

A COMPARATIVE ELUCIDATION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY FROM A PAULINE AND ANCIENT CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstracts:

The resurrection of the dead is one of the most important dogmatic doctrines as expounded by Apostle Paul. He explained that Christians that die will resurrect with a spiritual body similar to Christ's type of body when he resurrected. However, Christ resurrection body had some physical features and Paul did not explain how the physical features of Christ resurrection body can be connected to other believers that will resurrect. There are many ancient cultures that teach that the physical body needed to be preserved so that it can be qualified for resurrection without which there won't be the resurrection of the body. Paul on the other hand seemed to ignore these beliefs in favour of the view that resurrection body is strictly spiritual. This research is a comparative study that sheds light on the debate regarding the nature of the resurrection body according to The New Testament teaching in comparison with ancient cultures especially those of the Semitic Peoples and other Africans like the Egyptians and the Yorubas. The purpose of this research is to point to the view that Jesus' resurrection body had physical features yet downplayed and de-emphasized by Paul. These researchers hope to inspire a study into the nature of the resurrection body.

Keywords:

Human Body, Death, Decomposed, Resuscitation, Resurrection

INTRODUCTION

The human body is a valuable material in many cultures and that is why it is being handled carefully during and after the burial of a deceased. In some cultures, the dead are cremated, yet those that believe in cremating the dead regard such a practice as honourable and a dignified way of interment. The ancient Egyptians had to mummify to keep the deceased body intact for resurrection or for the continuation of an afterlife journey (Davies 1999:27; cf. Jordan 1976:144-145; Partridge 1994:6). It is important to note that the human body is made up of millions of cells which are the units of life. At death, the cells decay and become soil, gases, and other minerals (Walker 1999:10-13).

More so, when the entire cells in the human body can no longer function, humans are declared clinically death, and it is not known precisely in the medical sciences the specific moment of biological death until the cells in the brain and the entire body can no more function. Another type of death where resuscitation becomes difficult or completely impossible is the brain death (Agrillo 2011:1-2 cf. Agai 2015b:4-5). The body decays after death and the skeletal system in the body takes longer to decay likewise the teeth takes much longer to decay (Greeff 2015:523). After bodily death, nothing again with regard to life exist in the deceased from a scientifically-proven point of view except for beliefs, myths and superstitions believed by the bereaved according to which the dead lived or appeared and reappeared in some unknown worlds to some people who claim to have some sort of relationships with the dead. The resurrection body according to Paul's teaching is one of the subjects that can hardly be understood when read from a scientific perspective. This research is highly concerned about the kind of body that is believed would be resurrected after bodily death. The research is an attempt to create an image of what Paul meant by the resurrection body which is said to emanate from the present human-natural body. Other relevant questions

that pertained to this study are: what are the differences between pre-death and post-death bodies? What might have influenced Paul to have an in-depth knowledge of the resurrection body in comparison with other apostles in the New Testament? What are the features of the resurrection body?

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

In the ancient world, particularly among the ancient Egyptians and the Semitic peoples, the concepts of death and the afterlife dominated their interest and activities (cf. Turner 1993:1). The interest the ancient peoples had over the afterlife subject continued to generate concern in modern societies. More so, because death is inevitable, it is logical to inquire about the destinies of our loved ones who died. Agai said that many people have terrible and scary experiences after the death of their loved ones. He noted that the behaviour and the attitudes of many have changed as a result of the death of their loved ones. Inquiries on the whereabouts of the dead and on the destinies of the bereaved after death have always shaped the attitudes of many that are living especially among many African societies (Agai 2017:15). There is a need to inquire what would happen to the dead in the world of the dead seeing that it is painful to lose a loved one to death. One of the common words that are used to describe an individual or a group of people that rise or would rise from death is *resurrection*.

The word “resurrection” is a concept that is ambiguous in meaning. It could be associated with a form of revival of an individual or a community from an unworthy state of life (Loader 2005:683-684). Although resurrection is different from resuscitation, there is another view among some who regard resuscitation as closely related or an equivalent of resurrection (Geisler 1989:161). The restoration of the dead to life cited in the cases of Elijah, Elisha and Lazarus are relevant

examples of resuscitation (1 Ki 17:17; 2 Ki 4:18-37; 13:20ff; Jh 11:1-44). The most acceptable and widely accepted meaning of resurrection is the one that meant the creation of a new-celestial body after physical or bodily death. Many Christians are expecting this type of resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ (Agai 2024:1-7). Unlike the type of resuscitation experienced by Lazarus and those who were raised from death and had to die again, the kind of resurrection described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 does not allow an individual to die again. Dr Katherine Sonderegger phrased the concept “[r]esurrection is when death is no longer in front of us, but behind us” (Sonderegger 2013). This implies that once a person is resurrected, there is no more death for the person. This research is a show of interest on Paul’s perspective of the resurrection body.

Theologically, the resurrection of the dead is supposedly the primary doctrine of the Christian faith. Paul pointed out that without resurrection and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in particular, Christianity would have been futile and useless while Christians would have been the most pitied people (1 Cor. 15:14-19). John Hick described Paul as the “chief biblical expositor” of the idea of the resurrection of the body (Hick 1985:278). It is likely that Paul relied on the Christ resurrection to teach and guarantee the resurrection of all those that are servants of Christ and to explain what Christians’ ought to expect regarding their resurrection life. He explained that Christ resurrected with a physical yet glorified, immortal and imperishable body (Geisler 1989:148). After resurrection, Christ was seeing by Cephas, James, the twelve disciples, over 500 other people and many more (1 Cor. 15:5-6; Lk 24:42). The implication of Paul’s teaching is that, all those that believe in Christ, will also rise after death with a new body similar to the kind of body that Christ had after he resurrected from death. The body that will rise after death is being described as incorruptible by Paul (1 Cor. 15). In other words, after the physical death of Christians, not only will their soul

rise, but their bodies as well (Kreeft 2000:12). The nature of the kind of body that is expected to rise after the death of the physical body remains the bone of contention.

Jesus's resurrection and Paul's assertion that the dead would resurrect attracts many vital questions. How can a body that is declared dead resurrect? Most importantly, a body that is decayed, cremated and likely disappears or is spread or is randomly distributed due to natural phenomenon. It is highly unimaginable that a life of a human that is declared death over thousands or millions of years would rise on a particularly day probably called the Day of the Lord. This makes it relevant to inquire the kind of body Paul said would resurrect after death. Jesus Christ is the *only one* in the Bible said to have ever resurrected and lived on earth for a period of time after resurrection. Paul made it clear that Christ resurrection is a *type* or *reference* for other believers' kind of resurrection. Christ had a physical resurrection body, yet his physical body had unique features including the abilities to penetrate through walls and to ascend to heaven. It is not surprising that Paul mentioned that the natural human body would be changed and made incorruptible before it can be resurrected (1 Cor. 15:42). He added that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50; Schep n.d.:21-23).

In addition, there was a need for Paul to explain to the Church in Corinth the kind of body that would resurrect after death. Paul said "But some *man* will say, [h]ow are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come" (1 Cor. 15:35)? In this research, Paul's various description of the resurrection body would be put together. This research is not a complete guarantee that the kind of body Paul talked about would be logically comprehended; instead, the research focuses on analogizing Paul's picture of the resurrection body in comparison to Christ resurrection body.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN ANCIENT CULTURES

This section is important because it shows how relevant the idea of a resurrection body is to many ancient religions some of which translated into modern religions. The view regarding the dualism of the human body contributed to the assertion that the soul lived or would live after bodily death. This view has been believed and practiced as a tradition since the ancient times among the ancient Egyptians likewise the Yoruba people of Nigeria. The ancient Egyptians, for example, believed that the human body is divided into *Ka*, *Ba*, *Akh*, *Sah*, *khaibit* and many more and that these components including the human body itself survived after death (Schwantes 1969:65; Murnane 1992:37, 47). The Yoruba people on the other hand thought that the human body can be divided into *Ara* or “physical body,” *Oka*(n) or “heart” or “heart-soul”,¹ *Ojiji* or “shadow,” *Iye* or “mental mind or mental body” and finally *Emi*(n) or “spiritual body” or “spiritual soul” (Lucas 1948:251-252; Awolalu 1979:53, 57, 62). In other words, both the Egyptians and the Yorubas valued the human body even after bodily death. It is not surprising that the Egyptians mummified the bodies their dead for *resurrection*: “he Egyptians alone believe in the resurrection, as they carefully preserved their dead bodies. They have a custom of drying up their bodies and making them as durable as brass” (Davies 1999:27).

They also mummified to keep the body of the dead normal as if the deceased was not death and they glorified it as *Sah*. The Yorubas also preserved the bodies of their dead ones because of the respect they have for the deceased body and because of their view that the dead would resurrect (Lucas 1948:253). The ancient Israelites valued the burial of corpses because of cultural and health reasons and possibly because they taught that the dead might rise (2 Ki 9:30-37; Jr 22:19; Dt 21:23).

¹ The *Oka*(n) or “heart” or “heart soul” have both material and spiritual qualities.

Although the concept of the resurrection of the dead are inconsistent in ancient Israel (Agai 2011:180-184), Davies and Smith emphasized that the practice of burial and reburial in ancient Israel were aimed at preserving the bodies of the deceased for resurrection. In particular, were the reburial of Joseph and Jacob on their ancestral land to partake in the national resurrection (Davies 1997:120-121; Smith 1975:94). Bronner echoed the same sentiment when she noted that burial and reburial on family graves sides were to reunite families for post-mortem world (Bronner 2013:2). These are indications that the human body is vital for the afterlife world. The body in most cases has to be prepared for resurrection.

In addition, the concepts of death and the afterlife had been believed not only by the ancient Egyptians and the Yorubas but also among the Semitic Peoples. The Zoroastrians of Persia for example believed that the world would one-day come to an end and thereafter another world for the righteous would be formed. They believed that after bodily death, the souls of the deceased would travel across a bridge to the otherworld. To a Zoroastrian, the destiny of the deceased ended with the god Ahura Mazda. Zoroastrians believed that even the unrighteous would be saved by the good god who created human beings (MacGregor 1992:60). They had less regard for the human body because they taught that the soul is the foundation of resurrection and not the body (cf. Davies 1999:42-43).

More so, the Assyrians thought that the dead needed funerary goods including food and water offerings (cf. Agai 2024:1-7). For example, Ashurbanipal destroyed his enemies by forcing the family members of his enemies to stop giving food and water offerings to their dead fathers. He forced the children of the deceased governor of Nippur to destroy their father's bones and grave. In this case, the dead would not be able to find eternal rest and would continue to roam about tormenting and cursing his/her immediate family members (Agai 2015a:1-7). This is an indication

that the human body played a role among the living in the resurrection life.

Among the Egyptians, they taught that the physical body would resurrect after death while the Yorubas taught that the deceased body needed to be preserved and fed because the deceased body went on a journey in the afterlife. The deceased they taught may appear to the bereaved with-it physical body or as an ancestor or as a spirit (Awolalu 1979:65-66; Adedeji 1983:117). Should it be accepted that the ancient Israelites believed that the deceased body would resurrect, what kind of body would that be? Imagine a human declared death and buried, how would the same body rise after decay? Based on available records, even among the Egyptians, none of their mummified bodies had ever resurrected despite their practice of an extravagant burial just to keep the dead alive (cf. Agai 2015a:1-7).

PAUL'S BACKGROUND

It is important to note that Paul's personal background together with the context of the Corinthian Church had influenced his teaching regarding the resurrection of the dead. He was trained by Gamaliel in Jerusalem sometime around 25 to 50AD (Cervantes 2016:1-2). As a devout Jew, he read the Hebrew Bible with the Targums, which were Aramaic glosses. These exposures helped to build his Pharisaic perspectives. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead likewise in judgement and reward for the dead (Craffert 1999:57; Hindson 2001:198). In addition, Paul was a staunch adherer of the Law which opposes Jesus's movement (Cervantes 2016:1-2). He persecuted the followers of Christ and led the stoning of Stephen to death (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 26:9-11). His conversion was unique and it led to the change of his name from Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9).

Most scholars believe that the book of 1 and 2 Corinthians was written sometimes after Paul's visit to the city of Corinth around 55 to 58 AD.² Paul went to Corinth after his second missionary journey. He preached first in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens before arriving at Corinth (Cervantes 2016:4). The city of Corinth laid between two harbours namely Lecheion and Cenchreae (Hodgens 2001:67). Corinth was an extension of a Greek province in the southern area. Before the time of Jesus, it was called Achaia. Rome invaded the city in 146 BCE and rendered the city dormant for almost a century. Julius Caesar pioneered and revived the city in 44 BCE. Rome itself was highly Hellenized and influenced by Greek cultures and religions. These backgrounds affected the socio-political structure of Corinth. Cervantes explained that "...the Roman world had been thoroughly Hellenized; and since Corinth was historically Greek, it maintained many of those ties-religion, philosophy, the arts" (Cervantes 2016:3-5). So, it can be surmised that there were many other cultures and religions including a buoyant commerce or trade that reigned in Corinth during the time Paul (Hodgen 2001:67).

In addition, the Sadducean theology³ termed as an "over-realized-eschatology" posits that the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim 2:17-18). Likewise, another belief system termed as "realised immortality" denied the reality of the resurrection. Gnosticism⁴ and other Greek

² Cf. Acts 18:1ff.

³ The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead and while they valued the Old Testament, they doubted the Book of Daniel which gave clearer terms regarding the resurrection (Dan 12:2-4). The Samaritans like the Sadducees do not also believe in resurrection (Mt 22:23, Mt 12:18, Lk 20:27) (Agai 2024:1-7).

⁴ There is another view according to which Gnosticism did not contribute to Paul's defence of the resurrection. In other words, some scholars are of the view that Gnosticism complied with Paul's view about the resurrection of the body (Hodgen 2001:70). It might be recalled that Gnosticism is a notion according to which the material world including the human body perceived as weak and evil repelled a God who is Good, Holy and spiritual (Boer 1976:56). The relevant question the Gnostics asked is how can a human body that is weak and probably rotten after death resurrect? The argument presented by Hodgen is relevant because Gnostics were in the first place not concerned about raising such type of question for intellectual curiosity; instead, they were passionately indebted to finding redemption for the entire humanity and on striking a balance view on how humans can fellowship with God despite human weaknesses (Boer 1976:56).

philosophies⁵ in addition to other terms mentioned above might have influenced Paul's responses to the Corinthian Church on the resurrection of the body (Hodgen 2001:70). Paul had earlier met with the Epicureans and Stoics (Acts 17). It is important to note that Epicurus taught that both the body and the soul will cease to exist after death. This view is contrary to Platonism according to which the soul was created before the body and that the soul will continue to exist after the death of the body (Karadza 2014:167).

Stoicism, a philosophy invented by Zeno, a native of Cyprus around the 300 BCE is a view according to which everything including the mind, spirit, body and God are matter. Stoicism is a form of pantheism according to which everything is God and that humans can only relate to God through divine reason called *Logos* (Boer 1976:10-11). As a result, the stoics do not believe in the concepts of personal immortality and they do not have a specific belief regarding the resurrection of the dead (Karadza 2014:167). Despite the various Greek philosophies regarding the resurrection, there is a wider view among scholars that the Greeks generally rejected the resurrection of the body. Karadza echoed “[g]reek philosophies do agree on one thing, which is that it is impossible to resurrect a dead body” (Karadza 2014:167).

Paul, a Roman citizen and a devout Jew acquainted with Greek cultures was faced with the challenge of addressing the resurrection question to the church in Corinth. Paul's letters were written in Greek and his warning to the church against some philosophies are indications that he was conversant with Greek writings (Col 2:8; 1 Tim 6:20; 1 Cor. 1:20; Karadza 2014:166). He had to address some in Corinth who doubted the resurrection “...how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:12)? It is likely that many

⁵ There were various Greek-Philosophical thoughts at the time of Paul and it is difficult to ascertain the specific Greek philosophy that influenced Paul's teaching on the resurrection of the dead (Karadza 2014:167).

Corinthians believed in resurrection and especially the resurrection of Jesus but their contention was in the idea that the human body would resurrect. Due to the influenced of Greek philosophy especially of those that points to matter as evil, it was difficult for the Corinthian Church to believe in the resurrection of the body of other believers:

By denying the resurrection, the Corinthians were almost certainly not denying life after death; virtually everyone in the ancient world believed in that. Rather, they would have been disputing the Jewish and Christian doctrine of *bodily* resurrection endorsing one of the more Greek forms of belief that limited the afterlife to disembodied immortality of the soul (cf. 2 Timothy 2:17-18). In keeping with their overly realized eschatology, and like some later Gnostics, they may have applied the language of resurrection to the state of spiritual transformation they believed they already achieved in this life (Cervantes 2016:4).⁶

Paul generated a timid conversation and he was required to explain to the Corinth Church how the material or physical body of humans bound to decay after death would resurrect. He had to explain how matter or the human body assumedly weak can be transformed into righteousness for eternity through resurrection.

PAUL'S PERCEPTION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

Paul's view on the resurrection of the dead is a compilation of an absurd yet, a seemingly comprehensible dogma when taken into cognizance his background. Here are some of his perceptions of the resurrection of the dead and of the resurrection of the body in particular. He explained that there are celestial and terrestrial bodies' likewise natural and spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:40, 44). In his view, it is the celestial or spiritual body that will inherit the kingdom of God. He made it

⁶ Originally from Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

clear that flesh and blood cannot be part of the eternal kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). In other words, humans in their present bodily state are corruptible and would have to be *changed* and be given a new body that is qualified to inherit God's kingdom "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51b). He added that the process of the change shall take place within a very short period of time "in a moment, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52).

The profound view of Paul with regard to meeting the Lord is that both the dead and the living shall together be caught-up in heaven. Paul taught that at the coming-down of the Lord from heaven, the dead will rise first before those who are alive will be caught-up together with the dead that have risen in the cloud to meet the Lord (1 Thes. 4:16-17). The most significant point is the idea of the change in the bodies of both the living and the dead. More so, he relied on Christ resurrection body to explain how the body of other believers would look-like after death. This research is an attempt to describe the kind of body that shall rise after death from a Pauline point of view. It is difficult for an individual to rely on human senses to explain exactly what even Paul himself referred to as a mystery. He taught that the resurrection body is a mystery (1 Cor. 15:51a).

Paul's reliance on Jesus's kind of resurrection served as a pattern for the resurrection of other believers. He emphasized that the physical bodies of Christ followers would be changed similar to the glorious body of Christ "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Phil. 3:21 cf. Perman 2006:1-2). It is pertinent to look into the kind of body Christ resurrected with and to relate it or compare it with the physical body he had before resurrection and after resurrection. This will enable us to understand the kind of body Paul expected other Christians would possess in the resurrection life.

A DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY FROM A PAULINE PERSPECTIVE – THE JESUS’S ANALOGY

It is vital at this stage to note that there were instances in the Old Testament whereby some people were resuscitated from death likewise in the New Testament (Lk 7:11-15; 8:49-56’ Jh 11:43-44). The difference being that Christ rose with an immortal and imperishable physical body unlike others who had to die again (Geisler 1989:150). Although Jesus had powers to perform miracles before his resurrection, yet, he was fully human equal to other humans.⁷ Let us examine the nature of Christ resurrection body. He ate with his disciples (Acts 10:41). He was seen and touched (Mt 28:9 cf. Jh 20:27).

From the above excerpt, it can be said that his resurrection body was physical because he had flesh and bones. He disputed the view that he was a spirit and said “...handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Lk 24:39 cf. Acts 13:33-37; Perman 2006:1). While in one perspective, his resurrection body can be described as physical, there are other instances whereby his resurrection body could describe as spiritual. For the resurrection body, there shall be no more marriages (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25) and no more death because the humans who are resurrected shall be like angels (Lk 20:36). Jesus’s resurrection body could walk through walls (Jh 20:19) and disregard the force of gravity by ascending up to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) (Kreeft 2000:15). If we are to believe that Jesus’s kind of resurrection body is what other believers in Christ will inherit after bodily death, it thus suggests that much aspects of human personality before death shall be inherited after body death. Professor J.A. Schep surmised:

...men will indeed rise up in their own physical bodies.... This excludes any explanation suggesting that we shall be raised as

⁷ One of earliest heresies pertained to the debate on whether Jesus was a man (1 Jh 4:2; 2 Jh 7).

spirits, or that we shall receive an ‘angelic body,’ consisting of some heavenly glory-matter,’ without any physical connection with our present bodies (Schep n.d.:21).

Although at first, some of Christ’s disciples were not able to recognize him quickly, yet they recognized who he was after his bodily resurrection (Lk 24:13-32; Jh 20:11-16; 21:1-13). Kreeft said that the resurrection body is a continuity of the former or physical body in a changed state unlike the physical body (Kreeft 2000:15). The central point that will connect the present body and the resurrection body is the ability of the individual concern and the people that are known to him or her to recognise or identify the person’s personality. Badham noted that “... the only bond of unity between our present and future bodies is that they will be ‘owned’ successively by the same personality” (Badham 1976:85). Geisler tabulated the difference between Paul’s view of a resurrection body and the present body (Geisler 1989:153):

Pre-Resurrection Body	Resurrection Body
Earthly (1 Cor. 15:40)	Heavenly
Perishable (1 Cor. 15:42)	Imperishable
Weak (1 Cor. 15:42)	Powerful
Natural (1 Cor. 15:44)	[Supernatural / Unnatural]
Mortal (1 Cor. 15:53)	Immortal

It is not clear how bodies that are already decayed after burial or informally exposed would be piled together and be made to resurrect. This raises the question about what kind of body exactly would resurrect after physical death? Badham mentioned that the resurrection body would not be the molecules that are buried and would not comply with naturally physical, chemical and biological rules bound to humans and nature (Badham 1976:85-86). What marvelled me is that, the resurrection body has the ability to eat food ate by human beings but the biological and chemical processes which involves excreting all that is consumed is likely

not applied accordingly (cf. Rev. 21:27). Human desire for sex, lust, war, sin and anything filthy is subdued in the resurrection body. In other words, the resurrection body would have physical human personality feature yet spiritual and celestial.

Memory plays a great role in the identification and the acknowledgement of the resurrection body by both the resurrected person and those who were conversant or familiar with the resurrected person. Hick believed that Paul's intention is to describe a resurrection body that is spiritual yet identifiable by common human senses. He called the resurrection body *soma pneumatikon*, meaning a spiritual body:

When someone has died, he is, apart from any special divine action, extinct. A human being is by nature mortal and subject to annihilation at death. But in fact, God, by an act of sovereign power, either sometimes or always resurrects or reconstitutes or recreate him- not however as the identical physical organism that he was before death, but as a *soma pneumatikon* ('spiritual body') embodying the dispositional characteristics and memory traces of the deceased physical organism, and inhabiting an environment with which the *soma pneumatikon* is continues as our present bodies are with world (John 1985:279).

Paul's explanation of the resurrection body is seemingly incomprehensible without faith or a distortion of some current scientific absoluteness. His view of the resurrection body is undoubtedly influenced by his experience of Christ when he was on his way to Damascus. Although Jesus lived long before him, Paul claimed that he met Jesus who changed his life from being a persecutor of the Church to an evangelizer to the Church (Acts 9:1-18). It is not surprising that Paul acclaimed that the risen Christ appeared to him "[a]nd last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8). Paul's tune in this biblical passage has a greater emphasis of Jesus literally appearing to him than just a metaphorical undertone. Ivan Karadza echoed that "[i]n this encounter [of Paul allegedly meeting Christ], Paul recognizes the reality of

Jesus' resurrection, and for him Jesus becomes the firstborn of the resurrected (1 Cor 15:20)" (Karadza 2014:164). Paul's experiences made him to regard the resurrection of Christ a reality. His claim is that he had seen Christ's resurrection body and has experienced Christ divine or supernatural power. In the modern or western contemporary world where science and reason dominate human thoughts, the question pertaining to the kind of body that will resurrect after death is relevant (Cervantes 2016:15). Unfortunately, many scholars have expressed the blurredness of the biblical understanding of the resurrection body. For example, Rev. A. E. Whatham of the Trinity Episcopal Church Louisville in Kentucky noted that both Paul and other New Testament passages made no clarity or give no any relevant knowledge of the concepts of the resurrection body which kept scholars rather mute or guessing over the subject:

In view of all the evidence now produced, what is the logical conclusion of the whole matter? It is this, namely, that the New Testament in its teaching, Pauline or otherwise, has no message whatever for us on the subject we have been discussing, since what it does say here is in absolute contradiction to the accepted teaching of science, as this is fully indorsed by modern biblical scholarship (Whatham n.d: 34).

One of the gaps covered in this research is the combination of various views by different scholars regarding Paul's perception of the resurrection body, this is in addition to Paul's own views about the resurrection body. The views are that the resurrection body might be seeing, felt and the pre-resurrection personality of the dead seemingly inherited. This research attempts to bring all the views together so that an imagery of the resurrection can be formed.

CONCLUSION

Paul explained the resurrection body as a physical personality that can be recognized, felt and known to the resurrected person that he or she was the same person who once had a body that lived in the physical world. His emphasis indicates that the resurrection body is spiritual but the personality of the person could be known. The best reference Paul had to use to explain the resurrection body pertained to the resurrection body of Christ. This is so because Christ is the *only one* that died and was resurrected according to the New Testament. Others that died were rather resuscitated because they had to die again. In modern world, the kind of body Paul said would resurrect can hardly be understood using scientific calibrations or simple logical categorisation. What is clearer from the New Testament perspective about Christ resurrection body is that, it has some physical features or personality features and spiritual features mainly noted in Christ's type of body after resurrection and in some of Paul's description of Christ resurrection body.

The researcher pointed out that Christ body after resurrection had both physical and spiritual features. It is physical because it was seen by others, touched, and that Christ talked and visited people and he ate like other humans. His ability to appear and reappear in various places including his ascension and other unique features he possessed spiritualized his being as a spiritual person. The researcher points that Paul's socio-political and philosophical backgrounds in addition to his experience of Christ on his way to Damascus influenced the need for him to defend the Christian faith with regard to the resurrection of the body. Paul ignored the physical features of the resurrection body of Christ with an emphasis the spiritual features of the resurrection body. In Paul's view, the resurrection body is strictly spiritual. His view can further be supported with other biblical teaching according to which humans should

focus on building the spiritual aspects of their lives more than the physical aspects.

Unlike other ancient cultures like those of the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the Yorubas that emphasized the preservation of a deceased body in an expected resurrection, Paul seemed to ignore ideas that pertained to the preservation of the physical body in order for it to resurrect.

Though unproven, it is likely that ancient Greek philosophical thoughts that regarded the body as evil might have influenced Paul to de-emphasize the resurrection body a physical being. With regard to some Asian tradition that normally cremate the dead to and keep the ashes from the dead as a symbolic connection between the living and the dead (Berill 2020:372-380), there is an implication from a Pauline perspective. Paul de-emphasised any kind of treatment given to the physical body of the dead in order to preserve the sanity of the dead, and his emphasis is strictly spiritual suggesting that being more concern about the spirit of the dead is more important than the body of the dead. These researchers are aware that Asian traditions value the spirit of the dead also, unlike Paul, some Asian traditions value both the physical and spiritual components of the dead.

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