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The resurrection of the dead in the view of Dale C. Allison: an interpretation of Matthew 27: 52-53

Abstract: This paper aimed to discuss the resurrection of the dead in Book Matthew Chapter 27 verses 52-53 following Dale C. Allison's 'Historical-Critical Method'. As the research encompassed both the hermeneutical and theological aspects of the topic, the 'Discourse Analysis' method was employed revealing the notion of resurrection, accompanied with the 'Document Analysis' method' enquiring Allison's major works related to the study. This paper consists of several parts encompassing the short note regarding Gospel Matthew with a biographical introduction of Dale C. Allison. continued with a general understanding of resurrection according to scholars and how it was contained in the Bible; last but not least, Allison's interpretation with respect to the resurrection in Matthew 27: 52-53 will be discussed at the end of the discussion. This paper concluded that the resurrection of the dead, following Allison, was examined as the object of 'Historical-Critical Method'. As such, Allison mainly focused on uncovering the traditional context provided by the Church in the form of literal meaning and bringing the meaning to nowadays context. For Allison, the resurrection of the bodies in Matthew 27: 52-53 should be interpreted as a historical event and eschatological altogether.

Keywords: Bible, Dale C. Allison, Eschatology, Hermeneutics, Historical-Critical Method, Interpretation, Matthew 27: 52-53, Resurrection.

Introduction: Gospel Matthew and Dale C. Allison

Gospel of Matthew, in particular, shows the space of eschatological topic attractively and at the same time, plays a special role in the New Testament. The Gospel, however, is not specifically meant to satisfy

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speculation about a potential event; rather, it is intended to inspire the church to act appropriately (Rosner and Alexander 2008, 267) As such, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that reading the Gospel of Matthew would lead us to the very foundation of the Church; following McDonald: "...*The final resurrection narrative in Matthew comes as the climax to the Gospel. It offers 'a compendium of important Matthean themes', and is said to provide 'the key to the understanding of the whole book...'*" (McDonald 1989, 78) The Gospel of Matthew is also distinguished from other Gospels in that the narrative of resurrection is linked to the whole by mythical apologetic content (Evans 1970, 57). Furthermore, Matthew is also the only gospel that describes the presence of a party of women visiting the tomb (Evans 1970, 85).

Jesus's resurrection is the final sign of God Revelation in order to unite entire people witnessing Jesus. Gospel of Matthew continues the interpretative tradition of the baptism narrative, differed with the Luke reflecting hermeneutical discussion in church circles identifying the Spirit of God as the source of Jesus's power –healing people, walking on the water, etc (McDonald 1989, 85). It also plays a role as a cosmic disclosure, conveyed in statements that move through a spectrum which historical; recollecting the one end of the scale and theological statement at the other end. It is calibrated for apologetic and exhortatory purposes; the interest of Matthew denotes the action of God in its eschatological verses 'from top to bottom'. Matthew expanded this interpretation by his narrative of the earthquake, which is like no other in that its resurrection of the bodies and finally the language of a cosmic event to which in Matthew –the centurion-bear witness (McDonald 1989, 90–91).

Dale C. Allison is an American Scholar in New Testament. He is Professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and wand Princeton Theological Seminary. He wrote a lot of books about the exegesis of the New Testament especially in Matthew, which some of those books would be utilized carefully in this paper. One thing extremely important to register is that Allison put the topic of eschatology in many of his writings, while the works are quoted and discussed by a massive number of other scholars. Such as Gleen B. Siniscalchi for example; Siniscalchi has demonstrated an intense debate about the rationality of the resurrection in Christianity between Allison and William Lane Craig (Siniscalchi 2011). Allison, moreover, also seems interested in the topic of 'Historical Jesus'; as we find in Scot McKnight's quote from Allison's *Constructing Jesus* and *Jesus of Nazareth* that the discussion of historical Jesus should be different from the theological Jesus (McKnight 2012, 173–74).

The last but not least, the most attractive idea of Allison is his hermeneutical approach. In his *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, he commented and interpreted Matthew in the form of 'Historical-Critical Method'. Written in three volumes, this

compendium signifies an advanced, critical, and authorized interpretation of the Gospel. As such, this work inevitably becomes a major reference in this paper with an aim to reveal the concrete understanding of ‘resurrection of the dead in Matthew 27: 52-53 according to Dale C. Allison. Relating to those issues mentioned, this paper, by consequences, will attempt to research the following research question: “*How does the resurrection of the dead in Matthew 27: 52-53 according to Dale C. Allison?*”

Research Method

This paper will utilize the ‘*Discourse Analysis*’ method; constructing identities, relationships, beliefs, and knowledge systems in language use. As this method combines a textual interpretation, it focuses on the ideology in the discourse including the recreation and transformation of relations of domination (Hjelm 2011, 134). In this context, the method of ‘*Discourse Analysis*’ will comprehend the conceptual construction of ‘resurrection of the dead’ in Matthew 27: 52-53 in accordance with Allison’s ‘Historical-Critical Method’. As the resurrection by Allison will be seen as the discourse which classified as his personal thought, the discussion will consequently derive a distinguished discourse of Resurrection compared with another theologian. ‘Discourse Analysis’, moreover, also plays a crucial role as the discourse actualizes both social reality and relationships; “... *is a way of speaking that does not simply reflect or present things ‘out there’, but ‘constructs’ or ‘constitutes’ them.*” (Hjelm 2011, 135). In addition to that, discourse operates ‘function’ and ‘social practice’ as well (Fairclough 2009, 3; Potter 1996, 105). Hjelm, in particular, emphasizes that discourse establishes at least three elements: *social identities, social relationships*, and most importantly, *the system of knowledge and belief* (Hjelm 2011, 136). Apprehending Allison’s ‘Historical-Critical Method’ and how it interprets the resurrection of the dead verses in Matthew 27: 52-53 will culminate not only the replication of society’s understanding of resurrection and to the development of the community by regards with that understanding, but constituting their epistemological scheme about the concept altogether.

Following the ‘*discourse analysis*’ method, this research further employs the ‘*document analysis*’ method; considering the number of references going to be studied in order to answer the research question mentioned in the introduction, this method is likewise considered decisive. This method conforms to Grace Davie and David Wyatt, is going to regard documents in terms of their production, usage, benefit, and content; not to mention the aim, reader, place and date as well (Davie and Wyatt 2011, 151). Accordingly, the public documents -publications, books, magazines, etc.- are extremely crucial to uncover the current trend of society and avoid a “... *subjective and nuanced opinions..*” at the same time (Davie and Wyatt 2011, 156).

Allison's works will be unavoidably become the documents analyzed in this research; as 4 of his writings are available here: *The New Moses A Matthean Typology*, *The End of The ages Has Come an Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus*, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. And most importantly, the project that was done with William David Davies: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Every single work stands on a particular substance embedded within this research; for instance: Allison's 'Historical-Critical Method' will be comprehended through *The New Moses*. His detailed comprehension concerning the resurrection, exist in *The End of the Ages*' and *Jesus of Nazareth*'. While his concrete hermeneutical aspect regarding Matthew 27: 52-53 is accessible in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. Those references are going to be analyzed in a very careful way accompanied by tens of supporting sources related to the idea.

General Understanding of the Resurrection of the Dead and in the Bible

First of all, it is mandatory to assert the concrete linguistic meaning defining resurrection to reach the same ground of understanding. It means that the 'resurrection' in this paper will only refer to the term used in Matthew 27:53. 'The resurrection' then, should be understood as *a waking up or rising up from the sleep of the death*. It is interesting to know that the resurrection of the dead is the fundamental principle of the Christian Faith. It is a topic discussed by a massive number of Bible commentators. As it claimed by Allison in early of *Jesus of Nazareth*: "...But, however much we better our methods for authenticating the traditions about Jesus, we are never going to produce results that can be confirmed or disconfirmed."(Allison 1998, 7). Clearly that for Allison, some given interpretation may contain a good deal of truth but will never exhaust it in the context of application our insight to the resurrection. Philosophically speaking, the resurrection is relative to the standpoint of the judging subject (Blackburn 2005, 411); it will be many subjectivities, perspectives, scientific paradigm, and even personal tendencies in the case of Biblical interpretation as one of the hermeneutical activities in general and especially in defining the resurrection.

Considering the disputes, we will able to find the common ground admitted in the topic of resurrection. *First*, the resurrection of death is the central key of the Christian Faith in the New Testament. *Second*, the resurrection of the bodies is *always* related closely to the resurrection of Christ. The important value of resurrection may be analyzed from C F Evans's perspective for the example; as he quoted both Wellhausen and Bousset that the resurrection is both "...the basis of Christian faith..." and "...the center of the new understanding of theology..."(Evans 1970, 3). Earlier than

Evans citation, Karl Barth confirmed that the topic of resurrection is vitally important which “...*I need not emphasize...*” (Barth 1933, 11–12). Commentating Barth, John Webster began his foreword for R. Dale Dawson’s writing as: “*Barth regarded the resurrection of Jesus as the material center of the Christian faith... and pointing ahead to the future of the creation in fellowship with the exalted Son, the resurrection contains within itself the full reach of the Gospel...*”(Dawson 2007, viii) Philip Schaff and Lyman Abbott were also explicitly mentioned the legacy of the concept of resurrection in their dictionaries (Schaff 1880, 733–34; Abbott 1875, 802–4). The issue of resurrection, in addition, symbolizes a percentage of interreligious encounters between Islam and Christianity; conceding the issue is considered sacred from both theological perspectives (Armayanto and Ulfa 2019).

The problem arises when the concept of resurrection is questioned and even debated; as to how *did* the resurrection happen? How it *will* occur? Does it happen as the ‘*real*’ body resurrection? Does our condition of ourselves in the time of resurrection will be the same with the condition when we passed away? On the other side, we do aware that Christ –in particular- as risen from death depend on the ordinary life and teaching of the Church and also the New Testament. Nevertheless, we may not quite understand what does Christians believe at this point. In consequence, faith in the resurrection yet not become mandatory even it is understandable that the misunderstanding of resurrection will lead to complete doubt. Following Gerald O’Collins, S. J.: “...*We have become used to the idea that –as regard the divine nature, the Church, the Eucharist and the Trinity- some given interpretation may contain a good deal of truth but will never exhaust the truth. It is high time to apply this insight to Christ’s resurrection...*”(O’Collins 1978, 3) the confusion in understanding resurrection for Collins is as a result of the resurrection itself is a multidimensional mystery that should be defended. The understanding toward resurrection itself may be a false procedure if it isolated as the only formulation of understanding and taken to be the exclusive explanation.

There are a number of theories that resulted in an association with the efforts given by Biblical interpreters and scholars to represent the resurrection. Davis mentioned four theories of resurrection: *bodily resuscitation*, *bodily transformation*, *spiritual resurrection*, and *reductive resurrection theories*. In the *bodily resuscitation*, Jesus affirmed as dead and later genuinely alive and the tomb was founded empty; as Jesus identical body was physiologically resurrected to the same condition of His life that was experienced before the crucifixion. Later, the resurrection of the corpse of Jesus owns the same qualities as before death no less. Second, the theory of *bodily transformation*. This theory agrees that Jesus was in fact dead and later alive, as it also conforms to the emptiness of the tomb afterwards. This theory, however, denies an assumption of ‘body restoration’ declared by the

previous theory. The theory of bodily transformation rather believed that Jesus earthly body transformed into a new body with renewed properties; reestablishing a continuation between the 'old body' and the 'new body'. Jesus's new body, moreover, was no longer bounded certainly of the natural laws as was the previous one. The next theory is the theory of *spiritual resurrection*. This theory affirmed Jesus's death at the time of the crucifixion and how He alive afterwards but it does inevitably questions the empty tomb; by regards with was the soul or spirit of Jesus separated from His body. His bones might still be rotting in Palestine, but Jesus, in fact, lives. Lastly, the theory of *reductive resurrection*. This theory denies that either Jesus died, and later alive, or the empty tomb as well. *Reductive resurrection* explains the death of Jesus in the psychological states of Jesus's disciples. When Jesus appeared before His adherents, it was *merely* their visions or even hallucinations (T. Davis 1993, 44–45).

A similar approach is done by Abbott as he divides three conditions of the body resurrection: *First*, when the identical body laid in the grave at death, it will be raised again with all its members. *Second*, it was Jesus's soul that will be united in the body which will be analogous to the present body in the future. *Third*, it argues that everyone is possessed of two bodies both physical and spiritual. At the time of death, the physical body is laid aside, while the soul, with the spiritual body, enters at once upon its perfected spiritual existence. The resurrection done in this third classification takes place immediately upon death, and the spiritual body is referred to as an inner or unsubstantial body (Abbott 1875, 802–3).

These divisions are the problem pointed out earlier by Allison, as he realized that the restriction he dealt with the apologetic of resurrection is the unconformity of the interpretation method utilized uncovering Bible verses. Therefore, he affirmed that it is not important for us to deceive ourselves into imagining that methodological sophistication will ever eventuate either both of unimaginative scientific procedure or academic concord. Related to the problem confessed Allison wrote: "...Until we become literal time travelers, all attempts to find the historical Jesus will be steered by instinct and intuition. Appeals to shared criteria may, we can pray, assist us in being self-critical, but when all is said and done we look for the historical Jesus with our imagination –and there too is where we find him if we find him at all..." (Allison 1998, 7) Another issue stated by Allison in relation to the '*realized eschatology*'; offering a deeper question concerning the resurrection -of Jesus in particular- was a purely eschatological context. If the resurrection of an individual of Jesus alone was so implausible, why should Jesus's vindication be interpreted as a bodily assumption to heaven? (Allison 1985, 93) As such, Allison left the affair unanswered. The notion of Allison's interpretation of Matthew 27: 52-53 will be broadly explained later.

The next point in question needs to be comprehended to understand resurrection is an affirmation that the resurrection of Jesus has been taken to be both the guarantee and the model of human resurrection in the last day. As we found in Romans 8: 11: “*But if the Spirit of a Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit.*” (*The Holy Bible, New King James Version* 1982, bk. Rom 8: 11); 1 Corinthians 15: 20 and 23 also frequently discussed: “*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.*” (*The Holy Bible, New King James Version* 1982, bk. 1 Cor 20, 23). Other Bible verses mentioning resurrection are Philemon 3: 20-21, 1 Thessalonians: 4: 14, 1 John 3:2, and the last but not least, Matthew 52-53. In Matthew 52-53, the resurrection of bodies preceded by a number of events, with the death of Christ as one of them. The emptiness of the tomb is the sign of His resurrection followed by the resurrection of the bodies. It means that Christianity conforms to Jesus and mankind’s resurrection are connected continuous chain. Accordingly, McDonald wrote: “...*If no general resurrection, then no resurrection of Chris a total collapse of all the gospel stand for...*”(McDonald 1989, 38) “...*the death of Jesus releases the faithful from their graves...*”(McDonald 1989, 91).

Jesus resurrection and mankind resurrection, however, differs as two resurrections are not exactly analogous. We understand that the resurrection of Jesus already occurred at a certain point in history, while our resurrection will occur at the end of the world; While Jesus’s resurrection preserved him from bodily decay, our resurrection will occur afterwards (McDonald 1989, vii). The detail of bodily transformation validating the differences between Jesus and human’s resurrection should emphasize the continuity and change between Jesus’s pre-resurrection bodies. *Continuity* means that it was Jesus –or an A- in general, who was resurrected and not someone else. *Change* means that –is not sometimes suggested- the transformation of one sort body into another; it is that the one body *changes* into the other (T. Davis 1993, 50).

Allison’s Hermeneutical Notion: Interpreting Matthew 27:53 Historical-Critical Method: The Definition and Application

After understanding the principle of resurrection, we shall step now in the notion of Allison Hermeneutic interpreting Matthew 27:52-53. In order to reflect and interpret the texts, Allison indeed considered several investigations as the foundation of Biblical understanding. Once, he claimed the tool named ‘*Historical-Critical Method*’. Structurally, Allison convinced himself that he found several methods of interpretation of the text since he found the number of "intentional fallacy" as the unavailable authorial

intention, as such, Allison decided that the 'Historical-Critical Method' is the most suitable respecting the early style of interpretation (Allison 1983, 1–2). Practically, this method concludes the meaning of the text in a distant time and culture; makes it attempt to reveal messages embedded within verses for both of the Church and the individuals consigned to theologians and pastors., in the sense that the interpretation does not need another point of interpretations such as exegetes, critical scholars, and cognate linguists. The Historical-Critical Method, moreover, concerns more with identifying the literary sources and social setting compared with the *Proof-Text Model*, which only emphasizes the practical and pastoral side of life at the time of interpretation. In the matter of contextualization, the Historical-Critical Method did not broadly release the reader and interpreter intention to go to 'unnecessary distance' in the other direction as it was initiated by the *Reader-Response Method*, while at the same time does not rigidly involve the '*syntactical-theological*' study. The Historical-Critical Method clearly avoids an exaggerated discussion related to divine revelation, its function as a canonical church, or its application in the devotional-theological pastoral enterprise of Christians (Kaiser and Silva 1994, 31–34).

Allison seems to reject the tendency of postmodernism in his approach; which he declared as the method that will deliver us to the 'incoherent of the author' or even to 'reach something but never grasp' (Bernstein 1991, 8–16; Lehmann 1993, 1–11; Gaston and Maclachlan 2011, 22). For Allison, the text is yet the literal product of human beings; as creatures whose public and private lives are pervaded by intentions, they will have the intentions of their authors encoded in them. The text, by consequence, should be read arbitrarily (Allison 1983, 1–2). Furthermore, Allison's position seems to favour a more traditional or literal reading to affirm the integrity and unity of each book and respect the traditional authorships (Melton 2005, 269); This attempt, offered by Allison to reclaim the concrete meaning of the text is called later as *intertextuality* (Allison 1983, 6). By referring to this approach, it is simply to say that Allison tried to recover the intention of the author following the understanding of *grammatico-historical exegesis* regarding scripture via 'textual criticism' indicating that this analysis considers paying attention to both of language in which the original text was written and the specific cultural context giving the rise of the text in a very prominent way (Kaiser and Silva 1994, 19).

Through this method, the reader will conceivably understand the meaning and message of the Bible in a better way. Due to the common critical reading of the Bible was suspected to be not sure enough answering the question regarding the meaning of verses, a recent biblical study has invited us to the literal sense of scripture almost exclusively. In other words, this literal reflection just aims for uncovering the substantial value –meaning and message- of the Bible. Accordingly, the understanding of the Bible does

not project the scripture as revelation but as the ‘record’ of the original revelation as the substance of the verses has to be delivered nowadays (Blackman 1996, 3–19). Following this, Seiler agreed that the text is going to aid the communication to be expressed by the author; so the interpretation should be done in the same words as the written text: “...*If we are right in judging that the books contained in the Bible are written conformably to reason, the canon is obvious in the Bible but a single sense...*”(Seiler 1835, 32) McDonald, also refers to this reflection in the way how the Bible interpreter is required to establish proper communication between author and reader: “...*It is at this point that readers are drawn into the discourse between the author and the readers he is addressing in the text. The world of the text reveals something of the author, for he participates in the action within the text in so far as he communicates through it with his readers...*”(McDonald 1989, 2)

Allison declared that the object he has been trying to maintain is the ‘core of determinate meanings’ or substantive content that must thus cohere with the intention of the author of the Gospel (Allison 1983, 3). Allison realized later that the meaning of the text that intended to communicate with the reader is problematic –especially when the potential meaning of a text is no less comprehensive than its significance-. For him, the issue has emerged because that both meaning and significance are able to be viewed from any number of perspectives and always possess an infinite horizon of unspoken meaning. According to Allison, “...*to understand the present we need to know the past and to understand a thing before us, including a text, we need to know, as Aristotle explained, who or what brought it into being and to what end...*”(Allison 1983, 4). A struggle to interpret the Bible means drowning in its world and find meaning within.

As for the context of resurrection, the reader and/or interpreter is required to engage with living reality. Indeed, it is an extremely complex process. The Historical-Critical Method will be applied involving the critical study of Biblical sources as well as an elucidation of the cultural context in which words and concepts are used (McDonald 1989, 2–3) An effort to interpret the texts toward nowadays life also considered by Evans and Davis; as the historical research will only be applied in the closed continuum of that not even God can interrupt, so a decisive reflection in respect to the verses is necessary to argue based on rational, historical, philosophical and theological grounds (T. Davis 1993, x; Evans 1970, 3). The notion of Allison’s hermeneutic will be analyzed in the next section.

The Interpretation of Matthew 27:53 by Allison

Right now, we are stepping into the core of the discussion. Gospel Matthew 27: 52-53 will be interpreted based on several of Allison's writings and commentaries; mainly in his *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The*

Gospel According to Saint Matthew and *The End of The Ages Has Come*. This part of the paper will introduce firstly the verses as has been written in 'The Holy Bible: New King James Version' then followed by Allison's interpretation.

1. Matthew 27: 52

"and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised." (*The Holy Bible, New King James Version* 1982, bk. Matt 27: 52)

Allison's hermeneutical notion regarding the verse is as below: First, Allison writes that "...*Jesus death is a resurrecting death: the death are revived by his dying. As he passes from life to death they pass from death to life...*" (Davies and Allison 2012, III:633) This interpretation, in general, shows the concrete interrelationships between the death of Christ and the rise of bodies; as when Jesus died, the deceased arise from their death bed. Allison borrowed Paul's metaphor that Jesus is "*the first fruits of those who have died*" – comparatively to 1 Cor 15: 20- assuming that the eschatological harvest is underway, that the resurrection of Jesus is only the beginning of the general resurrection of the dead (Allison 1998, 41, 2021, 171). Accordingly, Allison also claims that Matthew 27: 52 is also related closely to John 5: 24-29; as the 'Life and Judgment' are only possible to done through Jesus only (*The Holy Bible, New King James Version* 1982, bk. Jhn 5: 24-29).

Second, 'asleep' as it is written in the verse, according to Allison, is a general analogy for death (Davies and Allison 2012, III:633). This word does not merely imply an 'unconscious condition' as the 'saints' mentioned in the text is the late prophets in the past. Allison, for instance, interprets the sages relating to eschatological events experienced by them in some of the Old Testament chapters are: Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah (Davies and Allison 2012, III:633). The verse, however, claimed by Allison does not encourage such belief; as We appear to be dealing with a local phenomenon whose major goal is to bear witness to Jesus in and around Jerusalem. Here, Allison's 'Historical-Critical Metod' carries out its task bringing the past chronicle today; reflecting as the sages have often been associated with all of the pre-Christian redeemed; The dead saints will be resurrected later in an eschatological context (Davies and Allison 2012, III:633; Allison 2021, 174, 1985, 43).

2. Matthew 27: 53

“and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (*The Holy Bible, New King James Version* 1982, bk. Matt 27: 53)

Allison’s commentary confirms that the ‘saints’ mentioned in the previous verses stands for Jewish representatives to testify the truth of Jesus: “... *The ‘saints’, as representatives of the Jewish past, add their testimony to Jesus, which confirms the Christian present...*” (Davies and Allison 2012, III:634). Allison, however, questions the improbability of the resurrection of the holy ones after the death of Jesus. It is on account of following the splitting of rock and the open of the grave as the sign of the resurrection, “... *the holy ones remain in their tombs until Easter...*” (Davies and Allison 2012, III:634) For Allison, it is strange to grasp how the saints are yet not resurrected at the time, in accordance with what they *have done* between the time of Jesus died and His resurrection (Davies and Allison 2012, III:634); at the same time, how they possibly witness the empty tomb of the signs while they were *only* resurrected after the Jesus was revived?

Attempting to answer the question through Historical-Critical Method, Allison quotes in his commentary: “... *the bodies of the saints came forth without souls, and their souls later ascended to heaven without their bodies...*” (Davies and Allison 2012, III:634) It means that Allison affirms the resurrected bodies was not occupied by ‘living spirit’, as their soul would later ascend to Heaven. This idea emphasizes the origin of the body-spirit division as well: “... *It is absurd... to imagine that they spent three days alive and breathing, hidden in tombs.*” (Davies and Allison 2012, III:634; Allison 1985, 45) Again, it is difficult to imagine the saints were able to witness the resurrection of Jesus -that did not happen only up to three days later- (Allison 1985, 45).

For Allison, Jesus’s resurrection was only able to be registered as an isolated event in history. Jesus’s resurrection moreover, was more closely joined to general resurrection embedded in Rom. 1:4; as there is much to argue that the primitive Christian community believed that the new age was dawning in their time, that eschatological events had been and were unfolding before their eyes. Those verses of Matthew finally finds a fitting home within; then the suggestion that the passage preserves a piece of primitive Christian tradition commend itself (Allison 1985, 46). Matthew 27: 52-53 are the verses only possibly to be observed as a turning point of the eschatological event.

Conclusion

Allison tried to uncover the meaning of Matthew 27: 52-53 via his 'Historical-Critical Method'. The interpretation implies that the general resurrection is always linked and preceded by the resurrection of Jesus. The matter of chronological events *after* the resurrection, meanwhile, is associated with the *end of the ages*. Allison leaves the discussion open: do they will be living on the ground or ascending to heaven?

Related to the general hermeneutical principle in general, Allison's interpretation successfully uncovers the substantial meaning of the text. When Allison tried to present this phenomenon to the reader, he returned to the literal meaning of the text while maintaining the miracles of Jesus at the same time. To conclude, Allison convinced that the resurrection, in general, is the phenomenon that happens in the history of Christianity. With regards to will resurrection possibly occur at the end of our age yet still conceivably to be debated.

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