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RECONSIDERING ETERNAL LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:  
THE IDEA OF RESURRECTION ROOTED IN THE TORAH

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by  
Eun-Jung Kim  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

RECONSIDERING ETERNAL LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:  
THE IDEA OF RESURRECTION ROOTED IN THE TORAH

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To Daeji Church,  
and to  
Hwamok Church,  
my mother churches in Korea,  
where I was nurtured to live for Christ

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1 QH	Hodayot or Thanksgiving Hymns
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>°Abod. Zar.</i>	<i>°Abodah Zarah</i>
<i>AJS Rev</i>	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Reviews</i>
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i>
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
<i>B. Bat.</i>	<i>Baba Batra</i>
<i>B. Meṣ̄a</i>	<i>Baba Meṣ̄a</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakot</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CAT	Catechetical Lectures
CC	Continental Commentaries
<i>°Erub</i>	<i>°Erubin</i>
<i>Ḥag.</i>	<i>Ḥagigah</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Society</i>
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
LXX	Septuagint
<i>Meg.</i>	<i>Megilah</i>
MT	Masoretic Text

NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
<i>Qidd.</i>	<i>Qiddušin</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
<i>Tg. Neb.</i>	<i>Targum of the Prophets</i>
<i>Tg. Neof.</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

## PREFACE

It has been a challenging but enjoyable task to search for the evidence of the presence of eternal life and resurrection of the dead in the OT. I am very honored to have Dr. Russell T. Fuller as the supervising professor. Semesters of sitting in his classes were grateful moments inspired by his scholarly humility before God's Word and his dedication to the biblical teaching of the OT. His supportive supervision has been a great encouragement throughout the writing. I am also grateful for Dr. Terry J. Betts and Dr. Brian J. Vickers who willingly agreed to serve on my dissertation committee.

My two mother churches in South Korea, Daeji Church and Hwamock Church, have been faithful supporters through their prayers and finances. I sincerely dedicate this work to these two churches with the prayer that my continuing progress in research may be used to serve the Church of Christ. Especially, I express my respect and gratitude to my pastor, I Seog Shim, at Hwamock church, whose life and pastoral care challenged me to pursue a Christ-centered life and to dedicate my life for the service of the church.

My earnest thanksgiving also goes to Cameron Jungels, who has provided proofreading for this work. He continued his faithful support for this work even under the pressures of his family and ministry responsibilities. Without his support, my writing would not have been as understandable as it is to English readers.

Most of all, I give my inexpressible gratitude to my husband, Joosung, and our three children, Puniel, Hilkiel and Adoniel. Joosung and the three little ones showed me their constant support and sacrificial love when I needed to sit at my desk for hours year after year. When I felt incompetent to complete this work,

Joosung's prayers and encouragement and the children's smiles gave me strength to press on finishing this task. It is by God's grace to have such a godly and faithful husband as my companion in life and to build a family along with the children. I joyfully look forward to the future as we serve the Lord together as a family. I also pray our loving fellowship in Christ continues to the world where we eternally glorify God.

Eun-Jung Kim

Louisville, Kentucky

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In Old Testament studies, there has been a broad scholarly consensus that the Old Testament is mainly focused on “this side of the grave”<sup>1</sup> and has nothing (or little) to say about eternal life. The majority of Old Testament scholars have described the effort to find an idea of eternal life in the OT as “a fruitless hope.”<sup>2</sup> Especially, the idea of eternal life after bodily resurrection has been widely rejected in Old Testament studies. Such an idea appears to modern scholars to be an intrusion of the New Testament into the Old. They may agree on the fact that a few passages from the prophetic or wisdom literature might indicate the idea of life beyond this world or resurrection. However, those passages have been almost always treated as later extrapolations redacted by religious leaders to bolster monotheistic Yahweh worship.

The modern critical scholarly view of eternal life in the Old Testament argues that the concept of immortality and individual resurrection has developed late after the exile along with the rise of monotheistic Yahwism and religious

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<sup>1</sup>Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), 121, 136. Goldingay also affirms that the Old Testament “has no expectation of a renewed life the other side of death,” and when the Old Testament speaks of hope, it refers to the hope for this world. John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 631.

<sup>2</sup>Hallote opines that Israel's search for immortality was “a fruitless hope.” The majority of modern scholarship concludes that the OT has nothing to say about eternal life beyond this terrestrial life. Rachel S. Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 104. Zimmerli also boldly comments that the Old Testament says “nothing of immortality.” Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, 110.

individualism. Scholars also maintain that Greek and Persian ideas of resurrection from the dead were influential in causing the hopes for the nation and individual hope to intermingle at the close of the fourth century B.C. Later in the second century, after the Jewish war against Antiochus Epiphanes, the dogmatic teaching of individual resurrection was reinforced. Scholars hypothesize that the Jews tried to resolve the problem of theodicy under severe persecutions by foreign nations by teaching the concept of postmortem retribution of the wicked and reward of the righteous.<sup>3</sup>

However, this modern scholarly consensus on the idea of eternal life and resurrection in the OT is not without challenges. Without question, the OT does place much emphasis on this life on earth. It employs the phrase related with ‘eternal life’ only a few times,<sup>4</sup> and no occurrence of the word ‘resurrection’ is found in the OT. If the terms ‘eternal life’ or ‘resurrection’ were the only basis for a search for the concept of eternal life and resurrection in the OT, then it would indeed be, as Hallote describes, a “fruitless hope.” But the infrequent use of a particular term does not eliminate the presences of the concept in the OT.<sup>5</sup> For example, as Schwarz points out, the word *Messiah* does not occur very often in the OT to refer to a future eschatological figure.<sup>6</sup> However, the theme of Messiah as a future salvatory figure

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<sup>3</sup>Bruce Vawter, “Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 162. See also Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 58-60.

<sup>4</sup>The expressions related to ‘eternal life’ are found in the following passages. See Gen 3:22, חַי לְעֵלָם; Ps 133:3, חַיִּים עַד־הָעוֹלָם; Dan 4:34, לְחַי עֲלָמָא.

<sup>5</sup>Block points out in his Deuteronomy commentary that “the absence of the word does not mean the absence of the concept.” A concept can be found in the writings of the OT even though a specific word or a phrase is not found in it. Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 714.

<sup>6</sup>Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 48-49.

flows throughout the OT writings. Even though the terms ‘eternal life’ and ‘resurrection’ do not occur frequently, their thematic presence may be traced by other means.

A stronger challenge to the scholarly consensus comes from the New Testament’s understanding of OT in terms of eternal life and resurrection. The teachings of Jesus affirm the presences of the concept of eternal life and resurrection in the early writings of Hebrew Scripture, in contrast to the scholarly consensus. It is striking that Jesus almost always quoted from Moses’ writings to teach about eternal life and resurrection not the Prophets or other writings (Matt 19:16-22; Luke 10:25-28; 18:18-30; Mark 10:17-22; 12:18-27; John 3:14-15).<sup>7</sup>

In spite of scholarly insistence that a search for the concept of eternal life and resurrection in the OT is in vain, a series of questions arises out of the problem of severance between the modern OT eschatological view and the NT eschatology. Does the OT indeed keep silent about the idea of eternal life and resurrection? Has the OT doctrine of resurrection of the dead been developed out of a theological need by religious leaders throughout centuries, and inserted in the later days to affirm Yahweh theology? Is the idea of eternal life and bodily resurrection merely an intrusion of the NT into the OT? A great number of works on the subject of OT eschatology have already been done in the past. There remains at the present time, however, a need for a reexamination of the Old Testament’s concepts of eternal life and resurrection to answer the objections of the scholarly consensus and to establish justifiable connections between the OT and the NT with regard to eschatology.

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<sup>7</sup>Along with Jesus’ reading of the OT and his understanding of eternal life and resurrection, the promise of eternal life given by God became a foundational aspect of Paul’s preaching of the gospel (Rom 2:6-8; 5:17-21; 6:22-23; Gal 6:8; Titus 1:2; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12). It was also shared by other apostles, who harmoniously emphasized the knowledge and faith in eternal life (Acts 13:46-48; Jude 21; 1 John 1:24-25; 3:15; 5:11-13; 5:20).

## **Thesis**

Although the modern critical scholarly view contends that the idea of eternal life is not found in the OT and the idea of resurrection was developed late in Israel's religious history, I will argue that the concepts of eternal life and resurrection are firmly rooted in the Torah and have been continually refreshed and revealed anew through the prophets and other writings in the OT. They are not products of later development out of religious and theological need. Rather, they are rooted in the ancient faith and teaching of the OT.

## **Methodology**

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to clarify terms related to the concept of eternal life. One of the terms that is closely related with the present study is the term 'immortality.' As briefly mentioned above, the term 'immortality' has been used with a wide variety of meanings by different scholars. The term has been used variously by scholars to refer to the immortality of the soul, to life after death, other to the continuance of human life, or to bodily resurrection. In light of this ambiguity, in this dissertation 'eternal life' will be preferred rather than the word 'immortality.'

When 'eternal life' is employed, the term does not mean immortality of the soul or life after death or continuance of human life. The hope for eternal life is indispensably connected with the hope for bodily resurrection from the dead. In contrast to the Egyptian view of afterlife, which pursues blissful afterlife of ka (soul or life spirit), afterlife without the body has never been desired by Israelites in the OT. 'Life' is found in the blood (Lev 17:14), which assumes the lively presence of a physical body. Since every creature succumbs to the power of death after the fall of the first man, the issue of eternal life generally requires the precedent occurrence of death. Thus, 'eternal life' in this dissertation will assume bodily resurrection from

the dead (besides special exceptions).

The paper will argue for the early presence of the concept of resurrection and eternal life in the OT from a threefold perspective: historical, scriptural and theological reconsideration. Evidences will be inductively collected from this threefold study. Upon these evidences, the paper will build a relevant argument that the concept of eternal life is rooted in the Torah and continually has been refreshed and renewed through the prophets and other writings in the OT.

### **History of Traditions**

The concepts of resurrection and eternal life are widely found in the early translations of the OT and intertestamental Jewish literature. They were situated at the core of the early church's doctrinal teaching. The resurrection of Jesus was not the watershed of a new religious teaching but was understood as the surety of the ancient promise. The centrality of faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life is also a characteristic within Rabbinic Judaism.<sup>8</sup> Rabbis traditionally taught that the resurrection of the dead is proved from the Torah (*Sanh.* 91B). The Amidah, recited three times daily in rabbinic Judaism, places the confession of faith in God who raises the dead in the second place of the eighteen benedictions. The centrality of faith in resurrection has been consistently held within both Christian and Rabbinic orthodox traditions until the Enlightenment. In contrast to the evolutionary view of resurrection, the consistent teaching of both traditions on resurrection can be read as an indication to the early presence of the faith.

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<sup>8</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Berakhot*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 23, 487. "The world to come," connected to the promise of resurrection, was considered on a par with the Torah's status in the rabbinic tradition. It was considered as one of the three holy gifts from God: Torah, the Land of Israel, and the world to come (*Ber.* 5A). Leading to eternal life is "the distinctive trait of study of the Torah" (*Ber.* 21A); idem, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 23 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 487.

## **Scriptural Reconsideration**

Scriptural examination of the Torah and the rest of the OT writings will be made to evaluate the possibility of the presence of the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the OT. The examination of the Torah passages in four areas—the passages with the promise of life (Deut 4:1, 26-31; 5:33; 6:24; 8:1; 16:20; 30:6, 16, 19-20 and Lev 18:5), the passages with the promise of land (Gen 17:7; Deut 11:21), the passages where the faith in resurrection is aroused (Gen 5:21-24; 22:1-19), and the passages where the source of resurrection and eternal life is suggested (Exod 3:6; Deut 5:26; 30:19-20; 32:47)—will show that the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life are present in the Torah.

The Torah's ideas and belief in resurrection and eternal life are expressed throughout the OT in the Prophets and other writings. The survey of the passages with the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the Prophets and other writings (Isa 26:19; 53:8-12; 55:2; Ezek 37; Ps 73; Dan 12:2) shows that those ideas were not alien to the OT. Several occasions of temporary resurrection in the OT prefigure future resurrection that will occur through the ever living Messiah (1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:18-37; 13:20-21). Also the Torah's view to find the source of eternal life in the living God is reaffirmed throughout the OT (1 Sam 2:6; Hos 13:14).

## **Theological Reconsideration**

Different views on OT eschatology are related to different views on OT thanatology. It is worthwhile to review the OT view of death to assess the relevancy of an OT eschatology. A discussion will be presented on the theological grounds for the resurrection of the dead and eternal life from the perspective of the OT view of death and a theological structure of life-death-life. The gift of life to Adam in Creation was in view of no-death. The intrusion of death in Genesis 3 destroyed the original blessings of life. Even though death was gradually recognized as “the

experience of the present frailty of man”<sup>9</sup> after the Fall, hope for the restoration of life lost in Genesis 3 was echoed in the promise of life in the Torah, “Then, you shall live” (Deut 4:1, 26-31; 5:33; 6:24; 8:1; 16:20; 30:6, 16, 19-20 and Lev 18:5).

The OT presents the crossroads of two ways: one leading to life, the other leading to death. The first Adam failed to choose the way to life. Israel, the covenant people of God, stood before the crossroads but failed to choose the way to life. Finally, the second Adam appeared to destroy death and to restore life eternal for God’s people (Rev 20-22). This movement from life to death, and then from death to life is like a core theme of the OT and the NT.

### **Historical Background**

Before investigating evidences for the thesis, it is helpful to investigate the main arguments of the modern critical view and its weaknesses in order to better grasp the significance of the arguments that will be presented in following chapters.

#### **Main Arguments of the Modern Critical Views on OT Eschatology**

Since there exists a broad spectrum of opinions even among the modern critical scholars on the formation of the OT concept of resurrection of the dead, it may not be possible to standardize their arguments in a uniform way. Nevertheless, a general consensus is found within their opinions. First, there was no idea of individual immortality in the early history of Israel. Second, the concept of postmortem eschatology in the OT has evolved throughout Israel’s historical experiences. Third, in the development of the idea of resurrection and postmortem judgment there has been significant influence from Zoroastrianism and severe persecution under the Hellenistic empire. Fourth, scriptural passages relating to the

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<sup>9</sup>Gustav F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1883), 168.

concept of individual postmortem eschatology and bodily resurrection of the dead have been inserted into the OT by later redactors. Fifth, the OT mainly focuses on mundane life and has no interest in postmortem destiny. Sixth, death is the natural and normal experience for human beings in this world.

**No idea of individual immortality in the early history of Israel.** First of all, most critical scholars propose that in early Hebrew Yahwism there is no concept of life beyond this world or individual eschatology.<sup>10</sup> As Brichto admits there remains ambiguity in the meaning of immortality when it is employed by different scholars.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars use the term to designate immortality of one's soul after death.<sup>12</sup> Another group of scholars may imply life after death.<sup>13</sup> Others may mean the continuance of human life without death.<sup>14</sup> Still others may signify bodily

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<sup>10</sup>Hermann Schultz, *Old Testament Theology: The Religion of Revelation in Its Pre-Christian Stage of Development* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 2:327; Host Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1:62-63; Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 40; George W. Coats, "Death And Dying in Old Testament Tradition," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 11 (1976): 11; James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 21; Philip S. Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," in *The Old Testament in Its World*, ed. Robert P. Gordon and Johannes C. Moor (Leiden: Brill, 2005):105; Vawter, "Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament," 169-70.

<sup>11</sup>Herbert C. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973): 3.

<sup>12</sup>Coats, "Death And Dying In Old Testament Tradition," 11; Gergely Juhász, "Some Neglected Aspects of the Exegetical Debate on Resurrection and the Immortality of the Soul between William Tyndale and George Joye in Antwerp (1534-1535)," *Reformation* 14 (2009): 37-38.

<sup>13</sup>John H. Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament: A Review of the Evidence," *Encounter* 22 (1961): 15-16; Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," 105; Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, 108-10; Simcha Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1994), 347-48.

<sup>14</sup>Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 222; William O. Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World: A Study in Old Testament Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 190-91; Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 19; Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World*, 104; Leonard J. Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," in *Traditions in Transformation*, ed. Baruch

resurrection.<sup>15</sup> Having excluded the last option, critical scholars usually employ the term immortality to mean continuance of human life (after death or without death) or immortality of one's soul after death.<sup>16</sup> In either case, the critical scholars would generally agree that the Old Testament does not have interest in postmortem life beyond this world. Any search for immortality would only be contradictory to the early writings of the Old Testament and an unsuccessful effort.<sup>17</sup>

The reason that the critical scholars maintain a negative view of immortality in early Hebrew Scriptures is related to their views of anthropology and thanatology. First, for those who argue against the concept of immortality as life of the soul beyond death, the idea of immortality is contradictory to the Semitic monistic view of man.<sup>18</sup> One's soul and body are so united that the meaning of life of the soul by itself without the body has no significance at all. Second, most of the critical scholars assert that man is created mortal and his mortality is the original intention of the Creator.<sup>19</sup> The statement in Genesis 2:17, in their view, should not be interpreted as an indication of the immortality of man. The mortality of man is an

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Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 252.

<sup>15</sup>Elmer Smick, "The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament," *Westminster Theological Journal* 31 (1968): 18-19. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966). Idem, *Psalms II 51-100*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1968). Idem, *Psalms III 101-150*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1970).

<sup>16</sup>See references in footnotes 11, 12, and 13.

<sup>17</sup>Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World*, 104.

<sup>18</sup>Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament*, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1960), 17.

<sup>19</sup>Otto Kaiser and Eduard Lohse, *Death and Life* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 23. See also Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World*, 104; Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 21; Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," 252.

inevitable fact from the beginning of the creation. Death, in this view, is considered as ordinary and harmonious part in nature.

Third, a major group of critical scholars conclude that death is not the result of sin. As briefly mentioned earlier, death is considered as a natural part of creation. Thus, the doctrine of original sin promulgated mainly by the Apostle Paul is considered as a significant departure from the “traditional” Hebrew view of death.<sup>20</sup> Since the correlation between this critical view of death and the idea of eternal life in the Old Testament appears significant, such a biased thanatological view of the critical scholars will be discussed more in depth later.

If any concept of immortality in the OT could be accepted by the critical scholars, it would be the corporate concept of continuance of life. They suggest that a man can continue his life through his descendents.<sup>21</sup> Through the continuance of descendants an individual’s life is remembered and continues to exist. This continuing existence through the offspring can be taken as “eternal life” of an individual.

**Evolution of the OT concept of postmortem eschatology.** Dealing with the passages in the Old Testament that implicitly or explicitly speak of individual postmortem eschatology, the critical scholars almost in a unison voice contend that the concept of afterlife or resurrection of the dead has evolved as Israel went through specific historical, theological and cultural contexts. With the rise of monotheistic Yahwism and religious individualism in later history under Jeremiah and Ezekiel, they conclude that the concept of immortality and individual resurrection developed

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<sup>20</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 18-19. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 16.

<sup>21</sup>Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 23, 28. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 21, 24. Vawter, “Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament,” 161. Brichto, “Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex,” 5.

within the Old Testament. Later on, the concept of the resurrection of the dead emerged at the earliest after the Babylonian exile and was dogmatically established as late as the second century B.C. as Israel experienced the downfall and restoration of the nation and severe persecutions under foreign empires.

Although some of the critical scholars have argued that the Jewish concept of eschatology evolved in a regular and orderly development, it is very difficult to reconstruct a unified model of the evolution of the Israelite belief in afterlife from the writings of different scholars. It is almost impossible to describe what each phase in the development of the belief looks like. Sellers casts doubt on the schematization of unifying the progressive development of the belief in afterlife in ancient Israel. He proposes two objections to the idea. Firstly, there is “no evidence of any unity of belief about this question among the Hebrews.” Secondly, it is very unlikely to build “such orderly development in thought among a whole people.”<sup>22</sup>

At best, the progressive steps of the development of the Israelites’ belief in afterlife can be generally described.<sup>23</sup> In the first place, there was a time when Israel held onto an early concept of God and the condition of the dead. In this phase, there was no positive view of afterlife in Israel’s belief. Israel’s theology was more like a monolatry at this point that God had no power over or interest in the realm of the

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<sup>22</sup>For example, Sellers outlines the progress of the development of the belief in resurrection of the dead in four phases: the first phase with no idea of afterlife in Israel’s belief system, the second phase with the belief in the shades of Sheol, the third phase with the belief of the continuing reputation of the good man, and the fourth phase with the belief in future rewards and punishment with the doctrine of resurrection. Ovid R. Sellers, “Israelite Belief in Immortality,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 8 (1945): 3-4.

<sup>23</sup>Leach presents the progressive steps of development of the belief in afterlife in Israel in three steps: “First, the earliest Hebrew conceptions of God and the condition of the dead. Second, the rise of monotheism and individualism with some evidences of personal immortality. Third, the resurrection idea and the extent of foreign influences on Hebrew eschatology.” Henry P. D. Leach, “The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament” (A.M. diss., The University of Chicago, 1917), 3.

dead, which is under the reign of death deity. His dominion was limited within the realm of the living. Also, God was mainly considered as a national God rather than being a God of the entire world.<sup>24</sup> The concept of corporate destiny of Israel as a nation and this-worldly view of retribution was prevalent at this stage.

The second phase of the development of belief in afterlife is a period when a belief in the shades of Sheol began to arise. Although some scholars object to interpret the archaeological data from ancient tombs as an evidence for ancestor worship,<sup>25</sup> still not a few scholars interpret some of the archaeological data from the ancient tombs in the Palestine area as evidences for necromancy and ancestor worship.<sup>26</sup> Raphael suggests that archaeological finds from tombs in Judah from the Iron Age, such as storage jars, bowls for food and cups for drinking, jewelry and amulets, may indicate that the ancient people in Israel might have served the need of the dead.<sup>27</sup> In this phase, Israel began to change the older view that God had no interest in the state of the departed into Sheol and develop her interest in individual

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<sup>24</sup>Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament," 17-24. Leach contends that Israel maintained a strict national and monolatrous concept of Yahweh before the eighth century prophets. God was a mere local deity who was disinterested from individual destiny after death. Concerning the view which emphasized the earthly dominion of Yahweh, see also Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:264. Contrary to Leach's monolatry view of Yahweh, Wyatt argues that the Semite was a "born Monotheist" from Israel's earliest history. See Vester Lafayette Wyatt, "The Old Testament Doctrine of Immortality" (Ph.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1935), 22-23.

<sup>25</sup>Sellers notices the inconclusiveness of archaeological evidence. He comments about the possibility that findings from ancient tombs such as lamps, dishes, jars, and knives could have been placed in the tombs not for the service of the deceased but as "symbols or for sentiment." Sellers, "Israelite Belief in Immortality," 15.

<sup>26</sup>Leach argues that the primitive Israelite concept of afterlife is grounded in ancestor worship. Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament," 17. Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament," 15-16.

<sup>27</sup>Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*, 6-7.

postmortem destiny.<sup>28</sup>

The third phase of the development of belief in afterlife is a period when monotheistic Yahwism and individualism were developed dogmatically.<sup>29</sup> The concept of monotheism and individualism was promoted by the 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets and crystallized by prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel.<sup>30</sup> In this phase Yahweh is considered as the God and Creator of the whole world.<sup>31</sup> His realm is extended from national to worldwide, from this-worldly to including the netherworld. After the destruction of the Judean kingdom, Israel's focus on corporate eschatology collapsed. Instead, Israel began to emphasize an individual and personal relationship to God and an accompanying individual postmortem destiny.

The fourth phase of the development of belief in afterlife is a period when the concept of individual resurrection arose within Israel's faith system. The emergence of belief in resurrection is considered as the zenith of the development of Israel's eschatological doctrine.<sup>32</sup> Many scholars consent to the assumption that the

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<sup>28</sup>Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 204-9.

<sup>29</sup>There are two basic assumptions for this opinion. The first assumption is that the individualistic idea of redemption apart from its corporate nature within the nation was alien to pre-exilic Israel. The second assumption is that Jeremiah's individualism became a foundation on which others could build and establish the idea of individualistic eschatology.

<sup>30</sup>Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 205-6; Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament," 19-24.

<sup>31</sup>George Mendenhall, "From Witchcraft to Justice: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament," in *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, ed. Hiroshi Obayashi (New York: Greenwood, 1992): 67-81.

<sup>32</sup>Martin-Achard comments on the culmination of Israel's eschatological vision in belief in resurrection of the dead. The idea is well expressed in the following citation from his writing which says that "his [God's] indifference towards those who are no more cannot be His final word; one day He will cease to suffer the existence of Sheol along with Himself. Slowly, under the pressure of manifold circumstances, the Old Covenant believers progress towards the conviction that the Living God can and will make all things new; Israel's vision of the future in store for the dead little by little grows . . . it culminates in belief in the resurrection." Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 50.

formation of monotheistic Yahweh theology and individualism precedes the development of the belief in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>33</sup> Johnston argues that belief in resurrection developed out of reflections on theological and historical contexts: the experience of the destruction and restoration of the nation led the Israelite to invent a theological doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. He presumes that Israel extended their national experience to the individual realm, inferring that the God who is powerful enough to restore the nation must be able to raise the dead from the power of Sheol.<sup>34</sup>

**Foreign influence.** Scholars believe that two factors have strongly influenced the formation of the doctrine of resurrection in the OT. The first one is Zoroastrianism under the Persian Empire.<sup>35</sup> The appearance of the concept of resurrection in the apocalyptic writings of Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah is presumed as an evidence of Zoroastrian influence. The majority of scholars believe that Zoroastrianism influenced Jews in exile toward the formation of the resurrection idea.<sup>36</sup> The constituents of ceasing of death and restoration of the righteous group to

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<sup>33</sup>Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament," 24; Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament," 3, 17-19; Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 60; Raphael, "Is There Afterlife After Auschwitz? Reflections On Life After Death in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," 353; Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," 111; Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 91-92; Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 204-9.

<sup>34</sup>Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," 110-11.

<sup>35</sup>Schwarz insists that Israel tried to resolve her theological confusion on Yahweh's theodicy after the collapse of the nation and Babylonian exile by employing Zoroastrian doctrine of individual eschatology in which postmortem rewards and punishments are to be expected. Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 60. Otwell also argues that the influence of Zoroastrianism should be prior to the appearance of monotheism and individualism in belief in postmortem life. Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament," 24.

<sup>36</sup>Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). Bernhard Lang, "Afterlife: Ancient Israel's Changing Vision of the World Beyond," *Bible Review* 4 (1988): 19.

life after a cosmological conflict between two deities, which ends with the triumph of a savior deity over against the evil deity, were considered to be the main aspects that influenced Jews to adopt the concept of resurrection.

The second influential factor was severe persecution under the Hellenistic Empire and the Maccabean revolt.<sup>37</sup> The persecution of the pious Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century B.C. has been assumed to be a significant watershed in Israel's development of their eschatology. It is generally asserted that the problem of unjust deaths of the righteous caused Jews to questions of theodicy. To prevent people from stumbling over uncompleted righteous judgment, scholars imagine that Israel invented a new eschatological doctrine which contains hope for future judgment, postmortem reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, and belief in the resurrection of the dead. According to this view, the creation of a new doctrine in the Hasidic community would have comforted and encouraged those who firmly held onto Yahwism.

**Redactional extrapolations of biblical passages.** There are only a scant number of scholars who reject the idea of resurrection altogether in the OT writings. Most OT scholars will agree that there are at least a few passages in the OT that may

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<sup>37</sup>The main two factors which had been assumed to have influenced the development of belief in resurrection of the dead are Zoroastrianism and Maccabean revolt under Hellenism's influence. For Zoroastrian influence, see Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament," 24; Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 58-59; Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," 247-60; and Boyce, *Zoroastrians, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 19. For the Maccabean revolt influence, see Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*, 11. Besides these two main factors, scholars also suggested the possibility of other pagan influences on Israel's belief in individual resurrection of the dead, such as ancient Near East mythologies (Preuss), Babylonian influence (Eichrodt), Canaanite mythologies (Sellers), and ancient Indo-European mind (Coulanges). See Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:262-63. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 211. Eichrodt pays attention to the affinity between the Hebrew ideas of the dead and resurrection and the Babylonian pictures of "the world of the dead in the myth of Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld and in the Gilgamesh Epic." Sellers, "Israelite Belief in Immortality," 11-12.

be read as pointing to the idea of postmortem destiny or resurrection. However, scriptural passages relating to the concept of individual postmortem eschatology and bodily resurrection of the dead are treated as later redactional insertions. Those passages are dated post-exile and as late as the second century B.C. Since it is broadly hypothesized that the belief in individual postmortem eschatology and bodily resurrection of the dead was developed late in the history of Israel, the passages which contain the idea of resurrection should not be of part of the original writings in the early history of Israel.<sup>38</sup>

For example, Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2 are widely regarded, even among critical scholars, as teaching the idea of postmortem destiny and resurrection of the dead. However, these passages are treated as being corrupted or later extrapolations or mere metaphoric writings.<sup>39</sup> As the concept of resurrection of the

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<sup>38</sup>Vawter admits that Ps 73:24-25 signifies “the possibility of a life beyond the present.” However, he argues that the psalm is of a late date, as late as about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. He notes that “when Ben Sira and Qoheleth and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon and perhaps many other devout Israelites were grappling with the problem of retribution posed by the traditional this-worldly view of human destiny and were emerging with widely divergent responses.” He treats Ps 49:16 in the same vein as Ps 73:24-25. Vawter, “Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament,” 162. See also Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” 247-48.

<sup>39</sup>Sellers treats Isa 26:19 as a corrupted passage, and Dan 12:2 as a late one. Oesterley assigns the Isaiah passage to the year 300 B.C. or a little earlier. A majority of scholarly group shares the similar view on dating of the passage. See Sellers, “Israelite Belief in Immortality,” 14. Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 220. Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, A Continental Commentary, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 2:556. Brian Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24-27* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 315. John F. A. Sawyer, *Isaiah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 1:220. Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1980), 217. Kaiser and Lohse, *Death and Life*, 79. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 123, 137. On Daniel passage, see Smick, “The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament,” 12; Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 93; F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1970), 314. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 32. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 144-45.

dead developed under the theological pressure of monotheism and individualism, scholars argue, these passages were inserted in the late history of Israel by the time of the Maccabean war.<sup>40</sup>

**OT focus on mundane life with no interest in postmortem destiny.** As noted above, the majority of OT scholars consent to the idea that the OT's main emphasis and concern is this-worldly. Emphasizing God's nature as the giver of life and the God of the living, they argue that Yahweh is not concerned with the destiny of the dead who can no longer worship or serve Him.<sup>41</sup> They understand the OT to be silent on the issue of the destiny of the dead. Johnston's comment, "life itself was the starting-point and the focus for Israel's faith, while death and its aftermath were of little concern,"<sup>42</sup> may well represent the modern scholarly view.

In relation to this view, Yahweh has no power over the dead for judgment or punishment. The realm of His dominion is strictly limited to the realm of this world and the living. Consequently, these scholars assert that a concept such as postmortem reward or punishment is not found in the OT. Yahweh's judgment and the OT's ideal eschatological transformation are focused on things of mundane life.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 37. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 145. Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 305.

<sup>41</sup>Vawter, "Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament," 160; Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 36; Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament," 24-25. Paul Woodson Armes, "The Concept of Dying in the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981), 194; Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament," 12; For Deutsch's comment, see Edward Hay Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison and Other Studies on the Life After Death* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1891), 51. L. Y. Rahmani, "Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs," *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982): 44b. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 91; Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World*, 203. Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, 108-10. Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 633.

<sup>42</sup>Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 69-70.

<sup>43</sup>Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," 111; Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 41.

The eschatological hope found in the OT writings is “hope for the world.”<sup>44</sup> The concept of postmortem judgment, reward or punishment after the resurrection of the dead, in the critical scholars’ view, must be alien to the original teaching in the OT. If someone is searching in the OT for future judgment and renewal of the creation beyond life in this world, he will be considered as one who chooses “a cheap option of a withdrawal into a dream world beyond.”<sup>45</sup>

**Death, a natural and normal lot of man.** The critical scholars’ views of immortality are closely related with their views of thanatology. A great number of OT scholars contend against the traditional view of death. They generally regard death in the OT as a natural and normal lot of man,<sup>46</sup> “part of an ordered, controlled harmonious creation.”<sup>47</sup> Death is by no means viewed as a result of God’s punishment of man’s disobedience. Gowan argues that the traditional Israelite view of death did not see death itself as “great tragedy,” rather accepted as “the normal conclusion of a long and fulfilled life.” He views that it is from the sixth century on that Jewish literature began to treat death as a problem (cf. Isa 25:6-8).<sup>48</sup> Barr also rejects the traditional theology of death and argues that the Genesis passage on the Fall of Adam and Eve does not indicate that the matter of death was caused by man’s disobedience to God.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, 136.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>46</sup>Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 90-92. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 6. Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” 252; Kaiser and Lohse, *Death and Life*, 23.

<sup>47</sup>Lloyd R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 58ff.

<sup>48</sup>Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 90-92.

<sup>49</sup>Rather, Barr contends that the punishment is found in the “area of work.” Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 6-9.

With this critical view of thanatology, NT understanding, especially Pauline understanding, of death is seriously under attack. Goldingay boldly asserts that the Apostle Paul's assessment of death as the "last enemy" is an alien idea to the OT thanatology.<sup>50</sup> Martin-Achard regards Romans 5:12 and 6:23 as being influenced by Greek philosophy of Platonism and as standing "utterly at variance with a whole Israelite tradition."<sup>51</sup> These scholars disseminate the view that the apostolic teaching on death does not originate from the OT: while the apostles taught that death was not the original intention of God's creation but brought in as a punishment and curse on human sin, OT thanatology supports man's mortality and death's naturalness from creation. In this case, the cleavage between OT and NT thanatologies becomes irreconcilable.

### **Weaknesses of Evolutionary View of OT Eschatology**

The preceding review of the main arguments for the evolutionary view of OT eschatology has revealed a number of serious weaknesses. These weaknesses include (1) lack of evidence and the logical error of circular reasoning, (2) misunderstanding of the OT's this-worldly characteristic, (3) an unbiblical view of death, (4) misunderstanding the problem of unfulfilled theodicy, (5) the resulting incompatibility between OT eschatology and NT eschatology, (6) the presence of belief in eternal life in ancient world, and (7) no evidence of attack on the authenticity of biblical passages in early history.

**Lack of evidence and circular argument.** First of all, the evolutionary view

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<sup>50</sup>Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 633.

<sup>51</sup>Martin-Achard argues that the "assertions" made by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12 and 6:23 are "utterly at variance with a whole Israelite tradition. He regards that man is born mortal and death is "entirely natural." Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 18-19.

of OT eschatology lacks evidence for its arguments and falls into the serious logical fallacy of circular reasoning. Its hypothetical assertions are rarely supported by objective evidence.<sup>52</sup> For example, it has been almost unanimously contended that biblical passages which contain the idea of eternal life, especially the concept of resurrection of the dead, have been inserted by redactional hands in the later history of Israel. However, there is no evidence found for such redactional insertions but only hypothetical presentations. No manuscript evidence has yet been found which omits the questioned passages or indicates any redactional activity. The huge tower of illusive assertion has been established upon the mere possible hypothetical imagination of many scholars.

Since the evolutionary view of OT eschatology cannot provide evident, objective, or at least probable evidence, it is seriously suffering from circular reasoning. Out of assumption that the idea of resurrection of the dead has been developed after exile, a majority of biblical scholars have argued that the passages in the OT which contain the notion of eternal life or resurrection of the dead must have been inserted by later redactional hands. To prove their argument, scholars have employed not a scientific method but a poor logical error of circular argument. Once again the evidence of their assumption of later development of the idea of resurrection of the dead is their imaginative scenario which could have been “possible” in Israel’s religious history.

**Misunderstanding of OT focus on mundane life.** The evolutionary view of modern critical scholars generally misunderstands the OT’s this-worldly

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<sup>52</sup>Raphael points out the failure of “the search for a chronological development.” Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*, 9. Barr also notices that scholars have not provided good material to support their developmental view of immortality and resurrection. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 22.

characteristic. It misses that the OT's focus on mundane life is related with the OT's hope for eschatological restoration of life. Raphael criticizes the modern tendency of Judaism which denies the existence of life after death.<sup>53</sup> As he complains, the modern scholarly view which ignores the OT's interest in eternal life seems to be biased and misleading with a partial truth. He recognizes that Jewish people have always taken the sanctity of human life in this world as serious and important, since "within the context of physical, embodied life one can fulfill the divine commandments, or *mizvot*." However, such Jewish attitude of "life-affirming, this worldly orientation," he stresses, has never denied or bypassed belief in life beyond this world.

Certainly, the OT primarily speaks about life on earth. It indeed does not speak or invoke curiosity about the state of the dead. Until the final judgment of YHWH, the dead will be silent with no power to intervene in the life of the living. However, this phenomenon does not mean that the OT has no concern for life after death. It is more likely due to the tremendously significant role that present life on earth has on the condition of postmortem destiny that the OT mainly focuses on religious and ethical human life on earth lived according to the Torah. The eternal paths of the righteous and the wicked are obviously separated corresponding to one's obedience and disobedience to the righteousness and justice of the Torah.

Once the fate of an individual is finalized by death, there is no way to change one's destiny; only the final judgment of God awaits the individual. For this reason, for the benefit of the living, the OT stresses matters of righteous living on

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<sup>53</sup>Raphael concludes that the three elements of "scientific rationalism, secularization of religion, and the Holocaust" have brought forth the modern tendency to deny Jewish tradition of belief in life after death. This tendency, he believes, has created "a cognitive schizophrenia for modern Jews" who have been taught that "Judaism is primarily interested in the here and now, and not in heaven and the hereafter," but hold some kind of belief in life hereafter or "the world to come." Simcha Paull Raphael, "Is There Afterlife After Auschwitz? Reflections on Life After Death in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *Judaism* 41 (1992): 348.

earth. OT eschatology by no means negates the postmortem destiny. Rather, it holds the telescopic view of eternal destiny of man and reminds the people of God about it throughout the Scriptures from the beginning to the end of the OT. Continually and repeatedly, it reminds the people of God that their final destiny does not end with life on earth. Their walk and communion with God does not end with death. Enoch's story weightily speaks to this the truth (Gen 5:21-24); Elijah's translation story also echoes this truth (2 Kgs 2:11); songs in the Psalms reflect the meditation and prayers of those who hope for this truth (Pss 17:15; 73:16-19); and the prophetic visions of the prophets confirm the surety of the eschatological day to come (Isa 26; Hos 13; Dan 12).

**An unbiblical view of death.** A large group of scholars hold the view that man was created mortal from the beginning and death is an inevitable part of creation. In this view, death is by no means a punishment for man's sin. This perspective on death not so much bolsters the evolutionary view of OT eschatology as undercuts the credibility of the argument with the problem of biased interpretations of the scriptural texts. For example, it raises a significant question as to the legitimacy of its interpretation of Genesis 2:16-17 and 3:19, which clearly teach that death was not the original intention of God's creation. From the beginning of the Bible it is consistently presented that death is brought into the world by the disobedience of the first man as the consequence of his sin against God's commandment.

Evidently, the critical thanatological view of OT scholars is biased in conjunction with their view of the evolutionary development of OT eschatology. Their view of death in the OT neither agrees with the OT's testimony nor with a biblical perspective as a whole. Rather, it distorts interpretations of OT passages related to death as shown above. Moreover, it undercuts the integrity and harmony

of the OT and NT in their treatment of death.<sup>54</sup> An expanded discussion of the OT's understanding of death will be presented in chapter 3. Then, it will be proved that a proper OT view of death can remain in conformity with the traditional teaching of the church.

As Cassuto points out, Genesis 2:16 is the first place where the verb 'command (צוה)' is used in the Torah.<sup>55</sup> The injunction given to the first man clearly communicates the term of the commandment and the penalty in case the term is broken. If death was something that was "harmonious" or "natural" in creation, God would have not warned the first man of his disobedience and its consequent penalty of death. The warning of future death is so firm that the Scripture employs the emphatic form of infinitive absolute with the imperfect of the verb "to die" (מות תמות), saying "you will *surely die*."

The intrusion of death into creation appears to have been acknowledged as a sure fact through continuing generations' deaths (Gen 5). Death, in the mean time, probably had been accepted as a "natural" event for every man. Humanity had to face it and to surrender to it without any power to overcome it. However, the OT holds onto hope in God's power over death. The translations of Enoch and Elijah, miraculous resuscitations by prophets, ardent entreaties of psalmists for salvation from death, and promises of God's victory over death in the prophetic writings all point a hope in God who is able to "put to death and bring to life" (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6).

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<sup>54</sup>Goldingay contrasts OT view of death and that of Apostle Paul. In his view, the Apostle Paul's assessment of death as the "last enemy" (1 Cor 15:26) is an alien idea to the OT. This view is shared by a major group of scholars. See Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 633. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 18-19, 49. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* 8-14. Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," 295. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death*, 58ff.

<sup>55</sup>U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press), 124.

**Misunderstanding of the problem of unfulfilled theodicy.** Many critical scholars hold the view that one of the reasons that Israel imported the foreign Zoroastrian concept of individual postmortem eschatology is because of the problem of theodicy. They hypothesize that ever since the destruction of Judah, Israel had experienced indescribable adversities under tyrannical nations. In the path of its devastating history, Israel found that God's just judgment had not been properly fulfilled in this world. The harshness of the Antiochean persecution under the Hellenistic empire caused Israel to turn to an idea that they learned under the reign of the Persian Empire, the idea of postmortem judgment and resurrection, to resolve the problems of countless deaths of the righteous and unfulfilled punishment for the wicked.<sup>56</sup>

Such a hypothesis may look very plausible at first glance. However, it fails to take into account the complex application of God's justice throughout history as revealed in the Hebrew Bible. The problem of unfulfilled righteous judgment has been always present with humanity. Since the death of Abel, there has lingered a question of proper reward for the righteous and proper punishment against the wicked on earth. Even before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, we read of numerous cases shedding innocent bloods by evil forces, such as enemies, violent monarchies, and even by religious leaders. Even the prophets in the Old Testament were put under maltreatment to the point of unjust death. Thus, it is more probable to say that the problem of unrealized justice in this world was not a surprising issue to the Israelites in the second century B.C. They did not need to invent a new doctrine to guard Yahweh's power to reign. Certainly, Israel's faith in God's protection and salvation might have stumbled through severely intense adversities. However, their theology itself had not necessarily changed through them.

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<sup>56</sup>Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 37.

**Incompatibility between OT eschatology and NT eschatology.** Once the critical scholars' view of OT eschatology is accepted, there occurs a twofold irremediable problem: not only in thanatology but also in eschatology, it brings about an irreparable rupture between OT eschatology and NT eschatology. First, according to the critical scholars' view, the OT view of death and that of the NT are incompatible. Consequently, the apostle Paul's teaching on death, which is rooted in OT interpretation, has gone under attack by a major group of OT scholars. Paul taught that death is a result of sin (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:56), "the last enemy" to be overcome (1 Cor 15:26, 54-55), from which Jesus has delivered the believer by destroying it (2 Cor 1:10; 2 Tim 1:10). In the critical scholars' view, Paul could have taught things from the OT about death in any manner he chose; yet, his teaching was not in accordance with what the OT really says. The issue of the difference in thanatological views between the OT and Paul has already been discussed.

However, the issue is not merely limited to Paul's personal interpretation of death in the OT. The view of death throughout the entire NT is consistently in line with Paul's teaching on death. In the writings of John, Jesus also speaks of death as something from which one needs to be freed in order to cross over to life (John 5:24). Death will be finally eliminated (Rev 21:4). Evidently, this NT view of death is in accordance with the traditional view of death in the OT.

Secondly, in contrast to the majority of scholars' view on eternal life and resurrection in the OT, Jesus teaching of eternal life and resurrection found its root in Moses' writings.<sup>57</sup> Whenever he was asked to teach on eternal life and resurrection,

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<sup>57</sup>The promise of eternal life has become a foundational center of the apostolic preaching of the gospel (John 3:14-16, 36; Acts 13:46-48; 24:14-15; Rom 2:6-7; 5:17-21; 6:22-23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 6:12; Jude 1:21; 1 John 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20.). Jesus himself also repetitively confirmed the essentiality of the promise of eternal life in connection with the promise of bodily resurrection (Matt 18:8, 19; 19:16-30; 22:23-32; 25:46; Mark 9:43-45; 10:17-30; 12:18-27; Luke 10:25-28; 18:18-30; John 4:14, 36; 5:21, 24, 39-40; 6:27-40, 47, 51, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2-3).

he always pointed back to the teaching of the Torah. He also claimed that one of his main missions is restoring life to the believer (John 6:27-40; 10:10). The life he meant is essentially connected to eternal life (John 10:28; cf. 1 John 1:2). Death that was brought by the disobedience of one man had to be overcome by the obedience of one man. Life that was lost by the entrance of death had to be recovered and given back to the faithful. If Jesus is the Messiah that was promised in the OT and if one of his main missions is to give the eternal life promised in the OT, then the scholarly opinion which denies the authenticity of the doctrine of eternal life and resurrection in the OT cannot escape the serious problem of a dichotomy between the OT and the NT.

**The presence of belief in eternal life in ANE world.** Since critical scholars argue that Zoroastrianism was a main factor that influenced Israel's shaping of the idea of resurrection, they conclude that OT passages with the idea are post-exilic. However, findings from the tombs and the literature in the ancient near east show that the idea of eternal life or resurrection of the dead was already widespread in the vicinity of ancient Israel. Ancient Ugaritic,<sup>58</sup> Mesopotamian<sup>59</sup> and Egyptian literature<sup>60</sup> all share the idea of eternal life and resurrection. No one claims that this belief in the texts from the ancient near east was a later insertion or influenced by Zoroastrianism. Then, with no affirmative evidence of Zoroastrian influence, it is

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<sup>58</sup>“Ask for eternal life, And I will give it to you. Immortality, And I will bestow it on you. I will make you number years with Baal, With gods you will number months” (2 Aqht VI 27-29).

<sup>59</sup>The common idea of eternal life or afterlife is found in The Epic of Gilgamesh, the “Poem of the Righteous Sufferer” (ANET 437d), and a poem to Ur-Nammu.

<sup>60</sup>The Egyptian tomb texts, such as the Pyramid Text (from the third millennium), the Coffin Text (2000 B.C.), and the Book of the Dead (1500 B.C.) witness to the pervasiveness of the ancient belief in life beyond this world and resurrection.

more probable that ancient Israel also shared some common elements of belief in eternal life and resurrection with the surrounding nations.

**No attack on the authenticity of biblical texts in early history.** The way the Sadducees responded to belief in resurrection and the teaching of Jesus and the apostles does not support the evolutionary view of OT doctrine of resurrection. During the second temple period the Sadducees had emerged as a religious-social power group in Israelite society. In Jesus' day the Sadducees were the authoritative group within the Sanhedrin and had more power to present opinions than the Pharisees, who were respected for their zeal for God's law but did not have control of the Sanhedrin. One of the differences between the two groups was belief in resurrection. The Sadducees rejected belief in resurrection, but the Pharisees accepted and taught it.<sup>61</sup> When Jesus' apostles preached the gospel of resurrection after Jesus' resurrection, the Sanhedrin in which the Sadducees had power and authority had threatened the disciples to stop them from preaching the message of resurrection of the dead.

If certain passages in the OT had been inserted for the purpose of establishing the doctrine of resurrection, it is very difficult to explain why the Sadducees did not stop the promulgation of such an idea with their authority and power by attacking the authenticity of the OT passages. If it were possible to insert new passages into the Scripture for theological purposes, it might have been possible to take certain passages out of the Scripture for the same reason. However, the Sadducees did not try to remove passages concerning resurrection from the Scripture, nor ever denied a certain passage's authenticity in the OT in the attempt to prove their theological interpretative authority. They merely present their different

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<sup>61</sup>Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3-5, in *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 586-87.

interpretative views on those passages. The fact that such an authoritative group of Sadducees did not defend their theological position by arguing against the authenticity of biblical passages concerning resurrection may provide a counterevidence that there was no actual movement of redactional insertions of certain passages into the Scripture for theological purposes as many scholars have imagined.

Having reviewed the main arguments and serious weaknesses of the modern major view of eternal life in the OT, it becomes more convincing that a scholarly reassessment of the topic is not an insignificant calling for future OT eschatological studies. As many scholars have sensed, it might be uneasy to find verbally expressive evidences for the concept of eternal life in the OT, especially in the early writings of the OT. However, there are evidences that prove the presence of the concept of resurrection and eternal life in the OT, even in the Torah.

## CHAPTER 2 HISTORY OF TRADITION

In this chapter, a survey of the history of exegetical tradition of the OT texts regarding the idea of resurrection of the dead will be presented. The survey includes the ancient translations of the MT, intertestamental Jewish literature and rabbinic tradition, and Christian writings from early church Fathers. This survey might not directly prove the early existence of the eschatological concept of the resurrection of the dead in the OT. However, as the materials are examined, it will become evident that the idea of resurrection of the dead has been quite widely and consistently accepted by the interpreters and writers throughout the ages before the rise of the school of historical-critical studies.

### **Ancient Translations of the MT on Resurrection of the Dead**

Although there is no explicit reference in the OT to ‘the resurrection of the dead,’ there are several concepts that the Jewish traditions of interpretation took as references to the eschatological life after the resurrection of the dead. Generally, the Targum Onqelos provides a very literal and formal translation of the Hebrew Bible. That being said, a few texts definitely contain the concept of eschatological life and the resurrection of the dead.<sup>1</sup> Comparatively, the Palestinian Targums (PTs) to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Tg. Onq.* at Lev 18:5 reads, “And you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man keeps them, then he will live by them eternal life. I am the Lord.” *Tg. Onq.* at Deut 33:6 reads, “May Reuben live in eternal life; and may he not die the second death, and may his sons receive their inheritance according to their number.” See also Gen 39:10 for life in “the world to come” and the LXX rendition of Job 42:17.

Torah and other Targums present the ideas of eschatological life sporadically and more liberally than Onqelos.<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to the rabbinic literature, the concept of the resurrection of the dead (תחיית המתים, *teḥiyyat ha-metim*)<sup>2</sup> occurs so often and flourishes throughout the centuries as a core doctrine in Judaism. Critical scholarship may take this phenomenon as evidence to argue for the late development of the faith in the resurrection of the dead due to the theological need in Jewish history. However, this phenomenon can be seen as evidence to the presence of the idea of resurrection in the OT from the beginning as a root. Then, the idea flourished throughout the course of history as people needed to focus more on it, just like the Messianic concept was always present from the beginning of the OT, and then its significance has been reviewed through the search for it for centuries. So, it is worthy of reviewing the tradition of interpretation of the OT texts regarding the concept of resurrection of the dead.

The ancient interpreters use different expressions when they present the concept of the resurrection of the dead or allusions to it. The glosses and notions notable in conjunction with the eschatological idea are the day of judgment, the world to come, eternal life, the second death, and the return of the heroes of faith.

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<sup>2</sup>In *Tg. Neof. Gen 19:26*, Lot's wife is not promised with restored life of the dead because she looked back to see what would happen in Sodom. *Tg. Neof. Gen 25:34* reads, "And Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright and derided the *teḥiyyat ha-metim* and denied the life of the world to come." *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 20:21* reads, "All the people saw the thunderclaps, how they changed so that each individual person could hear them, and how they went out from amidst the torches . . . and the sound of the horn, how it restored the dead to life, and the mountain smoking. When all the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance of twelve miles." *Tg. Ps.-J. Num 11:26* reads, "Behold, a king shall go up from the land of Magog at the end of days . . . . After that, all the dead of Israel shall be resurrected, and shall enjoy the good things which were secretly set aside for them from the beginning, and they shall receive the reward of their labor." Translation is borrowed from Levey. Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1974), 18.

Though being not totally comprehensive, the expressions covered in this section will prove how widely and commonly the eschatological idea of resurrection of the dead has been accepted by ancient OT interpreters.

### **The Day of Judgment and the Resurrection of the Dead**

The first interpretive tie with the resurrection of the dead in the OT is the concept of the day of judgment. The targumic texts of Genesis 3:19 is an example. Genesis 3:19 in the MT seems to highlight the transitoriness of human life which is destined to return to dust. Although Onqelos renders the text very literally, all other PTs relate the verse with the resurrection of the dead and the day of judgment.

Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonatan text as follows:<sup>3</sup>

By the sweat of (before) your face you shall eat bread until you return to the earth. For out of it you were created, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. And from the dust you shall (return and ) rise and give account and reckoning for all that you have done. (*Tg. Neof. Gen 3:19*)

By the work of your hand you shall eat food until you return to the dust out of which you were created. For you are dust and to dust you shall return. And from the dust you shall rise to give account and reckoning for all that you have done on the day of the great judgment. (*Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 3:19*)

The renditions of these two texts are almost identical in the understanding that Adam will return to the dust, but rise from the dust and give account for all he has done on the day of judgment. Both texts deliver a clear notion of the resurrection of the dead in conjunction with the idea of eschatological judgment. The day of judgment is also considered as a ‘day of comfort,’ in which the just are restored from death to life and comforted with the reward for their suffering under injustice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Translations of these two texts are borrowed from Sysling. See Harry Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim* (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1996), 70.

<sup>4</sup>*Tg. Neb. Hos 6:2* shows the connection between the ‘day of consolations’ and the resurrection of the dead. It reads, “He will revive us *in the days of consolations* that is to come on the day of the resurrection of the dead (אֲחִיּוֹת מִיָּא); he will raise us up and we shall live before him.”

Jewish exegetes consistently continue the tradition of targumic interpretation of Genesis 3:19. In the Apocalypse of Moses 41:1-3 Adam is cursed to return to dust, but given a new promise of the resurrection.<sup>5</sup> The Hodayot also borrows images from Genesis 3:19 to deliver not only a message of the temporary transitoriness of human life on earth which has been made of the dust (1QH 11:3; 1QH 12:24-25) but also a message of hope of resurrection from the curse of ‘worms of the dead’ in the dust (1QH 6:34; 1QH 11:12).<sup>6</sup> In the rabbinic writings, Bereshit Rabba suggests that the first Adam is to repossess the life that he has lost and be restored to life in the messianic era.<sup>7</sup> Even the writings of the Samaritans,<sup>8</sup> who have been criticized by the rabbis of their unbelief in the resurrection of the dead, interpret Genesis 3:19 as a supporting text to the idea of the resurrection of the dead.

The expectation for the day of judgment which is found in the targumic interpretations of the Torah continues in Targum of the Prophets. *Tg. Neb.* of Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2 presents the messianic and eschatological

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<sup>5</sup>The English translation can be given as such: “And God called and said, ‘Adam, Adam.’ And the body answered from the earth and said: ‘Here am I, Lord.’ And God said to him: ‘I told you that earth you are and to earth shall you return. Again I promise to you the Resurrection; I will raise you up in the Resurrection with every man, who is of your seed’ ” (The Apocalypse of Moses 41:1-3).

<sup>6</sup>The English translations of the Hodayot passages are borrowed from Sysling: “Man can be denoted simply as ‘dust’ or as a ‘heap of dust’: For you have done wonders with dust, and with that which was formed from clay you have greatly magnified yourself” (1QH 11:3); “But I, I was taken from dust, I was moulded from clay into an unclean well and shameful nakedness, a heap of dust, one kneaded (with water)” (1QH 12:24-25). “And those who lie in the dust, will raise a signal, and the ‘worms of the dead’ will raise a banner” (1QH 6:34); “to raise from the dust the ‘worms of the dead’” (1QH 11:12). Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim*, 76-77.

<sup>7</sup>Rabbi Berekhya taught in the authority of Rabbi Samuel bar Nahman that the first Adam can return to the perfect state when the Messiah comes (Bereshit Rabba 12:6).

<sup>8</sup>The eighteenth century Samaritan catechism, the Malef, also connects Gen 3:19 with the belief that the soul will return to the reconstituted body in the bodily resurrection (Malef 190). Cf. Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim*, 78-79.

interpretation. *Tg. Neb.* of 1 Samuel 2:9 reads as follows:

The bodies of His righteous servants, He will keep from Gehenna. But for the wicked, the transgressor of the Word will be known in Gehenna, in darkness, to make known that no one that belongs to the house of force will be righteous for the day of judgment.

The concept of ‘the day of judgment’ is linked to the judgment in Gehenna and in darkness which the wicked transgressor of the Word deserve. Evidently, the judgment is expected to occur after death for both the righteous and the wicked—after one is to pass to Gehenna or to escape from it.

### **The World to Come and the Resurrection of the Dead**

The second interpretive tie with the resurrection of the dead in the OT is implicitly deduced from the belief in ‘the world to come,’ which indicates the eschatological world coming in the messianic era. The ‘world to come’ logically assumes the resurrection of the dead when the faithful who have lived and died before the coming of the messianic era will see its fulfillment by being raised from the dust.

Targum Onqelos employs the gloss ‘the world to come’ once in Genesis 39:10. The MT text of Genesis 39:10 merely speaks about the persistent seduction of the master’s wife and Joseph’s determined refusal of her request. Targum Onqelos extends the interpretation and gives the reason why Joseph did not accept her request. He did not want to be with her in ‘the world to come’ (בעלמא דאחרי) by lying with her in this world. Onqelos’s interpretation assumes that Joseph had an eschatological view that man’s life does not end in this world. Rather, his mind was concerned about the consequences of his conduct in this world that he would carry into the world to come—the world, in targumic tradition, which comes after the coming of the Messiah in conjunction with the resurrection of the dead. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Genesis 39:10 agrees with the interpretation of Onqelos by

stating that Joseph did not want to lie with her “lest with her he should be condemned in the day of the great judgment of the world to come.”

Other than Genesis 39:10, the Targum Onqelos does not employ the explicit expression of ‘the world to come.’ Not explicitly but implicitly, however, a descriptive expression of the eschatological world appears in Targum Onqelos at Deuteronomy 32:12. It reads that “the Lord alone prepared them to dwell in the world which He will renew.” It does not specify that this world is the world to come. However, it can be deduced by its nature described in the text that the world, which the Lord alone will renew and in which He makes His people dwell, should be identified as ‘the world to come’ in the messianic era.

The gloss of ‘the world to come’ occurs five times in Targum of the Prophets (2 Sam 7:19; 23:5; Jer 51:39, 57; 1 Kgs 5:13 [4:33]). In 2 Samuel 7:19, targumic tradition renders ‘the future of long distance (למרחק)’ in the MT text as ‘the future of the world to come (לעלמא דאתי)’ interpreting the vision from the Lord for the house of David as a promise reaching to the world to come. In targumic interpretation of 2 Samuel 23:5, David ascribed the effect of the eternal establishment of God’s covenant with him unto the ‘world to come (ונטירא לעלמא דאתי).’<sup>9</sup> The author of Targum of the Prophets interprets that Solomon also maintained the messianic view on the throne of David. In 1 Kings 5:13 [4:33], the author of the Targum interprets that Solomon also prophesied concerning the kings of the sons of David, who would reign in this world and the world to come.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Tg. Neb.* 2 Sam 23:5 reads, “Said David, more so: ‘My house is before God, for He has made an eternal covenant for me to make my kingdom as firmly established just as orders of beginning stand firm, and He kept unto the world to come. Since all my desires and all my petitions are fulfilled before Him, no other kingdom shall stand in His presence.’”

<sup>10</sup> *Tg. Neb.* 1 Kgs. 5:13 [4:33] reads, “And he prophesied concerning the kings of the house of David who would reign in this world and also in the world to come of the Messiah. And he prophesied and spoke concerning animals, birds, reptiles, and fish.”

In Targum of the Prophets at Jeremiah 51:39, ‘the world to come’ appears in combination with ‘the second death.’ One who dies the second death is not allowed to live in the world to come—the world in which the resurrected will live. YHWH’s sentence of ‘the everlasting sleep’ from which Babylon cannot awake ( וישנו ) ( שנת־עולם ולא יקיצו ) in the MT of Jeremiah 51:39 and 51:57 is interpreted by the targumic tradition as ‘the second death (למותא תנינא)’ thereby Babylon cannot live ‘in the world to come (ולא ייחון לעלמא דאחתי).’

‘The world to come’ is more extensively used throughout the targumic texts of the Hagiographa.<sup>11</sup> In those texts YHWH is praised for His kingship from this world to the world to come (Tg. Pss 41:14 [13]; 89:53 [52]; 90:2, 9 [8]: 103:17; 106:48). Under the reign of the anointed King in ‘the world to come’ (Tg. Pss 61:7 [6]; 110:4) YHWH’s eschatological rewards for the righteous and punishment for the unfaithful are expected to be fully performed on the day YHWH’s judgment (Tg. Pss 25:13 49:16 [15]; 50:21; 66:9; 92:10 [9]; 101:8; 128:2; Tg. Job 5:4; Tg. Cant 1:3; 2:3; 8:7; Tg. Ruth 2:12, 13). The desire to enter the world to come for eternal blessing is strongly expressed in the form of prayer and honorable acceptance of it (Tg. Ps 102:25 [24]; Tg. Ruth 2:13).

### **Eternal Life and the Resurrection of the Dead**

The third interpretive tie with the resurrection of the dead in the OT is the concept of eternal life. In terms of frequency of the appearance of the specific gloss, it is true to say that the MT rarely speaks of eternal life regarding human life. In the MT, Genesis 3:22 would be the only place in the Torah where a possibility of eternity

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<sup>11</sup>In the Targums to six different books—Psalms, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Esther, and 1 Chronicles. See Tg. Pss 25:13; 41:14; 49:14, 16; 50:21; 61:7; 63:4, 5; 66:9, 89:53; 90:2, 5; 92:9, 10; 101:8; 102:25; 103:5, 17; 106:48; 110:4; 116:13; 119:165; 128:2; 139:18; Tg. Job 5:4; 28:17; Tg. Cant 1:3; 2:3; 8:7; Tg. Ruth 2:12, 13 (twice); Tg. Esth. II 1:2; 2:5, 7; 4:16; 6:1; and Tg. 1 Chr 16:36; 17:17; 29:10.

of the first man's life is suggested. Besides the Torah, there are only a couple of more places in the MT where 'eternal life' is presented as a future promise for humanity (Ps 133:3 and Dan 12:2). Due to the rarity of the occurrence of the gloss 'eternal life' in the MT, most of the critical scholarship has refused to acknowledge that the OT speaks about eternal life. Even the texts that unambiguously speak of eternal life have gone under severe attack, and their authenticity has been strenuously challenged.

Despite the infrequent occurrence within the MT, however, 'eternal life' or 'to live forever' regarding human life is sporadically found in ancient interpretations of the Hebrew text. The targumic tradition alludes to eternal life more frequently than the MT does. It is noteworthy that even the Targum Onqelos testifies to the presence of awareness and hope of eternal life in a few texts (Lev 18:5; Deut 33:6). The commonality of the targumic texts that use the concept of 'eternal life' is that these texts view the scope of 'life' in several places of the MT as referring to 'eternal life.'

For example, in the MT of Leviticus 18:5 the text does not specify what it means by saying a man who keeps the commandments of YHWH will *live* in them. A majority of scholarship understood that the promise of life in the text refers to the covenantal blessings in the promised land from keeping the law rather than offering the promise of future reward with eternal life.<sup>12</sup> However, the comparison of the MT text of Leviticus 18:5 and the targumic texts shows that the targumic tradition did not simply understand the promise of life in the MT as referring to this life only. Despite the fame of 'literal rendition' of the Targum Onqelos, in Leviticus 18:5 the targum adds a few additional words and explains what the actual scope of the life

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<sup>12</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Leviticus 18:5 And Paul: Do This and You Shall Live (Eternally?)," *JETS* 14 (1971): 25.

promised in the MT. ‘Life’ in the MT of Leviticus 18:5 is interpreted in the Targum Onqelos not as mundane life or covenantal blessings in the land of Canaan but as eternal life. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is very close and similar to Onqelos except a few additional words at the end of the verse. The comparison of the three texts is below:<sup>13</sup>

And you shall keep my statutes and judgments, and the man who does them will live by them. I am the Lord.” (MT Lev 18:5)

And you shall do my statutes and my judgments. If a man obeys them, he will live by them in the life of eternity (יִחִי בְהוֹן בְּחַיִּי עֹלָמָא). I am the Lord. (*Tg. Onq.* Lev 18:5)

And you shall keep my statutes and the order of my judgments. If a man obeys he will live in them, in the life of eternity, and his portion will be with the just. I am the Lord. (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 18:5)

Allusions to Leviticus 18:5 are found in verses 11, 13, and 21 of Ezekiel 20 of the MT. In Ezekiel 20 YHWH declares that He has given ‘my decrees (חֻקוֹתַי)’ and ‘my judgments (מִשְׁפָּטַי),’ and ‘if a man do, he shall live by them (אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם (וְחִי בָהֶם).’ In the targumic exegetical tradition of these Ezekiel texts, YHWH’s promise of life given by the observance of the Law points to the prospect of eternal life beyond this worldly life. The Targum of the Prophets consistently interprets ‘life’ in the MT of these texts in Ezekiel 20 as ‘eternal life’ (דָּאָם יַעֲבִיד יִתְהוֹן אֲנִשָּׂא יִחִי בְהוֹן (בְּחַיִּי עֹלָמָא)).<sup>14</sup>

Deuteronomy 33:6 is another example. In the targumic tradition this verse is almost always interpreted in the purview of the eschatological world to come. The

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<sup>13</sup>The LXX is excluded from the comparison for its very literal translation of the Hebrew text.

<sup>14</sup>*Tg. Neb.* of Ezek 20:11 reads, “And I gave them my decrees and my judgments. I made known to them. If a man obey them, he will live by them in the life of eternity.” In *Tg. Neb.* of Ezek 20:13 and 20:21, the same phrase “If a man obey them, he will live by them in the life of eternity (דָּאָם יַעֲבִיד יִתְהוֹן אֲנִשָּׂא יִחִי בְהוֹן בְּחַיִּי עֹלָמָא)” repeats corresponding to the MT phrase “if a man do, he shall live by them (אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחִי בָהֶם).”

verse is often referenced as a proof text for the resurrection of the dead and eternal punishment in the Torah.<sup>15</sup> Moses' blessings for the tribe of Reuben is read in the MT "Let Reuben live and not die, nor his men be few."<sup>16</sup> Onqelos's rendition extends from the MT reading as follows:

May Reuben live in eternal life; and may he not die the second death, and may his sons receive their inheritance according to their number. (*Tg. Onq. Deut 33:6*)

In this rendition the blessing of life is interpreted as life in eternity, and 'to die' in the MT is interpreted as referring to the second death. As Sifrei Deuteronomy has noticed, Reuben had already passed away by the time Moses gave this last word of blessing for the Reubenite.<sup>17</sup> In the similar vein of reasoning, it seems that Targum Onqelos links the blessing of life to the world to come, making contrast between the parallels, life-eternal life and death-the second death.

The Palestinian Targums of Deuteronomy 33:6 (Neofiti, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Cairo Geniza fragment) vary from the reading of Onqelos' rendition to 'eternal life' of 'to live' in the MT text. These targumic texts neither interpret 'life' in the MT as 'eternal life,' nor do they make a contrast between 'eternal life' and 'the second death.' However, a commonality among the targumic texts is that the verse is understood through the lens of the eschatological perspective of the world to come, which is closely tied with eternal life and the resurrection of the dead.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Rabbinic literature follows the targumic view of the text referring to the resurrection of the dead in the world to come. In Babylonian Sanhedrin 92A, the Raba quotes Deut 33:6 to answer the question "How on the basis of the Torah do we find evidence for the resurrection of the dead?" Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 23 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 488.

<sup>16</sup>Translation borrowed from NIV.

<sup>17</sup>Sifrei Deuteronomy 347.

<sup>18</sup>The comparison of different targumic texts are shown below. Translations are borrowed from Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim*, 217.

"May Reuben live in this world, and not die the second death by which the

The targumic paradigm to render ‘life’ in the MT as ‘eternal life’ appears more often in the targumic texts to the Prophets and Hagiographa.<sup>19</sup> For example, the MT of Isaiah 4:3, ‘everyone inscribed for the living [or the life] in Jerusalem (כל־הכתוב לחיים בירושלם),’ is interpreted as ‘everyone inscribed for *eternal life* shall see the consolation of Jerusalem (כל דכתיב בחיי לחיי עלמא יחזי בנחמת ירושלם).’ Another example is the MT of Psalm 21:5 [4] and its rendition in the Targum. In the rendition of Psalm 21:5 [4] of the MT, ‘life he asked of you (חיים שאל ממך),’ the targumic translator renders to ‘*eternal life* he asked of you (חיי עלמא שאל מינד).’ These examples show that the paradigm to read ‘life’ in the MT as ‘eternal life’ in certain contexts is well known and customary in the mind of ancient Jewish interpreters.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Second Death and The Resurrection of the Dead**

The fourth interpretive tie with the resurrection of the dead in the OT is the idea of the ‘second death (מותא תנינא).’ Although the gloss of ‘second death’ does not appear in the MT, Deuteronomy 33:6 is one of the places which refers to the idea of ‘punishment beyond death’ as mentioned above. As pointed out in Sifrei Deuteronomy, it might have been pointless to bless the tribe of Reuben saying “let Reuben not die” at the time when Reuben had already died.<sup>21</sup> In Jewish interpretative

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wicked die. And may his young men be a people of heroes, in number” (*Tg. Neof. Deut 33:6*).

“May Reuben live in this world, on account of his merit, what he did in favour of Joseph. And may he not die, on account of the affair with Bilhah, a death by which the wicked will die in the world to come. And may his young men be numbered among the young men of the Israelites” (*Tg. Ps-J. And Frg. Tg. Deut 33:6*).

<sup>19</sup>1 Sam 2:6; Isa 4:3; 58:11; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21; Pss 17:14; 21:5; 39:6; 66:9 (life in the world to come); 133:3, and Job 15:21.

<sup>20</sup>It is noteworthy that different targumic versions almost exactly agree in their interpretation to extend the meaning of ‘life’ in the MT to ‘eternal life.’

<sup>21</sup>Sifrei Deuteronomy 347.

tradition Deuteronomy 33:6 has been understood with this eschatological purview. In Targum Onqelos of Deuteronomy 33:6, the latter part of Moses' blessing for the tribe of Reuben, 'may he not die,' is associated with second death, interpreting it as 'may he not die the second death.'

The second death in targumic texts and rabbinic literature is understood as death by which the wicked will be judged in the world to come. Even though the recompensation of the sinners seems to be not fully completed in this world, it is expected that the final and righteous judgment of God will be fully and justly carried out in the world to come. This belief has been expressively shared in targumic interpretations of biblical texts in the Prophets and in the Hagiographa. For example, in the Targum of the Prophets of Jeremiah 51:39 and 51:57 the sinful and unrighteous leaders of Israel are judged by God not to live in the world to come but to die the second death. As is in the targumic renderings of Deuteronomy 33:6, here appears a strong correlation among the concepts as the second death, the resurrection, and life in the world to come which is supposed to be eternal.

The synonymous concepts to 'the second death' are found in the MT expressions of 'everlasting ruin (Jer 25:9; Ps 52:7[5])'<sup>22</sup> and 'everlasting disgrace (Jer 23:40; Ps 78:66; Dan 12:2)' in the Prophets and the Hagiographa. The targumic interpreters understood these expressions in the sense of 'punishment beyond death.' Pseudo-Jonathan of Numbers 24:20-24 shares the same interpretative view by rendering 'everlasting destruction' as an eschatological punishment against the wicked performed by the Messiah. The 'second death' appears more often in other targumic texts— in the Targum of the Prophets (Tg. Isa 22:14; 65:6, 15 and Tg. Jer 51:39, 57),<sup>23</sup> and in the Targum of the Writings (eg. Tg. Ps 49:11).<sup>24</sup> Pseudo-Jonathan

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<sup>22</sup>Tg. Ps 52:7 [5] renders that God will destroy the wicked and pluck them out of 'the land of the living for eternity (ויתלשינך מן ארע חייא לעלמין).'

<sup>23</sup>"The prophet said: With my ears I was hearing when this was decreed

of Numbers 4:19 refers to death in the burning fire in contrast with the life of the righteous. Evidently death and life in the text allude to the second death and eternal life in the world to come after resurrection.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Return of the Heroes of Faith and the Resurrection of the Dead**

The fifth interpretive tie with the resurrection of the dead in the OT is the idea of return of the heroes of faith. For example, in the MT of Malachi 4:5, the prophet proclaims that Elijah the prophet would come before the great day of YHWH. It does not say that the prophet called Elijah who is coming on that day is *like* the prophet Elijah of the past. Rather, he is *the* prophet Elijah of the past. In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Deuteronomy 30:4, Elijah is a main figure by whom YHWH gathers and restores the dispersed people of God.<sup>26</sup> In Jesus' day the scribal teaching on the return of Elijah seems to be widely recognized by common people (Matt 17:10-11; Mark 9:11-12).<sup>27</sup>

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before the Lord of hosts: Surely this guilt will not be forgiven you, until you die *the second death*, says the Lord God of hosts" (Tg. Isa 22:14). "See, it is written before me: I will not grant postponement in life, but for them is the retribution of their sins: I will hand over their bodies to *the second death*" (Tg. Isa 65:6). "You shall leave your name to my chosen to use as an oath, and the Lord God will put you to death with *the second death*, but to his servants the righteous he will give a different name" (Tg. Isa 65:15). "Bring upon them distress, and they shall be like drunkards, so that they shall not be strong, and they shall die *the second death* and not live in the world to come, says the Lord" (Tg. Jer 51:39).

<sup>24</sup>"For he sees men who are wise in wickedness . . . who die a *second death* . . . and are judged in Gehinom" (MSS Ps 49:11a).

<sup>25</sup>Part of *Tg. Ps.-J. Num 4:19* reads, "in order that they may live in the life of the righteous, and not die in the burning fire." Sysling, *Tehiyyat Ha-Metim*, 192.

<sup>26</sup>*Tg. Ps.-J. Deut 30:4* reads, ". . . from there the Memra of the Lord will gather you by the hand of Elijah . . . from there He will bring you near by the hand of the King Messiah."

<sup>27</sup>In Matt 17:10-11 and Mark 9:11-12, Jesus' disciples question about the scribal teaching on the return of Elijah. Jesus does not reject the scribal view; rather, he confirms the scribal interpretation as a fact.

David is another figure expected to resurrect and participate in the glorious assembly of the faithful to praise the Messiah. In Ezekiel and Hosea, David the servant of YHWH and king of Israel is proclaimed to return and serve Israel as a king (Ezek 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25; and Hos 3:5). The Targum to Psalm 61:9 [8] also assumes the resurrection of David from the dead so the author may participate in the worship and praise of the Messiah. The Targum of Psalm 61:9 [8] reads, “Then I will praise your name forever when I fulfill my vow on the day of the deliverance of Israel, and on the day that the King Messiah is raised to become the King.” Here, the author is expected to view the enthronement and anointing of the eternal King the Messiah and the deliverance of Israel in the world to come.<sup>28</sup>

Moses’ return is also expected in the Targums. In a fragmentary Targum to Exodus 12:42, Moses is also expected to return from the dead and participate in the procession and deliverance of the Messiah.<sup>29</sup> Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Deuteronomy 31:16 also alludes to the return of Moses by adding the phrase, “but your soul will be stored in the storehouse of eternal life with your fathers ( וְנִשְׁמַתְךָ תְּהוֹי גְּנִיזָא בְּגִנְזֵי חַיִּי עֲלֵמָא עֵן אַבְהַתְךָ ).” It seems that the belief in Moses’ return has been accepted broadly among the Jews. The rabbinic exegetes in Sifrei Deuteronomy tried to convince this view. As evidence to it, they employ an irregular syntax by linking the verb ‘and rise (וְקָם)’ in Deuteronomy 31:16 with the preceding part of the verse.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Tg. Ps 61:7 shows that the Targumist has the days of the world to come in view as the days of the King Messiah.

<sup>29</sup>Part of the Targum text reads, “The fourth night, when the world shall have completed its allotted time until the end, when it should be delivered, when the bands of wickedness shall be destroyed and the iron yoke broken. Moses shall go forth from the wilderness and the King Messiah from Rome. The one shall lead the way on top of a cloud and the Memra of the Lord shall lead the way between the two of them, and they shall proceed together.” Translation is borrowed from Levey, *The Messiah*, 12-13.

<sup>30</sup>Sifrei Deuteronomy 305. The Masoretes consider the verb וְקָם in Deut. 31:16 as one of the five texts that have a verbal form “which has no clear relationship to the preceding or following part of the sentence.” Sysling, *Tehiyyat Ha-Metim*, 189.

In this case the subject of the verb וקם becomes Moses rather than the people, reading the verse “you (Moses) will lie down with your fathers, but rise.”<sup>31</sup>

Although this syntactical approach and interpretation have not been supported by those who maintain the traditional syntax of the Masoretic accent system, the notion of Moses return from the dead has been maintained throughout the Jewish tradition. Otherwise, it would be inexplicable that Peter was not startled by the fact that Elijah and Moses were seen speaking with Jesus on the mountain where Jesus transfigured. Peter did not take the return of the two figures as impossible; rather, he accepted their appearance with no resistance.

It is likely that the Jews have applied the notion of the return of the heroes of faith from the dead to all the righteous. The ancient interpreters also support the expectation of the return of these figures from the dead by almost literally interpreting the MT texts mentioned above.<sup>32</sup> The Targumist, if needed for interpretative clarification, would have added explications to the MT.<sup>33</sup> However, in cases of the Ezekiel and Hosea texts mentioned above, both the Targum and the LXX provide almost literal renderings and implicitly endorse the idea that the heroes of faith will return and resurrect from the dead and participate in the glorious day of the Messiah in the world to come.

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<sup>31</sup>In the Babylonian Sanhedrin 90b the syntactical irregularity in the rendering of the verb could not convince the opponents who refuse to accept the idea of resurrection of the dead rooted in the Torah. In fact, the Masoretic accent is more likely to support to read the verb with the latter part of the verse, linking the verb with העם as its subject.

<sup>32</sup>The Targum texts of Ezek 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25 and of Hos 3:5, and the LXX translations of these texts provide almost literal renderings.

<sup>33</sup>In case of Jer 30:9, the MT reads, “They will serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.” The Tg. Jer 30:9 adds the word ‘son (בר)’ before ‘David’ changing ‘David’ in the MT to ‘the Messiah, the son of David.’ It reads, “they will serve the Lord their God, and they will hear the Messiah, the son of David, their king whom I will raise up for them.”

## Intertestamental Jewish Literature and Rabbinic Tradition on Resurrection

It has been testified by ancient writers that there have been different views on the idea of resurrection of the dead among the Jews. Josephus presented three different philosophical groups whose traditions of different opinions had been held 'for a great while' by the time of Josephus, that is, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.<sup>34</sup> According to Josephus, the Pharisees and the Essenes believed in the immortal nature of souls, but the Sadducees believed that souls die with the bodies.<sup>35</sup> One difference between the Pharisees and the Essenes on the matter is that the former believed in the resurrection in bodily form, while the latter disregarded the value of the body and the material in which the soul is prisoned.<sup>36</sup>

The testimony of ancient writers to the three different groups of opinions is affirmed by the writings of the NT. In Jesus' day and in the early church era, dissensions concerning the idea of the resurrection of the dead in bodily form existed among the Jews. The two main groups involved in the debates were the Pharisees, the proponents of the resurrection of the dead, and the Sadducees, the opponents of the view. Jesus was aware of each group's doctrine and gave them confirmation that the resurrection of the dead would indeed happen and that this ancient faith was

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<sup>34</sup>Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3-5 and *The Jewish War* 2.8.2, 11, 14, in *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999).

<sup>35</sup>Hippolytus also indicated the presence of these three distinguished Jewish schools in his book *Refutation*. He described the Sadducees as a group of people who reject not only the idea of bodily resurrection, but also the concept of the immortality of the soul. The notion of resurrection was accepted only in the sense that one's existence continues through leaving behind the posterity. The Sadducees also did not have any expectation of postmortem reward or judgment. Rather, the body and the soul were believed to decompose and to turn to nothing (*Refutation* 9.29.1-2).

<sup>36</sup>Josephus *The Jewish War* 2.8.11. In the Essenian view, the bodies are corruptible; the immortal souls are to be set free from the bonds of the flesh.

warranted on the basis of the Torah.<sup>37</sup> The Apostles also well recognized the dissensions between the two groups on the idea of resurrection of the dead.<sup>38</sup>

As Josephus pointed out, it seems that the Pharisaic view on this matter prevailed among the Jews<sup>39</sup> and that the multitude inherited the tradition of the hope of resurrection and eternal life.<sup>40</sup> The intertestamental Jewish literature and rabbinic writings show how central and essential the resurrection of the dead and its related eschatological concepts have been in Jewish theology, philosophy, and liturgy.

### **Resurrection of the Dead in the Apocrypha**

It has been well recognized that the Jewish writings of the Apocrypha richly contain the notion of the resurrection of the dead. The exemplary texts are found in Wisdom of Solomon, the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Maccabees, and the Second Book of Esdras.

**Wisdom of Solomon.** In Wisdom of Solomon 5:9-14, the author might be misunderstood to have a skeptical view on life for its vanity and transitoriness. In verse 14 the skepticism seems to reach its peak as he writes that even the hope of the godly is like dust blown away with the wind, like the smoke dispersed with a tempest, and like the remembrance of a guest that lasts only momentarily. However, the reverse is true of the author's view of life.

The ungodly, in the Wisdom, view that the body is subjected to return to the dust in vanity (Wis 2:1-5). Since the ungodly have no hope of resurrection, they focus more on enjoying things of the present and lead their lives into debauchery

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<sup>37</sup>Matt 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40.

<sup>38</sup>Acts 23:6-10.

<sup>39</sup>Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.4.

<sup>40</sup>Acts 24:14-15.

and indulgence (Wis 2:6-9). They hate the godly and make plots to harm the righteous and the innocent (Wis 2:10-20) with no fear of eternal punishment.

On the contrary, although life on earth appears to be momentary and vain, in 5:15-16 of Wisdom of Solomon the author looks forward to eternal life and reward stored for the righteous. Chapter three of Wisdom of Solomon reveals the glorious destiny of the righteous despite their sufferings in the mundane life. They are promised eternal life and great reward. They will judge the nations and have dominion over the people under the reign of the Lord. (Wis 3:1-9). The eternal kingdom, the beautiful crowns, and secure protection will be given from the Lord.<sup>41</sup>

**The book of Ecclesiasticus.** Plumptre observes that the book of Ecclesiasticus reflects a skeptical view on postmortem hope as it despairingly expresses the limit of human mortality. He quotes several verses from Ecclesiasticus to prove his view that death is assumed to be natural and it brings the end to human life leaving no future hope to praise God ever again in the body. Only the name of the dead can be remembered through the posterity (Sir 17:21-28; 41:1, 2; 44:14, 15; 48:11).<sup>42</sup>

Contrary to Plumptre's view, however, it is more likely that the book of Ecclesiasticus shares the hope of overcoming the power of death and expects the miraculous works of YHWH in raising the dead back to life. It undergirds this hope and notion as the author expresses his honor and awe at the works of the prophet Elijah (Sir 48:4-14). Although it delivers the universal nuance of despair in the

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<sup>41</sup>“But the righteous live for ever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them” (Wis 5:15-16). Translation is borrowed from RSV.

<sup>42</sup>Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison and Other Studies on the Life After Death*, 48.

finality of human mortality, it acknowledges that ‘nothing is too hard’ for the prophet Elijah who had ‘raised a corpse from death’ by the word of YHWH. The power of death is invaded by this great figure of God. Not only did death have to give back a dead person to life but also it could not confine the prophet himself in useless corruption; rather, even in his death he could do marvelous deeds.

**The Maccabees.** The account of a mother and her seven sons in the Second Maccabees and the Fourth Maccabees testifies to the strong faith in the resurrection of the dead and in the eternal renewal of life among the ordinary Jews in the intertestamental era.<sup>43</sup> The account shows an extraordinary example of courageous martyrdoms for the sake of the observance of the law of YHWH. In the midst of severe tortures and threats, they highly esteemed honorable death in the keeping of the law, which promises the blessed eternal rewards of the righteous, better than apostate life in the momentary world.<sup>44</sup> Those who die for God are believed to live in God “as do Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the patriarchs” (4 Macc 16:25).

Shepkaru claims that the Maccabees held the Essene’s view of the immortality of the soul, rather than the view of the bodily resurrection after death.<sup>45</sup> Although the author of the book of the Fourth Maccabees does not clarify what type of immortality he states, there is a high probability that he supports the view of physical resurrection after death. As proof texts from the OT for the belief of immortal life, the author presents the OT passages from the Proverbs (“tree of life,”

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<sup>43</sup>2 Macc 7:1-42; 12:41-45. In 2 Macc 12, the man who took care of the dead out of the hope for the resurrection is praised as godly and honorable. See also 4 Macc 17:12, 18; 18:23. These texts confirm the notion of of postmortem reward for the righteous which is “immortality in endless life.”

<sup>44</sup>2 Macc 7:1-42.

<sup>45</sup>Shmuel Shepkaru, “From After Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense,” *AJS Rev* 24 (1999): 15.

cf. Prov 3:18; 11:30), the Prophets (cf. Ezek 37:4), and the Torah (Deut 32:39). The Proverbs text is not very helpful for the clarification of the author's view on immortality. However, the Ezekiel 37 text and the Deuteronomy 32 text do not merely speak of the continual existence of the soul beyond death with no physical body. Rather, the two texts support the view of physical resurrection after death. The Ezekiel text casts a question about the possibility of the resurrection of the 'dried bones' whose bodies had been decomposed long time ago, which only put a hope onto the resurrection of the dead. The Deuteronomy text also implies God's power to kill someone and to make him alive again from the dead.

Even though the stories of the elder and the mother with her seven sons in the Maccabees are claimed not to be genuine stories but folktales,<sup>46</sup> they evidently testify to the fact that the eschatological hope for postmortem judgment and reward was not merely beginning to rise among the Jews under the cruel persecutions in the second B.C. If theological formation of the concept of resurrection of the dead was occurring contemporarily by the religious leaders, as most critical scholars insist, it would have not been probable that such a strong belief in the resurrection could have already sunk into the hearts of the common people to the degree for them to resist against the strong temptation of apostacy in the face of life-threatening afflictions. It is more probable that the hope of resurrection and eternal life had been already firmly rooted and fully bloomed into maturity by the time of composition of the book, not only in theological doctrinal formation but also in customary daily values. Thereby the severity of persecutions and tyrannical oppressions could not eradicate the hope even from the hearts of the lay people.

**The Second Book of Esdras.** The hope of postmortem judgment for the

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<sup>46</sup>Shepkaru, "From After Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense," 4.

unrighteous and the postmortem reward of eternal life for the righteous is richly expressed in the second book of Esdras. Those who humble themselves and honor God by keeping His law are promised with the resurrection life being raised from the tombs (2:16, 23), the tree of life, and the greatest glory in the world to come (8:1, 49-54).<sup>47</sup> God's mercy awaits for the righteous after death (14:34) and life is promised after resurrection (14:35). YHWH the righteous judge will reveal the names of the righteous and the deeds of the ungodly (14:35).<sup>48</sup> This hope of resurrection of the dead becomes the source of comfort for those who lose their beloved with death if they live in the acknowledgement of the justness of God's decree (10:16).<sup>49</sup>

The author of the second Esdras quotes Deuteronomy 30:19 from the Torah as a support text for the hope of the resurrection of the Dead, which reads "Choose for yourself life, that you may live" (7:129). The life language in the Deuteronomy text was understood as referring to life beyond the grave. Thus, one's grief by the destruction of death in this world could be overcome in light of the hope of salvation from the tomb (7:131). The source of power of the resurrection is found in the Creator who gives life to the body in the womb, takes away one's life, and

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<sup>47</sup>"Because it is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand. The root of evil is sealed up from you, illness is banished from you, and death is hidden; hell has fled and corruption has been forgotten; sorrows have passed away, and in the end the treasure of immortality is made manifest" (2 Esd 8:52-54). Translation is borrowed from RSV.

<sup>48</sup>"If you, then, will rule over your minds and discipline your hearts, you shall be kept alive, and after death you shall obtain mercy. For after death the judgment will come, when we shall live again; and then the names of the righteous will become manifest, and the deeds of the ungodly will be disclosed" (2 Esd 14:34-35). Translation is borrowed from RSV.

<sup>49</sup>A woman is comforted from her despair of losing her son for whom she had waited for 30 years to beget and who just died on his wedding day with the hope of resurrection of the dead. "For if you acknowledge the decree of God to be just, you will receive your son back in due time, and will be praised among women" (2 Esd 10:16). Translation is borrowed from RSV.

makes one live again in the world to come (8:8-13, 46).

### **Resurrection of the Dead in Rabbinic Tradition**

It has been already briefly examined above how richly the notion of the resurrection of the dead has been shared in the Jewish writings of the Apocrypha. The efforts to teach and defend the hope are extensively found in the Jewish liturgical traditions and talmudic writings.

**The Shemoneh Esrei.** The liturgical daily prayer of the Shemoneh Esrei, which is also called the Amidah, shows that the belief in the resurrection of the dead lies at the core of early Jewish religious life. Among the eighteen blessings, the praise of YHWH's ultimate divine power to restore the dead to life is placed in the second benediction. The benediction recites that the Gevurot ("the powers") of YHWH, the incomparably powerful deeds of YHWH, is to give, to sustain, and to restore life. He alone can remember His creatures and restore them to life. In this benediction the might and salvation of YHWH are understood in light of the restoration of life from the dead. YHWH's creational power is inseparably linked to the power to raise His creatures from the dust. The second benediction in the Geniza fragment recites as below:

You are powerful, humbling the proud (אתה גבור משפיל גאים)  
Strong, and judging the violent (חזק ומדין עריצים)  
Alive forever, raising the dead (חי עולמים מקים מתים)  
making wind blow and dew fall (משיב הרוח ומוריד הטל)  
Sustaining the living, reviving the dead (מכלכל חיים מחיה המתים)  
Like the fluttering of an eye, (כהרף עין)  
make our salvation sprout (ישועה לנו תצמיח)  
Blessed are you Lord, reviving the dead. (ברוך אתה יי מחיה המתים)<sup>50</sup>

The scholarly debate on the history of composition and compilation of the

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<sup>50</sup>Translation is borrowed from Instone-Brewer. David Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE," *JTS* 54 (2003): 29.

Amidah has not been settled yet. Most scholars suggest the Yavnean period after the destruction of the second temple as the origins of the composition and institutionalization of the Amidah for verbal worship.<sup>51</sup> Contrary to the majority view of later formation of the Amidah, some have suggested an earlier date for the origins of the Amidah as early as the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the early Second Temple period (*Ber.* 33A),<sup>52</sup> or the time of Moses (*Meg.* 17B).

Interestingly, there appears a line of strong conceptual and linguistic ties between the Amidah and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. The first notable tie is, as Instone-Brewer commented, the similar wording between כהרף עין in the Amidah and εν ριπη οφθαλμου in Paul's phrase in 1 Corinthians 15:52.<sup>53</sup> Kerkeslager also notes the strong probability that the benedictions of the Amidah had been known to NT writers and influenced the writing of 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.<sup>54</sup>

The second notable tie is the conceptual link between the title of the

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<sup>51</sup>Ezra Fleischer, "On the Origins of the 'Amidah: Response to Ruth Langer," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000): 382.

<sup>52</sup>According to Kohler, Elbogen suggests that the tradition of Amidah goes back to the time of the convocation of the Great Synagogue by Ezra and Nehemiah. Cf. Kaufmann Kohler, "The Origin and Composition of the Eighteen Benedictions with a Translation of the Corresponding Essene Prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions," *HUCA* 1 (1924): 387. Instone-Brewer claims that the eighteen benedictions of the Amidah originate from the Second Temple period despite the lack of any extant version from the period. Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE," 26-27.

<sup>53</sup>Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE," 33. In his brief analysis of the wordings of the second benediction in the Amidah, Instone-Brewer intimates the linguistic relation between כהרף עין in the Amidah and εν ριπη οφθαλμου in Paul's phrase in 1 Cor 15:52.

<sup>54</sup>Kerkeslager also proposes that the origin of the benedictions of the Amidah is earlier than the Yavnean period on the basis of the linguistic relevance to 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Allen Kerkeslager, "Evidence for the Early History of the Amidah in 1 Cor 15:51-52," in *A Multiformal Heritage: Studies on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Robert A Kraft*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 65-78.

second benediction, the Gevurot (“the powers”), and Jesus’ statement in his dispute with the Sadducees on resurrection by saying “you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matt 22:29; Mark 12:24).<sup>55</sup> In the background of this argument, as Instone-Brewer suggests, Jesus might have had in mind the second benediction of the Amidah, the Gevurot (“the powers”).

The third tie is the linguistic and structural resemblance between the Amidah and Jesus’ citation of Exodus 3:6 in his debate with the Sadducees on the matter of the resurrection of the dead (Matt 22:31-32; Luke 20:37-38; Mark 12:26-27). Marmorstein notes the probability that Jesus intentionally and purposely chose the Exodus passage recalling the first benediction of the Amidah whose beginning lines recite as below:<sup>56</sup>

Blessed are you Lord (ברוך אתה יי)  
Our God and God of our fathers (אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו)  
God of Abraham (אלהי אברהם)  
God of Isaac and God of Jacob (אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב)  
The great God, powerful and revered (האל הגדול הגבור והנורא)  
Exalted God (אל עליון)<sup>57</sup>

Although the exact history of composition of the Amidah might be untraceable, the Jewish liturgical daily prayer evidently reflects the central belief in the resurrection of the dead.

**Talmudic tradition.** Rabbinic eschatology in the Talmud is heavily freighted with concepts of the resurrection of the dead and the world to come.

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<sup>55</sup>Instone-Brewer, “The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE,” 34.

<sup>56</sup>Arthur Marmorstein, “The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead in Rabbinical Theology,” *The American Journal of Theology* 19 (1915): 579.

<sup>57</sup>The Geniza folio and English translation are borrowed from Instone-Brewer. Instone-Brewer, “The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE,” 29.

Rabbinic discussions in the Talmud on corporeal resurrection stress that the doctrine originates in the Torah. Not only is the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead elevated to an essential element in Rabbinic teachings, but it also appears that the rabbis tried to ground the doctrine in the authority of the Torah. Probably, the defensive discussions had been geared up for the continual challenges from the so-called Minims and the Gentiles who cast doubt on the hope, and from those who vigorously reject that the hope derives from the Torah. These groups of people are severely reproached and cursed that they are declared not to inherit the world to come (*Abod. Zar.* 18A).<sup>58</sup>

A large section in Sanhedrin is dedicated to the discussion of the matter of the resurrection of the dead and the world to come.<sup>59</sup> Sanhedrin 91B-92B provides the proof texts to support corporeal resurrection from the Torah. Then, the rabbis tried to show how other writings on the matter in the OT are derived from the Torah. The main scriptural texts in the Torah that have been quoted to undergird the teaching are Exodus 15:1 (*Sanh.* 91B, 1.27); Numbers 15:31 (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.8); Deuteronomy 4:4 (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.5); 11:21 (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.5); 31:16 (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.6); 32:39 (*Sanh.* 91B, 1.26); and 33:6 (*Sanh.* 92A, 1.31). The interpretative tactics to find the basis for the resurrection of the dead in these texts are as described below.<sup>60</sup>

First, the fact that Exodus 15:1 employs a verb (יָשִׁיר) in a future tense “will

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<sup>58</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Abodah Zarah*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 25 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 65.

<sup>59</sup>The Sanhedrin tractate is the most frequently noted and cited on the matter of the resurrection of the dead. Comparingly, Sanhedrin contains a richer and more extensive discussion on the matter. See *Sanh.* 90B-110B.

<sup>60</sup>The scriptural proof texts in the OT for resurrection collected by Kirschner from the rabbinic tradition are as such: Exod 6:4, 15; Num 15:31, 18:28; Deut 4:4, 11:21, 31:16, 32:39, 33:6; Josh 8:30; Isa 4:3, 26:19, 52:8; Jer 31:8; Pss 72:16, 84:5; Prov 30:16; Cant 7:9. Robert S. Kirschner, “Maimonides’ Fiction of Resurrection,” *HUCA* 52 (1981): 184.

sing” rather than in a past tense “sang” is noticed translating the text as “Then shall Moses and the children of Israel sing this song to the Lord.” The rabbis attentively note the text in light of a future promise which will be fulfilled at the resurrection of the dead. The future promise of praising God after the resurrection in Exodus 15:1 is shared in the texts as Psalm 84:5 and Isaiah 52:8, in whose prophetic picture the future praise of YHWH is anticipated (*Sanh.* 91B, 1.28).

Second, the adverb ‘completely’ from the Infinitive Absolute form of the verb (הכרת תכרת) in Numbers 15:31 is noted as an indicative of the future complete judgment of YHWH after the resurrection borrowing the words of Rabbi Aqiba. The despiser of the word of YHWH and breaker of His commandment will be “completely” punished and cut off in the world to come (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.8).

Third, the affirming statement to those who cleaved to YHWH that all of them are ‘alive today (חיים כלכם היום)’ in Deuteronomy 4:4 is understood as a reference to the reality that they are alive in the world to come (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.5).

Fourth, the rabbis points out that the promise of the land of Canaan is clearly given to the patriarchs in the oath of YHWH made to ‘them’ the patriarchs (לאבתיכם לתת להם) not ‘you’ the audience of Moses. Since the patriarchs had already passed away without inheriting the Promised Land, it seemed pointless to confirm that the promise was given to ‘them’ the patriarchs if they would not be resurrected from death (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.5).

Fifth, when asked by the Gentiles how they can know that YHWH will bring the dead to life and that He knows what is happening in the future, R. Joshua b. Hananiah answered the question by quoting Deuteronomy 31:16 (*Sanh.* 90B, 1.6). As in the *Tg. Ps.-J.* of Deuteronomy 31:16, the rabbi reads the verb וקם with the preceding part of the verb. Thus the subject of the third person singular verb becomes Moses not the collective subject ‘the people.’ However, this reading is not without syntactical challenge even from the people who believe the resurrection of

the dead because of the accent *Atnah* right in front of וקם.<sup>61</sup>

Sixth, YHWH's declaration of His absolute authority and power in taking one's life away and in making one live in Deuteronomy 32:39 is interpreted as an evidence of the resurrection of the dead (*Sanh.* 91B, 1.26). 'Making alive (וואחיה)' is viewed as an indicative of resurrection from death. Death and life are under YHWH's complete control. Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:6, "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up (יהוה ממית ומחיה מוריד שאול ויעל)," affirms that the faith in YHWH's absolute power over death and life has been passed throughout generations and the common Jews shared and confessed their faith in it (*Sanh.* 92B, 1.34).

Seventh, the Raba interpretes Moses' blessings for the Reubenites in Deuteronomy 33:6, "Let Reuben live and not die," into "Let Reuben live in this world, and 'not die' in the world to come."<sup>62</sup> This interpretation is in the same vein as the rendition of the Targum Neofiti to Deuteronomy 33:6<sup>63</sup> (*Sanh.* 92A, 1.31).<sup>64</sup> The rabbis understand Daniel 12:2 and 12:13 to be derived from Deuteronomy 33:6. The promise of raising the dead from the dust either to everlasting life or to everlasting shame and contempt is affirmatively proclaimed in the prophetic texts in Daniel.

Besides *Sanhedrin*, the topic is extensively dealt with throughout different tractates of the Talmud. In these tractates, the resurrection of the dead is one of "three keys in the hand of the Holy One" along with the key to rain and the key to

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<sup>61</sup>For the brief discussion of the *Tg. Ps.-J.* of Deut 31:16, see pp. 42-43 in the chapter 2.

<sup>62</sup>Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, 488.

<sup>63</sup>"May Reuben live in this world, and not die the second death by which the wicked die. And may his young men be a people of heroes, in number" (*Tg. Neof. Deut 33:6*).

<sup>64</sup>Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, 488.

childbirth (*Ta'an.* 2A, 2B<sup>65</sup>). Not only the Torah but also other writings in the OT are understood to support the power and glory of YHWH in his raising of the dead (*Ber.* 15B, 18A; *Soṭah* 9B; *Ḥag.* 12B; *B. Bat.* 16A).<sup>66</sup> The faithful are expected to rise from death as one awakes from sleep (*Ber.* 58B; *B. Meš'a* 85B; *Ketub.* 111A; *B. Bat.* 17A)<sup>67</sup> and will enter the world to come while the wicked are kept from having a portion in it (*Ḥag.* 15B; *Abod. Zar.* 10B; *B. Bat.* 16B).

Among other things, studying the Torah accompanied with keeping its commandments is the most highly esteemed way to enter the world to come (*Ber.* 21A, 28B, 61B; *Ta'an.* 21A; *Yoma* 72B; *Qidd.* 39B, 40A; *B. Meš'a* 85B; *Ḥag* 12B; *Abod. Zar.* 17B).<sup>68</sup> Those who suffer in this world due to keeping the righteous commandments in the Torah will be fully appraised and rewarded in the world to come (*Qidd.* 39B, 40B; *Erub.* 19A).<sup>69</sup>

The rabbinic effort to defend the doctrine of corporeal resurrection might be viewed as an act of enhancing the concept indoctrinated by the rabbis for

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<sup>65</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Taanit*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>66</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Berakhot*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); idem, *Bavli Tractate Sotah*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 17 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 42; idem, *Bavli Tractate Hagigah*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 12 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 49; idem, *Bavli Tractate Baba Batra*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 22 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 59.

<sup>67</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Baba Mesia*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 21 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 395; idem, *Bavli Tractate Ketubot B*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 14 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 513-14.

<sup>68</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Yoma*. The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary V (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 277; idem, *Bavli Tractate Qiddushin*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 19 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 180, 183.

<sup>69</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Erubin A*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 92.

theological purpose as a significant group of scholars claims. However, it can also be understood as a genuine reaction to the challenges to what they have believed—the Torah does speak of the resurrection of the dead and the writings of the prophets and the Hagiographa on the matter derive from the authoritative teaching of the Torah.

**Medieval Jewish exegetic tradition.** As always has it been, opinions on resurrection of the dead differed among medieval thinkers. The orthodox rabbis have confirmed and transmitted the traditional view on the resurrection of the dead throughout the centuries. Basically, the resurrection of the dead has been taken as a fundamental and essential teaching among Jewish exegetes throughout the Medieval period.

Although certain thinkers viewed resurrection of the dead as a pharisaic influence on Judaism rather than a fundamental teaching,<sup>70</sup> a rabbi like Saadia Gaon holds fast onto the traditional view on resurrection of the dead without “insurmountable difficulties” because of his faith in the doctrine of creation ex nihilo.<sup>71</sup> To the Creator who could give life out of nothing, it would be not a trouble to raise the dead who have already lived on earth.

Another main figure in medieval Judaism, Maimonides, having been questioned about his view in the corporeal resurrection, responded with a tractate *Treatise on Resurrections*, defending his faith in it. He may not be clearly communicating his eschatological view in the treatise as scholars have evaluated.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo state that the doctrine of resurrection of the dead is “a specific doctrine of Judaism, but not one of the fundamental teachings.” Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo, “Resurrection,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1905): 384.

<sup>71</sup>Sysling, *Teḥiyyat Ha-Metim*, 1-2.

<sup>72</sup>Kirschner casts doubt on Maimonides’ genuineness in his claim on the faith in resurrection of the dead since Maimonides did not provide proper proof texts

However, he did not dare to explicitly deny the traditional faith in public. Rather, he put the resurrection of the dead in the list of the thirteen fundamental roots of belief. It is in modern times under the influence of natural scientific philosophy that the traditional view has been explicitly challenged and publicly denied by the reformed rabbis.<sup>73</sup>

### **Traditional View of the Church on Resurrection**

From the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel and throughout the millenia the church has affirmed the doctrinal centrality of the resurrection of the dead. The antiquity of the tradition of this belief has been attested by ancient writers from different backgrounds as the NT writers, Josephus, Hippolytus of Rome, and Eusebius.<sup>74</sup> The apostle Paul, formerly a learned Pharisee in the first century CE, testifies to the ancient Jewish tradition in the hope. At his defense before Felix the governor, due to the charges against him by the high priest Ananias and a lawyer Tertullus, Paul mentions a traditional Jewish hope of the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:14-15). As a believer of the writings of the Law and the Prophets, Paul stresses that he has the same hope in God as the Jews do.

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for it except Daniel 12 which had less authority than the texts from the Torah. He also combines the concept of immortality of the soul in his eschatology and concludes that “the Torah never mentions resurrection.” See Kirschner “Maimonides’ Fiction of Resurrection.” Cohen also evaluated that Maimonides just pretended to believe in the corporeal resurrection while veiling his negative attitude toward resurrection. Arthur A. Cohen, “Resurrection of the Dead,” in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought: Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements, and Beliefs*, ed. Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1987), 810.

<sup>73</sup>“Resurrection” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 385. The reformed rabbis expressly declared to change the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead to the hope of immortality of the soul at a rabbinic conference at Philadelphia. This decision reshaped the American Reform prayer books.

<sup>74</sup>Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3-5; *The Jewish War* 2.8.2, 11, 14; Hippolytus *Refutation* 9.18 ff.; Eusebius *The Church History*, 2.23.13; Acts 24:14-15.

According to Paul, this Jewish hope of resurrection of the dead was rooted in the writings of the Law and the Prophets.<sup>75</sup>

The central Jewish hope in corporeal resurrection appears to be inherited by Christianity because of its firm root in the Scripture and the bodily resurrection of Jesus. The early Christian writers did not seem to strive as hard as the rabbis to find OT references for the ground of resurrection. Even when explicit citations or exegesis from the OT texts were lacking, they laid their arguments for the resurrection against the very beginning chapters of the Torah as their references.<sup>76</sup>

### **Centrality of the Resurrection of the Dead in the Church**

As Tatian the second century Christian writer stated, corporeal resurrection of the dead was believed by early Christians as a central creed which would occur “after the consummation of all things.” Since the resurrection of Jesus, it has been almost always laid at the zenith of gospel proclamation (Acts 1:22, 17:18, 32; 1 Pet 1:3) and Christian teaching of the apostolic fathers. Clement concretely expressed his faith in the raising of the righteous from the graves (1 Clem 50.3-4) and the promise of the “future punishment of the unfaithful and the future reward of

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<sup>75</sup>In his writings in the NT, Paul does not specifically point out proof texts from the OT for this hope. Rather, it could be inferred that Paul generally agreed with the Jewish teaching on the resurrection of the dead regardless of the opposite view of the Sadducees.

<sup>76</sup>For examples, Theophilus of Antioch taught that since “He [God] created you out of nothing, and brought you into existence,” it can be believed that “the God who made you is able to make you afterwards.” Theophilus of Antioch *Theophilus To Autolytus* 1.8, in vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page\\_91.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page_91.html). See also *Theophilus To Autolytus* 2.26. Athenagoras found the ground for his argument of resurrection from God’s power in creation. Athenagoras *The Treatise of Athenagoras* 3, 12, in vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page\\_150, 155.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page_150, 155.html).

the righteous” (1 Clem 34.3,7; 35. 2-3). For the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, the resurrection is affirmed due to the certainty of the future judgment and retribution for both the righteous and unfaithful. The early Christian theologians—like Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian—all followed and stressed the apostles and apostolic fathers teaching on the resurrection.<sup>77</sup>

Orthodox Christian eschatology after Nicaea has succeeded the early apostolic teaching on the resurrection. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Catechetical Lectures*, emphasized the power of the Creator as he argued against those who could not believe the resurrection of the dead (18.1-3).<sup>78</sup> In his view, the creatures created out of nothing exhibit the power of the Creator to revive the dead from the dust (18.6).<sup>79</sup> John of Damascus, in *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, found the ground of the hope of resurrection in the confessions of the OT prophets as Moses, David, Isaiah and Daniel. In his view, the hope in the OT was confirmed by the witness of the Gospel (4.27).<sup>80</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, in his *Homilies on the Psalms*, noted that the resurrection will be universal for both the righteous and the wicked to stand before the judgment seat of Christ (1.5; 1.20).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>For example, see Justin the Martyr *The First Apology* 18, 19. For more extensive search on the matter of the resurrection in the early church teachings, see Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>78</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures* 18.1-3, in vol. 7 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series II*, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf207, Page\\_134.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf207, Page_134.html).

<sup>79</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures* 18.6.

<sup>80</sup>John of Damascus *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.27, in vol. 9 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series II*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf209, Page\\_99b.html, Page\\_100b.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf209, Page_99b.html, Page_100b.html).

<sup>81</sup>Hilary of Poitiers, in his *Homilies on the Psalms*, noted that the resurrection will be universal for both the righteous and the wicked to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Hilary of Poitiers *Homilies on the Psalms* 1.5; 1.20, in

Those who denied the resurrection of the dead or those who taught that the resurrection has already taken place were regarded as false teachers (2 Tim 2:18; 1 Cor 15:12). Polycarp called those people “the firstborn of Satan” (*Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* 7.1). Irenaeus also criticized the Sadducees for their unbelief in the resurrection judging that thereby they dishonored God (*AH* 4.5.2).<sup>82</sup> He dedicated a large section of *Against Heresies* on the matter of resurrection and eternal life to keep the church from the heretical teaching that denied the resurrection.<sup>83</sup>

### **Continuity of OT Eschatology and NT Eschatology: Creation, Fall, and Resurrection**

The apostles and the early church fathers never separated NT eschatology from OT revelation and the traditional hope of the Jews. The hope of the resurrection of the dead in the NT was not taken as a new invention of Christianity. Rather, it was taken as grounded in the OT and shared with the Jewish traditional hope in it (Acts 24:15; Heb 11:35-39). As Filson pointed out, the Christian church has never justified the separation of the Testaments on theological matters and the resurrection was a “unifying focus of the entire history and of all the writings” of the Bible.<sup>84</sup> Cyprian’s argument, in his treatise against the Jews, is an example of

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vol. 9 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series II*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf209, Page\\_237.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf209, Page_237.html).

<sup>82</sup>Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 4.5.2, in vol. 1 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01, Page\\_466.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01, Page_466.html).

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.29.2; 3.18.3; 4.5.2, 5; 4.10.2; 4.18.5; 5.3.1, 2; 5.4.1; 5.5.1-2; 5.15.1; 5.34.1, 2.

<sup>84</sup>Floyd V. Filson, “The Focus of History: The Resurrection in Biblical Theology,” *Interpretation* 2 (1948): 24-25.

showing the continuity of textual evidence for the resurrection from the OT to the NT (12.3.58).<sup>85</sup>

According to Eusebius, the second century writer Hegesippus attributed the belief in the resurrection of the dead to the Jews converted by James, the brother of the Lord.<sup>86</sup> Epiphanius, the fourth century bishop of Salamis also made mention of the ‘Nazoraeans,’ the Jewish Christians who held the same Jewish view on the resurrection of the dead.<sup>87</sup> Although the early Christian writers have not provided a meticulous search through the OT texts for the evidence of the resurrection of the dead,<sup>88</sup> their view on the eschatological continuity between the OT and the NT has been undebatable.

The most common ground in the OT for the resurrection among the early Christian writers is the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* and the power of the Creator. Giving apologies for the resurrection, writers such as Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Justin Martyr counted on the power of the Creator, who created the world out of nothing, and with whom nothing is impossible.<sup>89</sup> The early Christian

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<sup>85</sup>Cyprian *The Treatises* 12.3.58, in vol. 5 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05,Page\\_548.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05,Page_548.html).

<sup>86</sup>Hegesippus *Memoirs* 5; cf. Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.23, in *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 70-73.

<sup>87</sup>Epiphanius *Panarion* 29.7.1-5. The Nazoraeans were Jewish converts to Christianity who maintained the Jewish faith in the doctrine of the Law and in that all things were created by God who is one. The only noticeable difference from the Jews was that they believed in Jesus as the Son of God.

<sup>88</sup>Clement of Alexandria tried to explain the Christian hope of resurrection and salvation on the bases of OT eschatological hope by giving proof texts from the OT. The OT proof texts he examined are Deut 31:20; 32:39; Isa 56:7; Prov 3:13, etc.

<sup>89</sup>Tatian *Address to the Greeks* 4, in vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02,Page\\_66.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02,Page_66.html). Theophilus of Antioch 1.8; 2.26; Justin Martyr *The First Apology* 18, 19, in vol. 1 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995),

writers viewed creation *ex nihilo*, as an *a fortiori* argument, proving the capability of the Creator to raise the dead who have already once existed in the world. In the West, Tertullian and Minucius Felix shared the same view.<sup>90</sup> The Greek writer Cyril of Jerusalem emphasized *a fortiori* the power of the Creator to renew the dead body in the resurrection (*Cat* 18.3, 6, 13).<sup>91</sup>

For Irenaeus, the creation and fall of Adam was the prelude to the resurrection of the dead. Without the fall of first Adam, there would not have been the problem of death and the event of the resurrection of the second Adam (*AH* 3.18.3). Augustine gave an apology making the same point as Irenaeus. The correlation between the first Adam and the second Adam, between death caused by the first Adam and life endowed by the second Adam, has influenced the shape of Christian understanding of death and life.<sup>92</sup>

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accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01, Page\\_168.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01, Page_168.html). Athenagoras *The Treatise: On the Resurrection of the Deads* 3, 11; Internet. Athenagoras' argument for the resurrection is also laid on the bases of the character of the Creator who gives greater care to those who belong to Him, and of the purpose of the creation of man who was made to partake in the image of God, a spectator of God's greatness and wisdom (*On the Resurrection* 13).

<sup>90</sup>Tertullian *The Resurrection of the Flesh* 11, in vol. 3 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903); Marcus Minucius Felix *Octavius* 34, in vol. 4 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 194.

<sup>91</sup>Cyril employs the analogies of the greatness of the beams of the Sun, blossoming of a tree that has been cut down, and in the climax, creation *ex nihilo*. Cyril also employs the analogies of the change of the season (*Cat* 18.7) and of the body of the moon (18.10). As he give an apology against the Samaritans, he appealed to the creation of man from the dust (18.13) and to the writings in the Law of Moses citing Exodus 3:6 as Jesus did (18.11). Daley presents that such apologetic tradition has continued in Zeno of Verona, Ambrose (*De Excessu Fratris* II), John Chrysostom (*I Cor Hom* 17.1). See Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 95-110.

<sup>92</sup>Augustine *A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants* 1.8, in vol. 5 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series I*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1995), accessed, May 1, 2015, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105, Page\\_18.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105, Page_18.html).

After a millenium since the early church writings, the reformers retained the same line of argument in their view of the resurrection. For example, in the sermon on the resurrection of the dead, Luther viewed creation *ex nihilo* as the ground of Abraham's faith in God's raising of his son even after sacrificing him. He also argued that God's miraculous power to create the new world for the resurrected righteous is proved by God's power of creation *ex nihilo*. Luther shared the traditional view of death and resurrection that with Adam's sin, death devoured life; but life in Christ devoured death giving the hope of resurrection and eternal life.<sup>93</sup>

### **Post-Enlightenment Challenge on Resurrection**

Although the critical scholars claim that the hope of the resurrection had been indoctrinated and elevated to the central position in Jewish religious creed by the second century B.C., oppositions to the hope in corporeal resurrection have long existed in the circle of Jewish thinkers. The orthodox rabbis had to continue dealing with the challenges and doubts—in the early second century A.D., Elisa ben Abuja who denied the doctrine of resurrection, in the third century A.D., the rabbis still faced with vehement opposition from the 'Minim.'<sup>94</sup> Even within Christianity, the fact that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has been continually opposed by heretics is evidenced in the apologies of the church leaders as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Augustine.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. trans. Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949). See also Luther's Sermon on Easter Sunday. Idem, "Easter Sunday," in *Epistle Sermons*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker, ed. John Nicholas Lenker (Minneapolis: The Luther Press, 1909), 169-80.

<sup>94</sup>Marmorstein, "The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead in Rabbinical Theology," 589.

<sup>95</sup>Justin Martyr *The First Apology* 18, 19; Tertullian *The Resurrection of the Flesh* 11; Augustine *A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants* 1.8.

It was not until the Enlightenment era, however, that the apologetic tradition within the Church and Judaism on the matter of the resurrection was seriously attacked and refuted. Under the flag of a humanistic, scientific paradigm, philosophers like Hume and Schleiermacher proposed to do away with miracles, such as resurrection, from religious systems for the sake of the scientific search of the learned mind.<sup>96</sup> Following this line of philosophy, the reformed rabbis decided to separate themselves from the traditional view of the corporeal resurrection and removed the corporeal resurrection hope from the reformed liturgical prayers.

Plantinga observed that under the influence of historical biblical criticism miracles were discounted as evidence or conclusions for religious studies.<sup>97</sup> Like what he observed, modern scholarship in OT studies has cast serious doubts on the presence of the concept of resurrection in the OT and marginalized it in the areas of OT studies. Oesterley presented an imaginative progression of the OT's development of the future hope beyond death. He showed through these developmental steps that this OT theology reached the pinnacle of the hope for eternity by the aftermath of the Exile.<sup>98</sup> Martin-Achard claimed that the OT views death as the "natural order of creation" with no indication of being contingent on sin. Accordingly, in his view, the OT originally did not provide the hope of resurrection until Israel's vision of future restoration gradually developed into the belief in the resurrection "under the pressure of manifold circumstances."<sup>99</sup> Zimmerli briefly characterized the OT as

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<sup>96</sup>David Hume *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 10.2, in *David Hume Collected Writings* (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2013), 554-58. See also Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (New York: T & T Clark, 1928), 696-722.

<sup>97</sup>Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 412.

<sup>98</sup>William O. Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World: A Study in Old Testament Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 208-20.

<sup>99</sup>Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development*

fundamentally “this worldly” with no indication of hope of individual resurrection from death.<sup>100</sup> The denial of the resurrection hope in the early writings of the OT and its subsequent later development is also advocated by major OT scholars like Childs, Preuss, and Goldingay.<sup>101</sup>

The queries raised by modern scholarship on the resurrection of the dead resemble those questions that the ancient rabbis had already faced (Sanh. 91A). The foundational issue is doubt about the probability of the miracle of resurrection—in other words, doubt on the capability of God to revive the decomposed dust of the dead. Lack of faith in the truth of creation and the Creator—lack of faith in the beginning of the Torah—has uprooted the resurrection hope out of the “enlightened” minds.

Although traditional rabbinic discussions of the Torah texts to prove the evidence for the corporeal resurrection might not be fully accepted without

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*of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament*, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1960), 49-50.

<sup>100</sup>Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), 108-36.

<sup>101</sup>According to Childs, the idea of individual resurrection of the dead has no place in the early writings of the OT. He states that the OT started presenting the idea of collective resurrection first only “toward the close of the exile” and then for individual in the end. See Brevard S. Childs, “Death and Dying in Old Testament Theology,” in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Company, 1987), 89. Preuss asserts in his *Old Testament Theology* that YHWH has no interest over the dead even though He has power over the realm of the dead. In his view, the OT suggests no future hope for the dead. The hope of resurrection either for individuals or for the nation only occurs in the later OT texts which date after the Exile. See Host Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1: 62-63. Goldingay claims that the OT takes for granted the mortality of man and it has not expectation of “a renewed life the other side of death.” As pointed out in the first chapter of this writing, he separates Paul’s understanding of death as the “last enemy” from the OT thanatology which “forgets” about the origin of death but takes this world as an accepted context for life with no hope for resurrection from death. See John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 633.

questions, the rabbis were well aware of the significant place of the Torah in the discussion. As Jesus and the apostles showed agreement with the pharisaic view of the resurrection rooted in the Torah, it is worthy to reconsider texts in the Torah to examine the validity of this ancient conviction.

CHAPTER 3  
SCRIPTURAL RECONSIDERATION  
FROM THE TORAH

The terminology ‘eternal life’ is found in the OT only in a few occasions (Gen 3:22, *חי לעלם*; Psalm 133:3, *חיים עדיהעולם*; Dan 4:34, *ולחי עלמא*), and the terminology ‘resurrection’ is found nowhere in the OT. Then, where in the OT can the idea of eternal life and resurrection be affirmed? On what basis can it be claimed that the idea is rooted in the Torah? It is one thing to raise questions about the progressive developmental view of OT eschatology. Even if one admits the seriously inherent problems of the critical view of OT eschatology, it is another thing to accept the argument that the idea of eternal life and resurrection is rooted in the Torah and have been refreshed and revealed anew through the rest of the writings in the OT.

Needless to say, the most foundational evidence to affirm the claim should be found in the Scriptures. In chapter 2, it was shown that the rabbis tried to provide scriptural evidence for the claim that the resurrection of the dead is derived from the Torah. They understood the significance of the scriptural evidences for their claim to be biblically legitimate. For the early church writers, it seems that they were not overly concerned with the debate over whether the belief in resurrection is found in the Torah or not. They made no objections to the rabbinical view of resurrection. Rather, they silently assented to the rabbinic view of the OT on the matter of the resurrection of the dead.

The task in this chapter is to examine the Torah passages where the presence of the ideas of resurrection and eternal life can possibly be suggested. A brief survey of rabbinical approaches to the Torah texts will be given first to see on

what scriptural bases the rabbis established their argument for the resurrection of the dead. Then, several texts in the Torah will be examined to evaluate the possibility of the presence of the idea of resurrection of the dead and eternal life. These texts will be categorized into four groups: the Torah passages with the promise of life (Lev 18:5; Deut 4:1; 6:24; 8:1; 16:20, and Deut 30), passages with the promise of land (eg., Gen 15:7; 17:7-8; 35:12; 48:21; Exod 6:8; Deut 1:8; 6:18), passages in which faith in resurrection is aroused (Abraham's offering Isaac as a sacrifice in Gen 22 and Enoch's translation in Gen 5:24), and passages where the source of resurrection and eternal life is presented (Exod 3:6; Deut 32:39).

### **Traditional Rabbinical References to the Torah for Resurrection of the Dead**

A general summary of scriptural references in the Torah for the resurrection of the dead is found in the Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin. The rabbis provided it by answering the question "How on the basis of the Torah do we know about the resurrection of the dead?" (Sanh. 90B-92A).<sup>1</sup> The main references cited by the rabbis are Exodus 15:1 (Sanh. 91B), Numbers 15:31 (Sanh 90B), Deuteronomy 11:21 (Sanh. 90B), 31:16 (Sanh 90B), 32:39 (Sanh 91B), and 33:6 (Sanh 92A). The examples of the arguments of the rabbis with these references are as below.

In Exodus 15:1, "Then shall Moses and the children of Israel sing this song to the Lord," the verb *ישיר* is in the imperfect form not in the perfect. By doing so, the text leaves room for the prospect of the future singing of Moses and the children of Israel of the song of salvation; in other words, they "will sing" not merely "sang" the song of salvation to the Lord. This exegetical application is expanded to the reading of Psalm 84:5 [6] and Isaiah 52:8 where the texts put future singing and the

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<sup>1</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 23 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 486.

praise of the salvation of YHWH into perspective.<sup>2</sup>

Numbers 15:31, “that soul shall be cut off completely, his iniquity [the soul’s iniquity] shall be upon him [the soul],” employs the combination of the imperfect verb with the infinitive absolute of *ברת*. Syntactically, the combination adds emphasis to the verb as “completely” or “surely.” From this emphatic expression, the rabbis read the possibility of the future judgment in the world to come. Since the complete cutting off the wicked is not realized in this world, in the rabbis’ view, the text must be referring to the world to come in which the complete fulfillment of righteous judgment of the faithful and the wicked according to one’s works will take place.

In Deuteronomy 11:21, “in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them,” the promise of the land was sworn to ‘them,’ not ‘you.’ So the fulfillment of the promise of the land includes the patriarchs. Since the speech was made to the descendants of Israel long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had passed away, the rabbis concluded that the text suggests the idea of the resurrection of the patriarchs for them to participate in the fulfillment of the promise.

Deuteronomy 31:16, “Behold! You will lie down with your fathers, and rise,” is mentioned in the previous chapter. By linking the verb ‘and rise (*וקם*)’ in Deuteronomy 31:16 with the preceding part of the verse, the rabbis rendered Moses as the subject of the verb *וקם*. By doing so, the text was viewed as one anticipating Moses resurrection. However, this syntactical approach was challenged not only by those who denied the idea of resurrection of the dead in the Torah but also by the students in the same rabbinical circle because of the strong Masoretic accent *Atnah* right before the verb *וקם*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>In Ps 84:5 [6] the imperfect of *הלל* is used (“אשרי יושבי ביתך עוד יהללוך” (סלה)). And in Isa 52:8 the imperfect of *רנן* is used (“קול יחדו ירננו”).

<sup>3</sup>As presented in chapter 2, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 32:39, “I kill and I make alive,” is used as a reference to YHWH’s power to resurrect one whom he slayed. Because the object of slaying is the same as the object of revivification, resurrection of the dead is anticipated in the text.

Moses’ blessings for the tribe of Reuben in Deuteronomy 33:6, “Let Reuben live and not die,” are traditionally interpreted as a reference to resurrection and eternal life. As discussed in chapter 2, Reuben had already passed away by the time Moses gave this last word of blessing for the Reubenite. There was no point to utter a blessing of life for one already died, if there were no resurrection.

Besides these texts cited in the Babylonian Sanhedrin, more texts in the Torah were cited by the rabbis in Jewish traditions as references to the resurrection of the dead. The texts in conjunction with the eschatological themes of the day of judgment (Gen 3:19), the world to come (Gen 39:10; Deut 32:12), and eternal life (Lev 18:5; Deut 30:6) are discussed in chapter 2. Although this rabbinical approach to the Torah to find evidence for the resurrection of the dead is not without vulnerable points,<sup>4</sup> at least it invites a rereading of the texts in order to assess the possibility of such interpretations. Besides these traditional rabbinic approaches, are there other ways to locate the presence of the idea of resurrection and eternal life in the OT?

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31:16 alludes to the return of Moses by adding the phrase, “but your soul will be stored in the storehouse of eternal life with your fathers ( וּנְשַׁמְתֶּךָ תְּהוִי גְּנִיזָא בְּגִנְיֵי חַיִּי (עלמא ען אבהתך).” The belief in Moses’ return has been accepted broadly among the Jews, and the rabbinic exegetes in Sifrei Deuteronomy tried to convince this view. In support of this view, an irregular syntax was taken by linking the verb ‘and rise (וּקַם)’ in Deut 31:16 with the preceding part of the verse (cf. pp. 42-43 and pp. 54-55 in chapter 2).

<sup>4</sup>As noted in chapter 2, the irregular syntactical approach was not unanimously accepted among the rabbinical circle. According to the traditional syntax of the Masoretic accent system, the more natural reading is to link the verb וּקַם to the latter part of the verse. In doing so, ‘this people’ becomes the subject of the verb, not Moses (cf. *Sanh.* 90B).

## Promise of Life in the Torah

In Luke 10:25-37, an expert in the Mosaic law (νομικός) tested Jesus by asking what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Being fully aware of the Law, the lawyer believed that he could attain eternal life by keeping the Law. While their conversation was centered on the Mosaic Law, both Jesus and the lawyer shared a same perspective that the fulfillment of the Law leads one to eternal life. The biggest issue on the part of the lawyer was which law he should keep to attain eternal life. In the conversation Jesus drew the lawyer's attention to the summation of the Law—quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Levites 19:18—loving God and loving neighbors. Then, Jesus alluded to the passages in Deuteronomy and Leviticus 18:5, saying “Do this and you will live” (Luke 10:28). An interesting point is where the Law only promises ‘life,’ Jesus affirms eternal life. Significantly, the expert of the Mosaic Law did not disapprove of Jesus’ hermeneutical perspective. Rather, he seems to have fully agreed with Jesus’ point. Have both Jesus and the lawyer been indoctrinated by the so-called later invention of eternal life? Or, was Jesus hermeneutical approach legitimate in the reading of “life” in the Torah?

### Then You Shall Live

In the Torah, there are several passages where the promise of life is offered. Of the Torah writings, the book of Deuteronomy most resonates with the promise “Then you shall live.” The promise of life repeatedly occurs in Deuteronomy 4:1, 5:33, 6:24, 8:1, 16:20, 30:6, 16 (cf. Deut 30:19).<sup>5</sup> Besides the Deuteronomy passages, Leviticus 18:5 is another notable text with the promise of life as the result of obedience to the law.

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<sup>5</sup>In addition to these passages, life language is pervasively found in Deuteronomy. As mentioned in chapter 1, the verb חיה occurs 19 times, the noun חיים 12 times, and the adjective 8 times in Deuteronomy alone.

In these texts the promise “you shall live” is offered on the obvious condition of fulfilling *all* the requirements of the Law—walking in all the ways of the Lord’s commandment (בכל־הדרך . . . תלכו) in Deuteronomy 5:33, doing all the decrees (את־כל־החקים לעשות) in Deuteronomy 6:24, doing all the commandments (כל־המחווה . . . תשמרון) in Deuteronomy 8:1. The noun ‘all (כל)’ is not used in Deuteronomy 4:1, 30:6 and Leviticus 18:5. But the commandment of keeping the Law in these texts alludes to the complete obedience to *all* the decrees and judgments of YHWH. Sprinkle suggests that the pair of words ‘decrees (חקות)’ and ‘judgments (משפטים)’ refers to “the entire content of the demands” of YHWH.<sup>6</sup> The near and the broader contexts of each text also repeat the importance of keeping the entire law. The plurality of the decrees and judgments (‘אל־חקים ואל־המשפטים’ in Deut 4:1, ‘מצותיו וחקתיו ומשפטיו’ in Deut 30:16, and ‘את־חקתיו ואת־משפטיו’ in Lev 18:5) seem to indicate the intensive and extensive inclusiveness of the Law.<sup>7</sup> The LXX’s addition of *παντα* before both the ‘decrees (*παντα τα προσταγματα*)’ and the judgments (*παντα τα κριματα*)’ supports this interpretation. Consistently in the OT, keeping the Law in its totality is taught as the *sine qua non* to obtain life.

What is the life to be given as the result of keeping the complete Law of YHWH? Almost unanimously, the majority of commentators propound that this ‘life’ means “virtuous,” “prosperous” life in the Promised Land with economical abundance, political security, physical health, and other mundane blessings.

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<sup>6</sup>Sprinkle claims that in Lev 18:5 the pair of decrees and judgments indicate not “specific legislations but the entire revelation at Sinai.” This formula is found in Ezekiel also. Preston Sprinkle, “Law and Life: Leviticus 18.5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel,” *JSOT* 31(2007): 280-81.

<sup>7</sup>Deut 30:16 intimates both the intensity and the extensity of the keeping of the Law. The person involved in the Law keeping is required to observe *all* the Law (extensity) with the whole person as the subject of exercising the decrees and commandments of YHWH (מצותיו וחקיו ומשפטיו) with the undivided heart of love (intensity).

Zimmerli states that for Israel 'life' precisely indicates "life in the land" and it means YHWH's protection, grace and favor whereby death is overcome.<sup>8</sup> Block does not allow "to live" in Deuteronomy 4 and 6 to refer to the sense of "enjoyment of eternal life with God," but as a "life of blessing."<sup>9</sup> Hartley also comments that life promised through fulfilling the law means "a secure, healthy life with sufficient goods in the promised land as God's people."<sup>10</sup> He claims that the attempts of later interpreters as Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Targum Onkelos, and early Jewish commentators to read "eternal life" into "life" in the Torah have little support.

Similarly, the same vein of interpretation of "life" as that in Deuteronomy is given to Leviticus 18:5 by modern scholars.<sup>11</sup> For example, Kaiser asserts the teaching of eternal life from this text is a mistake and "life" in the text should be understood as a prosperous life on earth lived by obeying God's laws and commandments.<sup>12</sup> Wenham envisages "a happy life in which a man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity." A meaningful life is brought and fulfilled in the present by obeying the law.<sup>13</sup> Harrison identifies the kind of 'life' in

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<sup>8</sup>Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), 108, 119.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel I. Block, "The Grace of Torah: The Mosaic Prescription for Life (Deut. 4:1-8; 6:20-25)," *BSac* 162 (2005): 16-17, 22.

<sup>10</sup>John Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1992), 293.

<sup>11</sup>Hess comments the "life" is "economically, politically, and in every other way" God-provided life. Richard S. Hess, *Leviticus*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 738b. Gordon Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979). Rooker also views the promise of life in Lev 18:5 as a promise of a meaningful and secure life. Mark Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC, vol. 3A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers), 241.

<sup>12</sup>Walter Kaiser, *The Book of Leviticus*, NIB, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1125a.

<sup>13</sup>Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 253. Wenham goes on insisting that the meaning of life is broadened to a fuller meaning of eternal life by the teaching of

the text as a “divine blessing and material prosperity.”<sup>14</sup> Noth views the life as a “normal earthly life” with no sudden death.<sup>15</sup>

Conversely, a minor group of scholars argue that the promise of life in the Torah surely indicates eternal life. In his Deuteronomy commentary, Merrill is open to reading eternal life in the promise of “Then you shall live.” In Deuteronomy 30:6, he states “to live” means “more than physical life on the land.” In the text he views a glimpse of unending life which is given through the supernatural power of God’s restoration. His eschatological view of life is maintained in Leviticus 18:5 as well.<sup>16</sup> Kiuchi also argues that life in Leviticus 18:5 includes physical life, but it envisages “more than just physical life.” YHWH’s intention in the text is eternal life of which the present life takes part.<sup>17</sup>

The majority modern view might appear reasonable in that the MT passages in discussion simply employ the verb חיה with no modifying words like “eternal,” or “forever.” However, at least three different grounds can be suggested to establish the argument that the promise of life, “Then you shall live,” includes the intention of eternal life and resurrection. The first ground is reviewing the semantic scope of life language in the OT against its usage in the ANE world in which ‘life’ could deliver the connotation of ‘eternal life.’ The second ground is reviewing

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Jesus and Paul in the NT era.

<sup>14</sup>R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus*, TOTC, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 188.

<sup>15</sup>Martin Noth, *Leviticus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 134.

<sup>16</sup>Eugene Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, NAC, vol. 4 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1994), 389. According to Merrill, the interpretation of ‘life’ as ‘eternal life’ is applied to Ezek 20:10-11, which alludes to Lev 18:5.

<sup>17</sup>Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 332. Kiuchi views that “the present life is part of eternal life.”

ancient interpreters' eschatological renditions of the passages with the promise of life. The third ground is reviewing the promise of life within the larger context of the Torah, whose backdrop holds the picture of life-disobedience-death-life.

### Semantic Scope of 'Life' in the OT

Dahood proposed a new philological probability of the meaning of *ḥayyīm* in the OT as 'eternal life' on the ground of the epic of Aqhat, an ancient Ugaritic piece of literature from the excavation of Ras Shamra. He maintains that the Ugaritic language, as the nearest language to the Hebrew, was used to determine the meaning of ancient idioms in Northwest Semitic literature, and that the Ugaritic and Canaanite literature in the second millennium greatly influenced the writings of the OT. In his three-volume commentaries of Psalms, Dahood applied new philological principles to the OT poetic texts and concluded that many of the Psalm texts contain ample references to eternal life and resurrection.<sup>18</sup> Rendering *ḥayyīm* as 'eternal life' in several texts in the Psalms is one of the philological principles Dahood employed.

The base text for Dahood's proposal comes from the epic of Aqhat, CTCA 17 VI 27-29. The transliteration of the text and its translation are as below.

<i>irš ḥym watnk</i>	Ask for eternal life [ <i>ḥym</i> ], and I will give it to you,
<i>blmt wašlhk</i>	Immortality [ <i>bl·mt</i> ], and I will bestow it on you.
<i>ašsprk 'm b'l šnt</i>	I will make you number years with Baal,
<i>'m bn il tspr yrḥm</i>	With gods you will number months

The two terms *ḥym* and *blmt* are linked together as a synonymous parallel. Dahood translates *blmt*, literally 'no-death,' as "immortality," and views *ḥym* as parallel with *blmt*, denoting "eternal life."<sup>19</sup> In this Ugaritic text, the goddess Anat

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<sup>18</sup>Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966). Idem, *Psalms II 51-100*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1968). Idem, *Psalms III 101-150*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1970).

<sup>19</sup>Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, 91.

offers eternal life (*ḥym*) to Aqhat at the request of his special bow and arrows. However, Aqhat refuses the goddess Anat's offer and does not believe in the possibility of a mortal having eternal life. In the context, it is evident that the word *ḥym* denotes not merely life on earth but eternal life. Unlike the modern usage of the word 'life,' the ancient people in the world of the OT used the word *ḥayyīm* with the meaning of 'eternal life.'

In the OT, the equivalent parallelism of 'no-death' and 'life' is found in Proverbs 12:28 (אל-מות//חיים). Dahood views that the author of the Proverbs used the two words in the parallel with the same sense as in the epic of Aqhat denoting 'eternal life' and 'immortality.'<sup>20</sup> Despite an ongoing debate over the meaning of אל-מות, to translate the idiom as 'immortality' is broadly accepted. Smick presents a broad consensus among the scholarly circle like Ewald, Bertheau, Franz Delitzsch, and even the Judeo-Arabist Saadia in the Middle Ages.<sup>21</sup> If the word *ḥym* could denote eternal life in the ancient Ugaritic language, it is probable that the ancient Hebrews, as one of the nearest relative language to Ugaritic, shared the same linguistic range of the meaning of the word *ḥayyīm*. With this perspective, Dahood translates *ḥayyīm* in Psalm 16:11 (ארה חיים) and in Psalm 69:28[29] (מספר חיים) as 'eternal life.'<sup>22</sup>

Certain scholars welcomed the methodology of applying the Ugaritic texts to the study of the OT. For example, Smick complimented Dahood's approach as a

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<sup>20</sup>Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, 91.

<sup>21</sup>Elmer Smick, "The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament," *Westminster Theological Journal* 31 (1968): 17.

<sup>22</sup>So ארה חיים in Psalms 16:11 is translated as "the path of eternal life," and מספר חיים in Psalm 69:28[29] is translated as "the scroll of life eternal." Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, 91; idem, *Psalms II 51-100*, 164.

“giant step toward a better understanding of the Psalms.”<sup>23</sup> He agreed with the probability of translating *ḥym* in the Ugaritic text as ‘eternal life’ and with the application of the principle to the OT writings. In current majority scholarly opinion, *ḥayyīm* in Daniel 12:2 is virtually the only a use that is lexicographically consented to denote eternal life.<sup>24</sup> Smick expresses his ardent support for Dahood’s attempts to more extensively apply this philological probability to the reading of the OT writings.

Generally, Dahood’s proposal provoked caustic criticisms against it. Pope objected to Dahood’s translation of *ḥym* in CTCA 17 VI 27-29 to ‘eternal life’ by arguing that Dahood’s application of synonymous parallelism goes against the larger context. Although the goddess Anat indeed offered immortality to Aqhat, Pope views, Aqhat himself did not believe a mortal could have eternal life and “even the goddess could not be trusted to make good the promise of immortality to a mortal.”<sup>25</sup> By implication, Pope argues that the skepticism found in Aqhat must have been shared by the authors of the OT. Thus, he views that in the larger context *ḥym* could not mean ‘eternal life’ in the epic of Aqhat. He also refutes Dahood’s proposal of translating אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהִים to “eternal life” and “immortality” on the same ground of contextual problem.

In the same vein, Vawter refutes Dahood’s proposal asserting that Dahood turned the philological possibilities which are “unsupported by other evidence” into

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<sup>23</sup>Smick recalls Albright’s statement that “all future investigations of the Psalms must deal intensively with the Ugaritic Texts.” Smick, “The Bearing of New Philological Data,” 13-14.

<sup>24</sup>Even this case is considered in critical opinion as a distinctive one whose origin is from the Maccabean era.

<sup>25</sup>Marvin Pope, “Marginalia to M. Dahood’s Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology,” *JBL*, 85 (1966): 462.

probabilities.<sup>26</sup> In the discussion of the parallelism of חיים and אל-מותת in Proverbs 12:28, he asserts that the “naive” sense of immortality that Anat offered to meet Aqhat’s rebuff must have not been taken by the author of the Proverbs.<sup>27</sup>

However, the argument based on the “larger context” that the word *hym* in CTCA 17 VI 27-29 could not mean eternal life is misleading. As Smick rightly pointed out, the point is not whether Aqhat the Ugaritic hero believed in eternal life or not.<sup>28</sup> The point is the word *hym* was actually used to denote eternal life by the Ugaritians. Pope also admitted that the goddess Anat indeed offered eternal life. This means that in the near context the word *hym* is definitely translated as ‘eternal life.’ This translation of *hym* does not stand against even the larger context in which Aqhat refused to believe the possibility of a mortal having eternal life. What is communicated by the word *hym* is ‘eternal life’ not ‘life.’ By the word *hym* Aqhat clearly understood that Anat offered ‘eternal life’ not ‘life,’ and he did not believe to have *hym* ‘eternal life.’

Indeed the word *hym* meant ‘eternal life’ in the ancient Northwest Semitic literature, and the Ugaritians in the middle of the second millennium BC could deliver the concept of eternal life by the word *hym*. Then, it is probable that the ancient Israelites of the Mosaic era, whose world is closer to the world of the Ugaritic literature, shared the same understanding for the word *hayyim*, the isogloss of *hym* of the Ugaritic language. The Deuteronomy and Leviticus passages with the promise of life, “Then you shall live,” can be approached from this perspective. Within the semantic scope of the ‘life’ language shared in the days of Moses and his

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<sup>26</sup>Bruce Vawter, “Intimations of Immortality and the Old Testament,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 159.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>28</sup>Smick, “The Bearing of New Philological Data,” 18.

hearers, “to live” could resonate “to live eternal life.”

### Support from Hermeneutical Traditions

The Jewish hermeneutical traditions give support to the view of drawing eschatological nuance from the passages with the promise of life in the Torah. As mentioned in chapter 2, the earlier interpreters as Targums and Jewish commentators understood these texts to speak of eternal life. Their interpretations have been often asserted as if they were schematic injections for later eschatological dogma. However, they could simply reflect the ancient understanding of ‘life’ that was passed down in traditions to the late antiquity.

**Leviticus 18:5.** A brief discussion on Leviticus 18:5 is given in chapter 2. The MT of Leviticus 18:5 promises that the one who fulfills the law will live by it. It does not specifically propound what kind of life the promise indicates. Traditionally, the text was understood to indicate eternal life in the world to come. Targum Onkelos reads that the man who obeys the statutes and judgments will live by them “in the life of eternity.”<sup>29</sup> Leviticus 18:5 is one of the only two passages that Targum Onkelos uses ‘eternal life’ (Lev 18:5 ‘בחי עולם’; Deut 33:6 ‘בחי עולם’). It is noteworthy that the writer of Targum Onkelos, the most literal translator, added the extra phrase ‘בחי עולם’ to give an explanation to the meaning of life in the MT. Thereby the promise of “Then you shall live” in the MT of Leviticus 18:5 is evidently expounded as the promise of eternal life in Targum Onkelos.

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<sup>29</sup>The MT and the targumic translations of Lev 18:5 are as below.

“And you shall keep my statutes and judgments, and the man who does them will live by them. I am the Lord” (MT Lev 18:5).

“And you shall do my statutes and my judgments. If a man obeys them, he will live by them in the life of eternity. I am the Lord” (*Tg. Onq.* Lev 18:5).

“And you shall keep my statutes and the order of my judgments, which if a man keeps he shall live in them, in the life of eternity, and his portion will be with the just. I am the Lord” (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 18:5).

The same eschatological view of life is found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Leviticus 18:5. Here life of the MT is understood as eternal life, and it is the portion of the just. In the Sipra, it is argued that the life to be given after fulfilling of the law should be given in the world to come. Since the full observation of the law is practiced through the end of life (אָהַרֵי מוֹת 9:12),<sup>30</sup> it does not make sense to be given 'life,' if it only means life in this world.

**Deuteronomy 30.** In the hortatory speech of Deuteronomy 30, Moses exhorts the Israelites to choose 'life.' The life language occurs repeatedly in the chapter, the noun חַיִּים five times (Deut 30:6, 15, 19, 20) and the verb חִיָּה twice. After the first appearance of the promise of life in Leviticus 18:5 on the condition of obeying the law, the Torah's denouement is plastered with the message of life. Ultimately, life will be given in the future as a gift from God to those who receive the circumcision of the heart (v. 6). In the meantime, it is each one's responsibility to actively choose life (vv. 16, 19).

The future recipients of the God-given inward change include "you" and "your descendants." In the context of Deuteronomy 30, on the one hand, the hearer "you" corporatively includes both the hearer at the time of Moses' speech and the descendants of coming generations that "you" participates in the future experience of scattering and exile of the descendants in the nations.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, "you" is the first hearer who was present at the moment of the prophetic speech. "You" is distinct from "your descendants" and "your fathers" (see vv. 2, 5, 6, 19, 20).<sup>32</sup> It

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onkelos to Leviticus and the Targum Onkelos to Numbers*, ArBib, vol. 8 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 37.

<sup>31</sup>Moses pointed out in Deut 29:15 that his address is not only for those who were standing with him but also for the following generations.

<sup>32</sup>In Deut 29, Moses summoned "you" all the Israelites (v. 2), and made them stand before God (v. 10). In Deut 30:15-20, the "you" were present on the day of Moses' speech. "Today (הַיּוֹם)" is emphatically repeated in vv. 15, 16, 18, 19.

appears to be a personal entity by possessing the whole personality of the heart and the soul (vv. 2, 6) rather than being an impersonal entity.

For the interpretation of “life” offered to the personal entity “you” in Deuteronomy 30, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan suggests an eschatological life in the world to come. *Tg. Ps.-J.* of Deut 30:6 reads “your lives may flow on forevermore” for “you shall live” of the MT.<sup>33</sup> “You” in verse 6 is promised with the circumcision of the heart and “life” in the future distinctively from the descendants’ reception of those gifts. Since the inner circumcision was yet to be awaited, the hearer of Moses’ speech “you” was expected to resurrect from the dead to participate in the “life” in the world to come. *Tg. Ps.-J.* of Deut 30:19-20 repeats the promise of eschatological life, “you and your children may live the life of the world to come” (v. 19) and “the prolongment of your days in the world to come.” In the eschatological life the ultimate gathering from the scattering occurs and the ultimate promise of the land is fulfilled.<sup>34</sup> In the same vein, life of Deuteronomy 30:20 is taught in Berakhot 61B to be a portion granted in the world to come.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>The translation of the entire verse of *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 30:6 is: “And the Lord your God will take away the foolishness of your heart, and of your children's heart: for He will abolish evil desire from the world, and create good desire, which will give you the dictate to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, that your lives may flow on forevermore.” The translation is borrowed from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/>.

<sup>34</sup>*Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 30:19-20 “Choose therefore the way of life, even the law, that you and your children may live the life of the world to come: that you may love the Lord thy God, to obey His Word, and keep close unto His fear: for the law in which you occupy yourselves will be your life in this world and the prolongment of your days in the world to come: and you shall be gathered together at the end of the scattering and dwell upon the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to them.”

<sup>35</sup>Besides the two passages Lev 18:5 and Deut 30, which explicitly communicate the promise of future life, Deut 33:6 carries the expectation of future life in a modified form. In the jussive, the verb חיה of the MT (“May Reuben live”) was interpreted as eschatological life by *Targum Onqelos* (“May Reuben live in eternal life”). This passage is one of the only two texts that Onqelos translated ‘life’ of the MT to ‘eternal life.’

### **The Backdrop of Life in Genesis 2-3**

In the broader context of the entire Torah, the promise of life “you shall live” is laid against the backdrop of original life that God designed for man in Genesis. Kiuchi points out that the life promised in Leviticus 18:5 is provided not by physical food but by observing the law.<sup>36</sup> The life offered by obeying God’s commandments in Leviticus and Deuteronomy alludes to life in Genesis 2-3, which was without death but lost by the disobedience of the first man. Thus, fulfilling the commandment of God and acquiring life by its consequence imply the resolution of the problem of death caused by disobedience in Genesis 2-3.

From this perspective, it could have been very natural for the ancient Israelites of Moses day to understand the promise “Then you shall live,” contingent upon law keeping, as promise of life overcoming death. Although critical scholars view death as a natural lot for every man not as a consequence of sin by the first Adam, the Scripture is unambiguous in communicating that death came into the creation due to Adam’s disobedience to God’s commandment (Gen 3). The last enemy is death that it will be overcome (Isa 9:2; 25:8) and God will deliver the faithful from death (Hos 13:14). A more extended discussion on the OT view of death will be presented in chapter 5.

Going back to Jesus’ response in Luke 10:25-37, is Jesus’ exegesis legitimate by claiming that a person who fully practices the requirement of the law will have eternal life whereas Leviticus 18:5 and the Deuteronomy texts (Deut 4:1, 5:33, 6:24, 8:1, 16:20, 30:6, 16) merely state “Then you shall live”? The observation of clues from the Ugaritic usage of ‘life’ as meaning ‘eternal life’ in the middle of the second millennium B.C., from the traditions of interpreting ‘to live’ in the discussed passages as ‘to live eternally,’ and from the broader context of life and death in the

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<sup>36</sup>Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, 332.

Torah (specifically Genesis), show that Moses and his hearers could communicate 'eternal life' by merely stating 'life.' It allows for the possibility that the meaning of 'life' promised with law keeping is 'eternal life' that is to be given after death. It is probable that Jesus' reference to the promise of 'life' in Leviticus 18:5 and the Deuteronomy texts was rooted in the traditional Jewish understanding of the texts and legitimate OT exegesis to the ears of Jesus' hearers.

### **Promise of Land beyond the Promised Land**

The promise of land was first addressed to Abraham in Genesis 12. The land of Canaan where Abraham was sojourning was offered as a future possession. The land promise took a central position in the covenant relationship between YHWH and his people, resulting in YHWH being their God and the people living under the blessings of their God. The Abrahamic covenant with YHWH is unconditional in its nature in that YHWH initiated the covenant and he alone passed between the torn pieces of the animal sacrifices as an assurance of giving the land of Canaan.

The land promise had been reaffirmed over and over again throughout the Torah (and throughout the entire OT) that the land is given to Abraham and his descendants. As the recipients of the land promise, the OT designates sometimes "Abraham" or "the forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)," other times "the descendants (as 'you' or 'them')," but still others times "Abraham and his descendants" or "the forefathers and their descendants (as 'you and your descendants' or 'them and their descendants')." <sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>"To Abraham" (Gen 15:7); "to Abraham and his descendants" (Gen 13:15; 17:7-8; 28:4); "to the fathers" (Gen 48:21; Num 11:12; 14:23; 32:11; Deut 6:18; 10:11); "to the fathers and the descendants" (Gen 28:13; 35:12; Exod 6:8; 13:11; Deut 1:8; 11:9, 21; 19:8); "to the descendants" (Gen 15:18-19; 24:7; 48:4; Exod 3:17; 6:4; 12:25; 13:5; 20:12; 23:23; 32:13; 33:1-3; 14:34; 20:24; 25:2; 25:38; Num 14:16; 15:2, 18; 20:12, 24; 27:12; 32:7, 9; Deut 1:21; 4:1, 21; 5:16, 31; 6:3, 10, 23; 7:13; 8:1; 9:23; Deut

Generally, it is claimed that the land promise was fulfilled with the Israelites' conquest of the land of Canaan, and that the promise of life indicated the prosperous and long life in the promised land. However, a couple of questions are raised against this understanding of the fulfillment of the land promise. The first question is whether this view accounts for certain individuals' inclusion or exclusion to the promise. The second question is whether the ultimate purpose of giving the land has been fulfilled in the conquest of the land of Canaan.

### **The Identity of the Recipients of the Promise: Corporativism or Individualism**

Although being assured of the gift of the land over and over again, none of the patriarchs took possession of the Promised Land. They all died while sojourning in lands not yet their own. Even Moses and Aaron who took primary roles to lead the Israelites out from Egypt to the land of Canaan were not allowed to enjoy the land. How could the patriarchs and their descendants who could not enter the land of Canaan participate in the promise? The 'corporate solidarity' view explains that their participation was made through the Israelites as a nation when they conquered the land of Canaan. The forefathers before the generation which actually took over the land are symbolically included within the corporate nation of Israel as she received the Promised Land and enjoyed the God-given blessings in the land.

But the corporate solidarity view does not seem to solve the conundrum why the patriarchs are specifically named to take possession of the land and why some descendants of Israel were condemned even after having inherited the land. It overlooks the individual uniqueness and identities. Obviously, not all the descendants of Israel entered the land, but the generation in the wilderness perished

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26:3, 15; 28:11; 31:21, 23; 32:49).

without seeing the blessings in the land. Even among the people who inherited the land, a great number of people ended up dying in irreconciled relationship with God by worshiping idols.

God repeatedly gave assurances to the patriarchs that they would take possession of the land by declaring “*you*” or “*you* and your descendants” as the beneficiaries of the covenant with God (Gen 15:7; 13:15; 17:7-8; 28:4, 13; 35:12; 48:21). Moses reaffirmed the fact that the land was sworn to the patriarchs and their descendants (to “*them*” or “*them* and their descendants”) to be given (Exod 6:8; 13:11; Num 11:12; 14:23; 32:11; Deut 1:8; 6:18; 10:11; 11:9, 21; 19:8). Whatever form a passage may take to indicate the recipient of the land promise, it is evident that the fulfillment of the promise includes not only the descendants of Abraham, the line of Isaac and Jacob who actually took possession of the land of Canaan under Joshua’s leadership, but also Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob themselves. These individual figures were specifically named to enjoy the goodness of the blessings of YHWH.

The OT emphasizes not so much the corporate nation Israel as much as faithful individuals who followed the way of Abraham as the inheritor of the Abrahamic covenant (the descendants of Abraham). Leviticus 18:5 (“the man who obeys will live”) and Deuteronomy 24:16 (“each is to die for his own sin”) confirms the individual nature of the covenantal relationship with YHWH. The individual who observes the commandment of YHWH, he himself shall live.<sup>38</sup> Not that the entire nation chooses to live on the law, but every individual among the descendants of Israel had to choose after Abraham’s faith. Otherwise, even the physical descendants of Jacob could not inherit the land or enjoy the blessings of YHWH.

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<sup>38</sup>Ezek 18 also confirms that each individual’s decision of obeying the Law or disobeying the Law will decide each one’s fate, whether to live as a righteous or to die as a wicked. A corporate judgment of righteousness and wickedness in the sight of YHWH is not expected. Israel is not judged as a corporate nation; rather, each individual is judged by one’s own conduct.

## The Fulfillment of the Land Promise

The purpose of giving the land of Canaan is revealed in Genesis 17:7-8. To be given a land is a great change and blessing for those who have sojourned in foreign lands. But the land itself was not the ultimate goal of the Abrahamic covenant. YHWH wanted to be the God of Israel through the everlasting covenant. He was giving the land as an everlasting possession so that they may enjoy the relationship with him according to the law and 'live.' In light of this perspective, the ultimate purpose of the Abrahamic covenant was not fulfilled by conquering the land alone. First, Israelites failed to conquer the *entire* Promised Land. Second, they neither had right relationship with God nor achieved 'life' due to their failure of keeping the law.

**Failure in the conquest of the Promised Land.** The book of Joshua recorded the history of the conquest. A distinctive fact in Israel's conquest is that the Israelites conquered the land not by military scheme or power, but by obeying God's commandments. From the beginning of the conquest, obedience to God's commandments was the essence of victory. As confessed in Nehemiah 9:7-8, God has kept his promise and gave the land of Canaan to the Israelites. It was their responsibility to drive out the people who were living in it, take over the land, and live as God's people in the way of God's commandments.

However, Israel never fully conquered the Promised Land in her history even in the zenith of Israel's history.<sup>39</sup> Townsend presents the comparison of different passages in the OT which contain the promise of the land.<sup>40</sup> Whether

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<sup>39</sup>1 Kgs 4:21 records "Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life." But the text does not indicate Solomon's actual conquest of the kingdoms. It was only the nations' momentary subjection to Israel under tributes during Solomon's reign.

<sup>40</sup>Jeffrey Townsend, "Fulfillment of the Land Promise in the Old

generally described (Gen 15:18; Exod 23:31; Num 13:21; Deut 11:24; 1 Kgs 8:65; 2 Kgs 14:25; Isa 27:12; 2 Chr 7:8) or specifically described (Num 34:1-12; Josh 15:1-12; Ezek 47:15-20), the boundary of the Promised Land was not fully occupied during Joshua's conquest or afterwards.

Several passages in the OT might appear to suggest the fulfillment of the land promise (Neh 9:7-8; Josh 21:43-45). After listing the land of different tribes in Nehemiah 9:7-8,<sup>41</sup> it records God's faithfulness in keeping his words of giving the land. Joshua 21:43-45 also records that YHWH gave 'all' the land promised to the forefathers and the Israelites took possession of it and dwelt in it. The problem is these texts do not reflect the reality of conquest in Israel's history. As Townsend observed, what these texts indicate is YHWH was faithful to give all the land he has promised to Abraham (Gen 15:19-21), and Israel had to take the remaining land after the conquest under Joshua by living in obedience to the Law.<sup>42</sup> But Israelites never acquired the entire land promised to Abraham due to their continuing rebellion against their God's commandment without repentance.

**Failure in relationship with God.** The central purpose of land giving as an everlasting covenant was not the land or prosperous life itself. At first glance, it might appear that life in God's intention was the prosperous and long life in the land. This longevity is indeed suggested in Deuteronomy as a consequence of keeping the commandments of YHWH (Deut 6:2; 22:7; 32:47). But the reality of

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Testament," *BSac* 142 (1985): 324-28.

<sup>41</sup>The list of tribes in Neh 9:8 is different from the fuller list in Gen 15:19-21. The former includes only six tribes (the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites) while the list in the latter text has ten tribes in it (the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites). The Nehemiah text might present the reality of Israel's limited occupation of the Promised Land.

<sup>42</sup>Townsend, "Fulfillment of the Land Promise in the Old Testament," 331.

Israel's life in the land shows that the life of longevity and prosperity and other ways of blessings in the land of Canaan was not the intended 'life.' While YHWH commanded law keeping as a prerequisite for 'life' (Lev 18:5, "you shall keep my statutes and judgments, and the man who does them will live by them"), the wicked lived a long, prosperous, carefree life without observing the law. Moreover, they had not been judged by their wicked deeds during their lives on earth (Ps 73:3-12; Eccl 8:12, 14).<sup>43</sup>

The life intended in the land was a worshipful life in right relationship with God. That is why the descendants of Aaron could be satisfied without inheriting any portion of land among the Israelites. They inherited the essence of the Abrahamic covenant, YHWH the God of Israel. YHWH himself became their inheritance (Num 18:20). The right relationship with God could be maintained by observing the law. After entering the Promised Land, however, the Israelites did not follow the law of YHWH and broke the covenantal relationship. The law given through Moses could reveal the rebellious heart of the people, but it did not have the power to change their disobedient heart. Due to disobedience to the law, Israel could not have the blessing of 'life.'

**Anticipation of fulfillment of the Land Promise.** Although Israel could not see the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, the OT looks forward to its future fulfillment. It occurs with the circumcision of the heart, the miraculous work of God for his people. YHWH wants to establish the right relationship with Abraham's descendants through the new covenant, which he himself again initiates. By receiving the new heart and spirit, Israel becomes the people of God and able to

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<sup>43</sup>In Ps 73, the psalmist complains about the peaceful, prosperous, and powerful life of the wicked, which continues until the end of their life. But he realizes the ultimate end of their life at the sanctuary of the Lord. They will be cast into destruction even after their peaceful death.

meet all the requirements of the law (Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-28). The land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, full of abundance and security, was a projection of the ultimate dwelling place of the people of YHWH. The antitype of the land is the Lord himself.

It is probable that the fulfillment of the Land Promise anticipates a fuller fulfillment beyond the giving of the land of Canaan. Also, it is a probable argument to claim that the gift of life in the OT meant something beyond the prosperous and meaningful life in the land. Traditionally, the rabbis interpreted that the land promise is ultimately fulfilled in the world to come. They believed that the patriarchs (and individuals who died before the conquest of the land, by implication) would participate in the enjoyment of the land after resurrecting from the dead (Sanhedrin 90B),<sup>44</sup> and that those who despised the law of YHWH are kept from entering the world to come (*Hag.* 15B; *Sanh.* 104B-106B; *Abod. Zar.* 18A).<sup>45</sup>

In the anticipation of the renewal of the heart and giving of the Spirit, the OT awaited the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant so that Israel could become the people of God and the law could be fully observed from the heart. The time of the renewal of the heart and giving of the new Spirit was not specified in the OT. If resurrection of the dead is not excluded in the OT, it is a more natural reading of the OT that the patriarchs will arise in the future and participate in the enjoyment of the

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<sup>44</sup>Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, 480.

<sup>45</sup>*Hag.* 15B and *Sanh.* 104B-106B presents a list of specific names of individual figures who have no portion in the world to come. On the other hand, *Abod. Zar.* 18A adds a general guideline regarding what kind of person will be excluded from the world to come: “(1) He who says, the resurrection of the dead is a teaching which does not derive from the Torah, (2) and Torah does not come from Heaven; and (3) the Epicurean.” See Jacob Neusner, *Bavli Tractate Hagigah*, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary* 12 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 65; idem, *Bavli Tractate Abodah Zarah*, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary* 25 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 65; also, idem, *Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin B*, 560-72.

Promised Land and 'live.' The promise of the land was not fulfilled in Israel's conquest of the land of Canaan, but it awaits the day of the resurrection of the patriarchs (and their descendants who lived before the resurrection) so that each faithful individual may inherit the Promised Land, both "you" and "your descendants," "them" and "their descendants."

### **Faith in Resurrection of the Dead in the Torah**

Contrary to the major assertion that there is no faith in resurrection and eternal life found in the Torah, there are a couple of places noteworthy in the Torah wherein this faith is detected. The first place to look is the account of Abraham's offering Isaac as a sacrifice at Moriah in Genesis 22. The second place where this faith in resurrection of the dead is found in the Torah is the account of the translation of Enoch (Gen 5:24).

**Faith in resurrection in the Aqedah.** In this pericope God tested Abraham and asked him to offer Isaac as an offering. The Aqedah ("binding") has received a great deal of attention in the history of interpretation. Traditionally, the account was interpreted as a passage in which the paragon of faith and trust in God is expressed.<sup>46</sup> The rabbinic traditions emphasize the righteousness and obedience of both Abraham and Isaac in doing the commandment of God. Abraham obeyed God's request up to sacrificing this most precious son. Isaac also actively supported his father's dedication to God by willingly offering himself as a sacrifice.

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<sup>46</sup>Kuruvilla provides a tradition of rabbinic interpretation of the pericope. In *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 22, Abraham silently obeys God's commandment. Having realized what Abraham was doing, Isaac willingly offered himself as a sacrifice. "Bind me well that I may not struggle in the agony of my soul and be pitched into the pit of destruction and a blemish be found in your offering." Translation is borrowed from Kuruvilla. Isaac's faithful support for Abraham's offering is emphasized in *Tg. Neof.*, *Gen. Rab.* 56:8, and *Sipre Deut* 32. See also Josephus, *Antiquity* 1.13.4. Abraham Kuruvilla, "The *Aqedah* (Genesis 22): What Is the Author Doing with What He Is Saying?" *JETS* 55, no. 3 (2012): 491.

But sometimes God's request of human sacrifice in the Aqedah made people "disturbed" and "uncomfortable." In efforts to unravel the difficulty of God's request to offer Isaac, Kant contended that God simply commanded Abraham to "bring up" Isaac to the mountain to make an offering. But it was Abraham's misinterpretation of God's message to make Isaac an offering instead of an animal sacrifice. Kant seems to make a defense of God from being misunderstood by the "obnoxious" request of sacrifice, and make the Aqedah acceptable to the modern intelligent.<sup>47</sup>

In the context, however, the sacrifice God first commanded Abraham to offer is Isaac, his 'only son' that he loved (Gen 22:2). At the moment of near slaying Isaac, the angel of YHWH stopped Abraham saying he proved his fear of God by not withholding his 'only son' (Gen 22:12). Here the 'only son' mentioned in verse 2 is identified with Isaac in verse 12. God definitely requested Abraham to 'offer' Isaac as an offering in verse 2, and Abraham obeyed with no protest at all.

How could Abraham obey God to offer up his only son? The clue is from a near context in Genesis 21. In the first part of Genesis 21, Abraham received the promised son Isaac in his old age, and he had to let Ishmael and Hagar go due to the disharmony between Sarah/Isaac and Hagar/Ishmael. To grieve Abraham God gave comfort saying that Isaac will be the one through whom Abraham's offspring would

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<sup>47</sup>Kant argues that the hiphil form of עלה in Gen 22:2 (והעלהו) should be translated as to "bring up," "cause to ascend," or "cause to rise" on the basis of the verb's general meaning in that form. Contrary to the traditional rendition of the verse, he suggests a different translation: "bring him for an offering-up." However, in the context of offering event, the verb עלה in the hiphil form often means to "offer (a sacrifice)." There are numerous examples in the OT for this case. See for examples Josh 22:23; 1 Sam 7:10; 10:8; 13:10; 2 Sam 6:18; Jer 33:18; Ezek 43:18; Ezra 3:2, 6; 1 Chr 16:2, 40; 21:24; 23:31; 2 Chr 23:18; 24:14; 29:21, 27; 35:14, 16; (in combination with the noun "offering עלה"); Jer 48:35 (in combination with "incense מקטר"); Isa 66:3 (in combination with "gift מנחה"). Laurence Kant, "Restorative Thoughts on An Agonizing Text: Abraham's Binding of Isaac and the Horror on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22): Part 2," *LTQ* 38 (2003): 173-74.

be reckoned (v. 12). When Abraham did not have any offspring, God gave Abraham a promise to make him a “great nation” (v. 2) and to give the land of Canaan wherein he was dwelling to his offspring (v. 7). Nothing was visible, yet God was calling the invisible as if it was visible. Abraham experienced God’s accomplishing power and faithfulness to his promise. God could enable a life (Isaac) from one (Abraham) as good as dead.

Although he was still sojourning as a stranger without inheriting a land, he in faith called upon the name of YHWH. The God Abraham experienced and believed is the God of eternity. He was not like other gods made in the world, but transcends the limit of the created world. He is gracious to give a hopeful promise that no one requested first. He is faithful and powerful to keep his promise of grace through a nearly dead body. Now the same God requests Abraham to offer Isaac back to him as an offering.

The passage does not specifically explain what Abraham thought and how he felt about the request. But Abraham probably thought of God’s grace, faithfulness and power. The God who asks for a sacrifice of his ‘only son’ (human sacrifice) is the same God of grace: He may not have requested such a ‘horrible’ request with no good cause. The God who gave the promise of an offspring and who confirmed that Isaac is the promised offspring is the same God of faithfulness: He will keep his promise even after offering Isaac as a sacrifice. The God who gave the life of Isaac through Abraham’s body as good as dead is the same God of power: He is able to give life to Isaac even from death.

This interpretation is supported by the NT interpretation of the Aqedah. Hebrews 11:17-19 records as below:

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Abraham's faith in God who could raise the dead, who is faithful to keep his promise, who is gracious to give an unrequested promise is the reason that he could willingly offer Isaac, his beloved only son, as a sacrifice. Mathison comments that Genesis is the first place wherein the major hints of eschatological themes are introduced.<sup>48</sup> The faith in the eschatological life through resurrection from the dead is placed at the center of the Aqedah. By showing this faith in genuine heart and action, God 'now' affirms Abraham's fear of him. Fear of God had to be expressed through faith in the God who could keep his promise faithfully even by the power of raising the dead. The faith had to be expressed through obedience to God's commandment.

**Faith in overcoming death in Enoch's translation.** The translation of Enoch does not express the faith in resurrection of the dead first hand. However, Enoch's account provides a hope in the power of YHWH which transcends death. Since the Fall of Adam, death became the norm for all humanity. As God declared in Genesis 2:17, the sentence of death became an unavoidable reality in the created world due to the first Adam's breaking of the commandment of YHWH. The reality of death is emphatically highlighted in Genesis 5 by ending each genealogy of the first eight patriarchs with the repetitive phrase "and he died" (Gen 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).

The description of Enoch's life is concise. His life is characterized by his intimate communion with God. No other explanation is given why God chose to take him away except the statement of Enoch's obedient walk with God. There are different opinions on the meaning of the latter part of Genesis 5:24, "and he was not, because God took him away." Cassuto expresses opposition to those who claim that

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<sup>48</sup>Keith Mathison, *From Age to Age* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 47.

Enoch did not see death. On the basis of other OT usages of “and he was not,” he argues that “and he was not” is a substitute expression of “and he died.”<sup>49</sup> However, “and he was not” itself does not indicate death but nonexistence on earth. In general, human experience of nonexistence is death. Yet, Enoch’s case proves a different way to nonexistence on earth which was caused by a divine intervention into the regular chain of life-death.

Targum Onqelos gave an account for the meaning of “to take away” in Genesis 5:24 as God’s extraordinary taking of Enoch from the fate of death. Its interpretation of the last part of the verse is “because the Lord did not make him die.” Kidner presented Psalm 49:15 [16] and 73:24 as examples wherein the verb *xql* indicates the taking of God from death. Although an exceptional instance, Kidner admits that Enoch’s translation is one of the only two cases in the OT (with Elijah’s translation) that “the gates of Sheol had not prevailed.”<sup>50</sup>

As Kidner comments, the case of Enoch shines as a “brilliant star” in Genesis 5.<sup>51</sup> Although Kidner’s focus sets on Enoch’s intimate fellowship with God when he points out the brilliance of Enoch’s account, yet the outstanding nature of Enoch’s life is not characterized just by his intimate walk with God. It is also characterized by God’s special grace to break the demand of death. In the midst of the sway of death, Enoch is the first figure in the Torah whom God took away that

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<sup>49</sup>Some of the examples of his references are from Ps 39:13 [14] “Look away from me, that I may rejoice again before I depart and am no more”; Ps 103:16 “the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more”; Prov 12:7 “Wicked men are overthrown and are no more”; Job 7:21 “For I will soon lie down in the dust; you will search for me, but I will be no more.” U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press), 284-85.

<sup>50</sup>Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 81.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 80-81. Kidner cited Bowie’s comment on Enoch’s life as a “brilliant start.”

he did not see death. Enoch's translation indeed radiates light in the world surrounded in the dark reality of death.

As Martin-Achard argues the instance of translation is so exceptional that ordinary people who face death as regular reality in human life could not think of it happening to themselves.<sup>52</sup> However, Enoch's instance could arouse faith that death does not prevail over God's will and it could be overcome by God. Kidner views that the intimate relationship with God itself was life to Enoch. Yet, the purview of the fellowship with God should not be limited to this worldly relationship. The faith in God's gracious and mighty intervention into the powerful sway of death could generate a hope that one's life does not end with walking with God on earth, but the fellowship with God can continue on beyond the life on earth.

### **Source of Eternal Life in the Torah**

In the Torah, there are at least a couple of ways whereby YHWH is presented as the source of eternal life. Firstly, the powerful nature of God over life and death presents him as the source of eternal life. Secondly, God's faithfulness in keeping his covenantal promises to the patriarchs presents him as the source of eternal life.

**Powerful nature over life and death.** The OT attributes the power and authority over life and death solely to YHWH. Genesis declares that God is the giver of life to every living creature and he is the one who brought the sentence of death to the creature. In the regular cycle of life-death in the created world, yet God holds the ultimate authority to break the normality and take away Enoch so that he did not taste death. In Noah's day, God demonstrated himself as the one who could decide

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<sup>52</sup>Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament*, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1960), 72.

whom to save from death and whom to deliver to death. Faith in God as the giver of life and death is generated in the first book of the Torah.

In the last book of the Torah, God's life-giving power is stressed in his work of raising the dead. In Deuteronomy 32:39 YHWH's absolute sovereignty is declared by his authority to put someone to death and to make alive, and to wound and to heal. As Nelson noted, this verse in the poem takes a strategic pattern of movement "from catastrophe to restoration."<sup>53</sup> It moves from "killing" to "making alive," and from "wounding" to "healing." The movement in parallel helps to understand that "making alive" indicates restoration after the calamity of death, which is resurrection from the dead. God, who was able to give life out of nothing in the creation, is able to give life to the dust and raise the dead out of death.

The rabbis maintained an eschatological view on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 32:39. Targum Neofiti on Deuteronomy 32:39 interprets "I kill and make alive" in the MT eschatologically by rendering as "I am the one who kills the living in this world and makes the dead live again in the world to come." The mishnaic tradition also taught the verse in eschatological context and used the verse as an evidence for resurrection of the dead in the Torah. The tannaitic teaching in Sanhedrin 91B argues that "just as wounding and healing happen to one person, so death and then resurrection happen to one person."<sup>54</sup>

In his final exhortation to Israel, Moses highlighted that YHWH himself is "your life" (Deut 30:20 "He is your life" הוּא חַיִּיךְ). The God of life (Deut 5:26 אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים) who is eternal (Gen 21:33 "Eternal God" אֵל עוֹלָם) is the source of Israel's life. This God wants his people to 'live.' In occasion, 'life' in the OT points to the greater

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<sup>53</sup>Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 377.

<sup>54</sup>Neusner, *Sanhedrin B*, 486.

reality of life eternal in synecdoche. The eternally living God wants his beloved people to live as he designed for man in his image in the beginning: living eternal life.

**God's faithfulness in the covenant.** Jesus quoted Exodus 3:6 as a base text to teach the resurrection of the dead in Matthew 22:31-32 (also Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37-38) showing that Moses' writing of the epithet 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' teaches about the resurrection of the dead. There are different opinions to explain how the epithet could refer to the resurrection of the dead.<sup>55</sup> A mostly supported explanation is the present tense of the Greek verb *εἰμι*, in Matthew 22:32 which seems to have followed the LXX of Exodus 3:6. The present tense of the verb indicates not the past relationship but the ongoing relationship of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (not "God *was* the God of Abraham").<sup>56</sup>

Although this explanation might be a strong argument, it is questionable whether Jesus indeed built his argument upon the present tense of *εἰμι*. As Sloan contended, Mark and Luke did not include the verb *εἰμι* in their quotation of Exodus 3:6, but were able to deliver the sense of Jesus' argument. A different explanation

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<sup>55</sup>Davies and Allison provide a summary of different explanations for the use of Exod 3:6 for the argument for the resurrection of the dead. The examples of the opinions are: 1) the present tense of *εἰμι* in Matt 22:32 indicates the ongoing relationship of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By implication the patriarchs will resurrect from the dead. This view is strongly supported by a majority group of NT scholars. 2) The debate between Jesus and the Sadducees involves the issue of sterility. Jesus' answer refers to God's overcoming of sterility. 3) God's faithfulness in the covenantal relationship will deliver his people 'completely,' not only in life but also in death. For more detail, see W. Davies and Dale Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (New York: T & T Clark International, 1997), 231-32.

<sup>56</sup>For example, see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 561.

could be suggested on the basis of God's covenantal faithfulness. Reminiscent of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Exodus 3:6 can support the resurrection of the dead at least in a couple of ways.

The first way to support the resurrection of the dead and eternal life is God's faithfulness in the relationship with his people. When God made an oath to Abraham *by himself* (בי נשבֵּעתי) in Genesis 22:16, it meant that the promise will be surely effective as long as the eternally living God lives. Thus, the covenant that God becomes the God of Abraham implies Abraham's continual life through resurrection from the grave. The covenant that God established with Abraham continued with Isaac and Jacob so that God will also become their God. God chose the epithet "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" for himself to remind Israel of the eternally faithful relationship with his people in covenant. Israel could find great comfort when God presented himself as the God of Israel. He is not merely a protector from enemies or a deity to give prosperity in the land. His love and faithfulness will endure forever for his people in covenant.

The second way for the epithet 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' to support the resurrection of the dead and eternal life is that the covenant with the patriarchs contains the faithful fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs. YHWH made covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give the Promised Land to "them and their descendants." Over again God affirmed to each of the patriarchs that "you and your descendants" will inherit the Promised Land. At every time when God established a covenant with each patriarch, God repeatedly stressed that "you" (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) are included in the coming blessings of land.<sup>57</sup> Faithfully and powerfully God was keeping his promise to the patriarchs by

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<sup>57</sup>The same reference "you and your descendants" was made to Abraham (Gen 13:15; 17:8; 28:4), to Isaac (Gen 13:15; 17:8; 28:4), and to Jacob (Gen 28:13-14; 35:12).

calling Israel out of the land of Egypt and giving the land of Canaan for them to take possession of it. But the consummate fulfillment of the land promise is still yet to come. It awaits the day when the patriarchs arise from the dead to participate in the enjoyment of the promise.

Israel was called to live in the land as the people of God, and YHWH will be their God. The blessings God prepared for God's people must be far greater than earthly blessings in the land of Canaan so that the faithful like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses could die without having taken possession of the Promised Land but rejoice over blessings to be given them after their resurrection. The core of the covenant is God's desire of genuine, dedicated, and consecrated relationship with his people. God provided the Law for his people to remain dedicated to the covenantal relationship with God while living in the land of Canaan. The Law is presented as the way to lead Israel to the eternal God of life, the source of life, by letting them live according to the commandments of God.<sup>58</sup>

Traditionally, the rabbis found the bases of the resurrection of the dead in the Torah. Scripturally, the Torah passages examined in four different groups—passages with the promise of life, passages with the promise of land, passages in which faith in resurrection is aroused, and passages where the source of resurrection and eternal life is presented—support to conclude that the concepts of eternal life and resurrection are not alien to the OT but firmly rooted in the Torah.

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<sup>58</sup>So Deut 32:47 declares that the law is “your life” (הוא חייכם). In the same vein, the rabbis taught that the study of Torah leads to eternal life (*Ber.* 21A).

## CHAPTER 4

### SCRIPTURAL RECONSIDERATION FROM THE PROPHETS AND OTHER WRITINGS

The imagery of resurrection of the dead becomes more evident in the OT writings of the Prophets and other writings. A textual and contextual survey of OT passages in the Prophets and the Hagiographa that contain the promise of resurrection and typological incidents shows that these texts draw the concepts of resurrection of the dead and eternal life from the Torah. These eschatological ideas are continually refreshed and revealed anew through the writings of the Prophets and the Hagiographa. A discussion of selective texts is presented in the current chapter.

#### **Resurrection of the Dead in the Prophets and Other Writings**

The survey of the passages with the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the Prophets and other writings shows a contrary result from the common assertion of critical scholars that the OT has no significant interest in the idea. Rather, the ideas are not marginalized in the OT writings. The ideas rooted in the Torah are consolidated through additional revelations regarding the matter and through confessions of faith. The critical presupposition which rejects the originality of the ideas in the OT brings about more complications, conjectures, and assertive emendations in the study of those texts. Regarding this matter, certain passages are noteworthy since these texts unambiguously communicate the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life. The selected passages are Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:1-14; Daniel 12:2; Psalm 73; Job 19:25-27; and Isaiah 53:10-12.

## Isaiah 26:19

Isaiah 26:19 is one of the most debated texts on the matter of resurrection of the dead. The resurrection language is so strong in Isaiah 26:19 that many scholars agree that the text communicates resurrection. The textual and contextual evidences consolidate this fact. First, the subjects of future living (יחייו) and rising up (יקומו), “your dead men” and “my dead body,” make the context plainly speak of resurrection. Second, the two Hebrew verbs חיה (“revive”) and קום (“raise up”) often connote coming to life again.<sup>1</sup> Third, “dew” was traditionally associated with the idea of resurrection because of its life-giving and healing power.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the apparent resurrection languages in the verse, critical scholars object to interpreting the text as an indicator of the presence of resurrection of the dead in the OT. Mainly, they object by attempting to disprove its authenticity in the context of the original writing. They further object by claiming that Isaiah 26:19 (together with other texts in the sense of resurrection) should not be interpreted literally but metaphorically. In this view the verse communicates in figurative speech indicating not so much of individual resurrection as of national reestablishment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For example, in 2 Kgs 13:21 the two verbs are used in a pair to communicate that the dead corpse set in the tomb of Elisha revived and came back to life. In 1 Kings 17:22 the verb חיה (ויחי) indicates the revival of the dead boy of the widow of Zarephath. For other cases, see Hos 6:2; Amos 5:2.

<sup>2</sup>The LXX highlights the healing power of the dew as it translates the MT of Isa 26:19 (γὰρ ἄροσος ἡ παρα σου ἰαμα αυτοῖς ἐστίν). Sysling’s survey shows that “dew” was often suggested with the promise of resurrection in the rabbinic tradition because of its beneficial character. For the rabbinic sources, see b*Hag.* 12b; j*Ber.* 5:2, 9a, 9b, j*Ta’an.* 1:1, 63a. Harry Sysling, *Teḥiyyat Ha-Metim* (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1996), 159-161.

<sup>3</sup>For the views of the national revival, see Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, CC, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 2:568; Brian Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24-27* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 315; Joseph Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 430; F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux

The dominant critical voices contend that the idea of resurrection of the dead in the text is against the spirit of the OT and not authentic to the context of original writing, but has been inserted at a later date. In terms of the date of redactional insertion of the text, there is no general consensus among the critical scholars. For different datings, the fourth century B.C. (Martin-Achard, Gesenius, influence from Zoroaster), the third century B.C. (Oesterley, influence from Jeremiah's individualism), and the second century B.C. (Otto Kaiser, Sawyer, influence from Maccabean times) are suggested.<sup>4</sup>

It is a circular argument to assert that Isaiah 26:19 was inserted at a later date without providing acceptable evidence except the hypothesis that the original writing of the OT did not contain the idea of the resurrection of the dead.<sup>5</sup> The verse is rather in harmony with the near and remote context. Isaiah 9 prophesies the birth

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Brothers, 1970), 313; Goldingay, *Isaiah*, NIBCOT, vol. 13 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 146; Philip S. Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," in *The Old Testament in Its World*, ed. Robert P. Gordon and Johnnes C. Moor (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 111.

<sup>4</sup>A group of scholars claims that the resurrection idea in the form of prophecy must be borrowed after the establishment of the doctrine of resurrection. William O. Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World: A Study in Old Testament Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 220; Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 431-32; Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament*, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1960), 137; Ovid R. Sellers, "Israelite Belief in Immortality," *Biblical Archaeologist* 8 (1945): 14; John F. A. Sawyer, *Isaiah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 1:220-21; Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1980), 216-27.

<sup>5</sup>For example, Sawyer views that Dan 12 has influenced Isa 26:19 with the idea of individual resurrection. He comments that "one of the major factors in the emergence of this belief in an afterlife for the faithful was the persecution and martyrdom of the righteous" in the second century B.C. Sawyer, *Isaiah*, 220-21. Although Wildberger regards Isa 26:19 as quite an authentic writing, he views "my dead body" in the verse does not belong to the original writing of Isaiah but a gloss added by a reader who held the hope of the resurrection. Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 2:556, 567. Clements also comments that "my body" was influenced from Ps 49:15, and it is an evidence of "a later reading of the verse in reference to the resurrection of individuals." Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 217.

of the messianic figure who will be a great light to those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death. From the latter part of Isaiah 9 through Isaiah 24 YHWH presents himself in the prophetic words as the one who reigns over all nations by bringing his righteous judgment to them. His lordship reaches not only to the ends of the earth, but also to the dominion of death in Isaiah 25.<sup>6</sup>

After a series of judgments of destruction over nations, the climax of YHWH's judgment is placed in his victory over death (Isa 25:7-8) and resurrection as the result of the victory (Isa 26:19).<sup>7</sup> On "the day" (Isa 25:9, ביום ההוא) YHWH makes a feast (Isa 25:6), he will remove the covering over "all peoples" which is death. His ultimate victory is over death which was covering all peoples in all nations (Isa 25:7-8). Isaiah 26 sings of the same day (Isa 26:1, ביום ההוא) as "the day" in 25:9 and the day of feast and salvation from death in 25:6-8. Within this near context of "the day," 26:19 is highlighting the result of swallowing up death in 25:8. The surety of God's promise of restoration is given to comfort those who would go under the impending punishment mentioned in verse 14. The dead will be comforted by YHWH's work of peace (v.11-12) which is demonstrated in the raising of the dead (v. 19).

Isaiah 26:19 is placed within the distinctively prophetic unit of Isaiah 25-27. The unit contains highly metaphoric imageries and its interpretation is not easy because of the mixture of literal and figurative uses of language. Critical scholars propose that the language of death and resurrection such as שכני עפר, גבלה, מחים,

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<sup>6</sup>YHWH's judgments of destruction proceed from punishment over Israel (chap 9), to destructions of Assyria (chaps 10, 14), Babylon (chaps 13-14), the Philistines (chap 14), Moab (chap 15-16), Ephraim and Damascus (chap 17), Cush (chap 18), Egypt (chap 19), Dumah (chap 21), Arabia (chap 21), the Valley of Vision (chap 22), and Tyre (chap 23). YHWH will make the earth waste and devastated (chap 24).

<sup>7</sup>Paul's comment that "the last enemy to be destroyed is death" in 1 Cor 15:26 might be related to these Isaiah passages (Isa 25:7-8 and Isa 26:19).

רפאים, חיה, קום and הקיץ are metaphors for the reestablishment of Israel which was oppressed and humiliated to the ground in exile. Doyle argued that the images of “restoration of the dead/corpses/dwellers in the dust” in the verse must be metaphorically understood referring to God’s graceful intervention for the revival of the nation.<sup>8</sup>

However, if the verse is merely read as metaphors of national revival with no reference to actual resurrection of the dead, the metaphors would not successfully communicate what it aimed to. Setzer pointed out, if the concept of resurrection of the dead were an absurd idea to the ears of the original reader, it would have been meaningless to use such a metaphor.<sup>9</sup> If no one believes the possibility of the resurrection of the dead, how can the revival of the nation in the metaphor of reviving of the dead be believed to happen and become a message of hope? If someone understands the verse as an indication to restoration of the devastated nation, it must also be admitted that the language of resurrection of the dead in the verse must reflect people’s hope and faith in the resurrection for the metaphor to arouse a real hope of national revival.

In the debates between the national-revival view and the individual-resurrection view, נבלתי in the MT has received special attention. Traditionally, the suffix was understood as the first person singular (Vulgate, AV) rendering the word as “my corpse,” giving a strong sense of individual resurrection. There are variant arguments which reject the idea of individual resurrection in the verse. Some deny

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<sup>8</sup>Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking*, 315; Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 568; Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 217.

<sup>9</sup>Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishing, 2004), 8. Raphael also pointed out that metaphors can properly communicate only if they have something to do with the audience’s way of life and thought. Simcha Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1994), 8.

the origin of individualism in the text and consider “my corpse (נבלתי)” as an evidence of the later interpolation by the influence of belief in individual resurrection from Daniel 12:2.<sup>10</sup> Others suggest to read the suffix of *ytln* as a gentilic in collective sense not as first person singular, translating נבלתי as “corpses” rather than “my corpse.” In this view, “your dead (מתיד)” together with “corpses (נבלתי)” indicates Israel as the nation.<sup>11</sup>

Grammatically speaking, either way—to read the final suffix as the first person singular or to read as a gentilic—looks to be a legitimate suggestion. At least, the image of resurrection of the dead is clearly communicated in either case. It could be a word play by which נבלתי in Isaiah 26:19 is allowed to be read both ways, “my corpse” (with the first person singular suffix) and “corpses” as a gentilic. In this case the resurrection of the collective corpses can be seen from the perspective of the first person including the resurrection of an individual “my corpse.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

The visionary scene of the resurrection of dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14 is impressively spectacular. The passage is fully colored with death and life language.

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<sup>10</sup>John F. A. Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for the Resurrection of the Dead,” *VT* 23 (1973): 220.

<sup>11</sup>Schmitz proposed a different morphological perspective to read the suffix of נבלתי as a gentilic. Syntactically, he views the suffix as an accusative of state which “specifies the state in which the dead are resurrected: (as) a corpse they [sc. ‘your dead’] shall rise.” Smith supports this proposal and interprets נבלתי as a gentilic. Philip Schmitz, “The Grammar of Isaiah 26:19a-c,” *JBL* 122 (2003): 145-49; Gary Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, NAC (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 454.

<sup>12</sup>For those who take the original meaning of Isaiah 26:19 as individual resurrection, see J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 219; Host Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1:62-63; Leonard J. Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” in *Traditions in Transformation*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 286.

The verb חיה frequently occurs throughout the book of Ezekiel, and prevails in chapters 18, 20, 33, and 37.<sup>13</sup> As in the case of Isaiah 26:19, most commentators interpret the death and resurrection in Ezekiel 37 as metaphors of national restoration.<sup>14</sup> The major theological approach is in the same vein arguing that reading hope for individual resurrection is not an intention of Ezekiel.<sup>15</sup>

Contextually, the passage does speak of the revival of the nation. What dry bones represent is the entire house of Israel laid in a hopeless situation as explained in verse 11. It is unlikely, however, that the meaning of revivification of the dry bones is confined to national restoration when the special role of the Spirit is considered in making the bones alive. The Spirit given to revive the dead bones is not something like a national spirit. It is linked to the aforementioned promise of the giving of a “new Spirit (רוח חדשה)” in Ezekiel 36, which is the Spirit of the Lord (v. 27 “my spirit” ריחי). The goals of the gift of the Spirit are to make Israel ‘live’ and to renew the fellowship between God and his people (Ezek 36:28, “you will be my people, and I will be your God”). The motifs of giving of the Spirit and endowment of life allude to Genesis 2:7. The lifeless clod of dirt was given life with no knowledge of death. The lifeless dry bones, once dead, are given life beyond the grave and led to the renewed relationship with God.

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<sup>13</sup>The verb החיה occurs 35 times in the book of Ezekiel. See Ezek 3:18, 21; 13:18, 19, 22; 16:6; 18:9, 13, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32; 20:11, 13, 21, 25; 33:10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19; 37:3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14; 47:9.

<sup>14</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1990), 186; Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 270; Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 320; Walter Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 509.

<sup>15</sup>Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), 132; Rachel S. Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 138-39; Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:62; Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 93-102.

As argued above, God's intention of giving the land was far greater than having mundane blessings like prosperity, longevity, and safety in the land. The vision in metaphors convinces the faithless people in *a fortiori*: If God is able to raise the dead once again, how much more will he be able to renew the destroyed nation? Not only would God revive the nation, he will also raise the dead to accomplish the covenant made with the forefathers. The ultimate blessings intended for the people of God were right relationship through the observance of the law and life overcoming death.

The ancient faith of YHWH's power over death and life (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6) could have remained in the prophet, albeit he might have been startled by seeing with his own eyes in the vision the spectacular scene of resurrection. Why, then, did Ezekiel not promptly give a positive answer to the question of YHWH in verse 3, "Son of man, will these bones live?" Ezekiel's roundabout answer, "O, Sovereign Lord, you know," does not indicate Ezekiel's lack of faith in resurrection. Rather it is a circumlocutionary expression of the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of YHWH, who is far more able than raising the dead.

God's strong desire and concern for the life of his people is revealed throughout the book. In Ezekiel a close tie of law-Spirit-life appears from time to time. God wants his people to 'live.' The life is attainable by keeping the statutes and judgments of the Law (18:9, 17, 19; 21; 20:11; 33:16). The Spirit revives the dead (37:5-14). With the gift of the Spirit, the resurrected are enabled to accomplish the requirements of the Law (36:27).

The motifs of law and life in Ezekiel 37 seem to be linked not only to Leviticus 18:5 but to a core spirit of the Torah wherein the promise of life in conjunction with law keeping is suggested (Lev 18:5; Deut 4:1; 5:33, 6:24; 8:1; 16:20;

30:6, 16).<sup>16</sup> In Ezekiel's prophecy, the Spirit of God for life was yet to come. All the exiles died without seeing the coming of the Spirit for renewal. What hope would the exiles find in the promise of the future giving of the Spirit and future restoration of the nation? The vision in Ezekiel 37:1-14 aroused the ancient faith in resurrection among the exiles by confirming the hopeful promise of restoration of their dead bodies to participate in the restoration of Israel. The hope cried out to the ears of the devastated like 'Remain in fidelity! YHWH will surely revive the dead from the dust, and let the faithful see the glorious day of new creation.

### **Daniel 12:2**

Sawyer observes that some ordinary and everyday language such as חיה, קום, הקיץ, לקח, and משפט can deliver the notion of resurrection with "special overtones, associations or references" in some contexts.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, the context of Daniel 12:2 indicates that the verse unambiguously speaks of resurrection. Expressions like ישינו אכמת-עפר "sleep in the dust of the earth," יקיצו "awake," חיי עולם "eternal life" definitely have to do with death, resurrection, and eternal life. As to the term ישן "to sleep," it is a figure of speech to designate death. The same usage is found in other poetic literature in the OT like Jeremiah 51:39, 57 ("to sleep an eternal sleep, ישנו שנת-עולם") and Psalm 13:3[4] ("to sleep of death, אישן המות").<sup>18</sup>

Collins comments that the text is "the only generally accepted reference to resurrection in the Hebrew Bible."<sup>19</sup> But there is no convincing reason to preclude

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<sup>16</sup>Sprinkle demonstrated that the allusion to Lev 18:5 is frequently found in the book of Ezekiel. Preston Sprinkle, "Law and Life: Leviticus 18.5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel," *JSOT* 31(2007): 285-93.

<sup>17</sup>Sawyer, "Hebrew Words for the Resurrection of the Dead," 218-34.

<sup>18</sup>Jer 51:39 and 51:57 use the imagery of "to sleep, ישן" ("to sleep an eternal sleep, ישנו שנת-עולם") as an indication of death. The two verses employ both "to sleep, ישן" and "to awake, קיץ" as a pair as in Dan 12:2.

<sup>19</sup>John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 392.

other OT texts with the resurrection idea like Isaiah 26:19 and Ezekiel 37. Whereas the prophetic visions in Isaiah 26:19 and Ezekiel 37 speak of one side of resurrection aspiring the hope in the sense of restoration, Daniel 12:2 vivifies the ancient assurance of two-sided resurrection. YHWH's eternal judgments through resurrection are not only over the faithful but also over the sinners. Two different groups will receive different judgments, one for everlasting life and the other for everlasting shame and contempt. Another distinctive feature of the verse is the explicit phrase of חיי עולם ('eternal life') which appears for the first time in the OT. Albeit the occasions of Genesis 3:22 חי לעולם ('live forever') and in Psalm 133:3 חיים עד העולם ('life unto eternity'), the case that חיים directly qualifies עולם is quite unique in the OT.

As to the reference of the resurrection, the majority of scholars maintain that Daniel 12:2 speaks of individual resurrection.<sup>20</sup> Yet, still not a few scholars contend that the text refers to national resurrection.<sup>21</sup> On the understanding of the scope of resurrection in Daniel 12:2, there exist variant views. The word רבים, generally meaning "many," is used as the reference of resurrection. Since the verse does not employ "all," most scholars are reluctant to regard the verse as a reference to general or universal resurrection, but partial or national limited only to some Jews.<sup>22</sup> Nickelsburg shows a good example of the limited resurrection view. He states

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<sup>20</sup>For the individual resurrection view, see Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 249; Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," 249; Collins, *Daniel*, 392; Edward Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1949), 256; Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 308-9.

<sup>21</sup>For the national restoration view, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 32; Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 170; Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah*, 314; Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 73.

<sup>22</sup>For the limited resurrection view, see Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*,

that “Daniel does not conceive of a general resurrection of all humanity,” but of the particular people of Israel who went under unjust treatment in this life.<sup>23</sup>

Since Daniel does not specify the constitution of the “many,” it is certainly difficult to clarify whether the resurrection in the vision is universal or not. However, there are several reasons to consider the passage as an indication of universal resurrection. First, the word רבים and its cognates (רַב, מַרְבּ, רַבָּה) are sometimes used to convey the idea of an uncountable multitude.<sup>24</sup> In his vision, Daniel seems to be looking at a great multitude of people rising from the dead whom he could not count the number. The nominative clause with a heavy accent over רבים in the beginning shows how Daniel was impressed by the size of the resurrected. It was not merely “many people” but an uncountable multitude.

Second, the participants of the resurrection include not only the righteous but also the wicked. If only “some” of the righteous and “some” of the wicked were raised for the judgment of God which decides their eternal destinies, such a partial resurrection would diminish the purpose and scope of YHWH’s judgment on the last day.

Third, Daniel 12:2 seems to reflect the resurrection vision in Isaiah 26:19. The two verses show linguistic proximity and similar imageries.<sup>25</sup> Daniel 12:2 shares the vision of Isaiah 26:19 where future resurrection of the dead, not only of the

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145; Collins, *Daniel*, 392; Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 307; Gowan views the resurrection in the text is only for the righteous. Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 93.

<sup>23</sup>Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 37.

<sup>24</sup>For the examples רבים in the meaning, see 1 Kgs 4:20 and Isa 53:12. For the cognate words in the meaning, see Gen 22:17; 41:49; 1 Kgs 4:29; Job 29:18; Jer 33:22; 1 Sam 13:5; 2 Sam 17:11.

<sup>25</sup>Bailey presented the intertextual relationship of Dan 12:2 and Isa 26:19. See Daniel P. Bailey, “The Intertextual Relationship of Daniel 12:2 and Isaiah 26:19: Evidence from Qumran and the Greek Versions,” *TynBul* 51 (2000): 305-8.

righteous Jews but also of all people, is envisioned. In Daniel 12:2 the uncountable number of multitude seems to be emphasized in resonating God's universal work of redemption from death in Isaiah 25:8 whose efficacy extends to all people.

As to dating the text, variant conjectural suggestions are almost the same as the case of Isaiah 26:19. Those who argue that the idea of individual resurrection in the OT developed later for theological purpose regard Daniel 12:2 as the consummation of the doctrine of resurrection in the OT.<sup>26</sup> Because of its unequivocal terms of resurrection and eternal life, the great majority of scholars attribute the text to sometime after the Antiochan persecution. Another group of scholars opine that the text is a product of the influence of Zoroasters which believed "different kinds of future life for the good and the evil."<sup>27</sup> A more critical view doubts the originality of Daniel 12:2 and assumes it to be a much later interpolation under the influence of the Christian doctrine of resurrection of the dead.<sup>28</sup>

Again, it is a circular argument with no convincing evidence for the assertion that Daniel 12:2 was composed at a later date. Daniel 12:2 is strikingly specific in its delivery of the message of future resurrection of the dead. However, it does not mean that the verse is a unique representation of the later belief in the resurrection. The idea of judgments of the righteous to life and of the wicked to death is a central motif in the Torah. In the giving of the law, YHWH made it plain

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<sup>26</sup>A major group of scholars asserts that the text is a consequence of political and religious oppressions under the rule of the Greeks. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 145; Elmer Smick, "The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament," *Westminster Theological Journal* 31 (1968): 12; Porteous, *Daniel*, 170; R. Charles, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary in the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1929), 325.

<sup>27</sup>Sellers, "Israelite Belief in Immortality," 14; Henry P.D. Leach, "The Idea of Immortality in the Old Testament" (A.M. diss., The University of Chicago, 1917), 36.

<sup>28</sup>Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 305.

that there are different ways, one to life, and the other to death (cf. Deut 30). If the blessing of life and the punishment of death in the Torah refer to destinies beyond mundane blessings and punishment, as argued above, it is more probable that the vision of Daniel accords with the ancient teaching of the Torah.

### **Psalm 73**

Linguistically, there is no term directly related to resurrection or eternal life in Psalm 73. Yet, the context shows the belief in resurrection, postmortem rewards, and postmortem punishment. A big question to theodicy is the beginning of Psalm 73. The psalmist's heart was grievously pressed with the reality of the world where righteous judgment seems to be lacking. The wicked despise God but live in peace and prosperity. They do not know pangs even in their death. Yet, the righteous are stricken and reproved. By looking at the prosperity of the arrogant, he almost slipped and fell from his faith in YHWH.

However, a great turning point in his perspective occurs as he enters into the sanctuary of YHWH. Johnston boldly claims that no concept of judgment after death is found in the Old Testament.<sup>29</sup> Such a concept is only found, he argues, in the non-canonical inter-testamental literature and the New Testament. But this claim is not a valid one. As mentioned above, the idea of judgments of the righteous to life and of the wicked to death is a central motif in the Torah and the Wisdom literature in the OT. For example, Ecclesiastes shows that the teaching of postmortem judgment was already known to Israelites in the tenth century B.C.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Johnston, "Death in Egypt and Israel," 111.

<sup>30</sup>In Ecclesiastes, Solomon observed that there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness (Eccl 7:15). Death also cannot be the appointed judgment of YHWH, for it comes both to the wise and to the fool alike (Eccl 2:16). He teaches that it is a gift from God for a man to enjoy his life; yet he should live with the fear of YHWH, realizing that all of his purposes and activities will be judged by God (Eccl 12:13-14).

In the sanctuary, the psalmist sees a vision of God's ultimate righteous judgment. Even though the wicked die in peace, their final judgment has not yet come. Their final destiny is with terror and ruin. Obviously, this final judgment over the wicked has neither happened during the lifetime of the wicked nor until their death. On that day, God will comfort the righteous and punish the wicked according to their deeds. The appointed time is definitely the postmortem future. Realizing this truth in the sanctuary, the psalmist's voice of agony and complaint turns into the praise of YHWH who will finally vindicate his righteousness and justice.

The psalmist finds God is his "eternal portion (חלקי . . . לעולם)." Otwell refuses to read לעולם at the end of verse 26 as a reference to eternity but as meaning "to a time remote from the present."<sup>31</sup> However, it is apparent that the psalmist has eternity in mind. Neither the just punishment to the wicked nor the just reward for the righteous is fully disclosed during their lifetime on earth. But in the end, "afterwards (אחר)," God will receive the psalmist in glory.

### **Job 19:25-27**

The semantic ambiguity and difficulty of this text has been unanimously recognized by scholars.<sup>32</sup> The interpretations of the passage are divided into two main streams. Some contend that this passage speaks of Job's hope of seeing the vindication and acquittal of YHWH in this world.<sup>33</sup> For example, Longman states

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<sup>31</sup>John H. Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament: A Review of the Evidence," *Encounter* 22 (1961): 22.

<sup>32</sup>Sellers complains that the Hebrew in the text is unintelligible. Sellers, "Israelite Belief in Immortality," 14.

<sup>33</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 166-73. See also N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1957), 304-05; cf. Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *The Book of Job* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), 171-74; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 294-95; Robert Alden, *Job*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 207.

that the ideas like the future Messiah and the resurrection of the dead are “foreign to the book of Job and extremely rare” in the OT.<sup>34</sup> Others argue that the passage speaks of Job’s assurance of seeing YHWH and his vindication beyond the grave.<sup>35</sup> W. Kaiser opines that the passage is one of the clearest texts that express the belief in postmortem judgment and vindication.<sup>36</sup> Those who hold the former view sharply challenge any attempt to find the notion of resurrection and postmortem vindication of YHWH in this passage. They regard such an attempt as a retrospective reading of the New Testament into the Old.<sup>37</sup> They consider that the passage is about a sick man’s hope for the declaration of his righteousness on earth while he is alive.<sup>38</sup>

Admittedly, the passage contains several notoriously challenging phrases to interpret the meaning. For example, variant interpretations of על-עפר (v. 25), אחר עורי (v. 26), and מבשרי (v. 26) do not seem to arrive at a consensus. The majority of critical scholars understands the meaning of על-עפר as “on dust” which means “here on earth,” not in the netherworld.<sup>39</sup> They argue that the advocacy from YHWH

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<sup>34</sup>Tremper Longman III, *Job* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 262.

<sup>35</sup>Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, 132; Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 292-93; Walter. Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 146; Edgar C. S. Gibson, *The Book of Job* (London: Methuen & Co., 1919), 99; Elmer B. Smick, *Job* in vol. 4 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 942-43; J. Gerald Janzen, *Job, Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 141. Zimmerli also admits that the text indicates a hope for “life beyond death,” although he argues that the Old Testament’s concern is solely worldly without having interest in life after death.

<sup>36</sup>Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God*, 146.

<sup>37</sup>Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 209.

<sup>38</sup>For example, Martin-Achard views that the Book of Job has no acquaintance with the concept of resurrection of the dead; such an idea would only undermine the book’s whole context and message. If there had been any form of vindication after death, it should not relate to physical resurrection or physical communion with God. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 170-181.

<sup>39</sup>See, Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 168-69; Hartley, *The Book of Job*

should arrive before Job's death in view of the context of the whole book. However, in several places of the book of Job, עפר is used to indicate the 'grave.'<sup>40</sup> Also, the word עפר is frequently used in other books of the OT in poetic speech as a euphemistic expression for the grave.<sup>41</sup> As Smick pointed out, the context of Job 19:25-27 also supports this interpretation as Job laments on his diminishing body.<sup>42</sup>

As to the meaning of אחר עורי, variant renderings suggested by different scholars show how difficult it is to understand. Most critical scholars interpret it as "after my skin" as an indication of depriving of a sick man's flesh and skin, which was severely destroyed from long suffering as a result of disease. In this interpretation, death is not in view. On the other hand, there is an attempt to emend the word to make the meaning of עורי fit in the context of resurrection. Janzen suggests changing the vowel point of waw making the word עורי as a constructive infinitive with the first person pronoun suffix (עורי). In this case, the reading is "my awaking" instead of "my skin," giving a fascinating rendition in support of the idea of resurrection.<sup>43</sup>

Even though it is an interesting suggestion, however, there is no sufficient reason to change the MT reading of עורי. Although it is difficult to decide the meaning of אחר עורי, in light of the surrounding context it is better to keep the MT

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294-94; Alden, *Job*, 207.

<sup>40</sup>The same phrase על-עפר as in Job 19:25 occurs in Job 7:21; 14:8; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26; 34:15. In these cases, the preposition על does not have the force of "upon" or "above." על-עפר ("on dust"), rather, forms a figurative expression designating the grave. Janzen and Gibson also view על-עפר as a reference to the grave. See Janzen, *Job*, 141; Gibson, *The Book of Job*, 99.

<sup>41</sup>Besides Job 19:25, see Gen 3:19; Job 7:21; 14:8; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26; 34:15; Pss 7:5; 22:15, 29; 30:9; 104:29; Prov 8:26; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Isa 26:19; and Dan 12:2.

<sup>42</sup>Smick, *Job*, 943.

<sup>43</sup>Janzen, *Job*, 142.

reading. Job 19:20 speaks of the diminishing body of Job whose skin (עורי) and flesh (בשרי) stick to the bones and whose skin (עור) of teeth is barely left. In the anticipation of further diminishing of the body, Job seems to express his hope to see his redeemer after the complete destruction of his skin and flesh. Both LXX and Targum also support reading עורי as “my skin.” In poetical language, Job expresses his faith that after the decay of his skin, he will still be able to see God with his own eyes, which implies resurrection. Job expresses his faith in resurrection and postmortem judgment of God in Job 19:26.

The hope for resurrection is reinforced with the use of מבשרי in verse 26. Although there are large number of disagreements on the interpretation of the preposition מן in verse 26, it is probable to read it as “from my flesh” in the partitive sense,<sup>44</sup> rather than reading it as “without my flesh” as if Job desired to be relieved from his disastrous body with sickness.<sup>45</sup> The partitive usage of the מן preposition with בשר is frequently evidenced in the OT.<sup>46</sup> The partitive sense is stressed as Job claims that his own eyes will be involved in seeing God in verse 27. After his body is destroyed, Job will still see God with a part of his physical body. After his body has decayed, Job still proclaims to see God with his eyes. He may not be vindicated on earth; yet his hope does not cease with his suffering, for he is assured that his Redeemer lives. He will turn to the dust, yet his God will stand as his vindicator and raise the dead to show his righteous judgment. Job 19:25-27 does not refer to a sick

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<sup>44</sup>For this view, see Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 296-297; Gibson, *The Book of Job*, 100; Smick, *Job*, 943-44.

<sup>45</sup>For the latter view, see Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 129; cf. Strahan translates it as “away from my flesh.” James Strahan, *The Book of Job* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), 177.

<sup>46</sup>See Gen 2:23; Exod 29:34; Lev 7:17, 18; 11:8, 11; 14:8; Deut 28:55.

man's hope of restoration from an emaciating body. Rather, it speaks of Job's hope of vindication and justice of YHWH beyond the grave.

### **Isaiah 53:10-12**

The last servant song in the book of Isaiah prophesies of an individual figure who would carry a special role of guilt offering for 'our sins.' (Isa 53:5). He would suffer by taking up 'our' incurable diseases and 'our' sorrows. He would be wounded for 'our' transgressions and crushed for 'our' sins. The substitutionary death of the figure is predicted after suffering God's punishment. He would be cut off from the land of the living and pour out his life unto death (Isa 53:8, 12). His grave would be with the wicked and the rich (Isa 53:9).

In Isaiah 53:10 there occurs a drastic turning point in the gloomy tone of the song to a hopeful promise. The servant, once died, would be restored to life, and his days will indefinitely prolong. After his death as a guilt offering, the servant would be rewarded by YHWH with the good results of his suffering. He will 'see' a seed (v. 10), receive portions and division of spoils with the strong (vv. 11, 12), and be satisfied (v. 11). Evidently, the hopeful results of the servant's suffering are given after his death, which implies the resurrection of the dead. One's physical entity and emotional entity are all involved in 'seeing' and 'being satisfied' with the postmortem results.

The striking proclamation of postmortem reward in the passage embarrassed many who refuse the idea of individual resurrection in the OT. Some claim that the servant did not really die, but suffered nearly to death and then resumed his life of blessings.<sup>47</sup> Sonne takes a radical step to reconstruct the text and contends that the text speaks of a person's healing from disease and returning to the

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<sup>47</sup>R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 177-80.

community rather than tasting death and being raised back to life to be rewarded.<sup>48</sup> Sonne's conjectural elaboration, however, has textual and contextual problems. On the one hand, it requires a great deal of textual sacrifice in the reconstruction. On the other hand, it is contextually unwarranted. Contextually, the passage repetitively emphasizes the clear fact of the servant's death. He was "cut off from the land of the living" (Isa 53:8), "buried in the grave" (v. 9), "with the rich in his death" (v. 9), and "poured out his life unto death" (v. 12).

Others argue that the servant in the passage is not an individual figure but the corporate nation of Israel, but this also has contextual problems. They identify the sufferings of the servant as the oppression and devastation of the nation Israel; future rewards of the servant refer to the future restoration and prosperity of the nation. Martin-Achard concludes that the nation Israel was oppressed, despised, and rejected by God, and the suffering was actually for the Gentiles or for the unfaithful Israelites.<sup>49</sup> As in the case of Sonne's argument, however, the national suffering view cannot explain the actual death of the servant. The descriptions of death and burial do not fit in the case of exiled Israel. The destroyed nation Israel might be described as being near to death; yet, it did not really die. Also, Israel's suffering under exile cannot be identified with the suffering of the servant. Israel suffered because of her own sins and transgressions, but the servant for 'ours' not for his own. Israel has neither made many to be accounted righteous by her knowledge, nor born the iniquities of other nations, but the individual servant did.

Smith comments that the idea of resurrection is implied in the passage, yet "an extended discussion of the resurrection would have pushed the conversation off

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<sup>48</sup>Isaiah Sonne, "Isaiah 53:10-12," *JBL* 78 (1959): 336-42.

<sup>49</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 113.

the central focus.”<sup>50</sup> However, the implicit idea of resurrection plays a significant role in making a drastic shift in the third servant song, from a gloomy picture of the suffering servant to a brilliant picture of the victorious servant beyond death. Resurrection acts like a turning wedge between two different phases in the life of the servant. Without speaking of resurrection, it is pointless to discuss the benefits and rewards of the servant that are subsequent to his death.

### **Types of Eschatological Resurrection**

The idea of resurrection from the dead is not foreign to the OT at all. Several occasions of temporary resurrection are recorded in the historical writings of the OT. The first incident of the resurrection of a dead individual in the OT is found in the account of the revival of the dead boy of the widow in Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:17-24. When God heard Elijah’s prayer, the widow’s dead son came back to life. A similar incident recurs in the account of the restoration of a dead boy’s life through Elisha’s ministry in 2 Kings 4:18-37. Hallote claims that the son of the Shunammite woman was not really dead, but close to death, and that the story is not about the revival of the dead.<sup>51</sup> However, the boy’s death was confirmed twice in verses 20 and 32. The third incident of resurrection of a dead person is found in 2 Kings 13:20-21. Seeing the sudden appearance of a band of Moabite raiders, those who were burying a dead man had to cast his corpse into Elisha’s tomb. When the dead man touched Elisha’s bones, miraculously he came to life.

Martin-Achard asserts that these incidents of resurrection are special cases and do not suggest any possibility of a general resurrection of all the dead.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, NAC (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2009), 460.

<sup>51</sup>Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World*, 140.

<sup>52</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 113.

Admittedly, these texts do not explicitly claim future general resurrection. However, a notable fact is that no contemporary of Elijah and Elisha expressed discomfort with the resurrection incidents in the OT. People might have been surprised at seeing those extraordinary events of the dead coming back to life. Yet, they did not think them impossible. Rather, when the prophets restored the dead to life, people acknowledged the power of God and recognized the prophets as the ‘man of God’ (1 Kgs 17:24).

Scholars classify these resurrection accounts in 1 and 2 Kings as legendary folklore due to the unusual elements in the incidents. Hallote cynically opines against the huge “leap of faith” in the resurrection of the dead man at the touch of Elisha’s bones in 2 Kings 13:20-21.<sup>53</sup> Yet, to those who hold onto faith in the Creator, it is not a “leap of faith” at all to accept these stories as real, since YHWH, who created heaven and earth out of nothing and gave life to the clod of dust, does not need to leap to a higher level to raise the dead through any media. The people contemporary to Elijah and Elisha regarded bodily resurrection possible in God.<sup>54</sup> YHWH who puts to death and brings to life (Deut 32:39) could work through the prophets revealing his sovereignty even over death.

YHWH employed the prophets, who are also bound in death, to momentarily raise the dead. Even the bones of dead Elisha could be used to reveal the great power of God. These three occasions in the prose narratives work as types of the coming resurrection of the dead. Although they are accounts of temporary resurrection and do not specifically address universal resurrection, these accounts

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<sup>53</sup>Hallote views that the “leap of faith” in the story makes it stand out as folklore. Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World*, 140. See also, Otwell, “Immortality in the Old Testament,” 18.

<sup>54</sup>Greenspoon argues the possibility that the belief in bodily resurrection was present in the ninth century B.C. Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” 298.

prefigure future resurrection that will occur through the ever living Messiah (cf. Isa 9:6), through whom God will reveal much greater glory and power.

### **Source of Resurrection and Eternal Life in the Prophets and Other Writings**

The hope and faith in YHWH's work of raising the dead are rooted in the Torah. The prophetic writings and the Hagiographa regenerate the ancient hope and faith for the benefit of the community of faith. Israel attributed the source of the resurrection of the dead to the power and work of YHWH the living God, who has sovereign power over life and death. YHWH provides unilateral grace to give eternal life to his people, that is, the Spirit of God. By giving his own Spirit, YHWH opens a newer way of establishing relationship with his people. This way is different from the way of the Law that the people of God were required to fulfill before the coming of the new way of grace in the Messiah.

#### **YHWH's Sovereignty over Life and Death**

**First Samuel 2:6.** Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:6 reflects Deuteronomy 32:39c that YHWH has sovereignty over death and life. 1 Samuel 2:6 adds an interpretative element of the resurrection of the dead in the citation of the Deuteronomy text.<sup>55</sup> While the MT of Deuteronomy 32:39c succinctly proclaims that YHWH has the power to "kill and make live (אני אמית ואחיה)," Hannah professes her faith in 1 Samuel 2:6 that YHWH is the one who can "kill and make live ( יהוה ממית ( והמחיה), and who can "bring down to Sheol and bring up (מוריד שאול ויעל)."

1 Samuel 2:6 shows that a pious Israelite understood Deuteronomy 32:39c

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<sup>55</sup>Since 1 Sam 2:6 borrows only part of Deut 32:39, the verse is divided into four different segments for the purpose of convenience in discussion.

39a ראו עתה כי אני אני הוא

39b ואין אלהים עמדי

39c אני אמית ואחיה מחצתי ואני ארפא

39d ואין מידי מציל

as a reference to the resurrection of the dead. Being an ordinary woman with no professional education of the Scriptures, Hannah probably professed her faith in YHWH's power to raise the dead reflecting the common contemporary view of the pious Israelites. Martin-Achard argues that 1 Samuel 2:6 neither speaks of revivification of the dead nor contains eschatological sense, but simply acknowledges that the power of God is limitless and divine. He insists that the expression "to raise up from Sheol" means "to deliver from some serious sickness." What is envisaged in the song of Hannah is not the resurrection of the dead, but the simple assertion of God's intervention.<sup>56</sup> However, if the text only acknowledges the power of God but has no actual effect, the praise of God's power would be mere empty words.

A trajectory of exegetical traditions of Deuteronomy 32:39c is observed in the comparison of Deuteronomy 32:39c, 1 Samuel 2:6, and Jewish traditions of interpreting 2 Samuel 2:6. 'Killing and making alive' in Deuteronomy 32:39c was understood as a reference to the resurrection of the dead in 1 Samuel 2:6. Further, the Targum of 1 Samuel 2:6 adds the sense of 'eternal life' to qualify the kind of resurrection as 'resurrection into eternal life (לאסקא בחיי עלמא).' This interpretative tradition was carried through everyday liturgical prayers like the Amidah. Both the Targum of 1 Samuel 2:6 and the second benediction of the Amidah designate YHWH's deed of raising the dead as one of the Gevurot ("the powers") of YHWH (גבורתא דיי). The second benediction of the Amidah, which contains the praise of YHWH whose mighty deeds give life, sustain life, and revive the dead, is titled as "the Gevurot (powers) of YHWH."

It seems that Jesus alluded to the targumic interpretation of 1 Samuel 2:6 in his debate with the Sadducees on resurrection Matthew 22:29 (cf. Mark 12:24). Jesus used the same kind of tie between the resurrection of the dead and the might

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<sup>56</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 56-57.

of YHWH as in the Targum of 1 Samuel 2:6. In Matthew 22:29 (cf. Mark 12:24), Jesus dismissed the Sadducees' view on resurrection as ignorance both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. Also, Jesus assumes eternal life in the occurrence of resurrection. Laid beyond human understanding, yet the resurrection of the dead is certainly grounded in the Scriptures and represents the unique power of YHWH.

First Samuel 2:6 is not the only place in the OT that contains allusion to Deuteronomy 32:39c. Sysling provides more parallels of Deuteronomy 32:39c from the prophetic writings (1 Sam 2:6; Isa 43:11-13; Hos 6:1-2; cf. Hos 5:14-15; Job 5:18; Isa 19:22; 30:26).<sup>57</sup> The contrasting motifs of life-death or smiting-healing are employed in Hosea 6:1-2, Job 5:18, Isaiah 19:22, and 30:26. These recurring allusions to the power of YHWH indicate that YHWH's sovereignty over death and life (including wounding and healing) was regarded as an essential characteristic of YHWH's power.

**Hosea 13:14.** YHWH's victory over death is anticipated in the prophetic writings of the OT. Having intruded into God's creation for Adam's disobedience, death held sway over all humanity. The fear of death is expressed with the negative descriptions of Sheol, which is a place of "no remembrance" (Job 24:19, 20; Pss 6:5; 88:13; Eccl 9:5), "no work or thought or wisdom" (Job 14:21; Eccl 9:10), and "no hope" (Isa 38:18).<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, it is a place of "no thanksgiving or praise" (Ps 6:5; Isa 38:18) where communion with God has ceased.

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<sup>57</sup>Sysling, *Tehiyyat Ha-Metim*, 242-43.

<sup>58</sup>Tromp describes Sheol with the concept of multiple negations. In his category, Sheol is a place of "no possessions" (Job 15:29; Ps 49:17), "no memory" (Ps 88:13; Eccl 9:5), "no knowledge" (Job 14:21; Eccl 9:10), "no return" (2 Sam 12:23; Job 7:9; 10:21; 16:22; Prov 2:19) and "no end" (Jer 51:39; Job 14:21; 16:22). Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 187-90.

Such death appears as YHWH's enemy in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.<sup>59</sup> Preuss asserts that even though Yahweh has the power over Sheol, the "kingdom and its inhabitants lie outside of YHWH's interest."<sup>60</sup> However, these texts show that the redemption of his people out of the sway of death is a central concern to YHWH. Through the prophets he promised to swallow up death and wipe away tears and disgrace from all people who have awaited his redemption. The plagues and sting of death would no longer harm his people.

There has been a dispute over the understanding of Hosea 13:14,<sup>61</sup> whether it is speaking of God's ultimate triumph over death or, rather, that death appears to be a mere instrument of God's judgment against Israel. For the former view, verse 14a should be read as an indicative declaration that affirms the certainty of Yahweh's redemption of his people from the power of death. For the latter view, on the other hand, verse 14a is regarded as a compound question, and it has nothing to do with YHWH's victory over death or the salvation of the people. It, rather, has to do with YHWH's battle against his rebellious people by summoning death as the instrument of his wrath. In this case the text is about the surety of impending judgment of Yahweh against Israel. Thus, Paul's citation of the verse in the context of celebration of resurrection is a totally different reading from the original meaning of Hosea.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 11.

<sup>60</sup>Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:263. Preuss suggests Isa 38:11 and Ps 88:6, 11 as his proof texts.

<sup>61</sup>The verse is divided into five different segments for the purpose of convenience in discussion.

14a מִיַּד שְׂאוֹל אֶפְדֶּם  
 14b מִמּוֹת אֲגָאֵלִם  
 14c אֱהִי דְבַרְיָךְ מוֹת  
 14d אֱהִי קִטְבְּךָ שְׂאוֹל  
 14e נַחַם יִסְתֵּר מֵעֵינַי

<sup>62</sup>Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 89.

At the first glimpse, it might appear attractive to read verse 14a as a compound question and the entire verse as an indication of YHWH's invocation of death to bring judgment over sinful Israel since it lies in the middle of the context of judgment and punishment over Israel. However, there are good reasons to reject such a reading. First, as McComiskey argues, there is no grammatical indication that verse 14a is a question.<sup>63</sup> Several examples are found in Hosea where clauses are indicative while having the construction of a prepositional phrase with an imperfect verb (Hos 5:10; 7:14, 15).<sup>64</sup>

Second, verse 14c and verse 14d should not be taken as YHWH's invocation of death to punish Israel. Rather, the interrogative beginning with “where (איה)” is a speech seasoned with taunt over against the enemy death. Garrett provides a convincing observation that a question beginning with “where” commonly carries in the OT a sense of scoff against an impotent enemy.<sup>65</sup> The plagues and destructive power of death shy away from before YHWH.

Third, the abrupt contextual change from the certainty of future punishment (vv. 12, 13) to assurance of future deliverance (v. 14) is a typical rhetorical strategy in the book of Hosea. It has been observed that this rhetorical strategy is used in other places of the book like 1:6-10; 5:14-6:2; 11:8-9; and 12:8-9.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Thomas Edward McComiskey, “Hosea,” in *The Minor Prophets*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 223.

<sup>64</sup>These verses employ the construction of a prepositional phrase with an imperfect verb. Yet, their meanings are certainly indicative.

5:10b עליהם אשפך כמים עברתי  
7:14b על־דגן ותירש יתגוררו  
7:15b ואלי יחשבו רע

<sup>65</sup>Deut 32:37; Judg 9:38; 2 Kgs 18:34; 19:13; Pss 42:3, 10; 79:10; 115:2; Isa 19:12; 36:19; 37:13; Jer 17:15; Joel 2:17; Mic 7:10 are the exemplary passages in which the “where is” formula is used in the sense of taunt. Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 264.

<sup>66</sup>McComiskey, “Hosea,” 223-34; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 265.

In these instances, the surety of both YHWH's future deliverance and the unavoidable judgment is affirmed.

In Hosea 13, YHWH's triumph over death makes a contrast with Israel's mortal kings and rulers who were to subject to the destructive power of death. Idols and mortal kings and rulers failed to save Israel. Yet, YHWH demonstrates that he alone is the true savior by breaking the power of death and by bringing salvation beyond the constraint of death. The same motif of victory over death is presented in Isaiah 25:8 as well. By repeating the motif, these writings in the OT lead Israel to an aspiration for the day when death is swallowed up, when every knee bows and every tongue swears that YHWH is the only God and savior (cf. Isa 45:23).

### **The Spirit of Life**

God provided his people with a way to have communion with God which is designed to give life to the people. The way is through the law. By observing the law, Israel was promised to 'live,' remaining in the fellowship with God. However, Israel failed to achieve the life to which the law was supposed to lead. Deuteronomy 29:4 hinted the new phase of God's working in the giving of "a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear," which were not given "until now (by the time of Moses)." Under the condition of this "uncircumcised heart" Israel's failure was predicted by Moses for sure that they would turn from the law (Deut 31:29; cf. Jer 9:26).

The provision of the new heart and the Spirit is promised in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14; 39:29). By these unilateral acts of God, on the one hand, Israel is made to accomplish the requirements of the law, and subsequently achieve 'life' (Ezek 37:9, 14). On the other hand, the relationship of Israel with God can be restored in the direction God has designed that YHWH alone becomes the God of Israel and Israel his people (Ezek 11:20; 36:28).

In the OT, YHWH is known as the living God (Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam

17:26; 2 Kgs 19:4; Hos 2:1; Ps 42:2, etc).<sup>67</sup> The living God is known as one eternally living (Gen 21:33 אל עולם; Deut 33:27 אלהי קדם; Isa 57:15 שכן עד; Dan 4:34 חי עלמא; 12:7 חי העולם). The eternally living God gives his own Spirit to let his people 'live.' It was argued in the previous chapter that the purview of life in the Torah given by observing the law is wider than mundane life; rather, it prospects life beyond the grave. Even by giving his own Spirit, YHWH wants his people to 'live' and become their eternal portion (Ps 73:26).

### **Call for Reconsideration and Studies on More Texts in the OT**

Mowinckel states that there was no eschatology in the early prophetic writings of the OT. He asserts that Israel's religion was preeminently mundane, realistic, and focused on life in this world, until eschatology had developed in the later period of Judaism and became dominant in Jesus' teaching.<sup>68</sup> Conversely, Dahood asserts that the eschatological idea of resurrection and eternal life permeated the OT writings from the early period of Israel's history. In his three-volume commentary on Psalms, he reconsiders the traditional interpretations of a large number of passages in the Psalms, giving them an eschatological sense.<sup>69</sup>

Did Dahood exploit OT passages to input an eschatological-theological agenda in those texts? Or, did the critical scholars decisively disregard the evidence for resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the OT? Dahood's attempt of reading

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<sup>67</sup>אל חי (Josh 3:10; Hos 2:1; Ps 42:2; Ps 84:2), אלהים חי (2 Kgs 19:4, 16), אלהים חיים, (Deut 5:26; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Jer 10:10), etc.

<sup>68</sup>Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), 130, 154.

<sup>69</sup>For the examples of passages Dahood translates in an eschatological sense, see his commentaries for those passages: Pss 1:3, 5; 5:9; 11:7; 16:10, 11; 17:15; 21:7; 27:4; 56:14; 61:3, 8; 63:3; 69:29; 91:15, 16. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I 1-50*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966). Idem, *Psalms II 51-100*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1968).

eschatology in the Psalms might appear too excessive. Yet, indeed, the OT speaks of eschatological resurrection and eternal life more often than critical scholars allow. To disregard all those texts with a clear idea of resurrection and eternal life in the OT as late redactional insertions, based not on textual and contextual evidences but on an assertive presupposition and conjectures, brings about torturous complications and confusions in the exegesis of those texts.

Scriptural examination of the Torah and the rest of the OT writings provides a firm ground to conclude that the concepts of eternal life and resurrection are firmly rooted in the Torah and have been continually refreshed and revealed anew through the prophets and other writings in the OT. The concepts are not products of later development out of religious and theological necessity. The hope of resurrection from the dead and eternal life began from the moment when the first Adam lost 'life' designed for man, expressed in Abraham's faith, shared in the law, and awaited by the faithful in the OT.

This paper is not thorough in dealing with OT passages that could possibly be read with an eschatological sense. There are certainly more texts in the OT which carry the idea of resurrection from the dead and eternal life, but have not been discussed in this dissertation. Further studies and discussions on this subject will help to bridge the chasm between the two ends of the spectrum of OT eschatology.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Other texts noteworthy in regard to eschatological idea are Pss 16:11; 86:12-13; 110:1-5; Hos 6:1-3; Eccl 3:11-17.

CHAPTER 5  
THEOLOGICAL RECONSIDERATION

Discussions on the scriptural evidences for these eschatological ideas in the OT are provided in the previous two chapters. In chapter 1, it is mentioned that different views on OT eschatology are related to different views on OT thanatology. It is worthwhile to review the OT view of death to assess the relevancy of an OT eschatology. This chapter will discuss on theological grounds the resurrection of the dead and eternal life from the perspective of how the OT speaks of death.

**Theology of Death in the OT**

A significant number of Old Testament scholars view that the OT regards death as an event in the human life cycle as natural as the rising and dying of plants in the field.<sup>1</sup> They claim that man was created mortal from the beginning, and there is no hostility towards death in the OT. Death, Bailey argues, is not “an irrational intruding enemy but part of an ordered, controlled harmonious creation.”<sup>2</sup> Martin-Achard goes on to say that God has neither originally intended to make death a punishment of sin, nor has he purposed a redemption from death. Unlike God’s original intention on death, he argues, due to Adam and his descendants’ sin, that death was “transformed” into an unnatural event and a breach occurred between

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<sup>1</sup>John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 633; Otto Kaiser and Eduard Lohse, *Death and Life* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 23; Leonard J. Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” in *Traditions in Transformation*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 252.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 58.

God and man.<sup>3</sup>

To assess the critical statements on death, it is necessary to review what the OT speaks of death. What is the beginning and end of death? How did the people in the OT describe death? Answering these basic questions benefits in a couple of ways. First, it will show that the critical view on death does not accord with what the OT speaks of death. Second, it will help to set a stepping-stone for a better understanding of OT eschatology.

### **Beginning of Death**

The first place in the OT where death language appears is the second chapter of Genesis. A commandment of God and the penalty of breaking the terms are provided in Genesis 2:16-17.<sup>4</sup> As it is apparent in the first chapters of Genesis, death was not the definite fate of humanity. This does not mean that the first man was made immortal. The possibility of eternal life was laid at the tree of life. If death was something “harmonious” or “natural” in creation, it is very odd that God warns the first man of dying. God’s announcement of the penalty of death to the first man was not like a parent’s warning a child of accidents of death as if saying ‘although everybody dies one day, be careful of untimely death before the full days of your life.’

God commanded the first man that he should not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for eating the prevented fruit is more

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament*, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1960), 20-21, 49. For more scholarly view that regard death in the OT as a natural and normal lot of man, see Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 90-92. James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 6. Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” 252; Kaiser and Lohse, *Death and Life*, 23; Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 633.

<sup>4</sup>As mentioned in chapter 1, Gen 2:16 hires an apparent gloss of commandment language צוה.

than clearly enunciated that he will ‘surely die.’ Verse 17 repeats the verb מוֹת in the emphatic construction of infinitive absolute with the indefinite verb (מוֹת תָּמוּת) to give the stern warning. There is a debate whether Genesis 2 and 3 speak of sin and its penalty of death. Barr argues that there is no major involvement of themes like sin and evil in Genesis 2 and 3.<sup>5</sup> Since the first couple did not immediately die after their disobedience, he states, there is no indication that the OT designates sin as the cause of death. Conversely, Hamilton retains the traditional interpretation of מוֹת תָּמוּת in verse 17 rendering it as “doomed to die.” Although the penalty was not executed soon after the disobedience of eating of the prohibited tree, the sentence of death is viewed as a “deferred penalty.”<sup>6</sup>

The emphatic construction of infinitive absolute of the verb מוֹת followed by the indefinite verb מוֹת occurs 46 times throughout the entire OT. Adumbratively, the usages are divided into three categories: (a) as the expression of fear of death,<sup>7</sup> (b) as an announcement of the definite sentence of death,<sup>8</sup> and (c) as a warning against future sentence of death on the condition of breaking the term of the commandments.<sup>9</sup> There are a couple of cases that fall into the category (a), and they do not involve the actual possibility of death. Categories (b) and (c) involve the actual death sentence. Only one case from the category (b) refers to immediate

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<sup>5</sup>Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 9-10.

<sup>6</sup>Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 173.

<sup>7</sup>See Jud 13:22; 2 Sam 14:14.

<sup>8</sup>Seven cases in category (b) are as such: Num 26:65; 1 Sam 14:44; 1 Sam 22:16; 2 Sam 12:14; 2 Kgs 1:4, 6; 2 Kgs 8:10.

<sup>9</sup>The examples of cases in category (c) are as such: Gen 20:7, 26:11; Exod 19:12; 21:12; 31:14; Lev 20:2; 24:16; Num 15:35; Jud 21:5; 1 Sam 14:39; 1 Kgs 2:37; Jer 26:8; Ezek 3:18; 18:13; 33:8. The rest cases fall in the category (c), without having immediate execution of death anticipated.

execution of the death penalty.<sup>10</sup> The emphatic phrase מות תמות in Genesis 2:17 seems to fall in the case of (c).

In case of breaking the terms, that is, eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the party on obligation of keeping the terms is doomed to death. The phrase communicates the certainty of death but not the immediacy. It is not uncommon that the Hebrew Bible employs the construction of infinitive absolute with the indefinite verb מות having the future execution of death secured. Adam and Eve did not die soon after they ate the fruit. Although being not immediate, the certainty of the execution of death was not in doubt.

Genesis 3:19 also provides support that the meaning of death in Genesis 2:17 is associated with “returning to dust.” Some argue that the actual punishment did not lie in death, but the fear of death and the toilsome work.<sup>11</sup> However, the text is more than clear to understand that physical death with decomposition to dust is sentenced as the punishment as it was warned in 2:16-17. Thus, the traditional interpretation of the text, which regards death as the consequence of the sin of the first man, remains supported. Although the first couple did not physically die immediately after eating the fruit, the clock for physical death started ticking. Not only they became spiritually dead after eating the fruit, their body would also surely die.

The immediate changes after the first couple took the prevented fruit was that their eyes were opened, they got to know their nakedness, and they judged that

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<sup>10</sup>The immediate execution of death penalty is found in 1 Sam 22:16 where King Saul decided to kill Ahimelech the high priest. The other six cases in category (b) refer to the announcement of the definite sentence of death, but without its immediate execution.

<sup>11</sup>Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 9; cf. Paul Woodson Armes, “The Concept of Dying in the Old Testament” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981), 89.

the nakedness was not good (טוב) but evil (רע) for them. They tried to solve the problem of evil on their own. These changes do not appear to be the results or symptoms of death. These changes came from eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, not from death. But these changes became subordinate reasons of death. God had to keep the way to the tree of life from fallen humanity, so that they would not live forever with the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:22-24). By losing the way of life eternal, the fallen humanity had no way to avoid death.

### **Description of Death in the OT**

Death is depicted as a multifaceted entity in the OT. On the one hand, the intervention of death is a device of grace for depraved humanity. It is unlikely that God wanted to keep the privilege of knowing good and evil to himself alone by blocking the way to the tree of life, and subsequently by bringing death to humanity. Rather, keeping the way to the tree of life from fallen humanity is God's grace. The knowledge of good and evil is not just a wisdom or intellectual capability to discern what is good and what is evil. Knowledge of something, in Hebraic concept, includes firsthand experience of it. Knowing good and evil includes experiencing good and evil. How torturous it would be if someone had to live with no end of sufferings, agony, anguish, tears of sins in the depraved condition experiencing unending goods and evils.

On the other hand, death is an unwelcome consequence. Gowan argues that "death in itself is no great tragedy," rather, it is to be "accepted as the normal conclusion of a long and fulfilled life."<sup>12</sup> However, such a view does not accord with the OT writings on death. Death brought in horrendous fear and enormous tears for its gruesome reality. The funeral mourning rites in Israel express the gravity of

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<sup>12</sup>Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 90.

death. The OT's funeral mourning rites are observed by de Vaux such as tearing ones garments (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 1:11; 3:31; 13:31; Job 1:20), putting on sackcloth (37:34; 2 Sam 3:31), taking off one's shoes (2 Sam 15:30; Ezek 24:17, 23; Mic 1:8), taking off headdress (Ezek 24:17, 23), covering one's beard (Ezek 24:17, 23), and veiling one's face (2 Sam 19:5; cf. 15:30).<sup>13</sup> In addition to these rites, Israel mourned in weeping for the dead for a certain period of time (Gen 23:2; 50:10; Num 20:29; Deut 34:8; 1 Sam 25:1). All these rites represent not only the depth of sorrow at the loss of a loved one, but also the gravity of the human fate of death. Seeing the death of man, made in the image of the eternally living God, made for the eternal relationship with God, is full of pain, grief, and shock. Death is a sorrowful reminder that something is wrong with the creation.

Sheol (שְׁאוֹל) is the most common word to refer to the 'abode of the dead,' and used as a synonym of death (2 Sam 22:6).<sup>14</sup> Generally, death/sheol is described in the concept of multiple negations. Sheol is described as a place of "no possessions" (Job 15:29; Ps 49:17), "no memory" (Job 24:19, 20; Pss 6:5; 88:13; Eccl 9:5), "no knowledge" (Job 14:21; Eccl 9:10), "no return" (2 Sam 12:23; Job 7:9; 10:21; 14:21; 16:22; Prov 2:19; Jer 51:39), and "no praise of God or thanksgiving" (Isa 38:18).<sup>15</sup>

Despite its negative imageries, no enmity against death is observed from the human party. Man surrendered to the fate of death; death is accepted as the

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<sup>13</sup>Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), 61.

<sup>14</sup>The word *Sheol* occurs 66 times in the OT (eg. Gen 37:35; Num 16:33; Job 7:9). It is frequently employed in the poetic writings such as Job and Psalms. Johnston provides a well organized table of the occurrences of the word Sheol in the Old Testament. Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 71.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World In the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 187-90.

inevitable reality of every man (1 Kgs 2:2; Eccl 7:2). Dying in peace after living full days was conceived as a blessing from YHWH. Frequently, death in the OT gives a nuance of rest through the euphemistic expressions like ‘to be gathered to the fathers’ (Gen 49:29; Judg 2:10) or “to sleep with the fathers” (eg., 1 Kgs 2:10; 11:21; 2 Kgs 8:24).<sup>16</sup>

In terms of physical death, the OT does not differentiate the death of the righteous from the death of the wicked. In some places of the OT, however, death appears to communicate ‘death of death,’ which indicates a negative experience beyond physical death. The example of Deuteronomy 33:6 was discussed in chapter 2. In Jewish tradition death in Deuteronomy 33:6 was interpreted as a reference to ‘the second death,’ which connotes YHWH’s punishment over the wicked in the world to come. In rabbinic tradition the second death means the exclusion from eternal life. This rabbinic interpretation of ‘the second death’ as an indication of death beyond physical death is supported by the NT reference to ‘the second death’ (Rev 20:14). More instances in which death is interpreted as references to ‘death of death’ are found in the Prophets and the Hagiographa (Isa 22:14; 65:6; 65:15; Jer 51:39; 51:57; Ps 49:11).<sup>17</sup>

### **Is Genesis 2 and 3 Myth?**

Certain critical scholars view Genesis 2 and 3 as myths borrowed from the ANE literature. O. Kaiser and Lohse view the story of temptation and sin in Genesis 2 and 3 not as a historical reality but as mythical symbols. They think the biblical

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<sup>16</sup>For more examples of the expression “to sleep with the fathers,” see 1 Kgs 11:43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6, 28; 22:40, 50; 2 Kgs 8:24; 10:35; 13:9, 13; 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6; 2 Chr 9:31; 12:16; 14:1; 16:13; 21:1; 26:2, 23; 27:9; 28:27; 32:33; 33:20.

<sup>17</sup>Harry Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim* (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1996), 210-26.

writer of the story borrowed from the Babylonian myth of Adapa.<sup>18</sup> Anu in the stories of Adapa is regarded as a parallel to the snake in Genesis 3 in that both offered something to eat. However, except the topics of offering food and eternal life, the difference between the two stories is much greater. While the former offered to eat the bread for life, the snake in Genesis 3 offered to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil by deceiving that death would not occur.

Hallote argues that the Israelites' concept of Sheol was influenced by Canaanite mythology, and the Hebrew word מוֹת is the Canaanite god of death. She continues to say that the feminine noun Sheol is a cognate with a Syrian goddess named Shuwala, reflecting the influence of foreign religion. With the mythical interpretation of the first chapters in Genesis, death is presented as a deity.<sup>19</sup> However, Hallote's argument that death (מוֹת) and Sheol (שְׁאוֹל) were active deities in the life of ancient Israel is a mere conjecture without biblical evidence. While death is personified in poetic expressions such as Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14, there is no indication in the OT that death was considered as a deity, having a rivalry power against the sovereignty of Yahweh (Job 11:8; Isa 28:15, 18). Rather, the personification of death in the OT is a figure of speech in the poetic literature.

Without distorting or amending passages in the OT, these critical opinions cannot accord with the writings of the OT. God's lamentation in Hoses 6:7 testifies that Adam's covenant breaking was a historical event. The result of covenant-breaking by the first man deeply grieved God. If the record of Genesis 2 and 3 were

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<sup>18</sup>Kaiser and Lohse, *Death and Life*, 23. For the parallel of the stories of Adapa and Gen 3, see Victor Matthews and Don Benjamin, "The Story of Adapa," in *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 43-46.

<sup>19</sup>Nahum Sarna shared a similar view on his comment on Job 18. He argues that "the references to 'death' in Job 18 were actually meant to refer to the Canaanite god of death whose name was Mot." Janet K. Smith, *Dust or Dew: Immortality in the Ancient Near East and in Psalm 49* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 30-31.

an unhistorical myth borrowed from pagan literature, God's lamentation over Adam's covenant breaking and its corollary result would have been absurd and nonsensical.<sup>20</sup>

These critical opinions are also revolutionary challenges to an ontologically essential part of Christianity. If the story in Genesis 2 and 3 were an unhistorical myth borrowed from a pagan literature, there would be no ground for Jesus' redemption from sin and death to be historical and real. Paul's teaching in the NT also takes it as historically real. In Romans 5:12 and 6:23, death is clearly presented as a result of sin.

Was death placed within the original plan of God's creation? No, death was not the original divine dispensation for humanity. Johnston comments that to say death is an original norm in the Old Testament is an overstatement.<sup>21</sup> Although a large number of scholars say for dust to return to the ground is an original plan of God as a natural result of humanity's mortality, and death is not contingent upon sin, the Bible unambiguously communicates that death is a painful cost that every one of fallen humanity has to pay due to their sin.

## End of Death

Is there the end of death? Since critical scholars view death as a natural part of creation, death is not viewed as something with an innate problem. However,

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<sup>20</sup>There is a debate about the meaning of "Adam" in Hos 6:7. Because of אָדָם in the latter half of the verse, "Adam" is understood as a reference to a place. Garrett view that wordplay on the name of the town Adam and the name of the first man Adam is involved in the verse. On reading the name "Adam," the reader could naturally assume the first transgressor Adam as a reference point. But when the verse said "there," the reference point could shift to a place Adam. Thus, it is still a legitimate to view that the verse involves the transgression of the first man Adam as a historical fact. On this discussion, see Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 162-63.

<sup>21</sup>Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 41.

there are at least a couple of passages in which YHWH decisively expressed his will to demolish death. In Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 death is pictured as the enemy of YHWH and as the object of God's 'swallowing up.' Consequently, tears over the faces of all people will be wiped away, and the disgrace of God's people will be removed. Besides these explicit passages that give the hope of demolition of death, the hope of overcoming death was expressed throughout the passages with hope of resurrection and of the Messiah. The OT designates the triumph over death to the sovereign work of YHWH and his Messiah. People living under the shadow of death will see the great light in the Messiah, and the power of death would be annihilated (Isa 9:2).

The OT anticipates the gift of the Spirit to renew the creation and to change the heart of the unfaithful to obey the law by heart (cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14; 39:29). The living God wants life for his people. The depraved creation had to stream from life to death. By the Spirit of life given through the redemptive work of the Messiah YHWH plans to revert the stream from death to life. Death cannot remain untouched, but its gate must have been broken for YHWH's sovereign work of salvation for his people (Isa 26:19).

The NT testifies that the awaited Messiah indeed came to destroy the power of death and brought life eternal (2 Tim 1:10). The Apostle Paul assesses death as the "last enemy" in 1 Corinthians 15:26. Goldingay asserts that Paul's teaching on death does not accord with the OT idea of death. He views that there is no denigration of death in the OT. However, as discussed in chapter 4, death is actually presented as the 'last enemy' in the writings of Isaiah. After a series of judgments of destruction over nations in Isaiah 9 through Isaiah 24, the final judgment comes on death before the song of victory in Isaiah 26. The climax of YHWH's judgment is placed in his victory over death (Isa 25:7-8).

## After Death

There have been archaeological approaches to prove or disprove the existence of the belief in postmortem life among ancient Israelites. The burial items in the Israelites tombs, paintings in the tombs, and the tomb inscriptions were scrutinized in the expectation of finding evidence for belief in postmortem life. In the past, some of the burial items were interpreted as indication of belief in afterlife.<sup>22</sup> However, recent archaeological investigation shows that these findings from the ancient Israelites' tombs are not conclusive evidence to decide whether the Israelites believed in life beyond the grave or not. Rutgers's investigation of Jewish funerary inscriptions from tombs of Beth She'arim shows that a number of inscriptions contained an explicit reference to eternal life. Nevertheless, the absence of such an explicit reference to eternal life on the inscriptions does not disprove belief in eternal life. As Rutgers pointed out, most early Christian inscriptions did not contain indication to resurrection, even though the early Christians held strong faith in resurrection.<sup>23</sup>

A contrary archaeological observation is made by Hallote on the basis of the fact that ancient Israelites tombs had capping stones at the gates. She argues that the fact the Israelites sealed off the tombs confirms that ancient Israelites did not believe in the actual possibility of resurrection, for the capping stones would hinder a resurrected body from leaving a tomb.<sup>24</sup> Her farfetched interpretation of archaeological data demonstrates the obscurity of interpreting archaeological data.

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<sup>22</sup>John H. Otwell, "Immortality in the Old Testament: A Review of the Evidence," *Encounter* 22 (1961): 16.

<sup>23</sup>Leonard V. Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 161.

<sup>24</sup>Rachel S. Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 141.

Lazarus' burial in John 11 proves that ancient Israelites who believed in the resurrection of the dead put the capping stone at the gate of the tomb. Christians who firmly affirmed faith in the bodily resurrection after death never mind sealing the tombs. If the gate of death could not prevent the power of God from raising the dead, no capping stone of the gate of a tomb is able to do so.

Wirgin provides convincing data which proves no direct correlation between the burial customs and faith in resurrection of the dead exists. Many of the Jews of Rome did not leave inscriptions or symbols which indicate the hope of resurrection, although they had strong concern and faith in resurrection. As Rahmani pointed out, the Pharisaic rabbis in the first century A.D. recommended making the burial very simple while holding and teaching strong faith in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the deduced conclusion from the observation of the archaeological data is that the correlation coefficient is very low between faith in resurrection or eternal life and burial remains.<sup>26</sup>

As is well known, the ANE world held beliefs in afterlife, resurrection, and eternal life. The Egyptian Pyramid Text (from the third Millennium), the Coffin Text (2000 B.C.), and the Book of the Dead (1500 B.C.) represent the Egyptians' great concern for afterlife. The belief in immortality was so predominant in ancient Egypt that the Egyptians spent so many resources to prepare a noble and happy life after death. Mesopotamian belief in eternal life is found in the ancient literature in the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh and the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer (ANET 437d). These texts prove that the idea of afterlife or eternal life existed from ancient times.

Despite geographical distance, the ancient people from different corners of

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<sup>25</sup>Levi-Yitzhak Rahmani, "Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs," *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982): 43-53.

<sup>26</sup>Wolf Wirgin, "The *Menorah* as Symbol of After-Life," *Israel Exploration Journal* 14 (1964): 102-4.

the world shared some kind of common idea that life does not end on this side of the grave and held special concerns for future life and judgment. It can be easily inferred that the ancient Israelites were well aware of these ancient beliefs. Compared to other ancient nations, the Israelites in the OT were silent on the state of the dead.

The relative silence on the postmortem state of death is probably related with the idiosyncratic faith in resurrection of the dead. On the day of YHWH's redemption and judgment, everyone is judged according to one's own deeds. The OT teaches that the fate of the dead depends solely on the life on earth. There is no chance of changing the fate once died. Thus, how one lives on earth has eternal value. Until the day of YHWH's redemption, the OT silently encourages the people of God to live in faithful relationship with God. For the dead, they are laid as those in sleep waiting for the day of the Messiah and the day of his redemption from the power of death.

### **Crossroads: Life or Death**

The first two chapters of the OT vibrated with the creation of life. The nature of the living God bursted forth throughout six-day's amazing work of creation. In the climax of the giving of life was laid the first Adam. The clod of dust was made alive with the breath of life of the living God. In the life-filled world, the first man stood on the crossroads of two ways. One way was to life, and the other to death. Death had not been tasted yet. He was commanded to choose life by keeping himself (with his mate) from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But He failed to keep the commandment. He failed to choose life.

The first Adam might not have imagined the extensity and intensity of the terrible aftermath of his disobedience, just as the men of Noah's day could not imagine the extent of the horrendous destruction by the flood. The consequence of breaking the commandment was so tremendously destructive that all humanity was

passed to the slavery of death. The repetitive records of death of the first patriarchs in Genesis 5 show that death became a “norm” and an “inevitability.”

Then Israel stood on the crossroads of two ways, the way to life and the way to death. God called out Abraham to set up a covenantal relationship with him and his descendants. Through the seed of Abraham, God planned to establish his redemptive work for life. The world in which Israel was standing, however, was unlike the world in which the first Adam was standing before the crossroads. Death has already been sweeping out in the creation. Sorrows and tears of death were covering over all humanity.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20, at the end of giving of the law, Moses spoke to Israel that two different ways, one of life and good and the other of death and evil, were set before them. He exhorted Israel to choose life (v. 19). By fulfilling the requirements of the law—by loving YHWH their God and keeping the commandments of the law—Israel could live (v. 16).

The life language repeatedly occurs throughout the last book of the Torah (Deut 4:1, 5:33, 6:24, 8:1, 16:20, 30:6, 16; cf. 30:19) as if it alludes to the way of life in the first chapters of Genesis. In the place of the first Adam, Israel stood before the two ways of life and death. However, just as the first Adam failed to keep the commandment of YHWH, so did Israel. Actually, Moses predicted Israel’s failure even before Israel entered the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy 30:18 Moses prophesied that Israel would surely perish and their days in the land would not prolong. It did not take long before the nation Israel was taken over by the foreign kingdoms. The lifespan of Israel in the Promised Land was shorter than the lifespan of the first Adam.

The history of Israel was painted with death and destruction. Yet, the writings of the prophets delivered the hope of restoration from death. In the world of the shadow of death, YHWH promised to send a great light (Isa 9:2). In the world

devastated by death, the promise of the Spirit of life was given (Ezek 11:19; 36:26-28; 37:14; 39:29; cf. Joel 2:28-29). Through the Spirit of life, the God of Israel would be acknowledged as the God of life. The OT closed its end (in chronological order) by closing the gate to life which is by the observance of the law. But it opened a new gate to life which is by the grace of YHWH.

Finally, the second Adam stood before two ways, the way to life and the way to death. He stood for the sake of all humanity. He stood as the ultimate servant of YHWH. Unlike the first Adam and Israel, the second Adam successfully chose the way to life by obeying and fulfilling God's commandments to the point of his death. On the one hand, he loved God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his life. On the other hand, he proved his love for the sinful neighbors. He loved them as himself and laid down his life for them.

The NT emphasized the role of the Messiah in giving eternal life.<sup>27</sup> The promise of the coming Messiah in the OT cannot be separated from the promise of life in the OT. One of the primary reasons for which Jesus came is to give life to those who believe in him. His ministries of forgiveness, redemption, justification, and sanctification are all connected to the ministry of giving eternal life. Although the first Adam lost life, the second Adam restores life by breaking the power of death at his resurrection. The life that the Messiah restores, however, is not like the life given to the first Adam. In this life no room for death is left as it was at the time of the first Adam.

The terms 'eternal life' and 'resurrection' burst out in the NT writings compared to the occurrence of the terms in the OT writings. The gap between the

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<sup>27</sup>For example, Matt 18:8, 19; 19:16-30; Luke 10:25-28; 18:18-30; Mark 9:43-45; 10:17-30; 12:18-27; John 3:14-16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39-40; 6:27-68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46-48; 24:14-15; Rom 2:6-7; 5:17-21; 6:22-23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Tit 1:2; Heb 11:17-19; Jude 1:21; 1 John 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20.

OT and the NT appears huge in this change. However, this change had been anticipated in the OT for a long time. Finally, the time had arrived that the gate to life eternal became wide open and the meaning of life in the OT accurately known. Jesus and his disciples did not invent a new idea which was foreign to the OT. They proclaimed the way to eternal life more explicitly than the OT in the greater light of the Messiah in whom God provides the promised Holy Spirit for life. Through the Messiah, the Spirit of life has set free the people of God from sin and death (Rom 8:2). The gate of Sheol has been already stricken in the death and resurrection of Christ. Those who put their trust in the Messiah are moved from death and condemnation to life eternal (John 5:24).

The last chapters of the book of Revelation are dedicated to eschatological judgment after resurrection and renewal of the creation (Rev 20-22). In these last pages of the NT, God's final judgment over death is revealed. Death and Sheol were thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Rev 20:14). "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Rev 21:4) as the prophet Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 25:8.

The movement from life to death, and then from death to life is like a core theme of the OT and the NT. As Barth comments, death is the "peak of all that is contrary to God in the world."<sup>28</sup> God has to do away with death unless he wanted to do away with his creation, for he is the God of life and is full of life. In Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the requirements of the law, his followers can achieve what God has promised in the way of law-keeping, that is, eternal life which has overcome death. The interpretation of a Jew in the first century A.D. epitomizes the entire message of the OT and the NT: "for God so loved the world that he gave his one and

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<sup>28</sup>Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, trans. H. J. Stenning (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933), 169.

only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

### **The Significance of Faith in Bodily Resurrection and Eternal Life**

The resurrection of the dead and eternal life are laid at the central place of OT eschatology. To backtrack the root of these ideas and to reaffirm the OT faith in them are significant for at least the following reasons. First, reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life helps to renew the heart of the fear of God. Human life does not end on earth. People of God will wake up from the sleep of death when they hear the voice of God with the sound of the trumpet. They will stand face to face before the Lord and his Messiah, the holy one of Israel. The day is not an illusive imagination, but a sure reality that is to come. It is a call for a Christian to live in the hope of the day of resurrection. He will not stand before the Lord as a spirit. As Job confessed, he will see the Redeemer with his own eyes of a resurrected body. Thinking of the day facing the blazing eyes of the Lord, a Christian must live in the fear of God in what he thinks, what he speaks, and what he acts.

Second, reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life helps to seek for pious behaviors of righteousness and justice. This point is closely related with the first point. The Creator whom a Christian will eternally face is the righteous Judge. He does not show partiality in judging (cf. Deut 1:16; 16:18; Prov 24:23; 28:21). The early Christian writers were well aware of the moral importance of the hope of resurrection.<sup>29</sup> For example, Cyril of Jerusalem taught that

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<sup>29</sup>Athenagoras stressed that the prospect of future judgment and the faith in future life with the resurrection have moral impact on Christian living. The early catechetical lectures for baptism also expressed the motivating power of hope of resurrection in moral behavior. Athenagoras *The Treatise of Athenagoras* 3, 12, in vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), accessed, May 1, 2015,

“The root of all good works is the hope of the Resurrection; for the expectation of the recompense nerves the soul to good works” (Catechetical Lectures 18.1). A man may use clever schemes and deceiving words to blur man’s judgment. Yet, his schemes will never deceive the eyes and judgment of God.

As Calvin commented, “if the hope of the resurrection be removed, the whole edifice of piety would collapse, just as if the foundation were withdrawn from it.”<sup>30</sup> In the thought of the day on which every dot of one’s thoughts and deeds stands bare before the Judge (Heb 4:13), a Christian must remain in the life of righteousness and justice avoiding the sinful desires of the flesh—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does (1 John 2:16).

Third, reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life helps to persevere through sufferings and to remain in pure love of God. The church of Christ has endured immeasurable persecution and oppression throughout the nations. The church has remained in the love of Christ and in the hope of God through the life-threatening beatings, blood shedding, hunger, nakedness, and homelessness. Even to this very hour, there are numerous Christians and churches that are under life-threatening attack and oppression. In certain countries, a Christian is put in jail and abused for indefinite periods because of his faith in the truth of the Scriptures. Even in countries where religious freedom is assured, living as a Christian holding onto scriptural truth is very challenging. It is witnessed that many churches and Christians deviate from the biblical teaching. The baits of this world are so attractive that it is hard to resist them. By reaffirming the ancient faith

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[http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page\\_150, 155.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02, Page_150, 155.html). Cf. Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 4, 31.

<sup>30</sup>Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, 211-12.

in resurrection of the dead and eternal life, a Christian will be able to persevere through temptations and sufferings of this world, and to remain faithful to the truth of God.

Fourth, reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life helps to secure the legitimacy of the eschatological writings in the OT. The church's faith is not established on man-made religion. To approach the Scriptures from the perspective of a literature composed by human writers for certain purposes contains the danger of distorting the ancient text. At least, it needs be admitted that the modern rationality and intellect are extremely limited to fully understand the life and thought of the ancient people of the Bible. Moreover, although God's miraculous work of raising the dead sounds irrational to be accepted to the world of the natural order, resurrection is no more miraculous than the existence of man on earth (unless one believes in the evolution theory).

Fifth, reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life helps to adhere to the theological integrity and unity of the OT eschatology and the NT eschatology. Johnston asserted that the OT and the NT perspectives on eschatological fate of man are contradictory to each other.<sup>31</sup> The NT eschatological hope and teaching of resurrection and eternal life did not step into the mind of the Jews out of the influence of the politico-historical situations of the intertestamental period, as Johnston believed. They are firmly grounded upon the teaching of the OT. The teachings of Jesus and his disciples always referred to the writings in the OT. There was no era like these days wherein the apostolic teaching is challenged in severity. Rather than rashly agreeing to the critical views on the OT eschatology, the critical approach should be reevaluated with the canon of the Scriptures.

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<sup>31</sup>Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 16.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This paper argued that the foundation of the eschatological ideas of resurrection and eternal life are rooted in the writings of the Torah and continually refreshed and revealed anew through the prophets and other writings in the OT. They are not products of later development out of religious and theological need. Rather, they are rooted in the ancient faith and teaching of the OT.

#### **Summary**

##### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter 1 raised questions regarding the major critical scholarly views on the resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the OT. It has been a major conjecture by critical scholars that the ideas of individual resurrection and different fates of the dead in the OT received influence from the Zoroasters around the fourth century B.C. and religious persecution under the Hellenistic empire. According to this critical view, the ideas of resurrection of the dead and eternal life are not the original thoughts of the OT, but later insertions.

The main arguments of the critical view are summarized as such. First, there is no idea of individual immortality in the early history of Israel. Second, the OT idea of postmortem eschatology has evolved as Israel went through specific historical, theological and cultural contexts. Third, the idea of resurrection of the dead is a result of foreign influence. Fourth, the OT passages with the idea of eschatological hope are the result of redactional extrapolations. Fifth, the OT focused on mundane life and had no interest in postmortem destiny. Sixth, death is

a natural part of creation and the normal lot of man, not a consequence of sin. The major critical scholarship almost universally agreed on these opinions.

However, this critical scholarly view contains serious weaknesses in the arguments. The problems of the critical view of the OT eschatology are summarized as such. First, there is not much evidence to support the critical argument, but continuous circular reasoning. Second, modern critical scholars missed that the OT's this-worldly characteristic is related to the OT's hope for eschatological restoration of life. Third, the critical view of death does not accord with the OT view of death. Fourth, there is misunderstanding on Israel's view of theodicy. Fifth, in the critical argument, the OT and the NT eschatologies are contradictory to each other. Sixth, the belief in eternal life was present in the ANE world. There is no reason to assume that the idea of eternal life had to develop later in history. Seventh, the authenticity of OT writings on the resurrection of the dead and eternal life has not been questioned in early history.

## **Chapter 2: History of Traditions**

Chapter 2 made a survey of how the OT eschatological passages were understood in the history. The first survey was on how ancient interpreters understood the MT on resurrection of the dead. Although there is no explicit reference in the OT to 'the resurrection of the dead,' the ancient interpreters use different expressions when they present the concept. The glosses and notions in conjunction with the eschatological idea are the 'day of judgment,' 'the world to come,' 'eternal life,' 'the second death,' and 'the return of the heroes of faith.'

The second survey was on the interpretations of the Jewish writers and rabbinic traditions of resurrection of the dead. The Apocrypha (Wisdom of Solomon, the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Maccabees, the Second Book of Esdras) and the rabbinic teachings (the Shemoneh Esrei, the Talmud tradition, the medieval Jewish

exegetic tradition) were reviewed.

The third survey was on the traditional view of the church on resurrection. The early church has consistently taught the centrality of the resurrection of the dead in Christian doctrine and the continuity of the OT eschatology and the NT eschatology. They never separated the OT teaching on resurrection and eternal life from that of the NT.

Finally, the chapter concluded with a brief review of the post-Enlightenment challenges to resurrection of the dead. Challenges from critical opinions existed from early in the exegetical history. The most sweeping attack on the traditional view of resurrection in the OT began in the Enlightenment era. The historical surveys in chapter 2 show that from ancient days on, the idea of resurrection of the dead was believed rooted in the Torah.

### **Chapter 3: Scriptural Reconsideration From the Torah**

Chapter 3 examined the Torah passages where the presence of the idea of resurrection and eternal life can possibly be suggested. It presented a brief survey of rabbinical approaches to the Torah texts to see the scriptural bases of the rabbinic arguments for the resurrection of the dead (Exod 15:1; Num 15:31; Deut 11:21; Deut 31:16; Deut 32:39).

Besides the rabbinic traditional approach to estimate the presence of the idea of resurrection and eternal life in the OT, the chapter presented four areas in the Torah where the ideas of resurrection and eternal life are detected. The first area is the Torah texts with the promise of life, “Then you shall live” (Lev 18:5; Deut 30). In light of Dahood’s philological suggestion to interpret ‘life’ in some OT passages to ‘eternal life,’ the promise of life in the Torah can be understood as the eschatological promise. Such an interpretation is supported by orthodox hermeneutical traditions, and it stands in harmony with the backdrop of Genesis 2-3 in which life with no

death was suggested to the first man, but lost by his disobedience.

The second area to search for the ideas of resurrection and eternal life was the texts in the Torah where the promise of land is provided. Generally, it was believed that the land promise was fulfilled with the Israelites' conquest of the land of Canaan, and that the promise of life indicated the prosperous and long life in the Promised Land. However, the land promise cannot be fulfilled without the participation of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Moreover, the Israelites failed in conquering the *entire* Promised Land, and also failed in having right relationship with God to achieve 'life' through law keeping. These facts indicate that the land promise refers to something beyond the Promised Land.

The third area to search was the Torah texts which express faith in resurrection of the dead. The eschatological faith is found in the account of Abraham's offering a sacrifice in Moriah in Genesis 22, and in the account of the translation of Enoch (Gen 5:24). These figures either represent the ancient faith in resurrection, or arouse the faith in the heart of the audience.

The fourth area to search was the Torah texts where YHWH is presented as the source of eternal life. In the Torah YHWH is praised as the sovereign God to overcome the power of death (Deut 32:39), and as the source of life (Deut 30:20 "He is your life," Deut 5:26 "God of life," Gen 21:33 "Eternal God"). YHWH's faithfulness assures that he will keep his covenantal promises to the patriarchs (Exod 3:6) that they will rise from the dead and participate in the eschatological promise for them.

#### **Chapter 4: Scriptural Reconsideration From the Prophets and Other Writings**

Chapter 4 examined the OT passages from the Prophets and the Hagiographa where the presence of the idea of resurrection and eternal life can possibly be suggested. First, several passages in the poetic writings have more vivid pictures of resurrection of the dead and eternal life with clear language. The selected

passages for the examination were Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Daniel 12:2, Psalm 73, Job 19:25-27, and Isaiah 53:10-12. Although there are vehement arguments against supporting the ideas of resurrection and eternal life from these passages, no convincing argument is provided to prohibit such a reading. Explicitly and implicitly, these passages support the eschatological belief.

Second, the accounts of temporary resurrection wrought by prophets Elijah and Elisha (1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:18-37; 13:20-21) prefigure future resurrection that will occur through the ever living Messiah. Sometimes the historicity of the accounts is questioned, other times the extent of the miraculous works in the accounts is minimized. Yet, these certainly communicate that YHWH is able to raise the dead through his servants.

Third, the Prophets and the Hagiographa suggest a couple of aspects as the source of resurrection and eternal life: YHWH's sovereignty over life and death (1 Sam 2:6; Hos 13:14), and the giving of the Spirit of life as the source of resurrection and eternal life (Ezek 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14; 39:29).

## **Chapter 5: Theological Reconsideration**

Chapter 5 presented the theological grounds for the resurrection of the dead and eternal life from the perspective of the OT view of death and a theological structure of life-death-life. In application wise, the theological significance for reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life was presented.

The OT speaks to the truth that death began as the consequence of the first man's breaking of God's commandment. The penalty of death was pronounced not only to the first man, but also to all humanity. Once intruded in the creation, death was accepted as a "norm" in the human life cycle. Yet, death is generally depicted with negative notions. Fear and tears covered the mourning heart of the mortals. Although some argue that the stories in Genesis 2 and 3 are myths

borrowed from the ANE world, the OT affirms the historicity of the accounts (Hos 6:7; cf. Rom 5:12; 6 23).

As it began against the nature of God the Creator, the OT anticipates the eschatological destruction of death (Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14; cf. Isa 9:2). With the gift of the Spirit of life, the creation will be renewed, and the heart of the unfaithful will be changed to obey the law of God from the heart (cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14; 39:29). Death will have no place in the new creation. Until the day of YHWH's redemption, the OT encourages the people of God to live in faithful relationship with God.

The OT presents the crossroads of two ways: one leading to life, the other leading to death. The first chapter of the Torah begins with life; yet the first Adam failed to choose the way to life. Israel, the covenant people of God, stood before the crossroads. The last chapters of the Torah are filled with life language, demonstrating God's desire for the life of his people. Yet, Israel also failed to choose the way to life. In a death-prevailing world, the second Adam appeared to let the people of God walk in the way to life and to destroy the work of death. The last chapters of the Bible describe the vision of eschatological judgment after resurrection and renewal of the creation (Rev 20-22). This movement from life to death, and then from death to life is like a core theme of the OT and the NT.

Reaffirming the OT faith in resurrection of the dead and eternal life has significant meaning in our day. First, it helps to renew the heart of the fear of God. Second, it helps to seek for pious behaviors of righteousness and justice. Third, it helps to persevere through sufferings and to remain in pure love of God. Fourth, it helps to secure the legitimacy of the eschatological writings in the OT. And fifth, it helps to adhere to the theological integrity and unity of the OT eschatology and the NT eschatology.

### **Concluding Remark**

Historical, scriptural, and theological examinations of the Torah and the rest of OT writings provide relevant grounds to conclude that the concepts of eternal life and resurrection of the dead are firmly rooted in the Torah and have been continually refreshed and revealed anew through the Prophets and the Hagiographa. The eschatological writings in the OT need not be emended as if they were inserted later as the products of religious and theological need. The ancient faith in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life has more solid ground on which to stand as biblically fitting in the spirit of the OT than the critical arguments against it.

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#### **Dissertations**

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## ABSTRACT

### RECONSIDERING ETERNAL LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE IDEA OF RESURRECTION ROOTED IN THE TORAH

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This dissertation reconsiders the historical, scriptural and theological grounds for the early presence of the hope of resurrection and eternal life in the OT. Chapter 1 reviews the critical view of late development of the resurrection hope in the OT which has significant exegetical and theological defects.

Chapter 2 surveys the history of exegetical tradition regarding the idea of resurrection of the dead in the OT. The survey includes the ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible, intertestamental apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, the rabbinic literature, and Christian writers from early church Fathers. Jewish and Christian interpretative traditions consistently support the presence of the idea of resurrection in the OT.

Chapter 3 examines scriptures in the Torah where the idea of resurrection of the dead and eternal life is found. Although the Torah does not employ the wordings “resurrection” and “eternal life,” these concepts are found in the promises of life and the land. Contrary to the major scholarly view, these promises do not merely reflect the corporate nature. Rather, they foreground individuality of the hope of eternal life and bodily resurrection.

Chapter 4 examines Scriptures in the Prophets and the Writings where the idea of resurrection of the dead and eternal life is found. This examination shows

that the hope of resurrection and eternal life had been already firmly rooted and fully bloomed into maturity in the Prophets and the Writings.

Chapter 5 presents the life-death-life structure embedded in the Torah and the rest of the OT by applying the ANE philological scope of the meaning of life to the meaning of life in the OT. The entire OT leads people to hope for the victory over death and the restoration of life eternal.

The paper concludes with the importance of the argument for the early presence of the concept of resurrection and eternal life in the OT. The argument is evaluated by its scriptural, theological, and ethical consequences.

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