

## **St. Paul Falsely Accused of Contradicting the Gospels on the Physical Resurrection: Another Cheap and Defective Product in a Profitable Industry**

The New Testament is a profitable area to write in as long as billions of Christians continue to believe; so academics continue to pump out books, typically faddish inventions in such an intellectual fashion industry. While good books are easy to find, so are those that parasitically profit on Christians' believers need to know truth (though the authors' own commitments might be to more or to less superstitious belief-systems than the Christian buyer). Whether this is ethical or not *non curo* (I care not!). However, in a scientific age, ought we to expect so little of publishers? On one hand, if the research by specialists were truly interdisciplinary, increased knowledge (or rather better hypotheses) in their field would be hopeful, but moneymaking from non-specialist readers and the (sometimes acknowledged) failure of the peer-review industry hardly requires real discipline and skill in understanding criterion for truth. Any decent scholar need not produce anything requiring much research to sell books. They simply need to be successful at some communication skills reducible to an engaging sort of sophistry that pleases or engages the eyes or ears (depending on media). To be sure some aforementioned biblical critics are sincere, for they never studied systematically the history of philosophy, early science, and modern science to understand what certainty in classical science requires versus merely possible and probable arguments (the last is typical of today's hard science). Hence, the blind leading the blind in alleged knowledge-acquisition is the rule of the day in the not-even-soft-science of biblical exegesis. The pseudo-scientism of higher criticism (which I personally enjoy as a hobby and find to be valuable when understood for what it actually provides – best guessing) has none of the virtues of metaphysics,<sup>1</sup> physics, or any other branch that has classically claimed real scientific knowledge. But it also lacks the assumed virtues of hard science too. Even with the pretense of modern scientism (the unproven assumption that a constantly changing field of provisional conclusions about the universe represents a constant called truth), certain biblical critics rely mostly on taste and ingenuity and little on knowing anything that is necessarily true or unchangeable about principles or their focus of study regarding some sort of truth criterion. Yet, any critic's thesis may enjoy decades-long preference by scholars and, therefore, is weirdly touted as knowledge with the result that believers and militant non-believers spend their cash and pour peons of praise (or ignominy) on writers who don't understand basic difficulties brought up by philosophers of science (e.g., Thomas Kuhn, Karl Popper, Paul Feuyerabend) when amateur truth-seekers make claims to knowledge that are fairly absurd, albeit in their own field. Knowing that these authors avoid using grammatical constructions that show the tenuousness of their arguments or all the conditions needed to be absolutely correct (especially when such conditions will never be proven to have existed with certainty), the pomposity of men is difficult to bear who cannot understand either epistemology (the verification that what's in my head conforming to what's out there), or metaphysics (whether pre- or post-Kantian),

---

<sup>1</sup> If one responds that metaphysics has no virtues, I would still assert –unlike biblical criticism– a singular virtue of metaphysics is (taking Kant, Hume, and Wittgenstein) that its own celebrated practitioners admitted its lack of virtue, that is, it is a worthless endeavor (thus, the death of metaphysics), whereas higher critics enjoy nothing universally agreed upon (inexorable principles) by which an equal or superior critique of their own changes of mood over the centuries can be levied, if anyone has tried. By ignoring the greatest virtue of (principled) self-criticism they embrace to the highest degree accusations of mumbo jumbo since there is no reward for self-criticism. Critics' ad hoc response can be reduced to circularly dismissing not-biblically-relevant critiques of methodological principles in their self-insulated science, celebrating itself among practicing members failing to appreciate any "higher criticism" of their own discipline. The critique here is not about whether working principles of exegesis are permissible, but whether they are productive of infallible knowledge like geometric definition (that don't change or get revised).

neither the limits of certitude, nor criteria for truth that might qualify their ideas as respectable within what they claim to know about the Bible. If believers, as the more polemical critics say, are stupid for believing, the critics are stupid for rejecting formerly believing without understanding necessary and conditional realities in the universe. If they happen to be right about a religious objection, it is by happenstance since their poor argumentation does not actually lead necessarily (and sometimes even plausibly) to the conclusions to which they so often leap.

For a communist to oppose capitalism based upon the feeling that communist principles are infallible, is not a proof that communism is true; not that distributivism is affected by the critique. The choice among principles is often not binary or a disjunction: It's not either/or but either x/ or y/ or z (or more!). The ideological textual critic under our knife is like a communist who criticizes the capitalist. The communist-critic presumes –by analogy– economics by accepted truths so far undemonstrated in the modern-scientific sense, but critics cannot provide –as they should– reliably predictable outcomes and inexorable formulae or equations that lead to testability and repeatable outcomes to prove their assumptions reliable in future cases (for they speak about psychology and its effects on literature). Hence, one faddish thesis replaces another. Economics, too, knows many systems: To reduce the argument to communists (zealous critics) versus one species of capitalist (simpleton believer) looks like oversimplification. The inability to subject one's own system to the same principles of verification/falsifiability, as with the opposed system, altogether shows that the conversation is useless. Until principles are discussed and shown to the communist to be the fruit of non-empirical assumptions, a dialogue cannot take place about basic epistemology. Hence, the capitalist, socialist, distributivist, and others must typically be content to refute individual arguments (ad hoc) of the ideologue communist who cannot –like his professed materialism– rise above gross matter and see non-tangibles in the universe (viz., abstract principles) and, therefore, refuses to call into question the communistic reduction of everything sayable and nameable to matter. Similarly, since critics are by and large poor philosophers and have no training in logic and philosophy of science, this article will, ad hoc, content itself to highlight some amusingly obvious evidence (that by exegetes' alleged rules should be devastating) missed by exegetes who study St. Paul's admittedly authentic first epistle to the Corinthians. I plan to show how sloppy, and poor, are the arguments about St. Paul's allegedly irreconcilable doctrine of the Resurrection with that of the Gospels.

### **1. Against Mr. Obvious: St. Paul cannot mean what he writes in his own context and culture**

Exegetes get excited that St. Paul's used the phrase “spiritual” as if something ethereal (yes, a pun of sorts). This allows for all sorts of exciting psychological projections into the text as to what St. Paul might mean. After all, “spiritual” (*pneumatikon*) is never used in the Greek Old Testament (= LXX) from which St. Paul usually quotes Scripture. This is St. Paul's very own contribution to resurrection-talk. In other words, “spiritual body” (*pneumatikon sôma*) –although exegetes be strangely allergic to St. Paul potentially adopting this term from Stoicism<sup>2</sup> means something only definable as a negation: “Spiritual =

---

<sup>2</sup> In virtue of St. Paul using “types” or typology in 1 Corinthians by name, one would at least expect a Scriptural commentary to exhaust the Stoic school's introduction of typology into literary exegesis of contemporary classical literature. Instead, exegetes typically (pun) flee from types, as if a strain of Covid, for they are ill-equipped to deal with a stereotypically patristic pursuit. To be sure, patristics is messy with how the principles of typology were received and applied, but again, the dismissal is visceral, not principled and studied. In fact, I would attack (as a would-be atheist) St. Paul for typology as method of exegesis, not waste my time on the pabulum I discuss here. But

not-physical body and is unlike the Gospel of St. Luke.” This marks about the only broad agreement on the explanation of “spiritual” among exegetes or interpreters, namely, that there is a dichotomy between St. Paul and the Gospels. Everything else is up for grabs on what St. Paul might mean. Still, just because exegetes can only majorly agree on a single negation: “Paul is *not* like the Gospels,” this still needs to be addressed since the leading scholars hope to prop up their entire reading of 1 Corinthians based upon the principle that “spiritual” cannot mean St. Luke’s fish-eating resurrected Jesus.

This commonplace asserts that St. Paul uses the term in a physical-denying way, where “spiritual” modifies “body” in 1 Corinthians 15:44. St. Paul allegedly means: “I reject the traditionally Jewish notion behind what in Greek is a ‘physical body’ consisting of genetic ‘flesh and blood’” (1 Corinthians 15:50). It is alleged for St. Paul that something not-traditionally Jewish in conception and reality will rise again without its genetic flesh with which it was born. I hope it is clear as can be: Numerous exegetes want us to believe that 1 Corinthians 15:44, 50, *forces us* into at least two incommensurate doctrines of resurrection: (i.) St. Luke’s doctrine (the main example) vs. (ii.) St. Paul’s doctrine. Silliness in believing in the Resurrection is, for such exegetes, found in the inability to know which resurrection to believe in since contradiction is a vice (at least rhetorically) for exegetes when they evaluate the Bible as absurd. But as we shall see, contradiction is a virtue when they ignore the most obvious statement of St. Paul that make their exegesis untenable. Mr. Obvious (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) is clearly disappointed with well-paid exegetes, whose \$100, 000.<sup>00</sup>+ a year salaries at American Universities, with research assistants and light teaching loads, somehow make them unable to notice the following:

I make you to know, brethren, the Gospel with which I evangelized you, which also you received (*parelabete*), in which also you stand, through which you are also saved. I evangelized you by some meaningful-discourse, which you received, unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you, first of all, what I myself received: [i.] that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [ii.] and that he was buried, and [iii.] that **he has risen** on the third day **according to the Scriptures**. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

St. Paul committed himself to Jesus rising just as the Hebrew or Greek (pick what you will) Old Testament talked about the Resurrection. Would it not be asinine for St. Paul to emphasize that Jesus’s Resurrection is what is found in the Hebrew Bible, if his theory is not what can be found in the Hebrew Bible (BTW, this absurdity *is not a modern exegetical claim!*)? On this score, we have only six candidates for St. Paul’s reference: Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:1-15, Job 14:14, Daniel 12:1-2, 2 Maccabees 7:8-14; 12:43 (and Genesis 19:26). First, we look at the oldest prophecy:

Your dead shall live; Together with my **dead body** (*nəḇēlāṯî*) they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. (Masoretic Hebrew Isaiah 26:19)

The use of “**dead body/carcass**” is common enough in the Scriptures but is especially poignant in 1 Kings 17:1-24. Elsewhere in 1 Kings, the same root word is used for carcasses several times, which is significant since –although the story of the resurrection by Elijah of the widow’s son does not refer to the child’s “dead body” but of him personally– the book as a whole uses this standard word when a dead

---

atheists-as-exegetes is former-Evangelical and Liberal-Protestant business, and both have a too predictable history of identifying the study of typology with fleeing a pit of snakes.

body is mentioned in 1 Kings. Hence, it is clear about what vocabulary would have been said of the boy's carcass. The result is that, given Jewish scribal knowledge of such vocabulary and the popularity of this story among the illiterate masses, Isaiah 29:19 makes sense as a development out of 1 Kings storytelling about the miraculous raising of a dead carcass. The Jews would have understood contextually Isaiah's passage as historically literal, not merely as a figurative abstraction of the future, but as an historical incident in the past to be repeated by God for the dead members of the progeny of Israel in the future. Without confronting this obvious point of reference, modern exegetes whom I survey claim only that Isaiah means some innovative resurrection corporately, since no resurrection of the dead could have been taken literally or individually at this time (but the sources for 1 Kings are much older than Isaiah!). They simply fail to even consider 1 Kings 17:24, committing a methodological error by omitting this text from investigation. For argument's sake, I happily grant –contrary to the evidence– that Paul *may not* be referring to the most popular first-century prophet Isaiah in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. But I don't *need* this passage to show the obvious absurdity of forced dichotomy between St. Paul's and St. Luke's resurrection.

Next, St. Paul could have been referring to Ezekiel's extensive prophecy thus:

Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry **bones**, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.'" ' ' " So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the **bones** came together, **bone to bone**. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" ' ' " So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' Therefore prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.' ' " (Ezekiel 37:4-14)

The important root for "bones" shared between Ezekiel and 2 Kings is in the following verse:

Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched **the bones** of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet. (2 Kings 13:20-21)

The roots for the noun "bone" and the verb meaning "to live" or "to heal" or "to revive" are shared by both passages. Why is there no scholarly discussion the background that both Elijah and Elisha by way of individual resurrections for Israelites to develop a generic notion of resurrection? It is difficult to know why a Jew, especially, would psychologically exclude thinking of Elisha and Elisha from understanding the notions in Isaiah and Ezekiel that clearly develop vocabulary from older books to speak about a more corporate resurrection of the individual bodies that together are so many to form the corporate body of

Israel. However, even here, due to the prejudice to exclude these stories based upon the fact that experts have for so long failed to deal with this connection (as if this were an argument by neglect), I would accept (for argument's sake) –contrary to fact– that somehow St. Paul **in his first-century culture** and Jewish culture *would allegedly not be thinking of the Scriptural resurrection of Isaiah and Ezekiel*. Therefore, I move on to one last debated case before showing that the most probable references that must be accepted by a modern exegete are actually the worst references for a modern exegete's anti-physicalism (who embraces a non-physical resurrection in Paul), since the references to which St. Paul (by default) must refer according to them are the least likely to allow for a non-physical interpretation.

The root for the verb in the resurrection of the dead by Elisha's bones and in Ezekiel's valley of the bones is the same word used by Job 14:14: "If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, until my change comes." Here, the Greek or Septuagint tradition –also utilized by St. Paul– is helpful for a second-century BC Jewish understanding of the meaning of the passage: "For if a man dies, he shall live, after having finished the last day of my lifetime shall I wait until I shall be born again (*palin genômai*)" (LXX Job 14:14). However, this passage too will be disputed, likely based upon the accusation of anachronism since it is already (presumptively) a priori true that the antiquity of the sources (unless a late redactor is supposed to add the phrase) cannot *ipso facto* believe in the resurrection (unless Job has contemporary materials with 1-2 Kings!).

So, to whom must zealously anti-physicalist interpreters of St. Paul concede that St. Paul compares Jesus's resurrection ("he's arisen according to the Scriptures" [plural]) as one of at least two cases? In answer, we must turn to Daniel 12:1-2:

And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life some to shame and everlasting contempt.

The theme of dust coming back to life is clearly a Genesis theme requiring God to do something like breath his spirit into the dust of the earth.<sup>3</sup> It is practically certain that this passage must be admitted by the anti-physicalist exegetes, should they exclude St. Paul from interpreting (Why? I do not know!) Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Job in the sense of physical bodies being reconstituted. The sense here is simply a physical resuscitation or repeat of the Genesis composition of dust and breath that makes man a living being. Finally, since the literal sense of "according to the Scriptures"<sup>4</sup> means that St. Paul has in mind more than one passage referring to Jesus's kind or type of resurrection, we must per force turn to 2 Maccabees 7:8-14 and 12:43:

He replied in the language of his ancestors and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done. And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws." After him, the third was the victim of

---

<sup>3</sup> This is reinforced by second-century Daniel-text in Greek (so-called LXX), where it uses dust (*chôma*), that will be arising (*eksegerthêsontai*) unto eternal life (*zoên aiônion*).

<sup>4</sup> The sentence in question only claims that a dead Christ "rose ... according to the Scriptures." The statement, given the possible range of its meaning, at a minimum requires that there was a dead man and subsequently that this same dead man was raised Scripturally, that is, in a manner foreseen by Scriptural testimony. To require more conditions than the minimal commitment that St. Paul could mean is simply for the hostile reader to require more evidence than the actual Greek requires. A straw man would be to require that the Hebrew Old Testament must name a person "Jesus" or that the Hebrew must require three days is not required by the sense of the text.

their sport. When it was demanded, he quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands, and said nobly, “I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again.” As a result the king himself and those with him were astonished at the young man’s spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing. After he too had died, they maltreated and tortured the fourth in the same way. When he was near death, he said, “Death at the hands of humans is preferable, since we look forward to the hope that God gives of being raised by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life.” [...]

He also took up a collection from all his men, totaling about four pounds of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. Judas did this noble thing because he believed in the resurrection of the dead.

It is clear that the closer we get to St. Paul’s own lifetime the more clearly physicalist the notion of the resurrection is. The same hands are explicitly to be returned to the man who has lost them in this life. The mentality of the first-century Jew Josephus, who comments on the Maccabees (e.g. *Jewish Antiquities*), as representative of a first-century Palestinian outlook (likely similar to a Jew like St. Paul said to be trained under Gamaliel in Palestine), ought to take the Maccabees as an important point of reference for Jewish nationalism, which St. Paul admittedly embraced prior to his conversion.

In a last example, taken up in the New Testament, we have the first-century AD Aramaic version of the account of what happened to Lot’s wife:

And because the wife of Lot was from the daughters of Sodomites, she looked back to see what would be the end of her father’s house and, behold, she stands as a pillar of salt **until the time the dead are brought to life.** (Genesis 19:26)<sup>5</sup>

Notice that Lot’s wife was a sign of God’s miraculous change of a human being into another substance, often referred to as salt-rock or stone.

Emphasis by first-century Jews was on the fact that Lot’s wife would remain a pillar of salt until the resurrection should occur. The mention of “stones” is odd for English speakers, for we might at best be accustomed to speak about “rock salt.” However, a typical archeological discussion about Mount Sodom inevitably leads to mention of composite “rock formations” or aggregates of salt and other materials that form mounds and pillars in the region. For this reason, Philo of Alexandria’s Jewish tradition is accurate, where it multiply summarizes (around AD 40) the story thus: “Lot’s wife [...] was turned to stone (*lithoumenês*) because she loved Sodom and she reverted unto the natures that had been condemned by God.”<sup>6</sup>

Next, it’s important to emphasize that Abraham, by taking of Lot and his wife into his family, adopted Lot as his child so that Lot and his wife were technically the “children of Abraham.” This was considered fact by Josephus in the first century: “Now Abra(ha)m having no son of his own, adopted Lot, his brother Haran’s son, and his wife Sarai’s brother” (*Jewish Antiquities*, bk I, chapter 7.1). Now that we have established that the Abraham’s adopted child Lot and (by extension) Lot’s wife were discussed as

---

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Cathart, Michael Maher, et al. (ed.), *The Aramaic Bible: Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, trans. Martin McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible 1A* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 109. Compare the Masoretic Text of Genesis 19:26: “But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”

<sup>6</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Allegorical Interpretation III*, LXXV.213, in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, 2nd ed., trans. C. Yonge (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 75a. See also idem, *On Drunkenness*, XL.164 (ibid., 221).

well-known points of history in first-century Jewish literature, we now turn to the prophecy in the Aramaic Bible preached by St. John the Baptist and fulfilled by Jesus. We begin with the Baptist John:

St. John the Baptist who had prophetically corrected his fellow Jews around AD 30 on their genetic pedigree and added a quip about the resurrection: “And don’t opine to tell yourselves: ‘We have Abraham as our Father.’ Now, I say to you that **God is able to raise (*egeirai*) out of these stones children who belong to Abraham**” (Matthew 3:9). We underline the fact that St. John the Forerunner or Baptist made a claim that stones can be instantaneously changed into personal natures by divine power. [...] Why in the world would St. John the Baptist come up with this kind of example? Is he inspired to say something new, or is he using something traditional? Well, in answer, let us look at the whole passage as recounted in Luke 3:7-9:

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers!” Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” For I say to you that **God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones**. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

First of all, as Dead Sea scroll scholars have long noted, St. John’s phrase: “brood of vipers” is a quotation from Qumran literature for Pharisees whose party is considered inobservant of the Mosaic Law. This makes good sense since both Qumran Jews and St. John the Baptist were neighbors who together lived nearest to the Dead Sea and Jericho as points of reference. In fact, John’s speech to the Pharisees seems to be in the desert, again near the Dead Sea. Both Greek speaking Jews in Alexandria and Jewish Targums in Palestine supplement each other to understand John Baptist’s context for his passage. The idea that stones can be changed into the biological children of Abraham is very reminiscent of Lot’s wife. Lot, his wife, and his two daughters, lived near John’s home by the Dead Sea at Sodom. When Genesis 19:26 tells the story of Lot’s wife turning into “a pillar of salt” as designated in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, we might miss something important in English. A pillar of salt known to both the author of Genesis and to later Jews is a rock formation. In the Jewish tradition known to Philo around AD 40, Lot’s wife was transmuted or substantially changed in her human nature to “stone” or even rock. So, for Philo’s tradition, “a pillar of salt” and “stone” are interchangeable. We then turn to Philo’s contemporary, St. John the Baptist: He’s at or near to the very place where Lot’s wife, one of the many rock formations formed by salt all around the Dead Sea. In the first-century Aramaic tradition, Jewish commentators saw significance in Lot’s wife remaining a pillar of salt as a sign of a future age to be transformed by the future resurrection, when Lot’s wife shall be transformed back into a human being. Again, the prophecy of the Baptist John: “Now, I say to you that God is able **to raise (*egeirai*)** out of these stones children who belong to Abraham” (Matthew 3:9), is eventually fulfilled after the crucifixion:

The earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep **were raised (*egerthêsan*)**; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:51-53)

This prophecy of the resurrection and its oblique concentration on split rocks easily is inclusive of the monument of Lot’s wife in the first century, as attested by Josephus:

But Lot's wife continually turning back to view the city as she went from it, and being too nicely inquisitive what would become of it, although God had forbidden her so to do, was changed into a pillar of salt: for I have seen it, and it remains at this day. (*Jewish Antiquities*, Book I, chapter 14.5)

It would appear that St. John Baptist's (Matthew 3:9) prophecy before Jesus's public ministry was finally fulfilled in St. Matthew 27:51-53. One of the resurrected was undoubtedly Lot's wife, whose pillar was still standing in the years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The resurrection of others besides Jesus was required for Jesus's own claim to fulfill the (Targum) Scriptures as anticipated by the Jews.

**Conclusion:** "Jesus has risen from the dead according to the Scriptures" should mean (in Isaiah and Daniel) that dust is reconstituted with breath, or that dried bones are revamped with brand new sinews, flesh, and breath (Ezekiel), or that as a man was once born, he shall live again, as if reborn (Job) and that the hands he lost in death shall be restored just as he once possessed them (Maccabees). Finally, (in Targum Genesis,) Jesus's resurrection will reverse the curse of Lot's wife, technically a child of Abraham. All these Scriptures are consistent in the basic implications of resurrection, whether taken by modern exegetes to be figurative or literal, namely, dust is turned to physical body (Greek), viz., flesh (Hebrew). But, for the modern exegete (by and large), St. Paul is a transcendent being who defies his Jewish, Palestinian, Scriptural, and nationalistic context. He is like unto a god—overcoming the limitations of time and history—because he used the word "spiritual body," for which quote the same modern exegetes cannot locate a direct source but simply assume that there must be some meaningful (though largely unexplained by them) contrast between "spiritual body" (*pneumatikon soma*) and "flesh and blood" (*sarks kai haima*), the latter of which are unable to inherit the kingdom. This somehow, for them, means that Jesus *was not raised in agreement with the previous Scriptures*. Hence (to speak facetiously for the group), we modern exegetes willy-nilly double down on "spiritual body" and doubly deny the verbal significance of "according to the Scriptures." Exegesis, what a racket! How might we summarize this kind of exegesis: "Wow the hoi polloi with never decipher our vacuous verbiage and we can hope that they don't consult Mr. Obvious about the glaring problem about us not even verbally dismissing, let alone directly addressing: 'What does *raised ... according to the Scriptures* mean for St. Paul the first-century Jew?'"

## 2. A Rhetorician whose rhetoric does not persuade

Modern exegetes of St. Paul are rightfully fascinated in recent times by ancient rhetoric and epistolary writing. It is a major disappointment (sincerely speaking) that they cannot even agree in whole or in major part on how to divide St. Paul's letters in their major divisions (3, 4, or 5 divisions?), let alone how to rhetorically divide paragraphs and verses in many cases. This is just the nature of *a posteriori* disciplines that try to make good guesses based upon philology, grammar, syntax, and analogies from other letters of ancients (among many other things to compare and contrast). In this, we should welcome modern scholars' investigations. However, as we can see, this simple issue is really emblematic a far greater agnosticism on so many issues precluding definitive judgments regarding St. Paul and his writings. Because some ideologically driven modern exegetes have taken affirmative stances, however, on what they apologetically claim St. Paul must mean (here, that St. Paul's resurrected body is not the same kind of fish-eating body as in St. Luke), this means that all I am required to do is show how poorly and superficially they understand St. Paul's literature, along with their funded teams of people, in understanding St. Paul (here 1 Corinthians). By failing to locate the source texts for St. Paul and then, all

the same, pontificating on the meanings of phrases in St. Paul as contradicting the Scriptures' notion of resurrection (viz., Hebrew Bible), they garner praise and sell books more in virtue of their wise career choices, friendships with editors, and good self-promotion (whether this is ethical, *non curo!*). It is disheartening though to see how much anybody with a decent search engine can find in the Greek New Testament sources to which these scholars are oblivious by being caught up in the slipstream of incestuous discussions among fawning fans who are but asexual reproductions of their own progenitor in a sort of hermaphroditical project of carrying on their legacy. The result is to miss plainly obvious things. Let us illustrate:

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same **SPIRITUAL FOOD** (*pneumatikon brôma ephagon*), and all drank the same **SPIRITUAL DRINK** (*pneumatikon epion poma*). For they drank of that **SPIRITUAL Rock** (*pneumatikês petras*) that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for they were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our types (*typoi*), to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. (1 Corinthians 10:1-6)

Should we actually pay attention to St. Paul the rhetor (an alleged fascination of modern scholars), then might we notice what follows?

**(A1) 1 Corinthians 2:13:** “spiritual teaching” is that by which the “spiritual man” (*pneumatikos anthropos*) judges

**(B1) 1 Corinthians 3:1:** But Corinthians are carnal men (*sarkikoi [anthropoi]*) so St. Paul had to feed them carnal drink (*epotisa*) and food (*brôma*)

**(C.) 1 Corinthian 9:11:** We can sow the spiritual seed but harvest carnal seed. The Scriptural interpretation of not muzzling the ox that treads out the grain (viz., typology/allegory) of future perfect and spiritual things is spiritual not carnal

**(B2) 1 Corinthians 10:3-4:** There is also a spiritual food (*pneumatikon broma* = manna) and drink (*poma*; rock turned into water), which is typologically Christ

**(A2) 1 Corinthians 12:1:** Desire the things that are spiritual

**Conclusion:**

**1 Corinthians 14-15:** a body (*sôma*) sown as psychic, rises spiritual; the psychic man is the first corruptible non-immortal Adam a “living soul” but the last Adam is also a “living soul” but with the new addition of the “live-creating Spirit” [viz., immortality].

Clearly: *brôma*, *poma*, and *sôma* are all *pneumatikon*. So, rhetorically, we cannot help but rhyme them: *pneumatikon brôma*, *pneumatikon poma*, *pneumatikon sôma*. The first two are physical realities (a white stuff that is bread-like and honey-like and melts) while the water from the rock refreshed mortal and physical Israel and its flocks. So, “pneumatic” or “spiritual” means clearly typological or reading the Bible in a spiritual sense, as a spiritual man who is aided by the Spirit. So that, *as* the food and drink are typological of Christ, *so* the mortal body of Genesis is typological of the body of Christ at the resurrection. The first food and drink were historically physical, just as the Eucharistic food and drink are physical bread and wine, but also the body of Christ. So, too, the mortal human body is a type of the immortal body to come, where the difference between the two is: mortality versus immortality or corruptibility versus incorruptibility. What is added to physical body to give it incorruption? Quite clearly and obviously it is the “life-creating” activity of the Spirit (see Romans 4:17; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 26; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:21) acting on the dead body just as it acted on the dust or dead bones and dead carcass of

Christ. It really isn't that hard: "Pneumatic" or "Spiritual" means typological and even allegorical, so that what is in the Old Testament Scripture, as with the Old Adam, is really and physically fulfilled in the New Testament but with some new additive or perfection that is lacking in the Old Testament Scriptural type.

What is the objection by the exegete: Well, we shouldn't too closely associated the examples of *sôma*, *brôma*, and *pôma*. This must be the inane objection! If I rhyme: "Bob, slob, and knob" as "A spiritual Bob overcame being a spiritual slob and turned a spiritual knob (whatever that's supposed to mean!)," English can still not do justice to the fact that in Greek each of the three words is neuter and has attached the *-ma* ending that is very peculiar as to what it implies in a substantiative. As if a rhetor would not modify with the same adjective three rhyming neuter nouns in the singular in order for us to associate them by repeating the adjective: "spiritual" thrice and, therefore, psychologically connect them! So, as the carnal gives way to spiritual (B1), we should conclude that the psychic gives way to the spiritual (**Conclusion**).

However, as the Paul-is-not-a-resurrectionalist scholar believes (wrongly), his strongest scholarly objection is the following supremely unexplained verse: "Now this I say, brethren, that 'flesh and blood' cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Because scholars seem oblivious to the source cited by St. Paul here, many smugly believe that any attempt to interpret St. Paul as a physicalist with the resurrected body "according to the Scriptures" is – for them – doomed to failure, for how –say they– according to St. Paul's plain words can physical-flesh and physical-blood actually be in heaven? This is apparently taken to be St. Paul philosophizing or making a sort of doctrinal axiom that has something like Stoic or Aristotelian categorical important on defining the physical body over and against the "spiritual body." For once, as rarely conceded by modern exegetes, St. Paul is (purportedly) playing the metaphysician or speculative theologian going beyond his tradition. In reply, the overused anecdote: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" is perfectly situated to be invoked here. Let us see the only place in Greek literature that this statement comes from the LXX Greek of Sirach:

A person who is alive and well can sing the Lord's praises, but the dead, who no longer exist, have no way to give him thanks. How great is the Lord's merciful forgiveness of those who turn to him! But this is not the nature of human (*en anthrôpôis*) beings; not one of us is immortal (*ouk athanatos huios anthrôpou*). Nothing is brighter than the sun [but even the sun's light fails during an eclipse]. Flesh and blood (*sarks kai haima*) abandons this and will think evil! The Lord can look out over all the stars in the sky. Human beings? They are dust and ashes. (Sirach 17:28-32)

If somebody were to use a search engine for the Greek term in updated databases –since the time when such silly articles first challenged St. Paul's theology of the resurrection before the advent of tech– then more embarrassing books dedicated to the forced dichotomy (alleged between St. Paul and St. Luke) would have been avoided. Even the context and surrounding vocabulary of Sirach fit St. Paul's discussion perfectly (including the metaphor of light; 1 Corinthians 15:41). "Flesh and blood" are anticipated by Sirach in his idiom to express "mortals" who are by nature not immortal from death. Like the sun they are eclipsed in death. They are dust and ash. But, says St. Paul, when dust and ash (the Old Adam from dust) is raised a second, the life-creating Spirit gives a new additive (in its operation philosophically speaking) to make what is by nature mortal into something that no longer dies. What are "flesh and blood"? It is an idiom to mean "humans" or "mortals" or "man" or a "son of Adam." The philosophy and deep thought somehow alleged to be behind St. Paul's idiom "flesh and blood" proves to be as deep a dime. Its simply

a Hebraism used to mean: “mortal man.” We agree, mortals don’t go to heaven, for they die no more by some divine action of the Holy Spirit upon the event of resurrection. The name for the Spirit in Corinthians is the name of the Spirit who raises from the dead (see Roman 4:17; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 26; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:21). What part of this, in the least, means that the resurrected body is non-physical? Of course, the answer is “nothing”!

As I conclude my reflections on 1 Corinthians and the resurrection of the body, it suffices to state that the lack of paying attention (by exegetes dedicated to dividing St. Paul from the Scriptures) to the Jewishness of a Jew, who shows no particularly metaphysical gifts, nor any speculative thought even in physics, leads to projecting one’s own “metaphysical consolations” (Nietzsche, *On the Birth of Tragedy*) or paltry physics onto St. Paul. By philosophical standards, St. Paul is pretty boring and so (whatever the crazy crackbrained projection of substandard philosophical readings of “flesh and blood” that one may run across) proves only a theory resulting from a lack of tech savvy to use a search engine before imagining a whole fantastical world of occult entities in the cosmology of St. Paul and then subjecting us to it after calling up a buddy in the publishing industry in hopes of a best seller that should be listed in the Sci-Fi phantasy section, though advertised as fact.

### **3. Resurrection in the sub-apostolic age and Conclusions by William Albrecht**

In the first few generations after Christ, Christians strove to find precise language to coherently explain such important truths of the faith such as the bodily resurrection of the Messiah. These early Christians were well aware of St. Paul’s Corinthian letter proclaiming the central message of the good news. Like the great Saint, the first followers of Jesus utilized language that eliminated all doubt about whether or not Jesus rose bodily or in a simply immaterial manner. As the early heresy of Docetism ran rampant, Christians found themselves having to provide a defense of the essential doctrines of the faith. In examining St. Paul’s creed of 1 Corinthians 15, Saint Clement of Rome delivered his masterful exposition on the nature of Christ’s resurrection to the living Corinthian community (plausibly able to contextualize its meaning better than a 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century scholar) towards the end of the first century. He noted that: “Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord is continually revealing to us the resurrection that is to be. Of this He has constituted the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits, by raising Him from the dead.”<sup>7</sup> The early writings from the Apostolic Fathers would serve as masterful expositions on the orthodox Christian faith for future generations of Christians intent on catechizing new converts to the faith. St. Clement’s language was not unique to him, but was also emphasized by St. Ignatius of Antioch, disciple of Saint John. As St. Ignatius was on his way to martyrdom, he emphasized clearly that he was going to gladly be fed to the animals for the sake of Christ. For what need was there to worry if eternal life and glory in the Lord awaited him in the afterlife? For St. Ignatius, there was no doubt of the import found in St. Paul’s words, and much like the great saint from Tarsus, St. Ignatius utilized shockingly similar language in describing the bodily resurrection of Jesus. In his greeting to the Church at Smyrna, he remarked: “I salute each and all of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and in His flesh and blood, in His passion and resurrection fleshly and spiritually (*sarkikê te kai pneumatikê*), in union with God and with you.”<sup>8</sup> To claim that Saint Ignatius

---

<sup>7</sup> Glimm, F. X. (1947). [The Letter of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians](#). In F. X. Glimm, J. M.-F. Marique, & G. G. Walsh (Trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Vol. 1, p. 29). Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

<sup>8</sup> Walsh, G. G. (1947). [The Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch](#). In F. X. Glimm, J. M.-F. Marique, & G. G. Walsh (Trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Vol. 1, p. 123). Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

was utilizing spiritual in a certain kind of denial of the physical would be missing the complete point of his epistles. For the earliest Christians the spiritual was quite physical and fleshly in terms of the resurrection. Saint Ignatius would leave no doubt for his reader as to how the Messiah arose. “As for me, I know that even after His resurrection He was in the flesh, and I believe this to be true. For, when He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them: ‘Take hold on me and handle me and see that I am not a spirit without a body.’ And, as soon as they touched Him and felt His flesh and pulse, they believed. It is for this reason that they despised death and even showed themselves superior to death. After His resurrection He ate and drank with them like anyone else with a body, although in His spirit He was one with the Father.”<sup>9</sup>

It seems quite obvious that even centuries after Christ’s resurrection and ascension that Christians were utilizing the very same kind of language to describe the physical nature of Jesus rising from the dead and destroying the bonds of death. All of this should come as no surprise to you, the reader, as we have previously examined in depth all of the candidates for resurrection in St. Paul’s masterful letter to the Church at Corinth. The conclusion that we also reach in the early post biblical sources contemporary to the time of Saint Paul indicate to us that the first followers of Christ truly believed that the rising from the dead “according to the Scriptures” was of the physical nature.

---

<sup>9</sup> Walsh, G. G. (1947). [The Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch](#). In F. X. Glimm, J. M.-F. Marique, & G. G. Walsh (Trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Vol. 1, p. 119). Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.