sort of people one normally associates with susceptibility to hallucinations (Lennox, 2014:4). Hallucinations are caused by hallucinogens. Hallucinogens or psychedelics are drugs that can alter and distort perceptions of time and space, alter mood, and produce feelings of unreality (Wood, 2011:135).

The hallucinogens facilitate hallucinations, sensations that have no basis in external reality (Wood, 2011:135) and tend to be of particular or expected events. But none of the disciples were expecting to meet Jesus again. The expectation of Jesus resurrection was not in their minds at all. Instead, there was fear, doubt, and uncertainty; exactly the wrong psychological preconditions for hallucination (Lennox, 2014:4-5 ; Wood, 2011:135). The appearances of Christ occurred frequently, over a period of forty days. Hallucinations, moreover, do not occur to groups, and yet Paul claims five hundred people saw Jesus at once (Lennox, 2014:4-5).

In any case, hallucination theories are severely limited in their explanatory scope because they only attempt to explain the appearances. They clearly do not account for the empty tomb no matter how many hallucinations the disciples had. They could never have preached the bodily resurrection if the nearby tomb had not been discovered empty due to the bodily resurrection of Jesus (Lennox, 2014:4-5).

2.2.2.6 The testimony of women

The ancient laws regarding legal testimony in the first-century Jewish culture could not consider the women to have been competent witnesses. However, it is striking that women first reported the appearances of the risen Jesus (Jacobs, 2023). Thus, no one who wanted to invent a resurrection story could have thought of women as its principal witnesses. The only value of including such a story could be if it were both credible and historical. Its very inclusion, therefore, is a clear mark of historical authenticity (Lennox, 2014:4). Another reason suggested in the Talmud is that the place of a woman was in her home and not in court (Jacobs, 2023), as the honour of the king's daughter was within the house (Psa. 45:14).

2.2.3 Other views in support of Lennox's position

In support of Lennox (2014), Craig (2006) adds that Jesus experienced bodily resurrection because there is reliable historical evidence that a physical body did disappear from the tomb. If the resurrection was spiritual, then what happened to the body? The proponents of spiritual resurrection could not present evidence that the body was stolen. In addition, the genre of the resurrection accounts is not metaphorical, but historical fact (Craig, 2006). The post-mortem appearances of the risen Jesus to his followers and the many people were meant to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was neither a ghost nor a hallucination. Instead, Jesus was alive again (Wright, 2003:10).

Faith only makes sense if it is rooted in reality and history is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology. All theological questions and answers have meaning only within the framework of history (Pannenberg, 1970:15). The history of early Christian worship and devotion to Jesus was evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead (Siniscalchi, 2011:727). Thus, for Pannenberg (1970:15), the bodily resurrection of Jesus is a historical event and it is open to the scrutiny of historical research.

2.2.4 Gaps observed in the literature

2.2.4.1 Bodily resurrection as the violation of the natural law

Bodily resurrection is a violation of natural law and is not accepted by modern and scientific minds according to Wayne (2017). This argument completely ignores the existence and possibility of change/s in nature and will be addressed in chapter six of this study.

2.2.4.2 Bodily resurrection as myth and allegory

Bodily resurrection is mythical and allegorical in meaning (Strauss, 2011). This argument does not consider the study of the sources of the narrative accounts as reported in the gospel accounts examined through source criticism as will be discussed in chapter six.

2.2.4.3 Failure to present the corpse

Failure to present the corpse of Jesus or its remains in order to disapprove the bodily resurrection and its proclamation remains a critical matter in this study. The arguments against the bodily resurrection should account for the missing corpse, especially considering the claims that bodily resurrection is a myth and allegoric (Eisenberg, 2016:141). Chapters five and six respond to the argument of Eisenberg (2016:141).

2.2.4.4 Bodily resurrection as later development

Bodily resurrection as a later development is based on the observation that the early New Testament writers like Paul did not mention bodily resurrection (Eisenberg, 2016:141). In the light of the stated argument, how can 1 Corinthians 15 be interpreted and the apostle Paul's testimony based on personal encounters with eyewitnesses? Chapter six responds to the stated observation.

2.2.4.5 The stolen body theory

The stolen body theory remains a weak argument in the debate about the resurrection because in this theory the disciples have been accused of having stolen the body from the tomb (Carrier, 2006). In this argument, what is the place of the seal and total security at the tomb enhanced by the Roman soldiers? To what extent did the disciples

overcome their fear which caused most of the male disciples to run away for their safety during the trials of Jesus performed by both the Sanhedrin and the Roman authorities? Thus, chapter five of this study responds to the stolen body theory by Carrier (2006).

2.2.4.6 The Spiritual resurrection theory

The spiritual resurrection theory entails that Jesus was not raised to life in a real physical form (Carrier, 2006). Accordingly, bodily resurrection is a subjective conception in the mind (Craffert, 2002:89-107). Like the stolen body theory, this theory does not account for a historical explanation of the absence of the actual physical body from the tomb. Where was the missing body or its remains? Thus, Chapter five facilitates the demonstration of reliable historical evidence of the empty tomb with empty burial linen.

2.2.4.7 The historical inconsistency

The gospel accounts indicate historical inconsistency and legendary embellishment (Carrier, 2006). This argument does not account for the existence of the diverse sources and the stages of development of the gospel accounts from oral transmission and written fragments to fully developed documents. What is the role of source criticism in light of the perceived historical inconsistencies? The stated gap is addressed in chapter four of this study.

2.2.4.8 Christian historians

Only Christian historians mention the resurrection (Carrier, 2006). In the light of the mentioned argument, what is the role of extra-biblical and non-biblical sources such as the submissions of both Jewish and Roman historians? These sources will be addressed in chapters three and five.

2.2.4.9 Historical setting

Regarding the historical setting, Carrier (2006) argues that the context of the first century was characterised by uncivilised, uncritical, unscholarly, and second-hand witnesses conveyed by people with biased views. To what extent are the people of the ancient world illiterate in light of sufficient historical evidence of their background characterised with education? For instance, Luke (Craig, 2006) the ancient historian

and a doctor trained in the medical science of the first century as will be discussed in chapter six of this study respectively.

2.2.4.10 Martyrdom

The martyrdom of Christians has been used as an argument against the bodily resurrection of Jesus, namely, that no Christian died because of his/her belief in the physical resurrection but was rather based on other, specific charges (Carrier, 2006). This argument undermines the central message of the proclamation of the early Christians that the one who was crucified was raised three days later as will be discussed in chapter six of this study. Such a proclamation and its implications cannot be ignored.

2.3 Conclusion

In the light of the literature review about the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the question is clear: Was the resurrection bodily or spiritual in nature? The gaps observed in the literature outlined from [2.2.9.1 to 2.2.9.10](#) indicate the necessity and value of this study.

The biblical text is taken as the primary source. Therefore, the historical-critical method, namely, source criticism as described earlier in chapter one of this study will help to establish the credibility, reliability, and historicity of the biblical text. To respond to the mentioned gaps, this study will perform an investigation of which the aim is to demonstrate that there exists reliable historical evidence in favour of bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, the discussion of the historical evidence of the death and burial of Jesus based on the act of crucifixion creates a point of departure for the investigations of this study.

CHAPTER 3 HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JESUS

3.1 Introduction

The first question to answer is whether Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross due to crucifixion and did not survive. This chapter aims to establish the historical evidence that Jesus of Nazareth died at the cross after crucifixion as recorded in the Synoptic accounts and the account according to John. In addition, evidence exists outside the gospel accounts within the New Testament canon such as the Pauline literature as well as writings outside the biblical accounts, namely, the documents of Jewish and Roman historians, also called non-biblical accounts. Furthermore, medical investigations will substantiate the reports from the narrative accounts that crucifixion did kill its victims.

3.2 The Synoptic accounts: Mtt. 27: 45-61, Mk. 15: 26-47, Luk. 23: 38-55.

3.2.1 Exegetical framework

The Synoptic accounts have created a point of departure for the discussion regarding the eyewitnesses to the death and burial of Jesus of Nazareth (Mtt. 27:45-61; Mk.15:26-47; Luk. 23:38-55) within the context of the subject of the resurrection. The Synoptic accounts are reliable sources of historical evidence about the death and burial of Jesus of Nazareth. The death and burial narrative accounts report that Jesus was crucified due to the Jewish accusations that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Matthew 27:46 reports that, “⁴⁶and about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’¹¹²; Mark 15:34: agrees and states that “³⁴at three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’¹¹³; Luke 23:46 adds the following words: “⁴⁶then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his

¹¹² Mtt. 27:46; ⁴⁶περὶ δὲ τὴν ἐνάτην ὥραν ἀνεβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλη λέγων Ἥλει Ἥλει λεμὰ σαβαχθανεὶ; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Θεέ μου θεέ μου, ἵνα τί με ἐγκατέλιπες (Nestle, 1904).

¹¹³ Mk. 15:34; ³⁴καὶ τῇ ἐνάτῃ ὥρᾳ ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλη Ἐλωὶ Ἐλωὶ λαμὰ σαβαχθανεὶ; ὃ ἔστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με (Nestle, 1904).

last.”¹¹⁴ Thus, the Synoptic gospels report that Jesus died at about three in the afternoon after battling for his life as demonstrated by a loud cry: “..., darkness came over all the land..., About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice..., Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice saying Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani. Which means my God, my God, why have you forsaken me...?, then gave up his spirit.” The phraseology concerning the onset of darkness echoes Exodus 10:22 and Amos 8:9-10 where supernatural darkness symbolises the displeasure of God. Thus, here too in the Synoptic accounts, the darkness implies the displeasure of God at the killing of God’s Son Jesus. It is important to note that astronomically, a natural solar eclipse would not have occurred during Passover at the time of the full moon (Gundry, 2010:130). The emphasis of the mentioned displeasure is demonstrated in the onset of darkness at noon when the sun is at its zenith, covering all the land and lasting till mid-afternoon (Gundry, 2010:130).

Jesus’s action of crying out in a loud voice entails a painful experience in his body which the Jews interpreted as God’s leaving Jesus to die at the cross rather than stepping in to save him from death (Gundry, 2010:130). The Hebrew of Psalms 22:1: “Eli, Eli, Lema sabachthani?” had to set up a mistaken impression that Jesus was calling for Elijah to provide necessary help, such it was perceived because the prophet Elijah left earth without dying (2 Kgs. 2:11), thus the Jews held the position that Elijah could come to save the righteous sufferers (Gundry, 2010:130). Among others, standing at the cross were the soldiers, chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders. Hence, in fulfilment of the saying of the Psalmist, one of them took immediate action to give Jesus a drink of wine vinegar (Psa. 69:21).

The stated bystanders noted that more time was needed to see whether Elijah could come to save him, hence the act of giving him the drink of wine. On the contrary, vinegary wine does not prolong life in a medicinal perspective, but as a simple refreshment it might keep Jesus alive a little longer (Gundry, 2010:130). Neither Elijah nor God came to save Jesus and he did not save himself as he saved others. The Synoptic accounts indicate that Jesus cried out and died at the cross. The Synoptics agree that it was the centurion that witnessed several supernatural happenings and

¹¹⁴ Luk. 23:46; ⁴⁶καὶ φωνήσας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. τοῦτο δὲ εἰπὼν ἐξέπνευσεν (Nestle, 1904).

reported the development to Pontius Pilate (Mtt. 27:50: “⁵⁰then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last,” ¹¹⁵; Mk. 15:37: “³⁷then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last,”¹¹⁶ ; Luk. 23:47 “⁴⁷when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent’¹¹⁷). Matthew 27:35-50: provides a full description of the moment of the death of Jesus; the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook, the rocks split the tombs were opened, and the bodies of the many holy people were raised to life. The centurion was physically present and watched these events unfold. Mark 15:39 report the following: “³⁹now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God's Son!’¹¹⁸), and in agreement with the Markan account Luke 23:47 adds the following “⁴⁷when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’¹¹⁹). Hence, affirm the confession of the centurion.

In addition, all the male disciples had fled (Mtt. 26:56: “⁵⁶but all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled. Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.”¹²⁰). Following at a distance Peter performed an apostate’s exist (Mtt. 26:75: “⁷⁵then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: ‘Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.”¹²¹) Only John remained (Joh. 19:26-27: “²⁶when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own

¹¹⁵ Mtt. 27:50; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν κράξας φωνῆ μεγάλη ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Nestle, 1904).

¹¹⁶ Mk. 15:37; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹¹⁷ Luk. 23:47; ⁴⁷ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης τὸ γενόμενον ἐδόξαζεν τὸν Θεὸν λέγων Ὅντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν (Nestle, 1904).

¹¹⁸ Mk. 15:39: ³⁹ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν, εἶπεν Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος Υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἦν (Nestle, 1904).

¹¹⁹ Luk. 23:47; ⁴⁷ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης τὸ γενόμενον ἐδόξαζεν τὸν Θεὸν λέγων Ὅντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν (Nestle, 1904).

¹²⁰ Mtt. 26:56: ⁵⁶Τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν. Τότε οἱ μαθηταὶ πάντες ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον (Nestle, 1904).

¹²¹ Mtt. 26:75; ⁷⁵καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τοῦ ῥήματος Ἰησοῦ εἰρηκότος ὅτι Πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι τρὶς ἀπαρνήσῃ με· καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς (Nestle, 1904).

home.”¹²²). Contrary to this, the women followed and watched all the events at a distance. They were identified as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the two sons of Zebedee (Mtt. 27:35-50). The naming of Mary Magdalene first suggests her leadership role among the other women (Gundry, 2010:131). Mark 15:40-41 reports: “⁴⁰there were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.”¹²³ Mark adds the name of Salome and Luke reports in favour of the women being available for him in Luke 23:55: “⁵⁵the women who had come with him from Galilee followed and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid.”¹²⁴). Only Luke reports women without mentioning their names.

Mark 15:43-45 adds that “⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.”¹²⁵). Mark discloses that before the body of Jesus was taken away for burial, Pilate the Roman governor being in receipt of the report of Jesus’s death authorised that the body be surrendered for burial in respect to the Jewish cultural values. The Jewish traditions demanded the removal of every corpse of the hanged and crucified prior to sunset (Deut. 21:22-23) before the observance of the Sabbath. It is of paramount importance to

¹²² Joh. 19:26-27: ²⁶Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἰδὼν τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν παρεστῶτα ὃν ἠγάπα, λέγει τῇ μητρὶ Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. ²⁷εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια (Nestle, 1904).

¹²³ Mk. 15:40-41: ⁴⁰Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι, ἐν αἷς καὶ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ Ἰακώβου τοῦ μικροῦ καὶ Ἰωσήτος μήτηρ καὶ Σαλώμη, ⁴¹αἱ ὅτε ἦν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ αἱ συναναβᾶσαι αὐτῷ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα (Nestle, 1904).

¹²⁴ Luk. 23:55: ⁵⁵Κατακολουθήσασαι δὲ αἱ γυναῖκες, αἵτινες ἦσαν συνεληλυθυῖαι ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας αὐτῷ, ἐθεάσαντο τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ ὡς ἐτέθη τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹²⁵ Mk. 15:43-45; ⁴³ἐλθὼν Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, εὐσχήμων βουλευτῆς, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τολμήσας εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλάτον καὶ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. ⁴⁴ὁ δὲ Πειλάτος ἐθαύμασεν εἰ ἤδη τέθνηκεν, καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν κεντυρίωνα ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν εἰ πάλαι ἀπέθανεν. ⁴⁵καὶ γνοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντυρίωνος ἔδωκ’ αὐτῷ τὸ πτώμα τῷ Ἰωσήφ (Nestle, 1904).

note that the taking of Jesus's body avoids the indignity of its hanging at the cross overnight and throughout the Sabbath. Furthermore, the Roman authorities normally forbade a proper burial of those executed like Jesus under high treason (in the case of Jesus as "king of the Jews") in opposition to Caesar (Gundry, 2010:132).

In the fulfilment of the sayings of the Old Testament prophets that his grave was aligned to be with the rich man in his death (Isa. 53:9), Matthew 27:57-60 reports that ⁵⁷when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away." ¹²⁶, Like the Matthean account, Mark also provides a similar report in Mark 15:42-46 states: ⁴²when evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb."¹²⁷ ; Luke 23:50-53 states: ⁵⁰now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, ⁵¹had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he

¹²⁶ Mtt. 27:57-60: ⁵⁷Οψίας δὲ γενομένης ἦλθεν ἄνθρωπος πλούσιος ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, τοῦνομα Ἰωσήφ, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐμαθητεύθη τῷ Ἰησοῦ· ⁵⁸οὗτος προσελθὼν τῷ Πειλάτῳ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. τότε ὁ Πειλάτος ἐκέλευσεν ἀποδοθῆναι. ⁵⁹καὶ λαβὼν τὸ σῶμα ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ ἐν σινδόνι καθαρᾷ ⁶⁰καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ ὃ ἐλατόμησεν ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ, καὶ προσκυλίσας λίθον μέγαν τῇ θύρᾳ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήλθεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹²⁷ Mk. 15:42-46: ⁴²Καὶ ἤδη ὀψίας γενομένης, ἐπεὶ ἦν Παρασκευή, ὃ ἐστὶν προσάββατον, ⁴³ἐλθὼν Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, εὐσχήμων βουλευτῆς, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τολμήσας εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλάτον καὶ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. ⁴⁴ὁ δὲ Πειλάτος ἐθαύμασεν εἰ ἤδη τέθνηκεν, καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν κεντυρίωνα ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν εἰ πάλοι ἀπέθανεν· ⁴⁵καὶ γνοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντυρίωνος ἔδωρῆσατο τὸ πτώμα τῷ Ἰωσήφ. ⁴⁶καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδὸνα καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησεν τῇ σινδόνι καὶ κατέθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνήματι ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας, καὶ προσεκύλισεν λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου (Nestle, 1904).

took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.”¹²⁸ All agree that after the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea a member of the Jewish council and a wealthy man, took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and buried it in his new tomb belonging to his family. Matthew describes the linen cloth as “clean” and the tomb as “new”.

Thus, the ritual purity of the shroud and tomb entails an explicit demonstration of Joseph’s respect for the body of Jesus. Adding devotion to respect is Mathew’s saying that Joseph himself hewed the tomb in rock. The rock associates tomb with the tombs in rocks that were meant and created for the righteous people. The tomb hewn in rock were expensive and had shelves on which corpses were laid (Gundry, 2010:132). Thus, Joseph’s gesture is a clear demonstration of the value of the status quo of Jesus, despite being a victim of crucifixion. The Synoptic accounts agree that women from Galilee were eyewitnesses to the death and burial of Jesus. Matthew 27:61 (Mtt. 27:61 “⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.”¹²⁹) ; Mark 15:47 (Mk. 15:47: “⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.”¹³⁰) agree that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body of Jesus was buried.

Therefore, Carson and Moo (2005:85-86) submits that source criticism appreciates and clarifies the gaps that may seem to exist in the Synoptic accounts such as similarity and dissimilarity as claimed by Carrier (2006) as earlier discussed [in chapter one and two](#). The dissimilarity does not imply theological inconsistency and modification and such suppositions should not disregard the Synoptic Gospels as unreliable and unhistorical. Source criticism demonstrates that the evangelists had many sources from which their narratives originated and does not ignore the fact that the sources were both oral traditions and written fragments. It recognises the two-source hypothesis in which Mark,

¹²⁸ Luk. 23:50-53: ⁵⁰Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Ἰωσήφ βουλευτῆς ὑπάρχων, ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος, ⁵¹οὗτος οὐκ ἦν συνκατατεθειμένος τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῇ πράξει αὐτῶν, ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας πόλεως τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὃς προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ⁵²οὗτος προσελθὼν τῷ Πειλάτῳ ῥήτησατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ⁵³καὶ καθελὼν ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ σινδόνι, καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνήματι λαξευτῷ, οὗ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὕτω κείμενος (Nestle, 1904).

¹²⁹ Mtt. 27:61: ⁶¹Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ Μαριάμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία, καθήμεναι ἀπέναντι τοῦ τάφου (Nestle, 1904).

¹³⁰ Mk. 15:47; καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδὸνα καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησεν τῇ σινδόνι καὶ κατέθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνήματι ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας, καὶ προσεκύλισεν λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου (Nestle, 1904).

and Quelle are major sources (Black & Dockery, 1991:144), which Matthew and Luke had used to compile their gospel accounts respectively.

However, source critics can justify that even when two or more people use the same sources of information, it is not uncommon that elements of narratives may not be exactly the same, and that similarities and dissimilarities will exist. Therefore, the conclusion should not be based on claims of historical inconsistency as a criterion for determining the credibility and reliability of a particular document but rather its tangible sources in their original form, using source criticism to identify these sources (Carson & Moo, 2005:85-86). In addition, source critics have enhanced the recognition of discrepancies and disjunctures in the text of the reports of the gospel accounts (Gorman, 2006:106-107). After that, source criticism has created a platform on which an inquiry into the sources discloses that the biblical text is not a product of one source. Instead, the process of development and compilation involved various sources such oral tradition (sayings) and written fragments both well and not well organised. For instance, Matthew and Luke will agree when the same source is used and differ when different sources are used (Gorman, 2006:107). Thus, source critics acknowledge the diversity of sources. A source critic will examine the text to discern what tradition and what redaction is. The exegete will utilise the source critic's conclusion to ascertain what happened and what did not happen in history (Black & Dockery, 1991:159).

Thus, source criticism plays a major role in rectifying the perceived disparities. For instance, the dissimilarity that exists between Matthew 27:45-46: ⁴⁵“from noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’¹³¹); Luke 23:44-46 ⁴⁴“it was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed

¹³¹ Mtt. 27: 45-46: ⁴⁵Ἀπὸ δὲ ἕκτης ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης. ⁴⁶περὶ δὲ τὴν ἐνάτην ὥραν ἀνεβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλης λέγων Ἥλει Ἥλει λεμὰ σαβαχθανεὶ; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Θεέ μου θεέ μου, ἵνα τί με ἐγκατέλιπες (Nestle, 1904).

his last.”¹³²) can be explained as being the result of the use of different sources by the authors. Matthew 27:45-46 reports that Jesus cried out loudly saying ‘Eli, Eli lema sabachthani?’ (Which means my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)” while Luke 23:44-46 reports that Jesus called out saying “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” The task now is to translate the language Jesus used ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’

Thus, source critics focus on the source of the original form and the language of the text. Thus, Benson (2018) notes that the phrase “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” are words quoted from Psalm 22:1. Yet these are not the very words of the Hebrew original but rather words in Syro-Chaldaic, the language which Jesus used. Bengel (2018) observes that *σαβαχθανι*¹³³, *sabachthani* and in Hebrew expressed as ¹³⁴*אֵלֵי אֵלֵי לָמָּה שָׂבַחְתָּנִי*, meaning forsaken me? This is rendered in Greek by *χ*, when *θ*, th, follows *Θεέ Μου*¹³⁵ meaning ‘my God’ and submits the quotation from the Septuagint (LXX.) of the Psa. 22:1 ‘my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning.’¹³⁶; meaning ‘my God, my God, ... Why...forsaken me?’ Barnes (2018) agrees with Benson (2018). The language is Aramaic.

In addition, Pruitt (2021) submits that the historical Jesus principally spoke a Galilean dialect of Aramaic. Through trade, invasions, and conquest, the Aramaic language had spread far afield by the seventh century BC and could become the lingua franca in much of the Middle East. In the first century AD Aramaic was the most commonly used language among ordinary Jewish people, as opposed to the religious elite and the most likely to have been used among Jesus and his disciples in their daily lives (Pruitt, 2021). Hebrew, which is from the same linguistic family as Aramaic, was also in common use in Jesus’s day. Similar to Latin today, Hebrew was the chosen language for religious

¹³² Luk. 23:44-46; ⁴⁴Καὶ ἦν ἡδὴ ὥσει ὥρα ἕκτη καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ’ ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης ⁴⁵τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος, ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ μέσον. ⁴⁶καὶ φωνήσας φωνῆ μεγάλη ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. τοῦτο δὲ εἰπὼν ἐξέπνευσεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹³³ *σαβαχθανι* (Bengel, 2018).

¹³⁴ *אֵלֵי אֵלֵי* (Bengel, 2018).

¹³⁵ *Θεέ Μου* (Bengel, 2018).

¹³⁶ ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Θεός μου, πρόσχες μοι, ἵνατί ἐγκατέλιπές με (Bengel, 2018).

scholars and the holy scriptures, including the Bible, although some of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic (Pruitt, 2021). Jesus understood Hebrew, though his everyday life was conducted in Aramaic. Thus, out of the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark record Jesus using Aramaic terms and phrases, while Luke 4:16 states: “¹⁶when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read.”¹³⁷ He was shown reading Hebrew from the Bible at a synagogue (Pruitt, 2021).

Furthermore, Aramaic and Hebrew, Greek and Latin were also common in Jesus’s time and space (Pruitt, 2021). For instance, after Alexander the Great’s conquest of Mesopotamia and the rest of the Persian Empire in the fourth century BC Greek supplanted other languages as the official language in much of the region. In the first century AD Judea was part of the eastern Roman Empire, which embraced Greek as its lingua franca and reserved Latin for legal and military matters (Pruitt, 2021). Hence, the Greek context.

Therefore, Matthew 27:45-46 and Luke 23:44-46 do not indicate theological inconsistency as claimed by Carrier (2006). Rather, the claimed discrepancies in reports are based on the use of different sources. Source critics engage the reader to identify and be aware of the diversity of possible sources, reminding readers that when Matthew and Luke disagree in their reports, they probably used different sources. When the two agree they probably used the same sources. Therefore, source criticism in this investigation maintains that the sources of the Synoptic accounts should not be ignored in the determination of the credibility and historicity of differing accounts of the same events (Carson and Moo, 2005:79-85).

3.3 The Gospel according to John 19: 28-42

3.3.1 Exegetical framework

John 19:17-18 states: “¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him,

¹³⁷ Luk. 4:16: ¹⁶Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ναζαρά, οὗ ἦν τεθραμμένος, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν, καὶ ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι (Pruitt, 2021).

and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.”¹³⁸). John reports that after the formal verdict of the crucifixion of Jesus. The soldiers took charge of Jesus on his way to the place of the Skull (Golgotha)-A place where he was crucified with two others on either side of him. Like in the Synoptic accounts, John 19:19-22 states: “¹⁹Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek. ²¹Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ ; ²²Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’¹³⁹). This affirms the inscription prepared by Pilate which read ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews’ and discloses that the Jewish leaders had objected that Jesus claimed to be ‘king of the Jews.’ However, despite the protests, Pilate insisted that the inscription should stand. John 19:23-24 adds that Old Testament scriptures were being fulfilled in and through various details surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. For instance, his, garment was not torn but divided among the Roman soldiers who guarded him. Hence, fulfilling the reference in Psalm 22:18, which states that they divided his clothes among them and cast lots for his garment.

The Johannine account includes the instruction of Jesus to his mother and the disciple whom he loved, as reported in John 19:25-27: “²⁵and that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.”¹⁴⁰). The trustworthy position of this disciple is

¹³⁸ Joh. 19:17-18: ¹⁷καὶ βαστάζων ἑαυτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν ἐξῆλθεν εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστὶ Γολγοθᾶ, ¹⁸ὅπου αὐτὸν ἐσταύρωσαν, καὶ μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἄλλους δύο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, μέσον δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν (Nestle, 1904).

¹³⁹Joh. 19:19-22: ¹⁹ἔγραψεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πειλᾶτος καὶ ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ· ἦν δὲ γεγραμμένον ἸΗΣΟΥΣ Ο ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ. ²⁰τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τίτλον πολλοὶ ἀνέγνωσαν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν ὁ τόπος τῆς πόλεως ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί. ²¹ἔλεγον οὖν τῷ Πειλάτῳ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων Μὴ γράφῃ Ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν Βασιλεὺς εἰμι τῶν Ἰουδαίων. ²²ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πειλᾶτος Ὁ γέγραφα, γέγραφα (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴⁰ . Joh. 19:25-27; ²⁵εἰστήκεισαν δὲ παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ καὶ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνῆ. ²⁶Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἰδὼν τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν

emphasised for he was at the side of Jesus and at the last supper (Joh. 13:23 “²³one of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him.”¹⁴¹). The stated disciple is identified as the author of the Gospel of John as indicated in John 21:24: “²⁴this is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.”¹⁴²). His eyewitness testimony is reflected in the Gospel as reported in John 19:35 that Jesus suffered pain and humiliation before he died at the cross (Joh. 19:35-36: “³⁵he who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true and he knows that he tells the truth.). ³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.”¹⁴³).

It is important to note that in the crucifixion narrative, another Old Testament scripture was fulfilled when Jesus had uttered his second word at the cross in John 19:28 saying, “I am thirsty” John 19:28: reports “²⁸after this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said [in order to fulfill the scripture], ‘I am thirsty.’¹⁴⁴] cf. Exo. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psa. 34:20). Like the reports of the Synoptics as discussed earlier, after drinking from a sponge soaked with wine vinegar (Joh. 19:29: “²⁹a jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.”¹⁴⁵), Jesus said “it is finished” bowed his head and died as reported in John 19:30: “³⁰when Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”¹⁴⁶). Vinegary wine plays a significant role here to slake the thirst better than fine wine does, which the soldiers did not have available.

παρεστώτα ὄν ἡγάπα, λέγει τῇ μητρὶ Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. ²⁷εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν ὁ μαθητῆς αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴¹ Joh. 13:23; ²³ἦν ἀνακείμενος εἰς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὄν ἡγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴² Joh. 21:24: ²⁴Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητῆς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴³ Joh. 19:35-36; ³⁵καὶ ὁ ἐωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε. ³⁶ἐγένετο γὰρ ταῦτα ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ Ὅσοῦν οὐ συντριβήσεται αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴⁴ Joh. 19:28: ²⁸Μετὰ τοῦτο εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται, ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφὴ, λέγει Διψῷ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴⁵ Joh. 19:29; ²⁹σκεῦος ἔκειτο ὄξους μεστόν· σπόγγον οὖν μεστόν τοῦ ὄξους ὑσσώπῳ περιθέντες προσήνεγκαν αὐτοῦ τῷ στόματι (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴⁶ Joh. 19:30; ³⁰ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Nestle, 1904).

The wrapping of a sponge soaked with vinegary wine around a branch of hyssop points to the crucifixion as a sacrifice of God's Passover lamb, for it was with hyssop that at the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites sprinkled the blood of their Passover lambs on the lintel and side posts of their doors so that the Lord passed over their homes without slaying their first born as he did slayed those of the Egyptians (Exo. 12:1-36; 12:22; Psalms 51:7). Jesus's consumption of vinegary wine fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist (Psalms 69:21) as also reported in the Synoptics (Gundry, 2010:453). The phrase "it is finished" suggested the end of Jesus's life. The anguished outcry "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me"? (...that is forsaken me to die [Mtt. 27:46 ; Mk. 15:34]), and committing his spirit to God (Luk. 23:46) are missing from the Johannine account, because as far as John's portrayal of Jesus is concerned Jesus is the Word and the Word is God. Therefore, how could God forsake the God-self? (Gundry, 2010:453). John 19:32-34 reports the breaking of the bones of other victims of crucifixion by the soldiers whilst sparing Jesus (Joh. 19:32-34: ³²then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once blood and water came out."¹⁴⁷). It was the piercing of Jesus's side by a spear which resulted in the sudden flow of blood, and water from the lance piercing of his pleural cavity, where the fluid had collected after heart stoppage and death (Davis, 2001). Breaking the legs brought on death by shock for the other two victims of crucifixion. The non-breaking of the legs of Jesus entails and portrays him again as a Passover sacrifice, for the Mosaic law prohibited breaking any bones of such a sacrifice (Exo. 12:46; Num. 9:12; [cf. Psalms 34:19-20]).

The blood that came out after Jesus was pierced entails the life-blood of God's Passover lamb that took away the sins of the people (1 Joh.1:7: ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."¹⁴⁸), that a person (follower of Jesus) must drink

¹⁴⁷ Joh. 19:32-34; ³²ἦλθον οὖν οἱ στρατιῶται, καὶ τοῦ μὲν πρώτου κατέαξαν τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου τοῦ συσταυρωθέντος αὐτῷ. ³³ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐλθόντες, ὡς εἶδον ἤδη αὐτὸν τεθνηκότα, οὐ κατέαξαν αὐτοῦ τὰ σκέλη, ³⁴ἀλλ' εἷς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχῃ αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἔνυξεν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁴⁸ 1 Joh.1:7; ⁷ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτὸς ἔστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας (Nestle, 1904).

(Joh. 6:53-56: “⁵³so Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.”¹⁴⁹).

The water that came out symbolises the Holy Spirit given by Jesus (Joh. 19:30) through whom a person is born from above as reported in John 3:3-8: ³Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ ⁴Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ ⁵Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit”.¹⁵⁰) such a person will have access to eternal life (Joh. 6:63: “⁶³it is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”¹⁵¹; Joh. 7:37-39: “³⁷on the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me ³⁸and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ ” ³⁹Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was

¹⁴⁹ Joh. 6:53-56; ⁵³εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πῖνῃτε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ⁵⁴ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, κἀγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ· ⁵⁵ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ μου ἀληθῆς ἐστὶ / ἐστὶν βρωσις, καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου ἀληθῆς ἐστὶ ἐστὶν πόσις. ⁵⁶ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵⁰ Joh. 3:3-8; ³ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. ⁴λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Νικόδημος Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὤν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; ⁵ἀπεκρίθη (ὁ) Ἰησοῦς Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. ⁶τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστὶν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστὶν. ⁷μὴ θαυμάσης ὅτι εἶπόν σοι Δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. ⁸τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ’ οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵¹ Joh. 6:63; ⁶³τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ ζωοποιοῦν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν· τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστὶν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν (Nestle, 1904).

no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified”.¹⁵²; [cf. 1 Joh. 5:6-8: “⁶this is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. ⁷There are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree.”¹⁵³]). The immediacy with which the blood and water came out ties the atonement (Gundry, 2010:454).

John 19:38-42 states: “³⁸after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.”¹⁵⁴. John reports the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea and adds that he was accompanied by Nicodemus. Thus, for John both the crucifixion and burial of Jesus was a lift up and glorification sealed by the enormous amount of perfumery with which the body was wrapped (Gundry, 2010:455).

¹⁵² Joh. 7:37-39: ³⁷Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἰσθῆκει / εἰσθῆκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἔκραξεν λέγων Ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω. ³⁸ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ρεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος. ³⁹Τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ / ὃ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύσαντες εἰς αὐτόν· οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐπω / οὐδέπω ἔδοξάσθη (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵³ 1 Joh. 5:6-8; ⁵τίς ἐστὶν δὲ ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; ⁶Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν, ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια. ⁷ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, ⁸τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵⁴ Joh. 19:38-42: ³⁸Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἠρώτησεν τὸν Πειλᾶτον Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, ὢν μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεκρυμμένος δὲ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ· καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν ὁ Πειλᾶτος. ἦλθεν οὖν καὶ ἦρεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ. ³⁹ἦλθεν δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν. ⁴⁰ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν. ⁴¹ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινόν, ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος· ⁴²ἐκεῖ οὖν διὰ τὴν Παρασκευὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ μνημεῖον, ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν (Nestle, 1904).

Thus, through the knowledge of source criticism as discussed in [chapter one](#), the reports disclose that John was not only the author of the gospel, but was an eyewitness of Jesus's crucifixion, death and burial. Thus, John reported his own recollection of events. I am of the opinion that the emphasis in John 21:24–25 (Joh. 21:24-25 “²⁴this is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”¹⁵⁵) should not be ignored by the readers of the gospel accounts and theologians of the twenty-first Century and beyond because John was an eyewitness.

3.4 The death and burial of Jesus: Scholarly views

The Johannine chronology of events adds to the reports of the Synoptic accounts (Witherington, 2001:134). This is a fair observation considering that John was an eyewitness to the death and burial of Jesus while other disciples had run away and others even denied their status as Jesus's disciples as they sought their security (Mtt. 26:69-74, Mk. 14:66-72 ; Luk. 22:54-61). The structure and tone of John may differ from that of the Synoptic accounts. However, discrepancies do not imply historical inconsistency but possible sources of diversity (Marshall, 1992:144-145).

Furthermore, Witherington (2001:156-157), based on the Johannine account, indicates that the Roman procedure of crucifixion involved a person condemned to death, who was flogged (flagellum) and made to carry the crossbar to the site of execution. Thus, in the case of Jesus flagellation took place earlier in the proceedings as Pilate attempted to have him released as indicated in all the gospel accounts (Mtt. 27:23-25: “²³then he asked, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified!’ ²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.’” ²⁵Then the people as a whole

¹⁵⁵ Joh. 21:24-25: ²⁴Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν. ²⁵Ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ' ἓν, οὐδ' αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσαι τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία (Nestle, 1904).

answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”¹⁵⁶, Mk. 15:12-15: “¹²Pilate spoke to them again, ‘Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?’ ¹³They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ ¹⁴Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’ ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.”¹⁵⁷; Luk. 23:20-24 ; Joh. 19:12-16: “¹²from then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of the Emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.” ¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” ¹⁵They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the Emperor.” ¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.”¹⁵⁸). It is vital to note that Jesus must have experienced considerable blood loss before execution. According to Witherington (2001:156-157) this may in turn explain why Jesus expired so rapidly at the cross.

In addition, Witherington (2001:156-157) states that the flagellum could and often did kill its victims, ripping out flesh right down to the bone with the hooks, bits of rock, and the like that were tied to the ends of the thongs. This refers to being scourged until the entrails were visible or until the bones showed. It appears likely that Jesus was severely

¹⁵⁶ Mtt. 27:23-25; ²³ὁ δὲ ἔφη Τί γὰρ κακὸν ἐποίησεν; οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραζον λέγοντες Σταυρωθήτω. ²⁴ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Πειλᾶτος ὅτι οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θόρυβος γίνεται, λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς χεῖρας κατέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου λέγων Ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὤψεσθε. ²⁵καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἶπεν Τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵⁷ Mk. 15:12-15; ¹²ὁ δὲ Πειλᾶτος πάλιν ἀποκριθεὶς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς Τί οὖν ποιήσω ὃν λέγετε τὸν Βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων ¹³οἱ δὲ πάλιν ἔκραζαν Σταύρωσον αὐτόν. ¹⁴ὁ δὲ Πειλᾶτος ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς Τί γὰρ ἐποίησεν κακόν; οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραζαν Σταύρωσον αὐτόν. ¹⁵ὁ δὲ Πειλᾶτος βουλόμενος τῷ ὄχλῳ τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιῆσαι ἀπέλυσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν Βαραββᾶν, καὶ παρέδωκεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν φραγελλώσας ἵνα σταυρωθῆ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁵⁸ Joh. 19:12-16; ¹²λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Δεῦτε ἀριστήσατε. οὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα τῶν μαθητῶν ἐξετάσαι αὐτόν Σὺ τίς εἶ; εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ Κύριός ἐστιν. ¹³ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὸ ὀψάριον ὁμοίως. ¹⁴τοῦτο ἤδη τρίτον ἐφανερώθη Ἰησοῦς τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν.

¹⁵⁹Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν, λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με πλέον τούτων; λέγει αὐτῷ Ναί, Κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ Βόσκε τὰ ἄρνια μου. ¹⁶λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεῦτερον Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; λέγει αὐτῷ Ναί, Κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ Ποίμαινε τὰ προβάτιά μου (Nestle, 1904).

scourged. Thus, due to the described flogging and scourging, Jesus became very weak as demonstrated in his failure to carry the cross all the way to *Golgotha* as indicated in the Synoptic accounts (Mtt. 27:32: “³²as they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.”¹⁵⁹; Mk. 15:21: “²¹they compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.”¹⁶⁰; Luk. 23:26: “²⁶as they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.”¹⁶¹). Hence, needed help from a man called Simon from Cyrene.

When Jesus was nailed at the cross, he experienced suffocation as a result of the inability to hold oneself up on the cross and breathe (Davis, 2001). This was shown in the loud cry of Jesus at the end as he was gasping for breath as reported in Mark 15:37 and his quick death surprising Pilate as indicated in Mark 15:44-45. Eventually Jesus possibly died of traumatic shock or even heart failure (Davis, 2001).

Jesus died on Nisan 14 (7 April) in 30 AD (Witherington, 2001:134) the day of preparation of the Sabbath and before the Passover began Jesus was already buried. Contrary to the view of (Witherington, 2001:134), Köstenberger (2014) submits that Jesus was crucified in the spring of either AD 30 or AD 33 and notes the evidence from astronomy that narrows the possibilities to AD 27, 30, 33, or 34 respectively. However, despite the mentioned dates, Köstenberger (2014) settle for the date of Friday, 3 April, AD 33 as the exact day on which Jesus of Nazareth died. Johnson (2010:25-26) points out that Jesus was put to death by crucifixion punishment that combined torture and asphyxiation. This was the mode of execution which the Romans reserved for slaves and rebels (Johnson, 2010:25-26). Wayne (2017) observes that the burial of the body of Jesus in the manner described in the passion narratives above was a radically unusual procedure because Jesus was crucified by the Roman authorities at the behest of

¹⁵⁹ Mtt. 27:32: ³²Ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ εὗρον ἄνθρωπον Κυρηναῖον, ὀνόματι Σίμωνα· τοῦτον ἠγγάρευσαν ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁶⁰ Mk. 15:21; ²¹καὶ ἀγγαρεύουσιν παράγοντά τινα Σίμωνα Κυρηναῖον ἐρχόμενον ἀπ’ ἀγροῦ, τὸν πατέρα Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ρούφου, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁶¹ Luk. 23:26: ²⁶Καὶ ὡς ἀπήγαγον αὐτόν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι Σίμωνά τινα Κυρηναῖον ἐρχόμενον ἀπ’ ἀγροῦ ἐπέθηκαν αὐτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν φέρειν ὀπισθεν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

rebellious Jews. Therefore, it was the Roman practice to leave the body on the cross until it decayed.

In addition, Wayne (2017) notes that the tomb was marked and authenticated with a Roman seal. It was first fastened with some ligament, over which was placed some well-compacted clay, and then impressed with the seal, so that any violation of it would be discovered at once (Job 38:14; Song of Songs 4:12; Mtt. 27:66). Fletcher (2012) agrees with the views of Wayne (2017) and submits that Joseph of Arimathea, received permission from Pilate, took the body of Jesus and placed it in a tomb. This action indicates that Pilate, an independent witness, knew that Jesus was dead. Hence, granting permission for a burial.

Furthermore, Fletcher (2012) states that Jesus was buried by two influential and respected men in the Jewish society, namely, Joseph and Nicodemus. Fletcher (2012) states that Nicodemus bought spices for the burial, namely, powdered myrrh and aloes. The fact of Jesus's death could also be verified by the Galilean women who prepared the body for burial. Two men (Joseph and Nicodemus) were not enough for the task of burying the body of Jesus because his dead body could not have been easy to carry. The stone to put at the entrance of the tomb required several men to move it. Joseph and Nicodemus were both rich men who had several servants at their disposal to perform the work (Fletcher, 2012).

The body of Jesus was buried after confirmation that Jesus had died. In Judea, if there was an approaching feast the bodies of crucified men were taken down and given to their relatives (Fletcher, 2012). A body was not allowed to hang on a cross after dark. This in obedience to the Jewish tradition which observes that men who had been crucified when there was a festival and holiday was at hand, were taken down and given to their relatives (Fletcher, 2012). The corpses were surrendered to the relatives to receive the honour of sepulchre and to enjoy such observances given to the dead, for the sacred character of the festival ought to be observed (Fletcher, 2012).

Jesus was buried according to the Jewish tradition (Fletcher, 2012). This means that the body was washed before it was finally wrapped in a simple shroud made of fine linen, normally a task performed by the female relatives of the deceased (Fletcher, 2012). During the act of preparing the body for burial, there were prescribed Psalms and

prayers. The body was then placed on a stone shelf within a tomb. The burial of Jesus's body was done quickly (Fletcher, 2012). Everything had to be finished in the short period that remained before sundown, all the people involved were strict Jews and careful observants of the Sabbath. Fletcher (2012) interprets the significance of the women who watched Jesus die at the cross and waited to see what could happen to his body with an observation that if no one claimed it. It could be buried with other criminals in a common grave. Thus, their presence positioned them as witnesses to the fact that Jesus was dead, buried, and they could testify to the exact tomb in which the body of Jesus was placed. Their courage and devotion made it unlikely that they could go to the wrong tomb when they returned in the morning on a Sunday after observing the Sabbath.

In this discussion, Wilson (2017) agrees with the views of Fletcher (2012) and adds that Roman authorities could not only nail the victim with both hands and feet but that the flogging could make the blood flow in streams. Therefore, it is certain that Jesus's hands and feet were nailed to the cross, though the nails did not usually kill the condemned person but only caused wounds that bled little. Most of the blood loss was from the scourging administered before the crucifixion and Jesus's death on the cross within six hours is a testimony to the severity of the scourging administered by the soldiers of Pilate before he was sent to *Golgotha*.

Thus, death could come slowly to most of the crucified, usually only after several days. Death resulted either from shock or a painful process of asphyxiation as the muscles used in breathing suffered increasing fatigue. Eventually, slowly a condemned man became too weak to breathe, but it was a unique case with Jesus who is reported to have died quickly (Wilson, 2017).

3.5 The extra-biblical sources

3.5.1 Other New Testament writers apart from the Gospels

There exists reliable historical evidence about the death and burial of Jesus outside the gospel accounts, but within the New Testament canon. The New Testament writers report about the death of Jesus. For Paul, among others (Peter and James), the crucifixion of Jesus was a fulfilment of the promise of the ancient scriptures as indicated

in Old Testament prophetic literature such as Isaiah 53:12. Therefore, the apostle Paul affirms the death of Jesus (1 Cor.15:3).

3.5.2 Non-biblical accounts: The Jewish-Roman historians

Apart from the Gospels and other New Testament writings, other sources exist that support the historicity of the death and burial of Jesus. These include two non-Christians from the first-century AD who mentioned Jesus Christ in their secular writings, namely, Cornelius Tacitus and Flavius Josephus. Tacitus was a Roman historian who lived from 35-120 AD. His attitude towards Christianity was hostile. However, Tacitus states that Jesus was executed by Pilate (Wasson, 2020)

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus lived between 37-100 AD. He agrees with the Roman historian Tacitus by pointing out that Jesus Christ the one who performed miracles was executed by Pilate. The attitude of Flavius towards Christianity was apathetic (Montefiore, 1960).

He recorded some of the earliest history of Jesus Christ outside the Gospels. Flavius Josephus belonged to the group of Jewish religious leaders and the Pharisees who were responsible for the death of Jesus (Montefiore, 1960). The writings of Josephus cover several figures familiar to the Bible readers such as John the Baptist, James the brother of Jesus, Pontius Pilate, the Sadducees, the Sanhedrin, the High Priests, the Pharisees, and Jesus himself (Price, 2004). According to Price (2004), the passage known as the Testimoniun Flavianum (TF) states that there was Jesus, a wise man, doer of wonderful works, teacher who drew the attention of both Jews and many gentiles. The Christ who was put to death by Pilate the Roman governor but was not forsaken completely by those that loved him. Jesus was a Jew condemned by Jewish leaders and was put to death by the Roman authorities (Price, 2004).

In support of the views of Price (2004), Bishop (2015) points out that one of the best-attested facts about Jesus is that he was crucified, a fact that many extra-biblical and non-biblical sources attest to. Cornelius Tacitus, writing around 116 AD states that Jesus suffered the extreme penalty of crucifixion under Pontius, which is affirmed by Flavius Josephus.

Furthermore, Bishop (2015) argues that some later writers, writing around the late second and early third centuries AD refer to the crucifixion. For example, the Lucian's satirical piece called the "passing of Peregrinus that mocks Christian faith" even reports about the death of Jesus and describes Jesus as a "crucified sophist." The Babylonian Talmud states that Jesus was hanged on the eve of the Passover (Sanhedrin 43a). In 52 AD Thallus wrote, possibly before Tacitus, that the death of Jesus was linked to a worldwide darkness, an earthquake and an eclipse-a parallel to the narrative reported in Matthew 27:51-54: "⁵¹at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'¹⁶²).

Gleghorn (2001) concurs with the views of Bishop (2015) and submits that the Roman historian Tacitus wrote, after a report on Emperor Nero's decision to blame the Christians for the fire that had destroyed Rome in 64 AD, Jesus suffered the extreme penalty, obviously alluding to the Roman method of execution known as crucifixion. This is said to have occurred during the reign of Tiberius and by the sentence of Pontius Pilatus. Indeed, these agree with much of what the gospel accounts have reported about the death of Jesus.

Furthermore, Gleghorn (2001) adds that other non-biblical sources of evidence about Jesus can be found in the letters of Pliny the Young to the Emperor Trajan. Pliny was the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. In one of his letters, dated around 112 AD Pliny writes that Christians were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day before it was light to sing hymns to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to perform any wicked deeds. This was an indication that the accusation of Jesus as king of the Jews resulted in death by crucifixion. Achtemeier et al. (2001:235) add that

¹⁶² Mtt. 27:51-54: ⁵¹Καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐσεισθη, καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν, ⁵²καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεώχθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν· ⁵³καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς. ⁵⁴Ὁ δὲ ἑκατόνταρχος καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ τηροῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἰδόντες τὸν σεισμόν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, λέγοντες Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (Nestle, 1904).

the Jewish tradition regarding the death of Jesus in the Jewish Talmud states that on the eve of the Passover they hanged Jesus of Nazareth and that a herald went out before him for forty days indicating that Jesus was going to be stoned because he practiced sorcery, enticed, and led Israel astray. After realising that one came out to defend Jesus, they hanged him on the eve of the Passover (Brown, 2009).

The sources outside the gospel accounts but within the New Testament canon and those outside the Bible, indicate that the narrative accounts about the death and burial of Jesus were not only known by the gospel writers or Christian historians, but also the Jewish and Roman historians, contrary to the argument of Carrier (2006) as mentioned in chapter two of this study.

3.5.3 Medical views

In the foregoing discussion about the death of Jesus by crucifixion, I am of the observation that medical views play a significant role with regard to authenticity of death by crucifixion. Thus, Mercola (2009) states that Jesus of Nazareth, a Galilean Jew who was regarded as a teacher and healer was charged with sedition against the Roman Empire for claiming to be the Holy Son of God and King of the Jews. At the age of approximately thirty-three, Jesus was condemned to death and was crucified. Death by crucifixion was reserved for only the worst of criminals (Mercola, 2009).

Large sharp nails, about fifteen to twenty centimetres (cm) long with a sharp end of six centimetres, were carved into the pulses, not into the palms, as the flesh of the palm could simply tear because of the weight of the body. In the wrist exists a tendon that extends to the shoulder. Thus, when the nails were hammered in, it broke the tendon. This forced Jesus to use all the muscles of his back to breathe, as the air was forced from his lungs by the weight of his torso (Mercola, 2009).

In this way, Jesus had to support himself onto the single nail carved into his feet, which was bigger than those driven into his pulse, as both feet were carved together. Death by crucifixion took several hours to complete. Jesus endured this cruelty for three hours (Mercola, 2009). A few minutes before he died no blood was left in his body. The human body is composed of nearly three and a half litres of blood in adults (Mercola, 2009). Jesus shed every drop of his blood because he had three nails hammered into his body, a crown of thorns on his head, and a spear plunged into his chest by a Roman soldier

that ensured his demise (Mercola, 2009). Davis (2001) submits that Jesus of Nazareth underwent Jewish and Roman trials, was flogged, and sentenced to death by crucifixion. The scourging produced deep *stripe*-like lacerations and appreciable loss of blood and set the stage for hypovolemic shock as evidenced by the fact that Jesus was too weakened to carry the cross bar (*patibulum*) to *Golgotha* (Davis, 2001). At the site of crucifixion, his wrists were nailed to the *patibulum* and after the *patibulum* was lifted onto the upright post (*stipes*), his feet were nailed to the *stipes* (Davis, 2001). Barbet (1963:87) adds that there was a considerable loss of blood.

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion was an interference with normal respiration. Death resulted primarily from hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia a condition in which insufficient or no oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged on a ventilatory basis or stoppage of the pulse as modern Latin or Greek asphyxia stopping of the pulse (Habermas, 2021). The death of Jesus was ensured by the thrust of a soldier's spear in his side. Therefore, modern medical interpretations of the historical evidence indicate that Jesus was dead when he was taken down from the cross. Davis (2001) argues that the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates clearly that Jesus was dead even before the wound to his side was inflicted. Davis (2001) supports the traditional view that the spear thrust between his right ribs perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Thus, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge because the actual cause of death by crucifixion was multifactorial and varied somewhat with each case (Davis, 2001). But the two prominent cases were hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia. Zugibe (2005) supports the views of Davis (2001) and states that hypovolemic shock and asphyxia caused the death of Jesus. Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, stress-induced arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and perhaps pleural effusions (Davis, 2001).

Furthermore, Davis (2001) points out that the other possible contributing factors which are recorded to have led to the death of Jesus, includes severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable loss of blood. Hengel (2006) adds that the principal mechanism observed is the combination of hypoxia from the restriction of the chest cavity to expand from increased stress on the upper extremities and chest as well as

the position of the body nailed at the cross. Thus, exceptional oxygen loss beyond just the breathing difficulties, the anatomy of the chest muscles and their potential effect on the lungs of someone in these positions also contributed to the death of Jesus (Harley, 2019). Habermas et al (2021) argues that forensic pathology and clinical investigations disclose the possible causes of the death of Jesus, among others as pulmonary embolism, cardiac rupture, suspension trauma, fatal stab wound and shock. The loss of blood left Jesus in a preshock state (Habermas et al, 2021). Moreover, hematidrosis had rendered the skin particularly tender (Habermas, 2021). The physical and mental abuse meted out by the Jews and the Romans as well as the lack of food, water, and sleep, also contributed to his generally weakened state (Habermas, 2021). Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, the physical condition of Jesus was at least serious and possibly critical (Davis, 2001).

Thus, in light of the crucifixion, Davis (2001) argues that the major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. The weight of the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the intercostal muscles in an inhalation state, and thereby hinder passive exhalation. Accordingly, exhalation was primarily diaphragmatic and breathing was shallow. It was likely that this form of respiration would not suffice and that hypercarbia could soon result.

The onset of muscle cramps or tetanic contractions, due to fatigue, and hypercarbia, could hinder respiration even further. Adequate exhalation requires lifting the body by pushing up on the feet, by flexing the elbows and adducting the shoulders. However, this manoeuvre placed the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and could produce searing pain (Davis, 2001). Furthermore, flexion of the elbows could cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged medium nerves (Davis, 2001). Zugibe (2005) further notes that the lifting of the body could also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden *stipes*. Muscle cramps and paresthesia of the outstretched and uplifted arms could add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort could become agonising, tiring, and lead eventually to asphyxia (Zugibe, 2005).

Therefore, the death of Jesus, after only three to six hours at the cross surprised even Pilate the Roman governor as discussed earlier. The fact that Jesus cried out in a loud

voice and then bowed his head and died also suggests the possibility of a catastrophic terminal event (Davis, 2001).

3.6 Conclusion

In the light of the evidence presented, it is fair to conclude that Jesus died at the cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The Synoptic accounts and the account according to John, extra-biblical sources outside the gospels but within the New Testament canon, non-biblical sources, and medical views have provided reliable information regarding the death and burial of Jesus. It is important to note that source critics have demonstrated that besides the gospel accounts exist other sources of historical evidence. All primary and secondary sources have indicated that Jesus died at the cross substantiated by the medical views that death was due to the interference with normal respiration which resulted in fatigue and hypercarbia. Eventually, Jesus died of asphyxia.

The above discussion about the evidence of the death and burial of Jesus disclose some names as eyewitnesses such as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joseph, and John the author of the Gospel, among others. This motivates an investigation with a focus on the views of the eyewitnesses to the death and burial of Jesus.

CHAPTER 4 THE EYEWITNESSES TO THE DEATH AND BURIAL.

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed reliable historical evidence that Jesus died and was buried in the presence of eyewitnesses, the Roman soldiers, Pontius Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Jewish religious leaders, and Galilean women, namely, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Joseph.

This chapter will investigate the reports of the eyewitnesses to the death and burial of Jesus and determine the historicity of the narrative accounts. In this investigation, source criticism will be applied as described in chapter one of this study. The New Testament text as recorded in the gospel accounts is taken as a primary source.

4.2 The gospel account of the eyewitnesses

4.2.1 The Roman soldiers

The Roman soldiers took charge of Jesus after Pilate handed him over to them (Joh. 19:16-24; 31-33). This meant that it was the responsibility of the soldiers to ensure that the condemned Jesus must die at the cross. Crucifixion was a Roman form of execution. The victim of crucifixion carried one beam of his cross along a main road to the site of execution as a warning to the people, followed and secured by the Roman soldiers (Macarthur, 2000:205-206). Types of crosses and methods of crucifixion varied. Some people were tied with ropes while others were nailed to the cross. Death came by suffocation because the weight of the body made breathing difficult as the victim lost strength (Macarthur, 2000:205-206). John 19:16-24; 31-33 give the impression that all the victims of crucifixion were under maximum security. Thus, the Roman soldiers could not give room to any mistake as such could cost their lives (Macarthur, 2000:205-206).

John 19:31-35: further states that to hasten the death process, soldiers broke the bones of the victims. However, the legs of Jesus were not broken because they carefully checked him and confirmed that he was indeed dead. However, the act of piercing his side and seeing the sudden flow of blood and water, indicated that the sac surrounding the heart and the heart itself had been pierced which was proof of his death as discussed earlier (Macarthur, 2000:205-206). Since Pilate had delivered Jesus to the Jews for crucifixion (Joh. 19:16), the soldiers acted under the command of the Jewish religious leaders. Only John reports that the soldiers, by implication four in number, divided Jesus's out clothing into four parts, a share for each one. Thus, the fourfold division of Jesus's clothing entails the universality of the Gospel (it's for the whole world). The preservation of the seamless tunic's wholeness may symbolise the unity of all the believers with one another and Christ (Gundry, 2010:452). Therefore, the Roman soldiers witnessed the death of Jesus at the cross and their responsibility was to ensure that the victim of crucifixion was dead and mistakes were not common cases.

Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:44-45, and Luke 23:47 add that the centurion, a leader of the soldiers who (Joh. 19:17) mentions stood there in front of Jesus and saw how he died at the cross. Mark 15:43-45 discloses that the permission to take away the body of Jesus for burial was given only after the centurion had reported to Pilate that Jesus was dead.

4.2.2 The Jewish religious leaders

Matthew 27:39-43 reports that most of the Jewish religious leaders such as the Chief Priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders were present at the cross. The Jewish religious leaders insisted that unless Jesus rescued himself, they could not believe his message. In addition, the Jewish religious leaders mocked Jesus based on his words as recorded in John 2:19-21 that the false witnesses had used in the trial before Caiaphas. He had said, “destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days” meaning he (Jesus) was to experience a resurrection in three days after his death (Bengel, 2018).

The enemies of Christ did not know the prophecy was about to come true, but they persisted in interpreting his words wrongly (Macarthur, 2000:205-206). They had come out to the crucifixion site in order to gloat and witness the culmination of their evil plot before they went home to the sanctimonious observance of their Passover meals. Their mockery was a desperate attempt to convince themselves and all other witnesses that Jesus was not the *Messiah* of Israel. They believed the *Messiah* could not be conquered. The fact that Jesus was hanged dying so helplessly was proof, as far as they were concerned, that he was not who he claimed to be (Macarthur, 2000:205-206).

4.2.3 The Jewish law and execution

John 19:31-33 reports that Jesus and others died on the day of the preparation of a special Sabbath. Hence, the Jewish religious leaders became concerned because according to the Jewish law an executed body of the criminal could not be left hanging on a tree or cross overnight. To do so was considered to be “defiling” the land (Deut. 21:22-23).

In addition, the law of Moses in Deuteronomy 21:22-23 states that if a man had committed a sin deserving of capital punishment and he is put to death by hanging him on a pole, the body shall not remain overnight on the pole. Rather, he must be buried that same day, so that the land is not defiled because someone who is hanged was considered cursed by God, meaning that person was an outcast according to the law of Moses. Macarthur (2000:196) adds that in the mind of the Jews, crucifixion was a particularly execrable way to die. It was tantamount to the hanging on a tree as

described by Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Numbers 15:35 adds that the Mosaic law also required that all executions occur outside the city walls or camp.

Unlike the Jewish approach, Matthew 27:39-43 indicates that the Romans had a slightly different concept. They made sure that all crucifixions took place near major thoroughfares to make the condemned person a public example for all who passed by. Thus, the crucifixion of Jesus took place outside the city, but in a heavily trafficked location carefully selected to make him a public spectacle (Macarthur, 2000:196).

John 19:31-34 reports that it was important to observe the Jewish law. Hence, the visit of the Jewish religious leaders to Pilate with a request that the legs of the crucified be broken to hasten death and to pave way for the special Sabbath. The soldiers therefore broke the legs of the two others crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead they could not break his legs. However, one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus to ensure death (Macarthur, 2000:196).

4.2.4 Security of the corpse of Jesus

As discussed earlier in chapter two, Matthew 27:63-64 states: “⁶³and said, ‘Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception would be worse than the first.”¹⁶³Hence, a disclosure that the Jewish religious leaders were not satisfied that Jesus was dead and buried, but knowledge about the actual tomb and its security remained a critical matter. Therefore, great care had been taken to prevent any confiscation of the body of Jesus.

To ensure maximum security at the tomb, the chief priests and pharisees informed Pilate that Jesus said, while he was still alive, that he would rise again after three days. Therefore, there was a great need to ensure that the tomb is highly protected until the third day to avoid any theft of the body reported in the Matthean account (Mtt. 27:57-60) discussed earlier [in chapter two](#). Their mission was not completely accomplished

¹⁶³ Mtt. 27:63-64; ⁶³λέγοντες Κύριε, ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι. ⁶⁴κέλευσον οὖν ἀσφαλισθῆναι τὸν τάφον ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας, μή ποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ κλέψωσιν αὐτὸν καὶ εἴπωσιν τῷ λαῷ Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χείρων τῆς πρώτης (Nestle, 1904).

because it is explicable from the Matthean account that on the third day after the burial they anticipated an unusual event described as “a rise from the dead.” Thus, the tomb was secured by putting a seal on the stone and posting a guard. In addition, Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:53 and John 19:41 have emphasised that Jesus was buried in a new tomb meaning that no one had ever been buried in it. Matthew 27:57-60 discloses that the new tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Joseph is an eyewitness.

4.2.5 Joseph and Nicodemus

The Synoptic Gospels, in particular Matthew 27:57, states: ⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus,¹⁶⁴ Mark 15:43 states: “Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus”¹⁶⁵ and Luke 23:50-51 as discussed [in chapter two](#) reports that Joseph was a wealthy man, a member of the Sanhedrin who was seeking the coming of the kingdom of God and had found it in Jesus. He had not consented to the Sanhedrin’s condemnation of Jesus. Köstenberger and Taylor (2014:166-167) observe that Joseph, one of the eyewitnesses, purchased a linen shroud to be used for wrapping the body of Jesus and had offered his own newly cut tomb nearby. It was a rock-cut tomb. Such tombs were very expensive, labour-intensive and generally belonged to wealthy families. A stone was prepared to be rolled against the entrance of the tomb. Köstenberger and Taylor (2014:166-167) notes that archaeological evidence confirms that circular stones were occasionally used to seal tombs although square or rectangular stones were much more common. The main purpose of the stone was to keep wild animals from devouring the body.

In addition, John 19:38-42 agrees with the reports of the Synoptics and adds that during the burial of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea was accompanied by Nicodemus. Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, a rich man, and had assisted Joseph in the burial of the body of Jesus by providing approximately seventy-five pounds which is equivalent

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¹⁶⁵ Mk. 15:43; ⁴³ἐλθὼν Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, εὐσχήμων βουλευτῆς, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τολμήσας εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλᾶτον καὶ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

to thirty-four kilograms (Brothers Inc., 2019) of myrrh and aloes. The body was wrapped in linen, an extravagant gesture indicating the high esteem in which Nicodemus held Jesus. He was from a well-established family of Jerusalem and had earlier visited Jesus at night.

Both Joseph and Nicodemus had dissented from the vote during the council of the Sanhedrin in which their fellow Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus and agreed to fully sponsor the burial of the body of Jesus (Wayne, 2017). This is because they were men of power, privilege, wealth, influential members of the Jewish community, and they buried the body of Jesus. Wayne (2017) observes that the burial of the body of Jesus in the manner described was a radically unusual procedure because Jesus was crucified by the Roman authorities at the behest of rebellious Jews. It was the practice of the Romans to leave a body on the cross until it decayed.

Furthermore, Wayne (2017) observes that it was the custom of the Jews that anyone sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin was not to be buried in the sepulchres of their fathers, but two burying places were appointed by the council. One was for those that were slain by the sword and strangled, the other for those that were stoned or hanged. Therefore, it is essential to observe that for Pilate to release the body of a criminal, especially one condemned of high treason to someone other than a relative was highly unusual (Wayne, 2017). Matthew 27:59-61 and Mark 15:46-47 report that Joseph completed the burial of the body of Jesus by rolling the stone in front of the entrance. The burial was performed in the presence of Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph. Hence, introducing the women as eyewitnesses in this investigation.

4.2.6 Mary Magdalene and Mary (Mother of James and Joseph)

John 19:25-26 reports that near the cross of Jesus stood his mother Mary, his mother's sisters named Salome (Mk. 15:40), and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Mt. 27:56), Mary the wife of Clopas (according to Matthew 27:56 she was Mary, the mother of James and Joseph) as well as Mary Magdalene.

Mark 15:40-41 as discussed [in chapter two](#) adds that the Galilean women followed and provided for Jesus when he was in Galilee and they followed him to Jerusalem. Matthew 26:33-35: (in Mtt. 26:33-35 “³³Peter said to him, ‘Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.’” ³⁴Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very

night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’³⁵Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.”¹⁶⁶).

The question, however, would be why are the women reported to have witnessed almost all the events of crucifixion, death, and burial to the extent that they even knew the actual tomb? What about the testimony of the men who promised to be with Jesus always?

Matthew 26:55: “⁵⁵at that hour Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching and you did not arrest me.’¹⁶⁷ ; Mark 14:50-51: “⁵⁰all of them deserted him and fled. ⁵¹A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him.”¹⁶⁸ discloses that all the male disciples deserted Jesus and fled for their lives and security and some later followed him as indicated in Mark 14:54: John witnessed the crucifixion. But the women followed Jesus to the place of the skull and stood as near as they dared to the spot where the Roman soldiers were carrying out the brutal execution. Fletcher (2006) observes that the absence of men should not be interpreted that the men were more cowardly than the women. According to Fletcher (2006) notes that it was simply more dangerous for men to be near the execution site because the Roman authorities saw Jesus as a dangerous rebel leader. Hence, the male followers of Jesus were also viewed with suspicion as co-conspirators, therefore they kept their distance. The women were seen as less threatening and so their presence was tolerated.

Mary Magdalene, whose hometown was a village on the shore of the sea of Galilee called Magdala (Carroll, 2006), was a leading figure among the women who were supportive to Jesus (Carroll, 2006). When the men had abandoned Jesus, especially at

¹⁶⁶ Mtt. 26:33-35; ³³ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ Εἰ πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται ἐν σοί, ἐγὼ οὐδέποτε σκανδαλισθήσομαι. ³⁴ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ὅτι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι τρίς ἀπαρνήσῃ με. ³⁵λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος Κἂν δέη με σὺν σοὶ ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ μὴ σε ἀπαρνήσομαι. ὁμοίως καὶ πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁶⁷ Mtt. 26:55: ⁵⁵Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς ὄχλοις Ὡς ἐπὶ ληστὴν ἐξήλθατε μετὰ μαχαιρῶν καὶ ξύλων συλλαβεῖν με; καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐκαθεζόμεν διδάσκων, καὶ οὐκ ἐκρατήσατέ με (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁶⁸ Mk. 14:50-51; ⁵⁰καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον πάντες. ⁵¹Καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνηκολούθει αὐτῷ περιβεβλημένος σινδῶνα ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, καὶ κρατοῦσιν αὐτόν (Nestle, 1904).

the hour of mortal danger (Carroll, 2006), Mary Magdalene, among other women watched the events at the tomb and saw the place where the body of Jesus was buried. Köstenberger and Taylor (2014:167) add that the Synoptic accounts conclude their narratives of the burial of Jesus by noting that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed the burial site of Jesus as mentioned earlier and knew the tomb in which he was buried. Believing that the body had been insufficiently prepared because of the hasty burial, the women who are among the eyewitnesses carefully observed the location of the tomb with an intention to return after the Sabbath with additional spices and ointments. Besides the women, I argue that not all the male disciples deserted Jesus. John 18:15-16 reports that John and Peter were with Jesus. Later, Peter left while John remained (Joh. 18:15-16).

4.2.7 The testimony according to John

John 18:15-16: (Joh. 18:15-16: “¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in.”¹⁶⁹) reports that after Jesus was arrested, Simon Peter and another disciple followed him. The other disciple, known to the high priest, went inside with Jesus and later sought permission for Peter to be brought inside during the trials of Jesus at night.

In this investigation about the eyewitnesses using source criticism, I note that the Synoptic accounts (Mtt. 26:58 reports “⁵⁸but Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end”.¹⁷⁰; Mk. 14:51-54; Luk. 22:54: “⁵⁴then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a

¹⁶⁹Joh. 18:15-16: ¹⁵Ἠκολούθει δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ ἄλλος μαθητῆς. ὁ δὲ μαθητῆς ἐκεῖνος ἦν γνωστὸς τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ, καὶ συνεισήλθεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, ¹⁶ὁ δὲ Πέτρος εἰστήκει πρὸς τῆς θύρας ἔξω. ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ μαθητῆς ὁ ἄλλος ὁ γνωστὸς τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ εἶπεν τῇ θυρωρῷ, καὶ εἰσήγαγεν τὸν Πέτρον (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁰ Mtt. 26:58; ⁵⁸ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἕως τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἕσω ἐκάθητο μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἰδεῖν τὸ τέλος (Nestle, 1904).

distance.”¹⁷¹) have only reported that Peter had entered the high priest’s courtyard and followed Jesus, but later rejected him. John 18:15-16 affirms the reports of the Synoptic accounts that Peter had followed Jesus and adds that other disciple sought permission for Peter to be allowed inside the courtyard.

However, Peter left after many inquiries about his relationship with Jesus due to his cutting of a man’s ear at the time of Jesus’s arrest (Joh. 18:10-11: “¹⁰then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus.¹¹Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?’¹⁷²). This explains perhaps the reason why the presence of Peter at the trials of Jesus and other proceedings proved to be a risk because the soldiers could have easily arrested him. Fortunately, the other disciple remained with Jesus. The question here is who was this disciple?

John 18:15 reports that “¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.”¹⁷³ Thus, in the morning the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor Pilate. John 19:1-16 reports the trials of Jesus before Pilate. Finally, Jesus was judged with treason as demanded by the Jews and was to be taken to *Golgotha*, an Aramaic word meaning the place of the skull, for crucifixion as indicated in Matthew 27:33: “³³and when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull.”¹⁷⁴; Mark 15:22: “²²then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull”).¹⁷⁵ and John 19:17 “¹⁷and carrying the

¹⁷¹ Luk. 22:54: ⁵⁴Συλλαβόντες δὲ αὐτὸν ἤγαγον καὶ εἰσήγαγον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως· ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει μακρόθεν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷² Joh. 18:10-11: ¹⁰Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος ἔχων μάχαιραν εἴλκυσεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἔπαισεν τὸν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως δοῦλον καὶ ἀπέκοψεν αὐτοῦ τὸ ὠτίον τὸ δεξιόν. ἦν δὲ ὄνομα τῷ δούλῳ Μάλχος. ¹¹εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ Βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ Πατήρ, οὐ μὴ πίνω αὐτό (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷³ Joh. 18:15: ¹⁵ἠκολούθει δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ ἄλλος μαθητής. ὁ δὲ μαθητής ἐκεῖνος ἦν γνωστὸς τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ, καὶ συνεισηλθεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁴ Mtt. 27:33: ³³Καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθᾶ, ὃ ἐστὶν κρανίου τόπος λεγόμενος (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁵ Mk. 15:22: ²²καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Γολγοθᾶν τόπον, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενος Κρανίου τόπος (Nestle, 1904).

cross by himself, he went out to what is called 'The Place of the Skull,' which in Hebrew is called Golgotha."¹⁷⁶

John 19:26-27 reports that after the crucifixion, Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby. This is the disciple Peter left with Jesus during the trials. Then, Jesus told the mother 'here is your son,' and to the disciple 'here is your mother' (Joh. 19:26-27). John 19:34-35 identifies this disciple, namely, the man who saw one of the soldiers pierce the side of Jesus with a spear caused a sudden flow of blood and water as a sign of death. Therefore, this disciple has given his testimony with the emphasis that his testimony is true based on what he witnessed. John 21:24 identifies this disciple as John the author of the Johannine account and sometimes referred to as 'the beloved disciple of Jesus.'

This investigation about eyewitnesses as described earlier using source criticism as discussed [in chapter one](#), I note that the Synoptic accounts, in particular Mtt. 26:58 states "But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end"¹⁷⁷; Mk. 14:51-54: "⁵¹a certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵²but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. ⁵³They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. ⁵⁴Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire"¹⁷⁸; Luk. 22:54: "⁵⁴then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance."¹⁷⁹ is an indication of various sources of their reports mostly through both oral and written fragments.

¹⁷⁶ Joh. 19:17; ¹⁷καὶ βαστάζων ἑαυτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν ἐξῆλθεν εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστὶ Γολγοθᾶ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁷ Mtt. 26:58; ⁵⁸ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἕως τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἔσω ἐκάθητο μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἰδεῖν τὸ τέλος (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁸ Mk. 14:51-54: ⁵¹Καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνηκολούθει αὐτῷ περιβεβλημένος σινδόνα ἐπὶ γυμνοῦ, καὶ κρατοῦσιν αὐτόν· ⁵²ὁ δὲ καταλιπὼν τὴν σινδόνα γυμνὸς ἔφυγεν. ⁵³Καὶ ἀπήγαγον τὸν Ἰησοῦν πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα, καὶ συνέρχονται πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς. ⁵⁴καὶ ὁ Πέτρος ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ἕως ἔσω εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, καὶ ἦν συνκαθήμενος μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν καὶ θερμαινόμενος πρὸς τὸ φῶς (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁷⁹ Luk. 22:54: ⁵⁴Συλλαβόντες δὲ αὐτὸν ἤγαγον καὶ εἰσήγαγον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως· ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει μακρόθεν (Nestle, 1904).

For instance, Luke 1:1-2 (“¹since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.”¹⁸⁰) notes that many had undertaken to draw up an account of the things that had been fulfilled among them, as they were handed down by those who were eyewitnesses. This implies that in the early Church there were many different sources concerning the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Luke maintains that he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” and decided to write his own account as indicated in Luke 1:3: “I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.”¹⁸¹ It is therefore also reasonable to assume that the other gospel writers did the same (Marshall, 1985:139).

4.2.8 Discrepancies: John and the Synoptic Gospels

The many different sources of materials used by the gospel writers seem to indicate the historical inconsistency claimed by Carrier (2006) due to discrepancies in the parallel Biblical narratives. For example, the report of John identifies Peter as the disciple that cut off the ear of the servant of the High priest, reports two disciples with Jesus at the courtyard of the High priest, mentions the piercing of the spear on the body of Jesus by one soldier and Nicodemus who helped Joseph to bury the body of Jesus.

The Synoptic accounts do not name the man who cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest but attest to the historical fact that one of the disciples struck the servant. The Synoptics do not report that the body of Jesus was pierced with a spear and never mention Nicodemus. Thus, these examples disclose the suggested discrepancies and argue that the reports are unhistorical (Carrier, 2006).

4.2.9 Source criticism: A response to suggestions of discrepancies

Suggested examples of discrepancies in the gospel accounts do not indicate historical inconsistency. I argue that source criticism as discussed in [chapter two](#) of this study

¹⁸⁰ Luk. 1:1-2: ¹ἤγγιζεν δὲ ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων ἢ λεγομένη Πάσχα. ²καὶ ἐζήτουν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τὸ πῶς ἀνέλωσιν αὐτόν· ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁸¹ Luk. 1:3: ³Εἰσῆλθεν δὲ Σατανᾶς εἰς Ἰουδαίαν τὸν καλούμενον Ἰσκαριώτην, ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν δώδεκα (Nestle, 1904).

demonstrates that the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were exposed to different manuscripts as sources of information. The reports were compiled both by oral tradition and written fragments. Thus, source critics indicate that when the same sources were used reports agree and differ only with different sources. For instance, unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John identifies the high priest's servant as Malchus whose right ear Simon Peter cut off with a sword in an attempt to protect the arrest of Jesus, as reported in John 18:10 as discussed [on page 96](#). Furthermore, I am of the opinion that the lack of a the name for the high priest's servant does not suggest historical inconsistency or possible discrepancies.

It is rather an indicator that various sources of information existed. The four evangelists reports provide a platform on which the narratives supplement each other and maintains the theological content. Therefore, it is unjustifiable for Carrier (2006) to claim that the reports of the gospel accounts indicate historical inconsistency; and such a position undermines the role or function of source criticism which involves the critical evaluation of a source, giving an understanding of its historical knowledge and process of development, credibility, purpose, and origin (Black & Dockery, 1991:81-82). Source critics demand the development of a critical approach, interpretation, discovery of available sources of information, and manuscripts (Black & Dockery, 1991:81-82).

The observed disparities in the gospel accounts can also be resolved by a description of the interrelationship of the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine account. In examining the available sources, source criticism notes that the order of their recording of events among the gospel accounts suggests not one but many sources. For instance, Matthew and Mark contain material that may not be found in Luke. Luke and Mark also contain material that may not be in Matthew (Carson & Moo, 2005:92-93). Thus, in development of the Gospels narratives (Matthew and Luke), Mark should have a relationship with both Matthew and Luke (Carson & Moo, 2005:92-93). Among other theories is the two-source hypothesis in which Mark and Quelle are considered sources (Carson & Moo, 2005:92-93). A source like Quelle remains the best explanation for the agreements between Matthew and Luke in non-Markan material. Therefore, source criticism appreciates the influence of the eyewitness accounts, various oral transmissions, and the evangelists own theological purposes as factors that determined the final manuscripts (Carson & Moo, 2005:92-93). For instance, it is the source critics that

disclose that in the passion narrative accounts Luke includes material from Mark, Quelle and his special material as mentioned even in Luke 1:1-4 (Carson & Moo, 2005: 92-93). Therefore, I argue that the Synoptic problem shown as discrepancies in the Gospels by Carrier (2006) can only be a problem when the functions of source criticism are not applied. There exists reliable evidence that the evangelists shared the materials and thereafter compiled their documents; and each evangelist is also a source (Carson & Moo, 2005:99-101). For example, the Gospel according to John remains a personal testimony of the author (Joh. 20:2-8).

4.3 Conclusion

The Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John report that Jesus of Nazareth died at the cross and was buried honourably despite being a victim of crucifixion. These texts also include eyewitness accounts of the death and burial of Jesus. The Synoptic accounts conclude their reports of the burial of Jesus by noting that the women from Galilee had observed the burial site of Jesus and knew the tomb in which he was buried.

The Johannine account agrees with the Synoptics and states that to hasten the death process, soldiers broke the legs of the victims of crucifixion. But the legs of Jesus were not broken because the soldiers had checked him and discovered that he was dead. However, one of them pierced Jesus's side with a spear, causing a sudden flow of blood and water which ensured that he was dead.

Therefore, it is fair to conclude that Jesus died at the cross and was buried in the new tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea and that this tomb was under maximum protection of the Roman soldiers who could not make any mistake because such could lead to capital punishment. Thus, the question could be what happened to the tomb and the corpse of Jesus after burial? This question motivates further investigation regarding the tomb and corpse of Jesus after the burial.

CHAPTER 5 THE EMPTY TOMB AND THE CORPSE OF JESUS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the historicity regarding what happened at the tomb and to the corpse of Jesus. The burial of Jesus was observed by the women from Galilee, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and John as indicated in chapter four.

Thus, chapter five will discuss the reports of the narrative accounts of what happened at the tomb and to the corpse of Jesus after burial. Extra-biblical and non-biblical sources will substantiate other findings.

5.2 The Synoptic accounts

5.2.1 Markan account

Reference herein is made to the exegetical framework of the gospel accounts as discussed earlier [in chapter one](#) of this study concerning the resurrection. Mark 16:1-6 reports that after the Sabbath Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought the spices so that they could anoint the body of Jesus whose burial was performed hastily. On this first day of the week very early in the morning, they returned to the tomb where the corpse of Jesus was buried. The women on their way wondered about who would roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb. But when they had arrived and looked up their worries were turned into awe because the large stone had already been rolled away from the tomb. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right-handed side and they were alarmed. The young man inside the tomb knew their objective and told them not to be alarmed because Jesus of Nazareth was raised and was no longer in the tomb (Mk. 16:1-8).

5.2.2 Lukan account

As discussed earlier, in chapter one Luke 24:1-6 agrees with the report of Mark 16:1-6 that women found the tomb open without the corpse of Jesus. The Lukan account adds that it was two men dressed as described in the Markan account that suddenly appeared to the women and disclosed that Jesus had been raised. I observe that Mark

and Luke do not describe how the entrance of the tomb was opened and the question is who rolled the stone away from the entrance of the tomb where the corpse of Jesus was buried? (Luk. 24:1-6).

5.2.3 Matthean account

Matthew 28:1-7 states: “¹After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.”¹⁸² These words are a response to the above question (Who rolled the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?) and give a description of what happened to the tomb and the corpse of Jesus. First and foremost, the Matthean account reports that after the death and burial of Jesus-it was after the Sabbath was over at dawn on the first day of the week-Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of James and Joseph) returned to the tomb where the corpse of Jesus was buried.

The Matthean account adds that while the women were at the tomb there was a supernatural occurrence in the form of a violent earthquake due to the angel of the Lord who descended from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it in the presence of the guards and the women. The guards were very afraid, shaken, and became like dead men due to the earthquake, the appearance of the angel-like lightning, and the clothes that were as white as snow. The angel encouraged the women to be without fear and disclosed to them that the corpse of Jesus was not in the tomb because Jesus of

¹⁸² Mtt. 28: 1-7: ¹Ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων, ἦλθεν Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον. ²καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ Κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. ³ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπῆ, καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιῶν. ⁴ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί. ⁵ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναιξίν Μη φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· ⁶οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο. ⁷καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὁψεσθε. ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν (Nestle, 1904).

Nazareth who was crucified had risen from the dead. The Synoptic accounts agree in their reports that the tomb was discovered empty with a missing body.

5.3 The Gospel according to John

It is of paramount importance to note that the investigations of chapter four disclosed that the Gospel according to John is a personal testimony of the disciple John, sometimes referred to as the “beloved disciple.” John was an eyewitness of the crucifixion, death of Jesus, many other things which had happened in the life, and work of Jesus of Nazareth (Joh. 21:24: “This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them and we know that his testimony is true”¹⁸³). Thus, like the Synoptic accounts, John 20:1-8 as discussed [in chapter two](#) reports that early on the morning on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, discovered that the stone was rolled away from the entrance and immediately informed Peter and the beloved disciple of Jesus identified as John. John 20:3-5: adds that John and Peter rushed to the tomb after receiving the report that the tomb of Jesus was discovered empty. John reports that he had reached the tomb first and had discovered that it was not only an empty tomb but an empty tomb with burial linen. The cloth was lying in its place, separate from the linen.

John 20:1-18 states: ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ ¹⁶Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘*Rabbouni!*’ (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended

¹⁸³ Joh. 21:24: ²⁴Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν (Nestle, 1904).

to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her." ¹⁸⁴ Keener (2003:1178) observes that Mary Magdalene was the first to discover the tomb empty and had reported the matter to the disciples. In Eastern Christianity Mary was called "*isapostolos*" as indicated in John 20:11-18 above which meant equal to the apostles (Keener, 2003:1178).

5.4 An examination of the reports of the Gospels

The reports of Mark, Luke, and John do not state how the tomb was opened, and who rolled the stone away. The report of Matthew 28:1-7 discloses the stone was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb by a supernatural authority through the angel. The Matthean report in my opinion does not indicate inconsistency in biblical parallels, but rather discloses information that may not exist in the reports of the other gospel accounts because Matthew is also a source of his own material (Carson & Moo, 2005:92-95). Similarly, John indicates that it was not only the empty tomb that was discovered, but also the burial linen inside.

Therefore, I am of the view that it could be unfair to conclude that the reports of the evangelists are not historical, reliable, and factual in the light of sufficient historical evidence from the eyewitnesses and the submissions of the non-biblical sources. It is fair to observe that the prepositions of historical inconsistency have ignored the role of source criticism and the body of literature of historical evidence that the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth was discovered empty with burial linen early in the morning on the first day of the week.

¹⁸⁴ Joh. 20:9-18; ⁹οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾗδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. ¹⁰ἀπῆλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί. ¹¹Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, ¹²καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. ¹³καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ἦραν τὸν Κύριόν μου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ¹⁴ταῦτα εἰποῦσα ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα, καὶ οὐκ ᾗδει ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν. ¹⁵λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; τίνα ζητεῖς; ἐκείνη δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρὸς ἐστίν, λέγει αὐτῷ Κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, κἀγὼ αὐτόν ἀρῶ. ¹⁶λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς Μαριάμ. στραφεῖσα ἐκείνη λέγει αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί· Ῥαββουνεὶ (ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε). ¹⁷λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς Μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὕτω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπέ αὐτοῖς Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα μου καὶ Πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ Θεὸν μου καὶ Θεὸν ὑμῶν. ¹⁸ἔρχεται Μαριάμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι Ἐώρακα τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ (Nestle, 1904).

Thus, the reports of the Gospels are historical and not allegorical or mythical, because the presentation is without comparison to the experiences of nature, rather something that happened witnessed by people. I argue that the internal evidence of the gospels attests to the historicity of the documents, especially when the time of composition of the gospels is considered. For instance, all the gospel accounts are products of the first century, dated as follows; Mark is considered to be the first written around 49-50 AD, Matthew and Luke around 60-70 AD, and John is the final Gospel written between 90-100 AD. The gospel accounts, among other New Testament documents were completed around 100 AD (Bruce, 1983:14). Furthermore, the extensive verbal agreement in the reports of the biblical parallels of the Gospels despite discrepancies points to some connection, a relationship to each other and interdependence between the Gospels (Marshall, 1991:140-141). The statements of the Church fathers such as Tertullian and Augustine in their extra-biblical writings are external evidence of the historicity of the gospel accounts, and the non-biblical documents substantiate this evidence (Marshall, 1991:144-145).

As earlier stated in [chapter two](#), the exegetical evidence indicates that the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid was discovered empty with burial linen. The question could be where the corpse of Jesus was. Was it stolen by grave robbers?

5.5 Carrier's argument in favour of grave robbers

There exists a high possibility that the empty tomb with burial linen may be associated with grave robbers (Carrier, 2006). Carrier argues that there is reliable evidence that mummies are missing from tombs due to theft. This refers to bodies of human beings that are ceremonially preserved by removal of the internal organs, treatment with natron and resin, and wrapping in bandages (Carrier, 2006). The corpses were used by sorcerers, especially parts like the skull, on the black market; and the skull of a sorcerer or a holy man were in high demand (Carrier, 2006). Therefore, the discovery of the empty tomb and the missing body on the third day may be associated with planned grave robbing (Carrier, 2006).

5.5.1 The fears of the Jewish religious leaders

I argue that the submission of Carrier (2006) does not account for the presence of the guards at the tomb where the corpse of Jesus was buried. Matthew 27:63 discloses the fears of the Jewish religious leaders that Jesus had stated that three days after his death he would rise from the dead. Luke 24:6-7 agrees with Matthew 27:63 and states that Jesus was to be crucified and on the third day be raised again. Matthew 26:26-32 states: “²⁶while they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ ²⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.’ ³⁰When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.’¹⁸⁵ Matthew adds that during the last supper, Jesus told his disciples that after he had been raised he would enter Galilee before them.

Therefore, the discovery of the empty tomb was an obvious fact of the reality pointing to a possible ‘rise from the dead.’ Notably, the disciples of Jesus did not go off to Athens or Rome to preach that Jesus was raised from the dead, but began in Jerusalem (McDowell, 2017). Rather, they went right back to Jerusalem, where, if what they were teaching was false, the falsity would have been evident. The proclamation in the city of Jerusalem was an explicit indication that the empty tomb was too notorious to be denied because it had presented itself as evidence (McDowell, 2017).

¹⁸⁵ Mtt. 26:26-32: ²⁶Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ δοὺς τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν Λάβετε φάγετε· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. ²⁷καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες· ²⁸τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. ²⁹λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπ’ ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ’ ὑμῶν καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Πατρὸς μου. ³⁰Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν. ³¹Τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Πάντες ὑμεῖς σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἔμοι ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ· γέγραπται γὰρ Πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα, καὶ διασκορπισθήσονται τὰ πρόβατα τῆς ποιμένης· ³²μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐγερθῆναί με προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν (Nestle, 1904).

Despite the plan of the Jewish and Roman authorities to carefully secure the tomb with a seal and standing guards (Mtt. 27:65-66), the tomb was discovered as empty. All human measures regarding to security proved impotent before Jesus because the stone was rolled back from the entrance whose size was approximately one point five tonnes (1.5t), which needed many people to roll it back and in the process could also produce a sound which the guards around could easily hear (McDowell, 2017).

Furthermore, McDowell (2017) notes that the reports of the gospel accounts indicate that the position of the stone has changed, having been rolled up a slope away, not just from the entrance of the tomb but from the entire massive sepulchre. Craig (2006) agrees with the views of McDowell (2017) regarding the empty tomb and states that an examination of other New Testament writers like Paul also provides historical evidence in support of the conclusion that the tomb where Jesus's body was laid was discovered empty as indicated in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: “³for I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”¹⁸⁶

The testimony of Paul suggests the historicity of the empty tomb and the empty tomb in the passion narratives of the Markan account supports its historicity. This means that the authenticity of the empty tomb is based on Paul and Mark being considered as early writers. For instance, the use of “on the first day of the week” instead of “on the third day” points to the primitiveness of the tradition (McDowell, 2017), meaning it was found in early Christian manuscripts such as the Markan account, among others. The discovery of the empty tomb by the women and the disciples of Jesus favour the resurrection rather than grave robbery (McDowell, 2017).

¹⁸⁶ 1 Cor. 15:3-4; ³παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, ⁴καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, ⁵καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ, εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα· ⁶ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν· ⁷ἔπειτα ὤφθη Ἰακώβῳ, εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν (Nestle, 1904).

Craig (2006) observes that the Jewish polemic presupposes the empty tomb. The narrative of Matthew regarding the guards at the tomb reported in Matthew: 27:62-66: was aimed at refuting the widespread Jewish allegation that disciples stole the body of Jesus. The opponents of the disciples, namely, the Jews, did not deny that the tomb of Jesus was empty (Craig, 2006). However, when the disciples began to preach that Jesus was raised, the Jewish opponents responded with a charge that the disciples had taken away the body of Jesus (Craig, 2006).

I concur with the views of Craig (2006) who submits that the polemic presupposes the empty tomb. The observation is that the Jews did not respond to the preaching of the resurrection by pointing to the tomb of Jesus or exhibiting the corpse. Instead, the Jews entangled themselves in a hopeless series of absurdities to explain away the empty tomb according to the Matthean account.

The enemies of Christianity felt obliged to explain away the empty tomb by the theft hypothesis shows not only that the tomb was known, but also that it was empty. Therefore, the proclamation of the gospel message with resurrection at its centre prompted an alternative explanation because the Jews could not deny that the tomb was empty and that what they had feared most had become a reality. Craig (2006) agrees with the views of Keener (2003:1180) regarding the proclamation in Jerusalem and argues it would be impossible for the disciples to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus if the tomb was not empty.

I observe that apart from the Markan tradition and other gospel narratives, Paul must have known the empty tomb. This is because in Galatians 1 and 2 Paul certainly describes his interaction with Cephas, James, and John (Gal. 2:9) during a stay of fifteen days in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18). Therefore, this implies that even the Christian community must have affirmed that the tomb was empty due to a possible “resurrection of Jesus” (Craig, 2006).

I agree with the views of Craig (2006) who argues that the disciples could not have believed in the resurrection if the corpse were still in the grave. But the disciples proclaimed the gospel of Jesus with boldness, regardless of circumstances because their beliefs were real.

5.5.2 The two possible reasons for the discovery of the empty tomb

Matthew 27:62-66 reports: Two possible occurrences of paramount importance for the discovery of the empty tomb which should not be ignored; these are either a resurrection or that the corpse was stolen by the disciples of Jesus. Therefore, I observe that the reasons for the discovery of the empty tomb with burial linen should be based on one of the two anticipated occurrences.

5.5.2.1 Security at the tomb: A response against grave robbing

Matthew 27:62-65 reports that the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate and sought permission for the tomb of Jesus to be made secure until the third day. This was because the Jewish religious leaders had anticipated the discovery of the empty tomb with a missing body due to either the resurrection of Jesus or the corpse to be stolen by the disciples of Jesus.

5.5.2.2 The mandate of the Roman soldiers

It is important to note that the primary role of the Roman soldiers was to prevent the loss of the corpse of Jesus through any form and they could not make or allow any mistake in their operations as such could cost their lives. McDowell (2017) submits that the Roman guards observed military discipline during their duties because of fear of the wrath of their superiors.

5.5.3 The consequences of failure to fulfil the military mandate

The failure to perform military duties correctly resulted in punishment by death. Hence, soldiers paid close attention to the minutest details of their jobs. One way a guard was put to death was by being stripped of his clothes and then burned alive in a fire started with his garments (McDowell, 2017). If it was not apparent which soldier had failed in his duty, lots were drawn to see which one could be punished with death for the failure of the guard unit (McDowell, 2017). Therefore, certainly, the entire unit of guards could not have fallen asleep with that kind of threat over their heads and it is obvious that no guard could risk their job and life. Thus, the tomb where the body of Jesus was buried was under maximum security as stated earlier.

5.5.4 The fear of the disciples

I am of the opinion that the stolen body theory remains a weak argument in the investigations of establishing what really happened to the corpse of Jesus. The theft theory claims the disciples stole the body from the tomb (Carrier, 2006). My observation is that this argument does not account for the fear which most of the disciples had developed. This fear made most of the disciples run away during the trials of Jesus performed by both the Sanhedrin and the Roman authorities to secure their safety. The presence of most of the disciples during the crucifixion was to be interpreted otherwise and could have resulted in death penalty. Hence, they ran away as disclosed earlier in the exegetical framework of the gospel accounts.

Thus, it was more dangerous to visit the tomb at night where the body of Jesus was buried than to have followed him during the trials and eventually his crucifixion (McDowell, 2017). This is because first and foremost, it should be noted that the tomb entrance was closed with a large stone whose weight could not be managed by one or two people, but several (McDowell, 2017). Secondly, the tomb was secured by sealing the entrance, and thirdly, the guards were posted to provide maximum security (Mt. 27:62-66). Thus, any attempt to remove the seal or roll the stone away could produce enough noise which could have attracted the attention of the Roman soldiers (McDowell, 2017). Therefore, how could the disciples who were highly conscious of their security, and safety suddenly become bold enough to risk their lives by planning to steal the body of Jesus from the highly secured tomb and eventually give up their lives as martyrs?

5.5.5 The narrative of Mary Magdalene

The story of Mary Magdalene as reported in John 20:1-18 regarding the empty tomb was one of the most self-authenticating narratives in all the gospel accounts in the Jewish context and tradition. It contained all the elements of the personal testimony of an eyewitness and dismissed the claims that perhaps the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb (Fletcher, 2006). Thus, in this investigation, the presence of the seal, the guards at the tomb and the fear of the disciples do not agree with the stolen body theory as the reason for the discovery of the empty tomb and the missing body. Now, if the body of Jesus was not stolen, then what could be the best explanation? I note that there

is one reason left of the two which have been stated above for the missing body and that is 'resurrection,' authenticated by the narrative of Mary Magdalene and other women (Fletcher, 2006).

All the gospels agree that it was early in the morning when the women visited the tomb. Mark says the two Marys and Salome (Mk. 16:1-3); Matthew mentions only two Marys (Mtt. 28:1), Luke says the two Marys, Joana, and other women (Luk. 24:10); John mentions only Mary Magdalene (Joh. 20:1). This is a clear indication that at dawn the women discovered the empty tomb.

Furthermore, John 20:2, despite the mention of Mary, the words of Mary affirm the Synoptic accounts reported as: "We do not know where they have put him." 'We' is a pronoun in the first-person plural. Therefore, it is true that Semitic usage could permit the first-person plural to mean simply "I" (cf. Jn.3, 11, 32), and the weight of the probability regarding the women visiting the tomb falls decisively in favour of Mary's "we" being the remnant of a tradition of more than one woman. Thus, according to the Synoptic and the Johannine accounts all agree that an empty tomb was discovered by the women due to a possible resurrection of Jesus. Craig (2013) maintains that the historical evidence for the empty tomb was reliable according to the criteria of historical investigation and methods of historiography. Fletcher (2006) agrees with the views of Craig regarding the empty tomb and states that the women returned to the tomb in response to the Jewish law regarding burial which involved the application of ointment and spices to the corpse and these could not be bought or sold on the Sabbath.

The death of Jesus had been sudden and unexpected. Thus, the women did not have the necessary burial spices, so they waited until the Sabbath was over, bought the spices, and went to the tomb with the intension of washing and anointing the body of Jesus. This was a traditional task of Jewish women (Fletcher, 2006). But when they got to the tomb, they discovered that it was empty. Hence, the ointment and spices they had bought to be used on the body of Jesus had served no purpose. The history of the empty tomb remains significant in the study about the resurrection of Jesus because the tomb was discovered without the body. It was both alarming and shocking to the women who first discovered it (Fletcher, 2006). A possible explanation is that the empty tomb favours the occurrence of the resurrection. Therefore, there is reliable historical evidence as reported in the gospel accounts based on witnesses as discussed in

[chapters two and three](#), that Jesus the Nazarene who died by crucifixion on the cross had been raised from the dead (King, 2012). Bishop (2016) argues that it is quite remarkable that the authors of the gospel accounts say that the women were the ones to first discover and report the empty tomb. Bishop (2016) further observes that in Jewish culture, tradition, and context, the testimony of women was not considered to be as credible as the testimony of men culturally. Therefore, I am of the observation that the inclusion of the testimony of the discovery of the empty tomb by women points to its authenticity and historicity. This is because culturally the testimony of women was worthless and not even permitted in the Sanhedrin. Hence, citing the women in the passion narratives as first witnesses suggests facticity.

Perman (2007) agrees with the views of Bishop (2016), especially regarding the degradation and humiliation of women in the Jewish culture and further submits that the women followers of Jesus had broken the Jewish cultural boundaries. If the empty tomb narrative were a legend, then it is most likely that the male disciples could have been recorded as the first to discover the empty tomb. The despised women in Jewish culture, whose testimony was deemed worthless, were the chief eyewitnesses to the empty tomb.

Furthermore, Perman (2007) agrees with the views of Craig (2006), and states that there exists historical evidence that the tomb of Jesus was discovered empty due to “a resurrection from the dead” and the disciples preached in the same city of Jerusalem where Jesus had been buried shortly before being raised to life. Perman (2007) argues that the disciples of Jesus did not go to some obscure place where no one had heard of Jesus to begin preaching about the resurrection, but instead began preaching in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus had died and was buried. It is obvious that the disciples could not have preached the resurrection of Jesus with boldness if the body of Jesus was still in the tomb or had been taken somewhere else; no one would have believed them. Thus, the empty tomb and missing body favours the resurrection.

I note that the plan of the Jewish religious leaders after the discovery of the empty tomb and the missing body was to communicate that the corpse of Jesus was stolen and that Jesus was not raised from the dead (Perman, 2007). This was because their plan against bodily resurrection admitted the tomb was empty with the burial linen. It is important to discuss the plans of the Jews (Perman, 2007).

5.5.6 The bribe of the Jews

Matthew 28:11-15 states: “¹¹while they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³telling them, ‘You must say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.”¹⁸⁷ These words disclose the plan and attempt of the Jews to refute bodily resurrection through motivating the soldiers with a bribe so that they develop and present the ‘stolen body theory.’ The stolen body theory itself admitted the significant truth that the tomb was empty (Perman, 2007). The proponents of the stolen body theory today have been motivated by the plans of the Jews (Perman, 2007). The empty tomb is supported by the historical reliability of the burial narrative. The burial narrative is one of the best-established facts about Jesus. Hence, the mentioning of Joseph of Arimathea as the one who buried Jesus (Perman, 2007). The burial narrative of Jesus in all the gospel accounts indicates that everyone knew the place where Jesus was buried-the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. It was the tomb belonging to Joseph which was discovered empty (Craig, 2013).

5.5.7 Non-biblical sources

The discovery of the empty tomb is not only reported in the gospel accounts; evidence exists from the non-biblical sources, both outside the gospel accounts and the New Testament narratives (McDowell, 2017). McDowell (2017) submits that the Jewish and Roman authorities admitted the tomb was discovered empty. Non-biblical sources support the history of the empty tomb. For instance, sources ranging from Flavius Josephus to the compilation of the fifth-century Jewish writings called the *toledoth Jeshu*. Indeed, such is positive evidence from a hostile source that support the historical

¹⁸⁷ Mtt. 28:11-15: ¹¹Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ τινες τῆς κουστωδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα. ¹²καὶ συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συμβουλίον τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἰκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις ¹³λέγοντες Εἶπατε ὅτι Οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων. ¹⁴καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῆ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, ἡμεῖς πείσομεν καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν. ¹⁵οἱ δὲ λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. Καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (Nestle, 1904).

evidence in favour of the empty tomb. In essence this implies that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favour, then that historical fact is genuine.

In addition, McDowell (2017) states that Gamaliel, a member of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, put forth a suggestion that the rise of the Christian movement was motivated by the historical fact of the discovery of the empty tomb. Gamaliel could not have acknowledged the rise of Christianity if the tomb were still occupied or if the Sanhedrin knew the whereabouts of the body of Jesus, especially after the discovery of the empty tomb. Maier (2013) supports the views of McDowell (2017) and adds that if the evidence is weighed carefully, critically, and fairly, it is indeed justifiable according to the canons of historical research to conclude that the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, in which the body of Jesus was buried was discovered empty on the morning of the first Easter. This historical evidence regarding the discovery of the empty tomb remains valid in ancient times, in the twenty first-century and beyond because no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraph, or archaeology that would disprove such a fact.

Furthermore, Gleghorn (2014) agrees with the viewpoints of McDowell (2017) substantiated by Maier (2013), regarding the non-biblical sources and submits that evidence from ancient non-Christian sources supports the historical reliability of the gospel accounts. The Christian movement grew rapidly in the city of Jerusalem and beyond due to the discovery of the empty tomb. As a result of the constant development of Christianity, the Roman historian Tacitus reported the decision of Emperor Nero to blame the Christians for the fire that had destroyed Rome in 64 AD (Tacitus, 1939).

The report of Tacitus with reference to Jesus and the early Christians is a clear indication that Tacitus was bearing a kind of testimony about to the conviction of the early Church that Jesus who was crucified was reported raised from the grave belonging to Joseph of Arimathea (Tacitus, 1939). The report of Tacitus expresses knowledge about the occurrence of a resurrection. Furthermore, another important source of evidence about Jesus and the early Christians was found in the letters of Pliny the Younger to Emperor Trajan (Pliny the Younger, 1936), in which Pliny the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor had requested advice from the Emperor about the appropriate way to conduct legal proceedings against the Christians. The letter of Pliny discloses that the main issue was about the great multitude of every age, class, and

race being motivated to join Christianity and that the religion experienced rapid expansion (Pliny the Younger, 1936).

Pliny the Younger also noticed that the strength of the Christians was devotion, dedication, commitment to their faith and meeting on a certain fixed day for praise and worship (Pliny the Younger, 1936). All these activities of the early Christian Church were motivated by the historical evidence that the tomb of Jesus was discovered empty because the crucified Jesus had experienced the resurrection. Hence, during gatherings the early Church sang hymns to Christ as to a god (Pliny the Younger, 1936). Thus, it is clear here that the observation of Pliny the Younger was accurate, especially the statement that the hymns were sung to Christ, as to a god, because as a reference to the rather distinctive fact that, unlike other gods who were worshipped, had no life, could not talk, and never existed, Christ was a person who had lived on earth as fully human (Pliny the Younger, 1936). Therefore, the letter of Pliny discloses that its author explicitly understands that Christians were worshipping an actual historical person as “God”, and this agrees perfectly with the New Testament doctrine that Jesus was put to death by crucifixion, was buried, and later had been raised from the dead. Gleghorn (2014) agrees with the above views that one of the most remarkable references to the life of Jesus outside the Bible can also be found in the writings of Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian wrote that Jesus was a wise man but condemned by Pilate to be crucified and on the third day rose from the dead. Thus, the writings of Josephus agree and are in favour of the discovery of the empty tomb as reported in the gospel accounts that the crucified and buried Jesus had experienced the resurrection from the dead.

5.6 Conclusion

In light of the articulated views, there is a preponderance of probability that Mary Magdalene remains the first woman to discover the tomb empty as indicated in the Synoptic and the Johannine accounts. John, among other disciples of Jesus, looked over to the place where the body of Jesus had been buried and discovered that there was only burial linen in the shape of the body, slightly caved in, and empty. Thus, the empty burial linen in an empty tomb caused John and the other disciples to be amazed because the linen was undisturbed in form and position.

In addition, the tomb in which the corpse of Jesus was buried was under maximum security offered by competent Roman soldiers. The security was due to the request of the Jewish religious leaders who were filled with fear. The fear of the Jewish religious leaders developed because they anticipated the resurrection of Jesus on the third day. The resurrection was anticipated because Jesus had spoken about it before the act of crucifixion. Hence, the request of the Jewish religious leaders to Pilate to have the tomb highly secured until the third day. The Roman soldiers performed their duties to the best of their abilities, bearing in mind that mistakes resulted in capital punishment. Hence, dismissing the claims of planned tomb robbery. Therefore, it is justifiable to conclude that the tomb was discovered empty with burial linen inside because of the resurrection of Jesus. The question is did Jesus of Nazareth rise from the dead in a physical or a spiritual form? This question motivates further investigations to establish the nature of Jesus after his resurrection.

CHAPTER 6 THE RESURRECTION

6.1 Introduction

The critical question is whether Jesus experienced a bodily or spiritual resurrection. This chapter will attempt to establish the historical evidence of the resurrection of Jesus as either bodily or spiritual as recorded in the Synoptic and Johannine accounts, the rest of the New Testament, non-biblical and extra-biblical sources.

6.2 The resurrection

6.2.1 Spiritual resurrection

I am of the opinion that the subject of the resurrection remains a contentious matter in biblical theology. Wayne (2017) maintains that belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus is not a response to a life objectively restored but is a subjective conception in the mind. Faith in the bodily resurrection of Jesus is allegoric (Wayne, 2017). Wayne (2017) adds that a dead Jesus is simply transfigured into an imaginary risen Christ or a mythical risen Christ because dead people do not rise from the dead in a physical form. Therefore, Jesus did not physically rise from the dead (Wayne, 2017). As discussed in [chapters one and two](#), Carrier (2006) supports the views of Wayne (2017) and states

that the resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter, a personal experience and not a physical event. Hence, appealing to the missing body and the discovery of an empty tomb does not guarantee bodily resurrection because there were grave robbers (Carrier, 2006). Carrier (2006) further submits that agreeing to the bodily resurrection may suggest a failure to account for the historical setting of the first century. The historical setting suggests a spiritual resurrection because the resurrection accounts emerged in an age of fables and wonder. Supernatural happenings such as magic and miracles were everywhere as discussed in [chapter two](#) (Carrier, 2006)

In addition, Carrier (2006) notes that after his death, Jesus was taken to heaven and given a new, more perfect and spiritual body. This is the Jesus they could sometimes not recognise and who vanished into thin air that the gospel accounts claim to be physical, as discussed in [chapter two](#) (Carrier, 2006). Thus, the resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter and accepting the bodily resurrection of Jesus is a violation of the natural law.

6.2.2 Bodily resurrection

I disagree with the views of Carrier (2006) and other scholars who have argued against the bodily resurrection of Jesus. I agree with the position of Lennox (2014:2-4) and others as discussed [in chapter two](#), whose stance is that Jesus had experienced a bodily resurrection. This is because I note that there exists reliable historical evidence in favour of the bodily resurrection of Jesus as explicitly discussed in [chapters three](#) (established the evidence of death and burial), [four](#) (actual eyewitnesses) and [five](#) (tomb and corpse of Jesus) respectively. The discovery of the empty tomb with burial linen is an event in favour of a physical resurrection. The question here is what authenticates the bodily resurrection of Jesus?

I am of the opinion that historical evidence discloses that Jesus had physically appeared to the women, a group of the eleven in a room, one by herself in a garden, a group of fishermen by the sea, two travelling along a road, others on a mountain as reported in the Synoptic Gospel and Johannine accounts as discussed earlier in [chapter five](#). Thus, it is of paramount importance to discuss the narrative accounts of the post-resurrection appearances that points to the authentication of the bodily resurrection. After that I will respond to the unanswered questions or gaps identified [in chapter two](#).

6.3 The post-resurrection appearances

6.3.1 Exegetical framework according to the Synoptic Gospels (Mk.16:8, Mtt. 28: 8-9, and Luk. 24:36-43)

Mark 16:8 reports that women left the empty tomb full of fear. The shaking with astonishment by women emphasises the overawing effect of what was seen and heard, namely, the discovery of the empty tomb and the announcement of the young man that Jesus was raised. They were fearful and dumbfounded, too scared to speak, namely, to re-emphasise the reality, physicality, and awesomeness of the bodily resurrection of Jesus (Gundry, 2010:220). Matthew 28:8-9 agrees with the Markan report that the women hurried from the empty tomb to meet the disciples. The women quickly left the tomb based on the instructions of the angel or young man with the expressions of great joy at the news that Jesus was raised from the dead.

The women rushed to inform the disciples that Jesus who was crucified, died and buried was raised from the dead. Suddenly, on their way Jesus met and greeted them. The action of seizing the feet of Jesus in worship is a transparent demonstration of the deity of Jesus and the physicality of the encounter (Mtt. 28:9: "Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him"¹⁸⁸). Human beings can only hold something that has weight and occupies space. The word used is a Greek verb, namely, *ἔκράτησαν*¹⁸⁹ which entails to take hold of something (Nestle, 1904). The instruction of Jesus to the women reiterates that of the angel or young man and emphasises the recurrence of the physical encounters as evidence of the bodily resurrection (Gundry, 2010:134). Thus, I am of the opinion that bodily resurrection is based on sufficient reliable evidence by not only one person but by many as reported in the passion narrative accounts of the Gospels respectively.

Furthermore, the clasping of the feet of Jesus by the women point to the physical appearance. Even the appearance to the eleven at the mountain in Galilee was in the same manner because Matthew 28:16-17 repeats the word worship. Luke 24:13-32

¹⁸⁸ Mtt. 28:9; καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων Χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁸⁹ ἐκράτησαν (Nestle, 1904).

states: ¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ ¹⁹He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ ²⁵Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’¹⁹⁰ This episode

¹⁹⁰ Luk. 24:13-32: ¹³Καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἦσαν πορευόμενοι εἰς κώμην ἀπέχουσαν σταδίου ἐξήκοντα ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἧ ὄνομα Ἐμμαοῦς, ¹⁴καὶ αὐτοὶ ὠμίλουσιν πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ πάντων τῶν συμβεβηκότων τούτων. ¹⁵καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ὁμιλεῖν αὐτοῦς καὶ συζητεῖν, καὶ αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς ἐγγίσας συνεπορεύετο αὐτοῖς· ¹⁶οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν. ¹⁷εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· Τίνες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὕς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους περιπατοῦντες; καὶ ἐστάθησαν σκυθρωποί. ¹⁸ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἰς ὄνοματι Κλεοπάς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· Σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσ τὰ γενόμενα ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις; ¹⁹καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ποῖα; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ, ὃς ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ προφήτης δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ (Nestle, 1904).

agrees with Matthew 28:8-9: “⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him,”¹⁹¹ and reports that after the resurrection Jesus had an interaction with the two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem was told to others disciples. In this report the two disciples discussed with Jesus the story of the discovery of the empty tomb and missing body and could only recognise him at the meal.

Furthermore, Luke 24:36-43 states: “³⁶While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.”¹⁹² Luke adds that it happened on the same day while the

έναντίον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, ²⁰ὅπως τε παρέδωκαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἡμῶν εἰς κρίμα θανάτου καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν. ²¹ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ· ἀλλὰ γε καὶ σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν ἀγει ἀφ’ οὗ ταῦτα ἐγένετο. ²²ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκές τινες ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξέστησαν ἡμᾶς, γενόμεναι ὀρθριναὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, ²³καὶ μὴ εὐροῦσαι τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἦλθον λέγουσαι καὶ ὀπτασίαν ἀγγέλων ἑωρακεῖναι, οἱ λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ζῆν. ²⁴καὶ ἀπηλθόν τινες τῶν σὺν ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εὗρον οὕτως καθὼς καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες εἶπον, αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον. ²⁵καὶ αὐτὸς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Ὡ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεῦειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφηταὶ· ²⁶οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; ²⁷καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν διερμήνευσεν αὐτοῖς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

²⁸Καὶ ἤγγισαν εἰς τὴν κώμην οὗ ἐπορεύοντο, καὶ αὐτὸς προσεποιήσατο πορρώτερον πορεύεσθαι. ²⁹καὶ παρεβιάσαντο αὐτὸν λέγοντες Μείνον μεθ’ ἡμῶν, ὅτι πρὸς ἑσπέραν ἐστὶν καὶ κέκλικεν ἤδη ἡ ἡμέρα. καὶ εἰσῆλθεν τοῦ μείναι σὺν αὐτοῖς. ³⁰καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ’ αὐτῶν λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς· ³¹αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ, καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ’ αὐτῶν. ³²καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους Οὐχὶ ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν καιομένη ἦν ἐν ἡμῖν, ὡς ἐλάλει ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, ὡς διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹¹ Mtt. 28:8-9; ⁸καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ταχὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου μετὰ φόβου καὶ χαρᾶς μεγάλης ἔδραμον ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ. ⁹καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων Χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹² Luk. 24:36-43: ³⁶Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτῶν λαλούντων αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν [[καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν]]. ³⁷πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν. ³⁸καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τί τεταραγμένοι ἐστέ, καὶ διὰ τί διαλογισμοὶ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν; ³⁹ἴδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτός· ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σὰρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα. ⁴⁰[[καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τοὺς πόδας.]] ⁴¹ἔτι δὲ ἀπιστούντων

disciples were listening to the story of a post-resurrection appearance of the two, and Jesus stood among them. The word “stood” demonstrates that Jesus was no longer lying supine as a corpse in the tomb. Hence, its emptiness. Jesus’s presence in their midst made eyewitnesses out of them all, John and Simon, the rest of the eleven, and the ones assembled with them (Gundry, 2010:10). The disciples were frightened and thought they had seen a ghost because Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, died, buried, and never expected any physical interaction with him. The disciples were troubled because of their fear.

Luke 24:38 as stated: above [on page 118](#) discloses that Jesus knew that his appearance after death and burial caused fear and doubts among his disciples. Thus, Jesus helps the disciples attain the right conclusion by appealing to what they see and inviting them to confirm their sense of sight with their sense of touch. Jesus proved to the disciples that he was the one and not a ghost by showing them his hands and feet contrary to a ghost that does not possess flesh and bones as reported in Luke 24:39 [on page 118](#). The hands and feet are selected not because of the nail scars of crucifixion, but because these are the exposed parts of his body featuring a combination of flesh and bones (Gundry, 2010:345).

In addition, Jesus had requested food and was given a piece of broiled fish which he ate among the disciples. The action of eating without reservations is strong, explicit evidence, and demonstration of the actual physicality of Jesus’s resurrection and such an occurrence disapproves any thought of a Ghostly apparition (Gundry, 2010:345).

Luke 24:13-32, as discussed [on page 117](#) further reports that in a physical encounter with the resurrected Jesus the eleven disciples were reminded about his death and resurrection by explaining the scriptures that all the things written about him in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms were fulfilled, and such helped the disciples to believe the events truly. Therefore, the post-resurrection appearances were the fulfilment of the scriptures of the Old Testament.

I am of the opinion, therefore, that source critics indicate that the Lukan account is neither allegoric nor simile but rather something historical (Allison, 2005:311). The

αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ θαυμαζόντων, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἔχετε τι βρώσιμον ἐνθάδε; ⁴²οἱ δὲ ἐπέδωκαν αὐτῷ ἰχθύος ὀπποῦ μέρος· ⁴³καὶ λαβὼν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ἔφαγεν (Nestle, 1904).

interaction of the risen Jesus with his disciples was physical (Dunn, 2019:2). If the interaction was spiritual, then the question is how the spiritual body could demonstrate hands and feet that human beings could touch? How can a spiritual body demand and eat physical food? Furthermore, the observation that Jesus entered the rooms not in a physical way does not rule out the probability of a physical body. Instead, it provides room for the possibility of the supernatural and transformation. Thus, there exists a possibility that the description in the Lukan account suggests the physical appearance of the risen Jesus and that his resurrection was bodily. All the Synoptic accounts report that after the resurrection Jesus appeared in a bodily form.

6.4 The account according to John

6.4.1 Exegetical framework

In agreement with the reports of the Synoptics, John 20:14-17 reports that after the resurrection Jesus had a physical interaction with Mary Magdalene during which, she did not recognise him until he called her by name. I argue that this interaction suggests Mary Magdalene could not recognise Jesus earlier because she never expected Jesus to rise from the dead and be seen physically. Thus, Mary's recognition of the good shepherd's voice when Jesus called her by name implies the relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep who will hear his voice as stated in John 10:3-4: "3the gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hears his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice,"¹⁹³; 16I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd¹⁹⁴; 27My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me.¹⁹⁵ Mary's response "Rabboni", reported in John 20:16 "16Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means

¹⁹³ Joh. 10:3-4; ³τοῦτω ὁ θυρωρὸς ἀνοίγει, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει, καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ ἐξάγει αὐτά. ⁴ὅταν τὰ ἴδια πάντα ἐκβάλῃ, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῷ ἀκολουθεῖ, ὅτι οἶδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹⁴ Joh. 10:16;¹⁶καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης· κάκεῖνα δεῖ με ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούσουσιν, καὶ γενήσεται μία ποιμνὴ, εἰς ποιμὴν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹⁵ Joh. 10:27; ²⁷τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐμὰ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούουσιν, κἀγὼ γινώσκω αὐτά, καὶ ἀκολουθοῦσίν μοι (Nestle, 1904).

Teacher)”¹⁹⁶) is a heightened form of ‘*rabbi*,’ which John translates as ‘teacher.’ Literary the term means ‘my Great one’ and was used as a title of honour for teachers. Hence, the mentioned title contributed to John’s transforming the account of Jesus’s death, burial and resurrection from pain and shame into one of glorification (Gundry, 2010:457).

John 20:19-21 agrees with the report of Luke 24:36-43 and states that when the disciples were together in a room for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus had appeared and stood among them. In this encounter Jesus had to show his hands to his disciples in order to overcome their fear and unbelief. John 20:24-29; reports “²⁴but Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’ ²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ ²⁸Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ ²⁹Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’¹⁹⁷ This describes another encounter with Thomas who could not believe the message that Jesus was raised from the dead and had physically appeared to the other disciples in his absence but had demanded to touch the wounds of Jesus. A week later, Thomas was with other disciples in a room. Jesus appeared and stood among them and had told Thomas to touch his hands and feet so that he could stop doubting. The disciple Thomas had believed that Jesus was raised from the dead only after he had seen the nail marks, put his finger in the nail marks and touched the hands and feet of Jesus.

¹⁹⁶ Joh. 20:16; ¹⁶καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς ἀλύης ταύτης· κάκεινα δεῖ με ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούσουσιν, καὶ γενήσεται μία ποιμήν, εἷς ποιμήν (Nestle, 1904).

¹⁹⁷ Joh. 20:24-29; ²⁴Θωμᾶς δὲ εἷς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα, ὁ λεγόμενος Δίδυμος, οὐκ ἦν μετ’ αὐτῶν ὅτε ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς. ²⁵ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄλλοι μαθηταὶ Ἐωράκαμεν τὸν Κύριον. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω ἐν ταῖς χερσίν αὐτοῦ τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω τὸν δάκτυλόν μου εἰς τὸν τόπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω μου τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω. ²⁶καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ πάλιν ἦσαν ἔσω οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ Θωμᾶς μετ’ αὐτῶν. ἔρχεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων, καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ εἶπεν Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. ²⁷εἶτα λέγει τῷ Θωμᾶ Φέρε τὸν δάκτυλόν σου ὡδε καὶ ἴδε τὰς χεῖράς μου, καὶ φέρε τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ βάλε εἰς τὴν πλευρὰν μου, καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός. ²⁸ἀπεκρίθη Θωμᾶς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου. ²⁹λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ὅτι ἐωρακάς με, πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες (Nestle, 1904).

John 21:1-13 as discussed [in chapter one](#) further reports an occasion in which the disciples of Jesus had gone out to fish on the sea of Galilee and had caught nothing. Jesus appeared to his disciples whilst on the sea of Galilee and provided guidance on where to cast their nets. The guidance of Jesus helped the disciples to catch a lot of fish that early morning and later he invited them to have breakfast with him.

The interaction reported in John 21:7 as discussed [in chapter one](#) indicates that it was the disciple whom Jesus loved that recognised him as he stood on the shore. The disciple whom Jesus loved was an eyewitness not only of the post-resurrection appearances but also of the crucifixion and happens to be the author of the account according to John as was discussed in detail in [chapter four](#) of this study. John 21:24 states that the Johannine account is based on the testimony of an eyewitness. Thus, having discussed the exegetical framework of the post-resurrection accounts, source criticism maintains that the Gospel accounts are not tales, but historical.

6.5 Source criticism in favour of the Gospel accounts

The determination of the historicity of the gospel accounts remains important. Among other scholars, Casey(1996) argues that the Gospels are profoundly untrue, both historically and theologically; for instance, John's Gospel, among others which provides an inaccurate account of the life and ministry of Jesus and adopts an anti-Jewish stance. In subscription to the views of Casey (1996), Ehrman (2011:243) argues that "faith documents" such as the Gospels are not reliable historical sources because the Gospel writers were not interested in providing the brute facts of history for impartial observers but in promoting faith in Jesus. In support of Casey (1996) and Ehrman (2011:243), Strauss (2011) adds that the reports of the narrative accounts are myth and allegoric.

In contrast to the views of Casey (1996), Ehrman (2011:243) and Strauss (2011), the functions of source criticism favour the reports of the gospel accounts as historical documents. For instance, through source criticism it is justifiable to conclude that the reports of the Synoptic accounts and the Gospel according to John are not parables, myths, metaphors, legends, elegies, or similes, but historical documents (Black & Dockery, 1991:159). In this investigation, source critics have given clarification that the reports of the gospel accounts were compiled through the oral tradition and written

fragments during the stages of development (Carson & Moo, 2005:85-101). Therefore, the historicity of the passion narrative accounts remains justifiable, reliable, and credible (Marshall, 1991:144-145).

Furthermore, source criticism helped to recognise and appreciate the diverse sources used by the four evangelists (Mtt., Mk., Luk., Joh.). Hence, the perceived historical inconsistencies in the biblical parallels were rectified through source critics with a fair conclusion that the evangelists agreed when they used the same sources and disagreed when they used different sources. In addition, source criticism recognised the historical fact that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Thus, source criticism sought to locate the original manuscripts to maintain their original form. Therefore, as discussed in [chapter one](#), source critics had also examined the process by which the passion narrative accounts were established and developed through oral and aural reports as mentioned. The text itself as reported in the gospel accounts is historically reliable.

For instance, I note that John 20:19-20 states: “¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together. For fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came, and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord”¹⁹⁸ (Aland et al, 1994:401-402). This passage expressed in Greek is translated in English today in several versions. However, source criticism will refer to the sources (manuscripts) in Greek so that the meaning is not altered. Apart from the Synoptic and Johannine accounts as primary sources there exist secondary sources regarding the post-resurrection appearances as are discussed below.

6.5.1 A critical examination: The post-resurrection appearances

McDowell (2017) submits that Jesus appeared alive on several occasions after the events of that first Easter. McDowell (2017) observes that when studying an event in history, it is important to know whether enough people who were participants or eyewitnesses to the events were alive when the facts about the events were published.

¹⁹⁸ Joh. 20:19-20: ¹⁹Οὔσης οὖν ὀψίας τῆ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη τῆ μιᾶ σαββάτων, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων ὅπου ἦσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. ²⁰καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἔδειξεν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῖς. ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες τὸν Κύριον (Aland [et al] 1994:401-402).

If the number of eyewitnesses is substantial, the event can be regarded as fairly well-established.

I agree with the submission of McDowell (2017) because the evidence provided by the exegetical frameworks, among others, authenticates the proclamation of the disciples that Jesus had been raised from the dead. The commencement of such a proclamation in Jerusalem where all the events regarding the crucifixion and resurrection took place demonstrates the historicity of events. This suggests that many people were still alive by then, and if the disciple's message were not authentic, they could have been arrested. Therefore, the credibility and historicity of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus could not be doubted.

The disciples of Jesus had an encounter with the resurrected Jesus in a bodily form. This is demonstrated in the efforts of the disciples to boldly proclaim the message in which the physical resurrection of Jesus and his post-resurrection appearances were at the centre (McDowell, 2017). It is vital to note that the early Christians did not give up the act of proclamation of the risen Jesus despite the persecutions characterised by beating, stoning to death, painful torture, even crucifixion, and every conceivable method used to stop them from the proclamation of the bodily resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances (McDowell, 2017).

The early Christian community instead chose to sacrifice their lives as the ultimate proof of their complete confidence in the truth of the message that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead. After his physical resurrection, Jesus appeared to the women, disciples, and many others. This is unusual and can only suggest that the confidence of the early Christian community was due to something that was not myth, but historical. Acts 1:3 states: "after his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God"¹⁹⁹ and reports that beginning on the Sunday of the resurrection he had showed himself alive by many infallible proofs and had instructed his disciples and many other followers periodically for forty days.

¹⁹⁹ Acts 1:3; ³οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσεράκοντα ὁπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

After the appearance to Mary Magdalene, Jesus also visited the women who were running to the city and reinforced the message that other disciples must be informed about the message that he had been raised from the dead. After the resurrection, Galilee was the place where Jesus would meet them (Mitchell, 2012). Jesus made this personal appearance to the women to overcome their fear to speak to anyone after an encounter with the resurrected Jesus. The women delivered the message of the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus with joy (Mitchell, 2012).

Luke 24:9-11 as discussed [in chapter one](#) reports that the eleven disciples and all the rest ultimately heard about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus from all the women, including Mary Magdalene. Yet no one believed them because the event of the resurrection of Jesus and post-resurrection appearances were not expected. Thus, this gives an impression that a belief in the resurrection and Jesus's post-resurrection appearances in a physical form were not easily accepted by the disciples and others.

6.6 My submission: A response to the gaps

6.6.1 Violation of the natural law

I observe that Wayne (2017) argues that accepting the physical resurrection of Jesus is a violation of the laws of nature. It is rational to mention that the laws of nature maintain uniformity, consistency, reliability, tangibility, and factual results of experimentation within the context of the natural order when reference to past experiences is performed. To the contrary, I accept the resurrection of Jesus because it is central to all of Christianity. Both ancient and modern proclamation are the testimonies that Jesus suffered, died, was crucified, and then resurrected on the third day based on the testimony of the apostles as reported in the gospel accounts. In addition, the testimony also of the apostle Paul substantiates the gospel accounts. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "...and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Furthermore, I accept the resurrection of Jesus because the earliest Christians were careful to ensure they left behind credible accounts of the resurrection as part of the canonical Gospels (as it is today). The discovery of the empty tomb suggests reliable historical evidence based on eyewitnesses. Therefore, I accept the resurrection of

Jesus based on sufficient reliable historical evidence that the tomb was discovered empty. The reports of the gospel accounts indicate that it was the women who discovered the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene, among others. In addition, Paul mentions the eyewitnesses as Peter, the twelve apostles, James the brother of Jesus, and a group of five hundred people who had also seen and borne testimony that Jesus was resurrected (1 Cor.15:5–8). By examining the resurrection accounts in the Gospels, we gain a deeper understanding of this remarkable event and its significance to the Christian faith. Thus, whether prophecy, drama, historical accuracy, or personal encounters are emphasised, it is worth noting that the resurrection of Jesus is the only reasonable explanation for the transformation of the disciples.

The disciples went into hiding in an upper room for fear of the Jews (Joh. 20:19). After encounters with the risen Jesus, the disciples went out boldly to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus (Acts 17:6)-fearlessly they proclaimed Jesus Christ had risen (Acts 3:12-26; 4:1-33; 8:4; 17:6). In addition, several extra-biblical writers attested to the fact that eyewitnesses died insisting they had seen Jesus alive after a crucifixion that should have left him unrecognisably disfigured. Among others as earlier discussed in [chapter five](#) Clement of Rome reported the deaths of Peter and Paul. Ignatius, Polycarp, Dionysius of Corinth, Tertullian, and Origen all affirmed that people died because of their belief that they had seen the resurrected Jesus. While many died for a belief, these are martyrs who died for what they claimed they saw. They had no reason to lie. Saying Jesus had not risen would have given them a chance for a relatively peaceful and prosperous life. Insisting he was raised brought them multiple scourging, imprisonments, and horrific deaths. In addition, Paul, a vehement persecutor of the Church (Acts 9:1-2) and James, Jesus's brother and a confirmed sceptic (Joh. 7:2-5), both claimed to have seen Jesus after his resurrection. Both died, refusing to recant their belief. Again, claiming that Jesus had risen granted them no earthly rewards. Paul was converted from a respected, powerful member of the Jewish leadership to a near-vagrant, constantly working, travelling and preaching with occasional breaks for prison.

I agree with Johnson (1998:336) who states that according to the laws of nature, the corpse of Jesus was exposed to decomposers whose function is to breakdown organic matter. When a human being dies, carbon dioxide (CO₂), water (H₂O), and nutrients are released into the atmosphere based on the process of decomposition. However, the decomposition of the corpse could not occur because of the change before the expected outcome. Jesus was raised from the dead, an event authenticated by the discovery of the empty tomb with burial linen. The post-resurrection appearances in a physical form, motivated Thomas to believe. Therefore, knowing the expected outcome as guided by the natural laws (Wayne, 2017) does not guarantee actual results because anything is possible before the results.

6.6.2 Bodily resurrection as myth and allegory

I disagree with the views of Bultmann (1970:15), Strauss (2011), and Eisenberg (2016: 141), among others, who have argued that bodily resurrection is mythical and allegorical. This argument has ignored the submissions of source criticism which has examined the original sources and disclosed that the passion narratives as reported in the gospel accounts are factual, credible, and historical. Thus, bodily resurrection is neither myth nor allegory, but something which happened in the public arena of history.

6.6.3 The stolen body theory

I disagree with Carrier (2006) who argues that the disciples had stolen the corpse of Jesus. This is because there exists reliable historical evidence as discussed earlier that it was even more dangerous to visit the tomb with the intention of stealing the corpse of Jesus. The stone at the entrance could have produced enough noise if moved. In addition, maximum security was applied by the Roman soldiers. If this was the case how could the people who were highly conscious of their own security and safety suddenly risk their lives? Stealing the body of Jesus from a tomb highly secured was too risky to perform. If the body was stolen, the disciples could not have boldly proclaim the bodily resurrection of Jesus and eventually give up their lives as martyrs. Thus, the proclamation of the risen Christ was performed boldly because the tomb was discovered empty with burial linen due to a bodily resurrection.

6.6.4 Spiritual resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus was a spiritual matter according to Carrier (2006). However, if the resurrection was a spiritual matter, what had happened to the physical body that was placed inside the tomb? Was the corpse or its remains discovered later? If this is so where is the historical evidence? The proponents of the spiritual resurrection theory lack evidence of the discovery of the corpse. I observe further that current research and the body of literature today do not provide such evidence. I am of the opinion, therefore, that historical evidence of the corpse of Jesus after the discovery of the empty tomb remains important in justifying spiritual against bodily resurrection. The discovery of the empty tomb with burial linen favours the bodily resurrection.

6.6.5 Failure to present the corpse

I note that failure to present the corpse of Jesus remains a critical matter in this study if the bodily resurrection is to be disapproved. For instance, even when Carrier (2006), among others as discussed earlier, argues against bodily resurrection, it is clear that their views do not present any historical evidence about the whereabouts of the corpse of Jesus or its remains. What is the justification for the empty tomb other than the discussed views? I am of the view that to make the argument against bodily resurrection strong, the historical evidence regarding the corpse should be presented, and if not, the argument remains weak to disapprove the event of the discovery of the empty tomb due to a rise from the dead.

6.6.6 Historical inconsistency

The gospel accounts indicate historical inconsistency and legendary embellishment according to Carrier (2006). This argument does not account for the application of source criticism whose critics recognise and value the available sources in their diversity. The gospel accounts were developed through oral transmission and written fragments. Therefore, when the reports of the passion narratives agree it means they probably used the same sources and will differ when different sources are used (Krentz, 1975:1). Source criticism as discussed earlier demonstrates that the passion narratives were fully developed through several sources (Carson & Moo, 2005:79-85). Thus, similarity and dissimilarity in the biblical parallel accounts entirely depend on the

sources used and such should not be interpreted as historical inconsistency. Therefore, source criticism concludes that the gospel accounts are historical, reliable, and accurate (Mounce, 1993:264).

6.6.7 Historical setting

The historical setting of the first century suggests that the masses had no understanding of science or critical thought. They were neither equipped nor skilled, nor even interested in challenging an inspiring story, especially a story like that of the bodily resurrection as reported by the Gospel accounts (Carrier, 2006).

In addition, Carrier (2006) argues that the context of the first century was characterised by uncivilised, unscholarly, second-hand witnesses, and people with biased views. In contrast to the view of Carrier (2006), my argument here is that if the context of the first century was the way Carrier (2006) describes it the disciples should have easily accepted the reports of the resurrection from the women and others. Why did the disciples doubt? I am of the view that, the doubts of the disciples suggest the ability to seek ratification of the resurrection event as was reported by the women, a contrary response to the view of Carrier (2006). Therefore, it's irrational to describe the people of the ancient world, especially the disciples as ill-equipped and that they were second-hand eyewitnesses in the presence of sufficient historical evidence so that some are reported to be eyewitnesses like John. Luke was a medical doctor of the first century with formal education.

Thus, it is obvious that the early Christians were aware of the laws of nature and their application. Hence, they could not just believe any miraculous narration. For instance, Thomas, called Didymus could be the best example. For Thomas bodily resurrection without a physical interaction was not possible until proven a reality by a bodily encounter with the risen Jesus (Jn. 20:24-29). Most significant New Testament writers understood that corpses could not exit tombs. But the evidence from the primary sources indicates that later the disciples believed because they had a physical interaction with Jesus which proved beyond doubt that Jesus had experienced a bodily resurrection. Christianity experienced a numerical increase due to the evidence that Jesus had risen from the dead. Therefore, the early Christians could sacrificed lives based on their beliefs.

6.6.8 Martyrdom

In contrast to the views of Carrier (2006) who has undermined martyrdom-he argues that it was not due to the belief that Jesus was raised from the dead but was a result of various charges of which some were political-I agree with the views of Keener (2003:1185) who states that the witnesses who saw Jesus alive from the dead were convinced of the veracity of their claims. Many devoted their lives to proclaim what they had encountered. The deaths of some as martyrs are a clear indication that the testimony of the early Christians regarding the discovery of the empty tomb was based on a bodily resurrection. The post-resurrection appearances were not fabricated but were events that took place in the public.

For instance, there exists evidence in Acts 2:22-24 which states: “²²you that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know ²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”²⁰⁰ This passage describes the message at the centre of the proclamation of the apostle Peter and others to the community. I am of the view that it was this same message about the resurrection of Jesus which all new converts and appointed leaders believed and proclaimed.

Acts 5:17-18 states: “¹⁷then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, ¹⁸arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.”²⁰¹ Hence, reports that it was the message about the risen Jesus which provoked the Jewish leaders to persecute the early Christians to the extent that some died as martyrs. For instance, Acts 6:3-6 states that ¹³therefore, friends,

²⁰⁰ Acts 2:22-24: ²²Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλεῖται, ἀκούσατε τοὺς λόγους τούτους· Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις, οἷς ἐποίησεν δι’ αὐτοῦ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε, ²³τοῦτον τῇ ὠρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε, ²⁴ὃν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ (Nestle, 1904).

²⁰¹ Acts 5:17-18: ¹⁷Ἀναστάς δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, ἢ οὔσα αἵρεσις τῶν Σαδδουκαίων, ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου ¹⁸καὶ ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ ἔθεντο αὐτοὺς ἐν τηρήσει δημοσίᾳ (Nestle, 1904).

select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, ⁴while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.’ ⁵What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.”²⁰² This passage introduces a new leader appointed by the apostles, namely, Stephen who was full of wisdom, committed to his faith, and believed that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Acts 7:59-60 states: “⁵⁹while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he died.” ²⁰³ Thus, Stephen was stoned to death based on his religious beliefs. Stephen’s proclamation that Jesus was alive after being raised from the dead is contrary to the claims of Carrier (2006) as discussed [in chapter two](#). Acts 8:1 states: “¹that day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria.”²⁰⁴ This is an addition that great persecution broke out against the Church in Jerusalem and many Christians were scattered. For instance, Thomas was executed in India, Matthew in Ethiopia, and Andrew at Patrae in Achaia (Hunter, 2013). It is therefore obvious that Stephen’s experience suggests that the same happened to other Christians. Therefore, the proclamation of bodily resurrection resulted in martyrdom.

²⁰² Acts 6:3-6; ³ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτὰ πλήρεις Πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης· ⁴ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν. ⁵καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους, καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρη πίστεως καὶ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Πρόχορον καὶ Νικάνορα καὶ Τίμωνα καὶ Παρμενᾶν καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα, ⁶οὓς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας (Nestle., 1904).

²⁰³ Acts 7:59-60; ⁵⁹καὶ ἐλιθοβόλουν τὸν Στέφανον, ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξα τὸ πνεῦμά μου. ⁶⁰θεῖς δὲ τὰ γόνατα ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ Κύριε, μὴ στήσης αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη (Nestle, 1904).

²⁰⁴ Acts 8:1: ¹Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ. Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις· πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρίας πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων (Nestle, 1904).

6.6.9 Bodily resurrection as a later development

I disagree with the submissions of Carrier (2006) and Eisenberg (2016:141) who argue that the resurrection of Jesus was a later development because I am of the view that the apostle Paul, regarded as one of the early New Testament writers, mentions the event (Craig, 2006). Paul attests to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and his physical post-resurrection appearances. Like the gospel accounts, in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 as discussed [in chapter two](#) . Paul reports that Christ died, was buried, and that on the third day he was raised from the dead. After being raised from the dead Christ appeared to Cephas, the twelve, more than five hundred brothers and sisters at the same time, and most of them were still alive at the time.

Then he also appeared to James, the apostles, and last of all Christ appeared to Paul himself. Acts 9:1-9: “¹meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ⁵He asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The reply came, ‘ I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’ ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.” ²⁰⁵ describes the appearance of the risen Christ to Paul on his way to the city of Damascus which he has spoken about in 1 Corinthians 15:7.

²⁰⁵ Acts 9:1-9: ¹Ὁ δὲ Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ Κυρίου, προσελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ ²ῆτήσατο παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολὰς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγάς, ὅπως ἐάν τινας εὕρῃ τῆς Ὁδοῦ ὄντας, ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας, δεδεμένους ἀγάγῃ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. ³Ἐν δὲ τῷ πορεύεσθαι ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐγγίζειν τῇ Δαμασκῷ, ἐξαίφνης τε αὐτὸν περιήστραψεν φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ⁴καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἤκουσεν φωνὴν λέγουσαν αὐτῷ Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; ⁵εἶπεν δὲ Τίς εἶ, Κύριε; ὁ δὲ Ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις. ⁶ἀλλὰ ἀνάστηθι καὶ εἴσελθε εἰς τὴν πόλιν, καὶ λαληθήσεται σοι ὃ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν. ⁷οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ εἰστήκεισαν ἔνεοί, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς, μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες. ⁸ἠγέρθη δὲ Σαῦλος ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἀνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν· χειραγωγοῦντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἰσήγαγον εἰς Δαμασκόν. ⁹καὶ ἦν ἡμέρας τρεῖς μὴ βλέπων, καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲ ἔπιεν (Nestle, 1904).

Paul reminded his audience that the majority of those people were still alive and could have challenged him with regard to bodily resurrection. It is vital to note that what gives special authority to the list of witnesses is the historical evidence that most of the five hundred people were still alive during and after the post-resurrection events.

Therefore, Paul places himself in the list of the eyewitnesses of the post-resurrection appearances and this does not imply that the mentioned appearances were the same for all people. Paul was not concerned with the how of the appearances, but with who appeared. It should be noted that the mode of the appearance were entirely incidental. By placing himself on the list of the eyewitnesses, Paul was not attempting to put the appearances to the others on a level with his own; rather he is trying to level up his own experience to the objectivity and reality of the other disciples of Jesus. In response to the opponents of the post-resurrection appearances, Paul anxiously includes himself, among other apostles as a recipient of a genuine, objective post-resurrection appearance and argues that the encounters of other disciples was as much a real appearance of the risen Jesus as what he saw (Craig, 2006).

In 1 Corinthians 15:8, Paul further argues that if people disagree that Jesus was raised from the dead, his personal encounter with the post-resurrection appearance of the risen Christ remains valid. For Paul, apart from receiving information, his personal encounter was motivation to his conversion and change of opinion. Therefore, the contents of a genuine letter written within thirty years of the event is almost as strong evidence as one could hope for something that happened nearly two thousand years ago (Craig, 2006). The proclamation of the post-resurrection appearance tradition mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 AD. I agree with the submission of Bishop (2015) that one of the criteria used in historical investigations to determine with high certainty what is historical is the early dating of a source.

Galatians 1:18-20 states: ¹⁸“then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; ¹⁹but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother ²⁰In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!” ²⁰⁶; 2:1ff; ¹“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking

²⁰⁶ Gal. 1:18-20: ¹⁸Ἐπειτα μετὰ τρία ἔτη ἀνήλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἰστορήσαι Κηφᾶν, καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε· ¹⁹ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον, εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Κυρίου. ²⁰ἃ δὲ γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι (Nestle, 1904).

Titus along with me.”²⁰⁷ In the mentioned texts Paul reports he performed at least two trips to Jerusalem and interacted with Cephas, James, and John about the Gospel. Later, Paul wrote that his and the apostles proclamation of the bodily resurrection of Jesus was the same. Thus, Paul attests to the resurrection throughout all his epistles.

1 Corinthians 15:12-18: “¹²now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have died in Christ have perished,”²⁰⁸ Here Paul argues; if it is preached that Christ had been raised from the dead, how can some argue that the dead are not raised (1 Cor. 15:12-18)? I note that Paul reports the resurrection of Jesus and the physical post-resurrection appearances as the basis and foundation of the proclamation of the gospel during the first-century, today, and beyond.

Paul, in Romans chapter 10 and Philipians chapter 2, indicates that the common and earliest confession of all the early Christians was that Jesus was raised from the dead. Therefore, I argue that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15 while other original eyewitnesses were still alive to correct him. The silence of Paul’s contemporaries on the subject of bodily resurrection compared to their criticism of his views on the law clearly entails that the common ground was truly laid. Thus, bodily resurrection is not a later development as Carrier (2006) and Eisenberg (2016:141) claim.

²⁰⁷ Gal. 2:1: ¹Ἐπειτα διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν πάλιν ἀνέβην εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα μετὰ Βαρνάβαν συναρταβῶν καὶ Τίτον (Nestle, 1904).

²⁰⁸ 1 Cor. 15:12-18: ¹²Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; ¹³εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· ¹⁴εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· ¹⁵εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν εἴπερ ῥὰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. ¹⁶εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· ¹⁷εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν. ¹⁸ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο (Nestle, 1904).

6.7 Extra-biblical sources: A response to an argument that only Christian historians reported the resurrection

6.7.1 Extra-biblical sources: Clement of Rome and Polycarp

There exist extra-biblical sources outside the Bible which respond to the claims of Carrier (2006) that the resurrection events have been reported by Christian historians only as discussed [in chapter two](#). The extra-biblical sources do not only attest to the beliefs of the Christians about the resurrection but rather that the events are historical. These are sometimes referred to as extra-biblical Christian writings (Bishop, 2015). Bishop (2015) mentions two people, among others who believed the message of the risen Jesus and reality of the post-resurrection appearances, namely, Clement of Rome and Polycarp (Bishop, 2015). Clement of Rome supported the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. He stated that the growth of the early Church was caused by the belief in the resurrection of Jesus and the physicality of the post-resurrection appearances (Bishop, 2015).

Like Clement, Polycarp wrote around 110 AD, refers to the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the disciples reports. Most importantly, both Clement and Polycarp were contemporaries of the disciples and knew the events (Bishop, 2015). Clement had interacted with the apostles. Polycarp was not only instructed by the apostles, but had conversed with several people who had encounters with the risen Jesus (Bishop, 2015). He was also appointed as Bishop of the Church in Smyrna by the apostle John while Clement provided leadership to the Church in Rome after ordination by Peter (Bishop, 2015).

There exist extra-biblical sources outside the Bible that respond to the claims of Carrier (2006) that the resurrection events have been reported by Christian historians only. The extra-biblical sources do not only attest to the beliefs of the Christians about the resurrection, but rather that the events are historical. These are sometimes called extra-biblical Christian writings (Bishop, 2015).

6.7.2 Non-biblical sources: The Jewish and Roman historians

The first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus independently attests to the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Josephus wrote on Jesus before his passage was later subject to some scribal interpolation (Bishop, 2015).

Flavius Josephus has mentioned the sufferings and death of Jesus by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. Gleghorn (2014) adds that Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote that Jesus was put to death by crucifixion. Pliny the Younger discloses that the followers of Jesus worshipped the risen Jesus and sang hymns as to a “god”. Therefore, the mentioned non-biblical sources remain valid and reliable historical sources in favour of the bodily resurrection. Therefore the resurrection events are not only mentioned by the Christian historians but also by extra-biblical and non-biblical sources because the proclamation of the bodily resurrection was a public matter.

6.8 Conclusion

In the light of the above views, this investigation has demonstrated that reliable historical evidence exists that Jesus of Nazareth experienced a bodily resurrection. The bodily resurrection of Jesus was authenticated by the physical post-resurrection appearances recorded in the Synoptic and Johannine accounts, extra-biblical, and non-biblical sources respectively. Thus, I accept the resurrection of Jesus based on its centrality to Christianity. Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected on the third day based on the testimony of the apostles as reported in the gospel accounts. Paul’s testimony substantiates that of the gospel accounts. Furthermore, I accept the resurrection of Jesus based on the canonical Gospel’s sufficient and reliable historical evidence that the tomb was discovered empty.

The discovery of the empty tomb suggests reliable historical evidence based on eyewitnesses that includes Mary Magdalene, among other women. Paul mentions the eyewitnesses as Peter, the twelve apostles, James the brother of Jesus, and a group of five hundred people. It is worth to note that the reasonable explanation for boldness and transformation of the disciples was the claim that Jesus experienced resurrection.

Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth, a wise man and miracle worker was put to death through crucifixion by Pontius Pilate the Roman governor and was buried in the tomb belonging

to Joseph of Arimathea. On the third day the tomb was discovered empty with burial linen in its their original form and position by Mary Magdalene and other women. The risen Jesus physically appeared first to Mary Magdalene and later interacted with the disciples and several others during the post-resurrection encounters as discussed

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

7.1. Findings

Therefore, in light of the articulated views regarding the resurrection of Jesus in which the investigations of this study included the ancient text taken as a primary source, substantiated by the extra-biblical and non-biblical sources, I note that both the primary and secondary sources have shown explicable, credible, and reliable historical evidence within the context of the subject of the resurrection.

The historical-critical method and in particular source criticism was employed in the investigations of this study and helped to determine the historicity and facticity of the reports of the passion narratives. Source criticism examined the original form and sources of the passion narratives. Source critics guided the investigations with the conclusion that all the reports of the gospel accounts are reliable, historical, and not myths or allegories. For instance, source criticism demonstrated that the writers of the gospel accounts had used different sources of information. Thus, similarities were observed when the writers had used the same sources and disparities existed when different sources were used. The dissimilarities or disparities did not suggest either a disagreement or a historical inconsistency in the biblical parallels, but rather an addition of the information of one evangelist to another. Therefore, this investigation has demonstrated that there is reliable historical evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was put to death by crucifixion. Three days after burial, a tomb was discovered empty with burial linen and such an occurrence favours bodily resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus was authenticated by the post-resurrection appearances reported in the gospel accounts, extra-biblical and non-biblical sources.

The crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and physical post-resurrection appearances were attested by the eyewitnesses. I am of the opinion that the eyewitnesses Mary Magdalene, John and Peter, among others have responded to the demands of an historical investigation in which two or more eyewitnesses play a critical role in the determination of whether an event is historical or tale. The reality of the post-resurrection appearances encountered by the disciples and many people on several days point to the authentication of the bodily resurrection. Hence, dismissing the claims of hallucinations, visions, mythology, and legendary embellishments. The resurrection and its physical post-resurrection appearances are historical.

I further argue that a fair way to disprove the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the twenty-first century and beyond is to produce the reliable historical evidence about the missing corpse of Jesus or its remains. This is because it remains a fact of history that the tomb where the corpse of Jesus was buried was discovered empty with empty burial linen. The proponents of a spiritual resurrection had failed to produce the corpse or account for its whereabouts. The stolen body theory remains a weak argument because it undermines the security at the tomb. Therefore, my position is that there exists reliable, exegetical and historical evidence that the tomb was discovered empty. The discovery of the empty tomb favours the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

7.2. My defence: Resurrection

Despite the controversy surrounding the subject of the resurrection of Jesus, I note that the resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith as earlier mentioned. The reports of the gospel accounts indicate that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead in the same body, only incorruptible and immortal. Thus, argue that the resurrection of Jesus be perennially defended because this study has disclosed that alternate theories have been proposed to explain away the resurrection occurrence in human history. For instance, among others the stolen body theory (Carrier, 2006), resurrection as a later development (Carrier, 2006), and violation of the natural law (Wayne, 2017). Hence, in this contemporary era, the resurrection should be defended based on the reports of the gospel accounts, extra-biblical and non-biblical writings, the testimony of authoritative witnesses, and canonisation. The reported resurrection transformed the lives of the disciples. Why would anyone invent the story that Jesus had risen from the dead, teach

others to be willing to die for it, and then personally be willing to die for it and die for it? It is an explicit indicator that the reports of the Gospels about the resurrection of Jesus are reliable, credible, and historical.

Furthermore, if the resurrection of Jesus was historical? its defence demands an examination of the relevant historical evidence. Hence, the application of the historical-critical method and in particular source criticism as the appropriate method for the investigations in this study. Therefore, current studies about the resurrection should not undermine the authority and historicity of the canonical Gospels because the authors have significantly named the eyewitnesses of the resurrection and the discovery of the empty tomb with burial linen. I accept and defend a bodily resurrection based on the reports of the Gospels whose credibility and historicity were established through source criticism, the explicit testimony of the eyewitnesses, consensus on the disciple's encounters with Jesus through the post-mortem appearances that are reported to have occurred not only once to a person, but to many on different days contrary to hallucinations. In addition, the gospel accounts all agree that Jesus of Nazareth, was arrested and convicted on charges of blasphemy by the Jewish Sanhedrin. Then slandered before the Roman governor Pilate on charges of treason, was crucified in Jerusalem by the Roman authorities during the Passover feast. He died and was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb, sealed with a stone. The women followers of Jesus, including Mary Magdalene, noticed his interment, visited his tomb early Sunday morning, only to find it empty. Therefore, there is reliable historical evidence that the reported resurrection of Jesus is factual and historical respectively. Hence, the defence.

7.3. Further research

As listed below, I recommend further research on the;

7.3.1. value of the empty tomb in post-modern theological thought.

7.3.2. management of supernatural events despite the naturalist approach (natural law).

7.3.3. conditions of hallucination and its impact on humanity.

7.3.4. understanding Christology through an interdisciplinary approach.

7.3.5. Value of recognising the reality and facticity of other possible supernatural interventions in the events despite the established laws of nature.

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