

A Biblical Study of Resurrection

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Content

| | |
|---|----|
| Bibliography | 3 |
| Preface | 4 |
| Resurrection or Resuscitation? | 5 |
| The General Resurrection in Scripture is not defined as “never to die again” | 7 |
| Resurrection in Scripture is defined as rising from death to life again, eternal life | 8 |
| Jesus, Paul, and Peter on Resurrection | 10 |
| Defining the Term Resurrection | 13 |
| Understanding Divine Nature, Power, or Activity <i>as History</i> | 16 |
| Resurrection in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures | 21 |
| Resurrection Refers to both <i>Spiritual</i> and <i>Physical Resurrection</i> | 22 |
| Some Old Testament Instances or References on Resurrection | 23 |
| Why did the Sadducees Reject the Doctrine of Resurrection? | 26 |
| What is Resurrection Faith? | 27 |
| How do Belief, Repentance, Baptism, Salvation, the Holy Spirit, Engage Resurrection? | 28 |
| Appropriate Inductive Exegetical Study of Resurrection..... | 29 |

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Anchor Bible Dictionary

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

Tyndale Bible Dictionary

Preface

Recently I was reminded of an extensive study I had given to the *systematic theology of the resurrection of Jesus*.

I was in a cohort class in the Department of Divinity, University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, (1969). My other thirteen classmates were all ordained ministers, or soon to be ordained, in five leading denominations in South Africa.

The professor, Dr. Victor Bredenkamp, introduced the topic as *the historical resurrection of Jesus!* To my surprise eleven of my classmates raised concerns, “surely no one today believes that Jesus’ resurrection was an historical resurrection.” Professor Bredenkamp referred to Professor Wolfhardt Pannenberg as a prominent German scholar who did! This led to an interesting discussion and learning experience for me! I learned that I was definitely in the minority supporting a historical resurrection of Jesus.

In 1970 Dr. Bredenkamp suggesting that I write a Master’s thesis on the resurrection examining several prominent theologians, Dr. John A. T. Robinson of Cambridge University, Dr. Rudolf Bultmann of the University of Marburg, Dr. Willi Marxsen of the Evangelical Kirche in Germany, and Dr. Wolfhardt Pannenberg of the University of Mainz. I was later awarded a Master of Arts degree, Department of Divinity, University of Natal, 1972, *with High Honors*.

Several decades later, 1980, I was in a scholarly theological study group meeting on the campus of the Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Texas. During a break I strolled over to the University chapel. I was impressed by its beauty. I noticed that the *icon* attached to a central podium had the image of the burning Felix Bird. I asked one of the professors of the Perkins Divinity Department of the SMU why the Fenix bird! *His response took me back over forty years to my cohort in the University of Natal in 1969*. Here I was in 1980 on the campus of a major theological school in Texas where *the reality of Jesus historical resurrection was celebrated as a myth. Apparently, little had changed in the theological catalogue of some theological seminaries!*

Resurrection or Resuscitation?

So, when I recently tuned into a video lecture on the resurrection of Jesus I was reminded again in 2025 that many still see Jesus' resurrection as a *resuscitation* rather than a *resurrection*! In the lecture on *resurrection*, termed a "generalized term" the speaker made reference to several scholars whose views on the *resurrection* suggested only a *resuscitation*, not a *return to life from death* in a *resurrection*. It was suggested that since some find the normal term *resurrection* lacking in clarity, the term resurrection needed definition, hence, resuscitation!

The argument was that what happened to Lazarus does not conform to a modern understanding of *resurrection*. *It is best understood as a resuscitation!* Therefore, the modern concept defining resurrection should be *resuscitation*.

The argument is that there is a difference between a *resurrection* like *Jesus' resurrection*, and other *resurrections* described elsewhere in the New Testament. The point being that since after his *resurrection* Jesus *did not die again* what Lazarus experienced could not be a *resurrection from the dead*, like *Jesus' resurrection*! In most other discussions of resurrection the person being raised was simply *resuscitated*, *due to die again*! In these "resurrections" the "dead" were simply *resuscitated* back into their present life, being destined, *to die again*! *Resurrection* requires the definition of never to die again, like Jesus! Lazarus, and others were *not resurrected* from the dead, merely *resuscitated back to normalcy again*!

To define other *resurrections* as *resuscitations*, as did the interpreter, is simply not biblically sound exegesis. The scripture, John 11, clearly states that **Lazarus died and was brought back to life again, resurrected being the term used!** Defining resurrection as "**never to die again,**" is simply not Scriptural! It is *conjectural*¹. Other supposed undefined *resuscitations* like Lazarus' *resurrection* are not described in Scripture with a *never to die again* expression!

Since Lazarus was to die "again" he was *not resurrected* back to life! *Lazarus was not resurrected like Jesus* therefore Lazarus was merely *resuscitated, not resurrected*. But Scripture, notably John's Gospel, John 11, defined and clearly stated that Lazarus experienced as *resurrection*!

Jesus, John, Paul, Peter, David in his Psalms, and "Scripture," were simply not aware of modern definitions of death and resuscitation!

It might help to read Jesus' comments at John 11:13-27

"The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³ **Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.** ¹⁴ **Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,"**¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."¹⁶ Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that **Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.** ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**" ²² And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "**Your brother will rise again.**" ²⁴ Martha said to him, "**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**" ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"**²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

The resuscitation argument loses me right there! Scripture specifically defines Lazarus' experience in being *raised from the dead*, a *resurrection*! According to the resuscitation view, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

¹ Conjecture, "an opinion or conclusion formed on the basis of incomplete information." *Several English dictionaries.*

in their Gospels, and Jesus who called Lazarus up from the dead, *did not know what really happened!* According to the *resuscitation* view, *Lazarus was not resurrected from the dead, he was merely resuscitated from the dead for a while* before he would die.

*My question is where does one find the term **resuscitation** in Scripture? Nowhere!*

The concept of *resuscitation* is introduced by confused thinking where Scripture simply but plainly defines the Lazarus' experience as being dead and being *resurrected from the dead!*

Nowhere is a resurrection ever referred in Scripture as a resuscitation!

Resuscitation is introduced into the discussion *deductively* from *presuppositions* induced *deductively* by the scholar, and *not from within the text, inductively!*

In other words, you begin by defining a concept to suit your objectives, introduce this into the discussion as a presupposition, then defend your presupposition in a way that suits your viewpoint! That is a debate skill, arguing in a circle, *a logical fallacy, not a biblical exegetical process!*

My point is that one does not practice *biblical exegesis deductively* by defining your point as a presupposition and then introducing it into your argument to prove your point!

It is obvious that Scripture has a much *broader definition* for *resurrection* than *raised from the dead never to die again!*

The General Resurrection in Scripture is not defined as “never to die again”

“*Never to die again*” might be one way of examining *resurrection* in a *special discussion such as Jesus’ resurrection*, *but* that thought is never found in the *general biblical discussion of resurrection*. On most occasions, as in the Jesus’ resurrection, *resurrection* is simply defined in Scripture as *being raised from the dead by the power of God and the Holy Spirit*. In most cases the *resurrection* is not explained in detail, merely adopting the *general definition of resurrection as coming back to life, or literally standing up securely in life*. The Greek verb for *resurrection* is ἀνίστημι, *anístēmi*², and the noun form is ἀνάστασις, *anástasis*, means simply *to stand up firmly, to be raised up in life*.³

It should be obvious to people who use Scripture as their basis for doing theology that *theological events or happenings, involving divine or miraculous activity, can never be definitively defined by epistemological human physical concepts!* In biblical theology one should expect to encounter *divine activities* which *cannot be defined in epistemological human terms!*

So, in reference to our review of resuscitation we should ask “where in Scripture does Scripture ever define resurrection as resuscitation!”

Jesus’ discussion of Lazarus’ resurrection, **John 11:17-44**, was intended to demonstrate that the believer in Christ experiencing resurrection with Jesus ensured that the *finality of death* had been replaced by *the finality of life in resurrection*.

² Zodhiates, ἀνίστημι, *anístēmi*, stand again, meaning to cause to rise up, to raise up, cause to stand, Spoken of ... the dead, meaning to raise up, *recall to life* (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; Acts 2:32; 13:33); out of the dead as in Acts 13:34; 17:31.

³ Confer Zodhiates, ἀνίστημι, *anístēmi*, and ἀνάστασις, *anástasis*.

Resurrection in Scripture is defined as rising from death to life again, eternal life

What do we mean by *life*?

Life - ζωή, zōē, or eternal life - ζωὴν αἰώνιον

Life, or eternal life is featured 18 times in John's Gospel. Primarily *eternal life* does not speak of life without end, but of the *quality of life God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have*. John sets this in motion with his statement at the opening of his gospel story about Jesus. **John 1:1-4**, "***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*** ² *He was in the beginning with God;* ³ *all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.* ⁴ ***In him was life*** [ζωή, zōē], ***and the life was the light of men.*** ⁵ *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*"

We learn from this that whatever life, ζωή, zōē, means it *existed in Jesus* before our word was made! This implies that mankind *shares, or can share, in the quality of life* that God and Jesus have.

We will learn from Scripture that the quality of life, *eternal life*, we share with Jesus, our relationship with God, can be lost through sin and our choosing to live our own lives! **Ezek 18:20** "*The soul that sins shall die.*" **Rom 6:23** "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" This death primarily refers to *spiritual death*, the *contrast of eternal life*. **Death** refers to **total ruin, physical and spiritual**, absence from the personal presence of God.

We learn from the Gen 2, 3 narrative, Adam and Eve, that the *punishment or consequences for sinning against God* was **spiritual death**, *banishment from the presence and blessings of God*, and also **physical death**, you will die!

John tells us that even though we have sinned and died spiritually, God loves us and has sent his Son, Jesus with life, to restore that spiritual relationship with God. **John 3:16** "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish [die] but have eternal life.*"

In the context of *resurrection*, the Greek word ἀνίστημι, *anistēmi* literally means to *stand again after lying down in death*. Resurrections are always found in *contrast to death* either *physical death* or *spiritual death*. Having **died** resurrection in Scripture implies *standing again or coming to life again*.

In Scripture *resurrection sets life in contrast to death*. The implication is that **some death** is involved for a *resurrection to life* to take place.

In the context of Scripture the kind of life spoken of as *eternal life*, implies the *quality of life Jesus enjoyed with God before creation*.

At **Eph 2:1-7** Paul speaks of *the contrast of life and death*. His point is that the Christians without Christ **are dead** but in Christ they had been **made alive** again, "***And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins*** ² *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.* ³ *Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.* ⁴ ***But God***, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ ***even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ*** (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ ***and raised us up*** with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ *that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*"

In a powerful message at **Rom 5:21- 6:1-14** Paul, speaking of spiritual death and life demonstrates that by *being united with Christ in baptism* we are *united with Christ in his resurrection to life*. The term *resurrection* is set in the context of *death and life, eternal life*.

The context of *resurrection* is set in *the contrast of death and being raised to newness of life!*

Rom 5:21, “so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 6

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that **as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸ But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. ⁹ **For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.** ¹⁰ The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Tit 3:3-7, “For we ourselves were once foolish, **disobedient, led astray**, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; ⁴ but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ **he saved us**, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit**, ⁶ which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that we might be justified by his grace and **become heirs in hope of eternal life.** ⁸ The saying is sure.”

The Sequence of Sin, Death, Grace, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Eternal Life

Scripture, Old and New Testaments clearly set **resurrection** in God’s eternal plan of redemption, and shared **eternal life** with God; Eph 1:3-14; Rom 6:1-11, Col 2:11, 12.

Without a clear Biblical understanding of sin, death, and eternal life **resurrection** defined as **standing up in life again** has no meaning!

Jesus, Paul, and Peter on Resurrection

Jesus on Resurrection

John 11:17-27.

*“Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off,¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house.²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”²³ Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will rise again.**”²⁴ Martha said to him, “**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?**”²⁷ She said to him, “**Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.**”*

Paul on the Resurrection

1 Cor 1:18-2:9.

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.¹⁹ For it is written,

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.”*

*²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, **it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.**²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,²³ **but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

²⁶ For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth;²⁷ but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong,²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.³⁰ He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption;³¹ therefore, as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.”

Chapter 2

¹ When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom.² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.³ And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling;⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

1 Cor 15:1-22.

“Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand,² by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures**, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹² **Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?** ¹³ **But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised;** ¹⁴ **if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.** ¹⁵ We 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. ¹⁶ **For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised.** ¹⁷ **If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.** ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.

²⁰ **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.** ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Peter on the Resurrection

In his great Day of Pentecost sermon peter builds his gospel message on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 2:22-36

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ **this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.** ²⁴ **But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.**

²⁵ For David says concerning him,
 ‘I saw the Lord always before me,
 for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
 moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades,
 nor let thy Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
 thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.’

²⁹ “Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ **he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.**

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand

of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says,

‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand,

³⁵ till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.’

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

1 Pet 1:3.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** ⁴ and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. ⁹ As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.”

Defining the Term Resurrection

To define **resurrection** by binding on the term a *definition* or *concept not covered or defined in Scripture* is **not biblical theology**. It is a *dogmatic argumentation*, as in a *debate*, in which *terms are defined in advance, or limited in meaning by definition!*

Inserting definitions not inherent in Scripture into the fundamental meaning of a Scriptural word is debate practice, or technique, and not biblical critical exegetical theology!

As in all word studies *etymology* plays a minor part, but the definition of a word is primarily shaped by the *context* or *cultural usage* of the term.

To take **one situation or context**, like the **resurrection** of **Lazarus**, and to use it as the *defining principle for all resurrection occurrences in Scripture* is simply **poor exegesis and bad biblical theology!**

There are over twenty other Scriptural discussions or events involving resurrection in Scripture, all differing in application, or importance, *according to their context and biblical theme under discussion*.

Deductive reasoning is how *general systematic theology* works. General systematic theology selects a topic, like *resurrection*, and *seeks to determine how other religious groups define resurrection* in a larger general context or interest.

This is not how one approaches biblical theology!

Biblical theology approaches the text **inductively** *from within the context of Scripture*. So, in the case of Lazarus' resurrection, *not resuscitation*, we seek to determine *what Jesus or John intended to teach or proclaim by raising Lazarus from the dead*. *It certainly was not simply that he had been resuscitated to life again!* There was obviously from within the context of the discussion *deeper meanings* or implications than simply Lazarus being *resuscitated!* Jesus' power would be one meaning inherent on the resurrection.

Biblical exegesis seeks to examine other potential meanings, **from within the text!**

Resuscitation was not the topic of the event emphasized in John 11 and Lazarus' resurrection! *Jesus power to resurrect was!* We will shortly note that the word **ἀνάστασις**, *resurrection*, contextually implies *standing up again, or living again in some form*.

What the *John 11 resurrection of Lazarus* was intended to demonstrate, exegetically, was first, *Jesus' power*. *The form of resurrection implied in the Lazarus narrative was that Jesus held the power over life and death under all circumstances!*

John and Jesus were not defining *what* the word *resurrection* meant, but rather *discussing the overall scope of resurrection* under the power of God. Notice the emphasis placed on *believing* what Jesus can do. If you believe, Jesus can give you power over even death!

This lesson is learned further from biblical instances of the word resurrection in over twenty other biblical references.

The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

“Resurrection. *Act of being raised from the dead, used in the Bible with three different meanings. It refers to miraculous raisings of the dead back to earthly life, such as when Elijah raised a boy (1 Kgs 17:8–24); Elisha raised the Shunammite's son (2 Kgs 4:18–37); Jesus raised both Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:35–43) and Lazarus (Jn 11:17–44); Peter raised Dorcas (Acts 9:36–42); and Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:9–12).*

There is no hint that these resuscitations would prevent future death.

It also refers to the eschatological resurrection at the end of time for punishment or reward (Jn 5:29; cf. Rev 20:5, 6).

Finally, resurrection refers frequently to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Resurrection and the Greeks. *Greek dualism*, the separation of body from soul, was not conducive to the acceptance of resurrection, with the exception of some miracle-story resuscitations.

Instead of a doctrine of resurrection, the Greeks developed a doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The body was thought to be a disposable physical outer garment, whereas the soul was related to the immortal forms and sustained from age to age. The Greek cyclical view of time lent itself to the development of a sophisticated view of the transmigration of the soul from body to body.

Whether the Athenians misunderstood Paul or not, their reaction to Paul's preaching of Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 17:16–32) is quite compatible with Greek thought. The idea of a genuine resurrection from the dead to an immortal state, whether for persons in general or a specific person like Jesus, was foreign to Greek philosophy.

Resurrection in the Old Testament and Judaism. *The concept of resurrection developed slowly in Israel. Life and death were related to physical existence in this world.* Death meant leaving this world and entering a shadowy existence known as Sheol, the place of the *rephaim* or shades (Is 14:10), a place of hopelessness (Jb 7:9, 10; 2 Sam 12:23). The tragedy of Sheol was that a person was cut off from fellowship with God. At that stage of Israel's thought, there seemed little hope for resurrection (Pss 6:4, 5; 88:10–12).

But in the midst of hopelessness concerning a personal future, Israel developed a sense of faithfulness to God. In spite of the fact that the future was not clear, Job cried helplessly, "If a man dies, will he live again?" (14:14). As Job sought for the seemingly impossible, the difficult passage in 19:25, 26 at least suggests that in the reality of a living redeemer (*goel*) there might be an answer. Likewise, the hymns of Israel began to affirm something more universal about God's presence in such statements as, "If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art *there!*" (Ps 139:8).

While some would argue that Hosea 6:1–3 suggests a resurrection, it is more likely that to Israel it seemed like a promise of God's continuing care, even when it experienced defeat at the hands of its enemies. Whether Paul saw in the third-day statement of Hosea a reference to Jesus is difficult to assess. This passage, along with texts like the dry bones of Ezekiel (ch 37), focus primarily on giving Israel hope in spite of defeat, but they may have become part of a developing sense in Israel that after death there should be something more.

In Daniel 12:2, however, there is a sure reference to the resurrection of the dead. Indeed, the text announced a twofold resurrection of Jews: some to eternal life and some to eternal contempt. But there was no general resurrection of all people suggested by this text.

The Enoch and Elijah stories pose other issues concerning the afterlife. The Enoch story, though brief (Gen 5:23–31), is intriguing because Enoch was seventh in the generations from Adam, and *in walking with God, he lived a year of (365) years.* In the intertestamental period and in Hebrews 11:5, the idea that "God took him" was viewed as a translation of Enoch to heaven. Enoch (48:10) is even quoted in Jude 14–15. Also in the Elijah-Elisha cycle, the transference of power is indicated by Elisha witnessing the translation of Elijah. Elijah went up by means of a whirlwind to heaven (2 Kgs 2:1, 11). While neither the Enoch nor Elijah story asserts the resurrection, both stories undoubtedly contributed to the development of the concept of a postresurrectional life.

In the *intertestamental period*, views began to solidify. *The theologically staunch conservative Sadducees would have nothing to do with the new ideas of resurrection and the afterlife.* They continued to argue that there was no resurrection in Moses, that life pertained to this earthly realm, and that the future hope was experienced through one's children (Sir 46:12, etc.). Sheol, the place of the dead, was devoid of relationship with God and was a place of hapless existence (Sir 10:11; 14:16; 18:28; etc.). The Sadducean opinion of the resurrection is generally well known to Christians because of the encounter between Jesus and the Sadducees when they sought to ensnare him concerning the wife of seven brothers. Jesus rejected their views of the resurrection, of God, and of the Scripture as inadequate (Mk 12:18–27). The this-worldly, politically compromising Sadducees, however, ceased to exist with the fall of Jerusalem and the loss of their temple power base.

The Pharisees, along with the Essenes and their Qumran brethren, adopted a resurrectional stance. A twofold pattern of resurrection was suggested by the famous eschatological passages of 2 Esdras 7 and the Apocalypse of Baruch 50–51. Both texts may be as late as the 1st century AD. In the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, the righteous Jews could generally expect resurrection but not the wicked (46, 51, 62). But elsewhere in Enoch there is a hint that some wicked may be raised for judgment (22, 67, 90). The resurrection of the righteous in these texts would generally be linked to a spiritual type body, yet in 2 Maccabees 7; 14ff., the view seems less developed and more physical. The Qumran covenanters who took up the spiritual war against the sons of darkness, like the Pharisees, expected a resurrection in the great Day of the Lord.

While in Judaism there was a growing sense of an eschatological day of resurrection and reckoning, there was *no hint anywhere of a resurrection of the Messiah. Such an idea had to await the historical reality of Jesus.*

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. *The resurrection of Christ is the central point of Christianity. So important was the resurrection for Paul that he hinged both preaching and faith upon its validity. He considered that a Christianity without the resurrection would be empty and meaningless (1 Cor 15:12–19). Indeed, the resurrection for him was the unveiling of God’s messianic power in Jesus (Rom 1:4).”⁴*

⁴ Elwell, & Beitzel, B. J., “Resurrection,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 1840–1841.

Understanding Divine Nature, Power, or Activity *as* *History*

It should be obvious to anyone with a firm belief in Scripture that many of the events, although taking place in history, have *more than historical or human interest*.

Systematic theologians in the early years of the twentieth century, saw in the theology of Karl Barth's and Rudolf Bultmann's a reaction to the nineteenth century *historical denigration* of George W. Hegel. While still negating Hegel's view of historical progression emphasized the role of history over faith and salvation. Barth and Bultmann reacted to Hegel's empirical view of history which negated the role of faith resulted in a *neo-orthodox dialectical* theology which *negated the role of history* in favor of an emphasis on faith dependent of history. Wolfhart Pannenberg, and his "Pannenberg circle" of young German scholars, all students of Barth and Bultman, proposed a view of *salvation history* which *become known as heilsgeschichte*⁵, "*salvation history*," which sought to unite *history and faith* in the dual role salvation.

God's saving activity, taking place in history, as in the Israel's Exodus from Egypt, was perceived and described in Scripture in expressions of *divine activity taking place in history, heilsgeschichte, salvation history*, or *divine activity*, in terms which *ensconced both human experience and divine power in salvation*.

The primary emphasis was *God's saving activity taking place in history in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and in the faith of believers in the historical activity of God..*

Resurrection as Heilsgeschichte

Anyone reading the Gospels and following Jesus' ministry, replete with miracles and dominical sayings, would recognize *the presence of divine activity in Jesus, and later in the Apostles*. The events described in Scripture were not simply *historical*, but carried within the historical element *God's revelation of his saving activity in and through Jesus*, hence, *heilsgeschichte*.

It is apparent when describing God's saving activity that *this took place in human history*, but *the power of such activity lay with God and his divine power* which can only be described *historically* in human experience.

Even a brief survey of *resurrections* in Scripture should recognize the *suprahuman power of God being expressed in human history*. That *resurrections* are described in human activity, their *historical empirical or theological* verification is lacking without an awareness of divine activity which shapes the meaning of the historical action.

This is the case with *resurrections* such as *Lazarus'* whose public witness to the event bore testimony to the reality of his resurrection, John 11. This was also demonstrated dramatically Jesus' personal resurrection; the divine power was obvious, as was the historical testimony to the event; the Gospels and Paul in 1 Corinthians.

That an event can only be described in "*heisgechichtlichen*", *apocalyptic*, and *eschatological* language does not negate the divine power acting in the event producing its *theological implications*.

To resort to human terminological terms to describe *resurrection* as in *resuscitation* is to fall into the trap of not understanding the full application of *divine salvation history* and its implication in events like *resurrection* in Scripture. Describing *Christian baptism* as a human act of *immersion in water* misses the *diving action of the Holy Spirit* in empowering a new birth! Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus in John 3:1-15 emphasizes *how easy it is to not recognize* the whole theological picture, especially with *resurrection*.

God is defined in Scripture by ethereal concepts far deeper than our *space-time* physical understandings

⁵ *Heilsgeschichte* derives from two German words, *Heils, salvation, pardon, holiness, health, and salvation*, and *Geschichte*, *meaning history*.

He is referred to as an *eternal* God, one who existed *before* creation and all other god's. He is *the almighty God* who *rules the undefinable cosmos*.

Attempting to define Jesus' activity in casting out demons with the power of the Holy Spirit, as in **Matt 12:22-27**, caused the Pharisees to accuse Jesus of *blaspheme*, with devastating consequences!

“Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it they said, “It is only by Be-elzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; ²⁶ and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Be-elzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

However, such demeaning of the godhead, *the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, occurs *whenever the divine is defined and limited by deductive presuppositions external to Scripture*, thus limiting the divine activity to human levels!

Scripture does not *define or limit* God *deductively* in human terms! God is *unlimited* and can only be defined *analogously* in human terms. But this does not *define or limit* God's nature of power!

So, defining what Scripture means by inserting *resuscitation* into the discussion is limiting the full meaning of what *resurrection* says about Jesus and Scripture. It results in a truncated view of what was taking place in **the event of the resurrection**.

To “understand” God's *nature, His divine power, and activity*, one has to work *from within Scripture, inductively by sound biblical exegesis, and not by defining such in human contexts or power!*

God's *nature and power*, expressed in the act of *resurrection*, can *only be defined contextually from within the context of Scripture*.

To explore the nature and power of God the scholar has to examine several events within Scripture, and often these contexts differ radically. Take for instance God's power with the Egyptian plagues, God's power at the crossing of the Red Sea, God's power in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God's power in the defeat of Jericho, Jesus' walking on the sea, Jesus' raising Lazarus, Jesus' raising Jairus' daughter, and the son of the widow of Nain, Need I go on? Each of these events demonstrates God's and Jesus' power have to be examined individually *within their own context* to learn something about God. Not one definition of God's actions can explain every situation when the power of divinity is in view.

The Meaning of the Greek word Resurrection - ἀνάστασις, ἀνίστημι

Zodhiates, and most Greek-English dictionaries, observe that the word *resurrection* derives from two Greek words, a *noun* and a *related verb*, *ἀνάστασις* and *ἀνίστημι*, which in turn imply to *ἀνάστασις, ἀνίστημι*, as to *stand up, to recover, be resurrected, return to life*

*The divine powers of ἀνάστασις and ἀνίστημι are not located in the meaning of the Greek words, but as in every other situation are provided in the Scriptural context of the discussion. Jesus said to Lazarus, **rise up**, and Jesus' resurrection was couched in the Scriptural record of God's heilsgeschichte which Paul claims God has been working since before creation, Eph 1:3-11.*

Zodhiates explains that the *noun* and *verb* forms of *resurrection* primarily refer to *standing on the feet again, or rising as opposed to falling, to come to life.*

Zodhiates observes that the noun and verb are used in Scripture figuratively for ***the resurrection of the body from death, to return to life.*** This is *spoken of individuals who have returned to life*, Heb. 11:35; Sept. 1 Kgs. 17:17f.; 2 Kgs. 4:20f. *Of the resurrection of Jesus*, Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:33; 17:18; Rom. 1:4; 6:5; Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:3; 3:21.

Furthermore, they are used in regard to *the future resurrection*, John 11:24; Acts 17:32; 24:15, 21; 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 21, 42; Heb. 6:2); resurrection unto life or unto condemnation, John 5:29. In Heb. 11:35, “that they might obtain a *better resurrection*” ... than that just before spoken. Resurrection was denied by the Sadducees, Matt. 22:23, 28, 30, 31; Mark 12:18, 23; Luke 20:27, 33; Acts 23:8; and by certain others, 2 Tim. 2:18.⁶

The word *ἀνάστασις* is never translated as ***resuscitation*** in the New Testament.

In most cases the noun and verb refer explicitly to *a resurrection, an arising from the dead, or of a resurrection to a new form of life.* Meaning is determined by *the context of the discussion or event* involved.

The concept of “*never to die again*” is ***not inherent*** in the words *ἀνάστασις* or *ἀνίστημι*. Such a definition has to be *inserted deductively* into the discussion from some external presupposition.

Paul, at 1 Cor 15, sets *resurrection* in the *context of death*, arguing in that pericope that *death is not final* because of a *resurrection* in which the power of Jesus offers new spiritual perspectives other than that of the Platonic view held by most Greeks, notably in this context, the Greek Corinthians.

At 1 Cor 15:42 Paul states “Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν,” “*So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.* ⁴³ *It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.* ⁴⁴ *It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.*”

Paul’s point is that the *resurrection*, when set in the concept of physical death as is the case with the Corinthians, *is not final*. Contrary to any Platonic view of life without the promise of a future existence can be *transformed into a new lifestyle, in a resurrection powered by the divine godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Two Scriptures may enlighten this point! **John 14:6**, Jesus stated, “***I am the way, the truth, and the life.***” **2 Cor 3:4-6**, “***Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.*** ⁵ ***Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God,*** ⁶ ***who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.***”

The point is that in Scripture the *resurrection*, wherever it surfaces, is *empowered by God’s tri-fold nature* with the promise of some *future existence with God in his kind of life.*

*We might add that the resurrection holds within itself an **eschatological** meaning!*

Resurrection apart from some form of death, physical or spiritual, has little meaning. Resurrection can be a physical but also a theologically spiritual concept, as in **Rom 6** and **Col 2** where *in baptism one dies* and is *raised* into a condition of *newness.* Resurrection is related in these texts to *spiritual life and death.*

Rom 6:1-11. “***What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?*** ² ***By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*** ³ ***Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*** ⁴ ***We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.***

⁵ ***For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*** ⁶ ***We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be***

⁶ Zodhiates, *ἀνάστασις*, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament.*

destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ *For he who has died is freed from sin.* ⁸ ***But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*** ⁹ *For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.* ¹⁰ *The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.* ¹¹ ***So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.***”

In some instances, as in spiritual or physical settings or references, we have no *recurring comment* defining the resurrection in any set definition such as *resuscitation!* However, in each instance or occasion the context describes the *theological* meaning of *resurrection!*

Brief Discussion of John 11:1-44, Lazarus' Resurrection

According to **Scripture**, the record of God's *heilsgeschichte*, Lazarus was *raised from the dead*, defined as a *resurrection by the power of Jesus!* The point was that ***Jesus can give life even to the physically dead. Physical death is not final for those who believe in Jesus!***

In this long and complex theological text and event, Jesus and John were making a point, Jesus can give the believer a life, even after death, if the believer trusts in Jesus who is himself the resurrection and the life.

Certain distinct theological concepts, words, or comments, were made by John and Jesus.

¹⁴ ***Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead;"***¹⁵ ***"Let us also go, that we may die with him."***

¹⁷ ***"Lazarus "had already been in the tomb four days. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died ... "Your brother will rise again."*** ²⁵ ***Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,*** ²⁶ ***and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ***"Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."*** ***but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me."*** ⁴⁴ ***The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go! Jesus raised him from the dead, a resurrection."***

I think we can conclude from this that that ***Lazarus had died, he was dead! Jesus brought him back to life, a resurrection, and there is a pointed reference to a future life after a resurrection in Jesus!***

Paul on the Importance of the Resurrection at 1 Cor 1:18-2:5, 15:1-50

Paul based his argument on *the death and resurrection of Jesus*, and proclaimed that a "similar" resurrection would be possible for *those who believe in Jesus*.

1 Cor 15 sets resurrection in *the context of a Corinthian Greek church* which, in the *platonic* philosophy of Plato, held that *the physical body is corrupt and without any future. Their argument being, "why raise a corrupt decaying body?"* The resurrection of a *failed and corrupt* body made no sense to Greek platonic thinking.

Since the *death and resurrection of Jesus* was the heart of Paul's and Christian *salvation*, he needed to spend some time clarifying the *theological meaning* of Christian *soteriology* and its relationship with resurrection. He had opened his first epistle to the Corinthians with a strong emphasis on what seemed to the *Greek Christians as folly, the death of a saviour God*, He closed the epistle with the same emphasis on death and resurrection, a *theological inclusio*, *everything in between the opening and closing thought depended on the death and resurrection of Jesus.*

Paul framed his theological argument in Jesus' *real death on the cross* and *real physical resurrection three days later* which had been **witnessed by many people on several different occasions**. He asserted that Jesus' resurrection was not a shadowy event, seen in secret by a few! *The physical resurrection of Jesus had been witnessed by all of the Apostles, and over 500 others, many of whom were still alive!*

1 Cor 15:3-14. *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

¹² Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴ if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”

If the resurrection of Jesus was not a real return to life, a physical but transformed life, then the basis of the Christian faith was void of meaning and power.

The resurrection of Jesus was a real physical resurrection after death, one transformed by the power of God, but with global and cosmic soteriological implications!

Resurrection in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures

The resurrected body or person referred to in Scripture is a *real transformed body*, **not simply a resuscitated body**, doomed to die again. The process incorporated in the term resurrection has no reference to *not dying again*. *Not dying again* is a conceptor presupposition introduced by persons not oriented to a biblical critical inductive exegetical approach to Scripture.

A resurrected person or body can refer to both a physical and spiritual life! Resurrection is much deeper theological concept than a physical resurrection. Both are theologically predicated by the physical resurrection of Jesus!

At **Rom 6:1-11** Paul united Christian death and resurrection, empowered by Jesus' death and resurrection, *with our baptism* describing our *death* due to sin, and *our being raised to a new life through Jesus death and resurrection!*

Christian baptism by faith as an induction into Christ speaks theologically of both our death and resurrection with Christ, empowered by our being united with Jesus' death and resurrection in baptism. Paul emphasizes the *symbiotic relationship* of our present death and resurrection *experienced in baptism* with *Jesus death and resurrection*.

Rom 6:1-11. "*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸ But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. ⁹ For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

The *theological* implication of this *physical/spiritual* reality was also stressed by Paul in his Colossian epistle, likewise a Greek philosophically related epistle like 1 Corinthians.

Col 2:11-15. "*In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹² and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.*"

Resurrection Refers to both *Spiritual* and *Physical* Resurrection

Resurrection in the New and Old Testaments referred to *dying* both *spiritually* and *physically* and being *raised from the dead* both *spiritually* and *physically*, either in *this eschatological age* to be united with God and Jesus, or in *the future age* to be with Jesus when he returns at the end of the age with trumpet sounds to judge the world in righteousness.

Rom 6:1-11 and Col 2:12, both of which we have discussed above emphasize that baptism in the name of Jesus unites the believer with Jesus and his death and resurrection.

1 Thess 4:13-18. “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are **asleep**, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For **since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.** ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For **the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first;** ¹⁷ **then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.** ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

Some Old Testament Instances or References on Resurrection

The following is a list of several Old Testament texts that indicate, although they do not mention the word resurrection, *that there was in Israel a belief in an afterlife after death.*

Job 14:14

*“If a man die, shall he live again?
All the days of my service I would wait,
till my release should come.”*

Job 19:25, 26

*“For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;
²⁶and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,”*

1 Kings 17:17-24

*“After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that **there was no breath left in him.** ¹⁸ And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to **cause the death of my son!**” ¹⁹ And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. ²⁰ And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, hast thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?” ²¹ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the LORD, “**O LORD my God, let this child’s soul come into him again.**” ²² And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Elijah; **and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.** ²³ And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, “**See, your son lives.**” ²⁴ And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”*

2 Kings 4:18-20

*“When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. ¹⁹ And he said to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” ²⁰ And when he had lifted him, and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and **then he died.** ²¹ And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. ²² Then she called to her husband, and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may quickly go to the man of God, and come back again.”*

2 Kings 4:32-37

*“When Elisha came into the house, **he saw the child lying dead on his bed.** ³³ So he went in and shut the door upon the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up again, and walked once to and fro in the house, and went up, and stretched himself upon him; the child sneezed seven times, and **the child opened his eyes.** ³⁶ Then he summoned Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Take up your son.” ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took up her son and went out.”*

Psalms 16:8-11

*“I keep the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also dwells secure.*

¹⁰ ***For thou dost not give me up to Sheol,
or let thy godly one see the Pit.***

¹¹ *Thou dost show me the path of life;
in thy presence there is fulness of joy,
in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”*

This Psalm must be read in conjunction with Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:25ff where Peter uses it as a proof of Jesus’ resurrection.

Psalm 49:13-15

***“This is the fate of those who have foolish confidence,
the end of those who are pleased with their portion. [Selah]***

¹⁴ ***Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd;
straight to the grave they descend,
and their form shall waste away;
Sheol shall be their home.***

¹⁵ ***But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,
for he will receive me. [Selah].”***

Psalm 71:20

***“Thou who hast made me see many sore troubles
wilt revive me again;
from the depths of the earth
thou wilt bring me up again.”***

I find it interesting that *David believed in a return to life from the grave, call it a resurrection, but the Sadducees did not.*

Why? Because they did not accept the Psalms or other Hebrew writings as *Torah!*

The Sadducees only accepted the *Pentateuch* as *Torah* even though Jesus accepted the *Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, and Jeremiah* as *Torah!*

From or reading of the four Gospels the Pharisees accepted the concept of a resurrection.

Isa 26:19

***“Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise.
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.”***

Dan 12:2, 3

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

Hosea 6:1, 2

***“Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn, that he may heal us;
he has stricken, and he will bind us up.
² After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,***

that we may live before him.”

This text should be read matching with the Gospels, Luke 24:7, which predicted that *Jesus would be raised on the third day*, and that it became the “story” of Jesus’ resurrection in the Epistles, 1 Cor 15:4.

Why did the Sadducees Reject the Doctrine of Resurrection?

The Sadducees, a Jewish sect, based their *faith only on the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch*, “attributed” to Moses,.

Because of their *truncated Torah the Sadducees rejected life after death, a resurrection, angels, the supernatural, and the immortality of the soul*, which were not major themes of the Pentateuchal narrative which focused on building “a legal system” of *Torah instruction* in a recalcitrant “nation”!

The Sadducees were comprised of wealthy aristocrats of Jerusalem who carried the political favor of the Roman powers of Jerusalem, not necessary of the Temple cult.

What is Resurrection Faith?

Resurrection faith is the *Biblical faith* related to several primary theological points established in God's creation of man; the immortality of the human soul, God's eternal plan of redemption of sinful condemned man, a promised future for man, the power of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to restore life to a lost humanity through Jesus' death and resurrection, in the establishment of an eschatological kingdom in which Christ would reign, and a future coming at the end of time to judge the world of righteousness and salvation.

Biblical resurrection is expressed in the New Testament by the Greek words ἀνάστασις, *anástasis*, ἀνίστημι, *anístēmi*, "standing up firmly, being raised up⁷."

The *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* and the *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* have extensive articles on *resurrection*. They discuss the topic of resurrection in considerable detail. I have edited their comments, clarified certain expressions, and added one important ingredient to explain the several meanings of *resurrection* in light of our present biblical study.

“Resurrection. An act of being raised from the dead, used in the Bible with several different meanings.

First, it refers to miraculous raisings of the dead *back to earthly life*, such as when Elijah raised a boy (1 Kgs 17:8–24); Elisha raised the Shunammite's son (2 Kgs 4:18–37); Jesus raised both Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:35–43) and Lazarus (Jn 11:17–44); Peter raised Dorcas (Acts 9:36–42); and Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:9–12). There is no hint that these "resurrections or resuscitations as some would call them" would prevent future death. Resurrection is never defined as *resuscitation* in Scripture. This is a concept introduced by scholars, deductively, into the dynamic of one resurrection, Jesus' resurrection!

Second, it refers to the *spiritual resurrection* the believers receives at baptism into a new kind of life in Jesus (Rom 6:1–11; Col 2:10–12).

Third, it also refers to the *eschatological resurrection* at the end of time for punishment or reward (1 Cor 15; 2 Thess 4:13–18; Jn 5:29; cf. Rev 20:5, 6).

Finally, resurrection in the New Testament frequently refers to *the resurrection of Jesus Christ* as the foundation of all resurrections.⁸ All discussions of the resurrection in the New Testament focus on Jesus' resurrection as the fulfillment and theological power of any resurrection under discussion.

⁷ Zodhiates, ἀνάστασις, *anástasis*

⁸ Elwell & Beitzel, *Resurrection*, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*.

How do Belief, Repentance, Baptism, Salvation, the Holy Spirit, Engage Resurrection?

Resurrection faith is worthless and invalid if it is not predicated on *divine activity seen in the resurrection of Jesus*, **1 Cor 15:12-19**, “Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ **But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised;** ¹⁴ **if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.** ¹⁵ We 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. ¹⁶ **For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised.** ¹⁷ **If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.** ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

Resurrection faith is a biblical, theological, response to the Apostolic preaching. 1 Cor 15:3-5. “For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received, **that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,** ⁴ **that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,** ⁵ **and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”**

At **Acts 2:17**, when Peter preached his great Pentecost sermon, he grounded this in the **Joel 2;28** prophecy of the Holy Spirit outpouring and the resurrection of Jesus which David had predicted in **Psalm 16:10**.

At **Acts 1:7, 8**, in Jesus’ sending commission he promised his disciples that they “*power when the Holy Spirit has come upon them; and that they should be Jesus’ witnesses, explaining the truth about Jesus, in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*”

Acts 2:38, “And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” Based in Peter’s statement, we learn that those who by **faith** in God’s saving activity, **are** instructed concerning Jesus’ death and resurrection are instructed to **repent, be baptized** in the name of Jesus, when they will **receive the Holy Spirit**. The grammar of this text implies that *the gift of the Holy Spirit* defines the *Holy Spirit as the gift*.

According to Peter, and Scripture, Peter’s great sermon ties Jesus’ death and resurrection to the faith, repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins to the Holy Spirit as the gift of God. Acts 5:32 clarifies this, “*And we are witnesses to these things, and so is **the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.***”

In his great commission recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, after Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus instructed his apostles to go out into all the world, to preach the gospel, to baptize people, and instruct them in the faith, obviously according to Paul, based in the resurrection faith. However, before they were to go out into the world preaching they were to wait for *the power Holy Spirit* to descend on them which occurred on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1.

Jesus’ commission, going, preaching, faith, repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit, are diametrically related to the resurrection of Jesus.

Witnessing in Luke/Acts is carried out by the disciples preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to all the world.

Appropriate Inductive Exegetical Study of Resurrection

In this section I plan to examine several *resurrection narratives* through a *biblical critical inductive exegetical model* seeking to *identify the theological principle involved in each case*, and contrasting this with a deductive doctrine of *resuscitation*.

We will also examine the *resurrection* evidence systematically through its historical theological witness (Pannenberg), theological principles, psychological impact like the power Jesus' resurrection had on the Apostles, the early church, and the church historically. The church is a *living witness* to the resurrection of Jesus!

An appropriate *inductive exegesis* approaches the text believing the text has within its word the meaning of the text. The theological meaning or principle of the text is contained within the words of the text.

The word exegesis derives from two Greek words, *ek*, *out of*, and *ago*, *to lead*. Thus *exegesis* means *to lead the meaning out of the text*, hence an *inductive reading of the text*.

The *exegetical process* involves a *disciplined examination* of the text in several *contexts*, the *history* of the text itself, the *culture* in which the text was being used, the *literary grammar* and *syntax* of the words in the text, the *theological* and *religious* context of the people and culture to, or for, which the text was originally written.

Some attention may be given *regarding other instances in Scripture where similar texts* occur since Scripture is a valuable *related context* for the text being examined.

After the *exegetical examination* of the text in which the exegete sought to determine **how** the *original readers* would have understood the text, the *theologian* must seek for *theological principles ensconced* in the text, applying *inductive theology* from within the text, to find similar contemporary situations where the theological principles may apply!