

Early Church Views on the Resurrection of the Believer

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History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Introduction and Thesis

The doctrine of the resurrection of the believer has a strong basis in the New Testament¹ and developed very early in church history.

There are two extremes that have developed on the issues surrounding the resurrection of the believer. One of these is termed the “literalist” view and the other is termed the “spiritualized” view. The “literalist” view has been the majority view throughout church history. In the modern debates over the resurrection of the body, both sides appeal to the early church fathers to support their views.

The Issues

This paper analyzes the positions of those in the two extremes as well as the interaction between the two extremes. There are two primary points of the doctrine that are to be considered² in this paper. These are the materiality and identity of the resurrection body.

Materiality of the Resurrection Body

The issue is the connection between the material of the body that is buried and the body that is raised. Includes; Is the resurrection body essentially spiritual, or physical? Or, is the resurrection body a physical body with spiritual characteristics? Also, what is meant by the phrase “glorified body”?

Identity of the resurrection body

This point centers around the question, Is the same body that is laid in the grave, the one that will be raised, i.e., will the old body be replaced with a new body or will the old body be transformed?”

¹ Considered to be one of the fundamental doctrines in the list of elementary teachings (Hebrews 6:1-2).

² The two basic categories are from; Geisler, N., *In Defense of the Resurrection*, p 121

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

The Contemporary Debate

There have been several contemporary debates on the issues surrounding the nature of the resurrection body. 1) Fuller Seminary had a controversy in the past on this subject. 2) Norman Geisler and Murray Harris of Trinity have been involved in a ongoing (and very public) debate on the subject. 3) The author of this paper has also been involved in an ongoing dispute with Rev. Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa on this subject. Each of these is briefly described in this section as background to this paper.

Fuller Seminary History of this issue

George Eldon Ladd, who was a professor at Fuller Seminary, wrote a book in which he described his view of the resurrection of Jesus³. Ladd denied the numerical identity and materiality of the resurrection body. This book was viewed by some Evangelicals as symptomatic of the slide towards theological liberalism of Fuller Seminary; which is said to have started with a denial of Biblical Inerrancy and is chronicled elsewhere⁴.

Geisler-Harris Debate

Murray J. Harris and Norman Geisler were both professors at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) in the late 1970's. Harris wrote a book in which he discussed his views on the issues around the nature of the resurrection body⁵. Norman Geisler wrote a number of books, tracts and papers against Harris' view⁶. Harris wrote another book⁷; which cleared up many of the issues that his first book raised.

Gilliland-Smith Debate

The Rev. Chuck Smith, of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, has preached a number of sermons over the years on the subject of the resurrection of the believer. On a number of these taped sermons, Rev. Smith shared his concept of the nature of the resurrection body⁸. In Rev. Smith's view the resurrection body of Christ is essentially immaterial⁹. On one particular tape, Rev. Smith defends his view against the literalist view of the resurrection¹⁰. A number of peer ministers as well as lay leaders have approached Rev. Smith and questioned his teachings on this subject.¹¹

³ Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, 1975. Pages 96, 100, 101, 115, 127, and 129.

For example, on p 98, Ladd wrote, "These words need not be taken to be a description of the actual material composition of Jesus' body, but are intended as proof of Jesus' corporeity".

⁴ Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, 1978. pages 114-115, and Lindsell, *The Bible In the Balance*, 1979 covers one "side" of the debate and Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, covers the "other" side. See also Fuller Seminary Statement of Faith, on the Internet at: http://www.fuller.edu/intro_ful/what_believe.html (11/97)

⁵ Harris, *Raised Immortal*, 1983.

⁶ For instance - Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection*, 1989

⁷ Harris, *From Grave to Glory*, 1990

⁸ Smith, Chuck, Tapes 4743, 5263, 5266, 5702, 8150, 8156, 8661, and 8667. The Word For Today. Tapes are generally undated, but the 5000 series tapes are ca. 1979 and the 8000 series tapes are ca. 1997. The 5000 series and 8000 series tapes are on the Internet on the CC site at; <http://www.calvarychapel.org> , in Real Audio format.

⁹ Tape is on the Internet at <http://calvarychapel.org/library/smith-chuck/audio/ttb/1979/5263-28.ram>

¹⁰ Smith, Chuck, Tape 4743. The Word For Today, undated.

¹¹ <http://idt.net/~doug/calvary/calvary.htm> documents this attempt.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Contemporary Authors on the Nature of the Resurrection Body

Wilbur M. Smith wrote¹²:

... resurrection means bodily resurrection. Any other use of the term is a misuse of the word. Modernists may say that this is their interpretation of the Resurrection of Christ. but it was never so understood in the New Testament, nor by those who formulated the great creeds of the Christian church.

William Lane Craig wrote¹³:

Thus, on the basis of these three lines of evidence, we can conclude that the fact of Jesus' physical, bodily resurrection appearances is firmly established historically.

In another book, William Lane Craig makes the claim that¹⁴:

All commentators agree that Paul did not teach the immortality of the soul alone; but his affirmation of the resurrection of the body becomes vacuous and indistinguishable from such a doctrine unless it means the tangible, physical resurrection.

Charles Hodge wrote extensively on the subject¹⁵ including the following quote:

Whenever the resurrection of the body is an article of faith the identity of the present and future body has been admitted. The usual form of Christian burial, in the case of the faithful, has ever been, "We commit this body to the grave in the hope of a blessed resurrection."

Philip Schaff¹⁶ wrote:

... the resurrection of the body, which was an essential article of the apostolic tradition, and is incorporated in almost all the ancient creeds.

Schep¹⁷ notes the existence of a "spiritualizing" group and describes two sub-groups distinguishable among those who hold the spiritualizing view. One of these groups is those who assert that the resurrection body is utterly immaterial. The other group acknowledges that there will be a resurrection body but believes that the body will not be a body of flesh, rather the resurrection body will be composed of some other "substance".

¹² Smith, *Therefore Stand*, page 363

¹³ Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, page 287

¹⁴ Wilkins, *Jesus Under Fire*, Section by W. L. Craig, page 157

¹⁵ Hodge, *Systematic Theology. Volume III, Soteriology*, 775

¹⁶ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity A. D. 311-600*, page 451.

¹⁷ Schep, *The Nature of the Resurrection Body*, page 11

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Biblical Evidences

The teaching of the resurrection of the believer is well established in the New Testament. The writers of the New Testament wrote extensively on the subject of the resurrection. The various views that are discussed in the early church all appeal to the same set of Scriptural passages. Attempts to correctly interpret these writings are what the points of the historical controversy centers around.

The Words of Christ

Jesus affirmed the resurrection and provided an apologetic to the reality of the resurrection based on the "power of God", a common and often repeated apologetic:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (KJV - Mat 22:29 -32)

In a [likely] parallel passage, Jesus is noted to have said:

The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. (KJV - Luke 20:24-38)

These statements do not address the nature of the resurrection body. The question that is left unanswered is "If the dead are raised to be like the angels, in what sense are they like the angels?" The ambiguity in these statements about the nature of the resurrection body is the source of the controversies of the following centuries as the church Fathers attempt to put the words of Christ into their own particular contemporary philosophies.

Jesus assured his hearers that if they did the works of God, they would be raised from the dead and rewarded:

When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (KJV - Luke 14:12b - 14)

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Although these passages seem to only include the righteous dead as part of the resurrection, John the Evangelist states that Jesus taught the resurrection of both the just and unjust, although possibly in a two-fold, or two-part resurrection:

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (KJV - John 5:29)

Jesus made the key issue, the knowledge of His identity, the determining factor in the resurrection:

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (KJV - John 11:25-26)

Apostolic Proclamation

The apostles were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Christ and taught the resurrection of the believers as well. These two points became inseparable from the earliest times. The argument from God's omnipotence was that if God can raise Christ from the dead, he can also raise us up.

The teaching of the resurrection was a source of persecution for the early church from a particular part of the Jewish community, the Sadducees.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (KJV - Acts 4:1-2)

Some of the contemporary Jews believed in the resurrection of the body and others rejected the doctrine. This division in the Jewish community was exploited on several occasions by the Apostle Paul. Paul used the issue to split the Jews and present himself as within the "pale of orthodoxy", but holding to an opposing view.

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. (KJV - Acts 23:6-8)

In the world of the New Testament times, there was a diversity of opinion on the immortality of the soul in society in general, and thus preaching the resurrection to the Hellenistic crowds could be a "hard sell" for Paul:

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.(KJV - Acts 17:31-32)

Paul publicly preached the resurrection of the just and unjust:

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (KJV - Acts 24:15)

Apostolic Theological Writings

Paul provides a linkage between the resurrection [body] of Christ and the resurrection [body] of the believer:

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: (KJV - Rom 6:5)

Paul stated that a belief in the resurrection of Christ was necessary for a person to be saved:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (KJV - Rom 10:9-10)

One of the longest series of Scriptures on the subject of the resurrection is:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (KJV - 1 Cor 15:12 -21)

Peter also affirms the essential points of the doctrine of the resurrection:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (KJV - 1 Pet 1:3-4)

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. (KJV - 1 Pet 4:5)

The book of Revelation seems to teach two separate resurrections with a thousand year period intervening between the two resurrections:

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (KJV - Rev 20:5-6)

“Problem Passages” in the New Testament

In the New Testament there are some difficult passages which have remained at the center of the controversies over the centuries.

One of the main problems is the use of the term "spiritual body"¹⁸ by Paul.

1 Cor 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

This passage has been understood by some commentators to mean that the resurrection body is essentially spirit and denying the essential physicality. Others have interpreted this to mean that Jesus only appeared to be raised in the same body.

Paul's use of the phrase "flesh and blood" in 1 Cor 15:50 has been at the center of many of the controversies also.

1 Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

The root of much of the continuing controversies is the unclear parts of the writings of the apostles. Peter noted this same "problem" in the interpretation of the writings of Paul:

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (KJV - 2 Pet 3:16)

¹⁸ πνευματικός – spiritual body. For a detailed coverage of this point, see Schep, *The Nature of the Resurrection Body* which clearly defends the literalistic view. The adjectival usage is of key importance.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Early Church Writers – The “Literalists”

The earliest of the church fathers uniformly taught the literal resurrection of the believer. The remainder of this paper covers many of the extant early church writers on the subject of the resurrection of the body of the believers. Starting with the very earliest writings, the resurrection was a primary subject of interest and speculation.

The Apostles Creed

The final form of the Apostles Creed probably dates from the 7th Century¹⁹ and states, in part: "We believe in ... the resurrection of the body". Earlier forms include the Roman Creed, which probably dates from the 2nd century²⁰, with the statement: "I believe in ... the resurrection of the flesh". Even shorter and earlier forms²¹ also include the "... resurrection of the flesh" clause.

The Didache

An interesting passage found in the Didache, also known as "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" refers to the resurrection:

And "then shall appear the signs" of the truth. First the sign spread out in Heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead: but not of all the dead, but as it was said, "The Lord shall come and all his saints with him."²²

There are at least two possible explanations for this passage. One common view is that the writer is denying the resurrection of the unjust. Another possibility is the writer(s) hold(s) to an implicit pre-millennial view in which it would be inappropriate to speak of the resurrection of the unjust in conjunction with the Second Coming. There are 1,000 years between the events, according to the pre-millennial view. The quote of Jude 1:14 is particularly enigmatic.

The First Epistle Of Clement To The Corinthians

Clement argues from several examples in nature for possibility of the resurrection²³:

God Continually Shows Us In Nature That There Will Be A Resurrection.

Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead. Let us contemplate, beloved, the resurrection which is at all times taking place.

¹⁹ Elwell, *Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*, "Apostles Creed" entry.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² *The Didache* 16,6-7. Found on the Internet at: <http://www.stmichael.org/Didache.html> (11/97)

²³ 1 Clement 24, *Early Church Fathers*, Volume 1

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Clement goes on to enumerate several of the points. One of them is the daily cycle of life.

Day and night declare to us a resurrection. The night sinks to sleep, and the day arises; the day [again] departs, and the night comes on.²⁴

Another common reference is that of the seed. Paul himself originated this theme which Clement and many other ancient writers pick up:

Let us behold the fruits [of the earth], how the sowing of grain takes place. The sower goes forth, and casts it into the ground; and the seed being thus scattered, though dry and naked when it fell upon the earth, is gradually dissolved. Then out of its dissolution the mighty power of the providence of the Lord raises it up again, and from one seed many arise and bring forth fruit.²⁵

Here a somewhat strange reference is found to the legendary Phoenix²⁶. The legendary Phoenix bird is referred to as if it is a actual bird. Clement proceeds to argue that if God can raise up the Phoenix, He can also raise us up.

We Shall Rise Again, Then, As The Scripture Also Testifies.

Do we then deem it any great and wonderful thing for the Maker of all things to raise up again those that have piously served Him in the assurance of a good faith, when even by a bird He shows us the mightiness of His power to fulfill His promise?²⁷

Clement then proceeds to provide Scriptural arguments to support the resurrection. Clement quotes the Old Testament as his evidences:

For [the Scripture] saith in a certain place, "Thou shalt raise me up, and I shall confess unto Thee;²⁸" and again, "I laid me down, and slept; I awaked, because Thou art with me;²⁹ " and again, Job says, "Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine, which has suffered all these things."³⁰

While the first reference is clearly not a very good one, the references to Job are much stronger. Unfortunately, Clement did not directly quote the most convincing passages in the book of Job³¹.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 1 Clement 25.

²⁷ 1 Clement 26.

²⁸ Exo 9:16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

²⁹ Psa 3:5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

³⁰ Direct quote is hard to classify. This appears to be a compilation of other parts of the book of Job, or perhaps a textual variant.

³¹ Job 19:25 -27 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Clement uses the omniscience of God as the primary argument for the resurrection of the body³². Clement lists some of the Scriptures from the Old Testament that show the faithfulness of God.

The Epistle Of Polycarp To The Philippians

The doctrine of the resurrection became a test of orthodoxy very early in the history of the church, Polycarp wrote:

Avoid The Docetae, And Persevere In Fasting And Prayer.

... and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan.³³

The Epistle Of The Church At Smyrna Concerning The Martyrdom Of The Holy Polycarp

This letter contains a reference to the doctrine of the bodily resurrection and is explicit in that it notes that Polycarp at his martyrdom said:

... that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup³⁴ of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Ghost...³⁵

The Epistle Of Ignatius To The Smyraeans

In this letter, Ignatius discusses the post-resurrection body of Christ. He notes that Christ was raised in a body of flesh and appeals to the New Testament as evidence.

For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now... He said to them, "Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit³⁶." And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit... And after his resurrection He did eat and drink with them³⁷, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father.³⁸

³² 1 Clement 27

³³ Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians Chapter 7

³⁴ Mat 20:22-23 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

³⁵ Epistle of the Church at Smyrna Concerning the Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp, Chapter 14, The Prayer of Polycarp.

³⁶ Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

³⁷ Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

³⁸ The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyraeans, Chapter 3

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Ignatius has an interesting differentiation between what he was taught (presumably through apostolic succession) using the phrase "I know" and what is his personal opinion "I believe" in the matter of the eternal physical nature of the Son of God. He separates the physicality of Jesus into three stages, pre-resurrection, pre-ascension, and post-ascension. In all three stages Ignatius affirms that Jesus has the same physicality. After the resurrection, Jesus had a body of flesh and for that very cause, Ignatius reasons, Jesus still does as nothing happened to change that essential materiality.

And I know that He was possessed of a body not only in His being born and crucified, but I also know that He was so after His resurrection, and believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, "Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."³⁹ And He says to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger into the print of the nails, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side;"⁴⁰ and immediately they believed that He was Christ. Wherefore Thomas also says to Him, "My Lord, and my God."⁴¹ ... Nor was this all; but also after He had shown Himself to them, that He had risen indeed, and not in appearance only, He both ate and drank with them during forty entire days⁴².

For Ignatius, the fact that Jesus ate and drank with the disciples after the resurrection had evidentiary value (that He was not a ghost and was raised up). Additionally, it may have had some eschatological significance as well⁴³. Ignatius expected that at the Second Coming, Jesus would be returning in the exact same body as the one he left in, based on the promise of the angels.

And thus was He, with the flesh, received up in their sight unto Him that sent Him, being with that same flesh to come again, accompanied by glory and power. For, say the [holy] oracles, "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go unto heaven."⁴⁴

In the next section, Ignatius explicitly denies the possibility that Jesus will return as a spirit (without body) based on the observation that Jesus will be recognized by the Jews.

But if they say that He will come at the end of the world without a body, how

³⁹ Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

⁴⁰ John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

⁴¹ John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

⁴² Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴³ It may have been in fulfillment of the saying of Jesus - Mat 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

⁴⁴ Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

shall those "see Him that pierced Him,"⁴⁵ and when they recognize Him, "mourn for themselves?" For incorporeal beings have neither form nor figure, nor the aspect of an animal possessed of shape, because their nature is in itself simple⁴⁶.

Later in the epistle, Ignatius, in a warning against heretics, wrote that they are at risk of eternal death (not participating in the resurrection of the righteous) due to their beliefs and practices:

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it were better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again.⁴⁷

In the same section, Ignatius, wrote that heretics should be avoided since they ridicule the resurrection:

It is fitting, therefore, that ye should keep aloof from such persons ... but to give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved... They are ashamed of the cross; they mock at the passion; they make a jest of the resurrection.⁴⁸

The Epistle Of Barnabas

Barnabas argues that by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus abolished death benefitting the believers. The evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead is a proof that God will raise mankind and judge them:

The prophets, having obtained grace from Him, prophesied concerning Him. And He (since it behooved Him to appear in flesh), that He might abolish death, and reveal the resurrection from the dead, endured [what and as He did], in order that He might fulfill the promise made unto the fathers, and by preparing a new people for Himself, might show, while He dwelt on earth, that He, when He has raised mankind, will also judge them.⁴⁹

Barnabas later argues that the just and unjust will be raised and there will be a judgement:

For he who keepeth these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooseth other things shall be destroyed with his works. On this account there will

⁴⁵ Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

⁴⁶ No physical part.

⁴⁷ Ignatius' Epistle to the Smyrnaea, Chapter 7

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ The Epistle of Barnabas, Chapter 5

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

be a resurrection, on this account a retribution.⁵⁰

The Second Apology Of Justin For The Christians Addressed To The Roman Senate

In his *Second Apology*, Justin⁵¹ refers to several New Testament eschatological passages when describing the events the surround the resurrection. Justin holds to a literalistic interpretation of the doctrine of the millennium with two separate resurrections, one at the start, and the other at the finish of the millennium. The just were to be raised at the start of the millennium and the unjust will be raised at the second resurrection after the 1,000 years.

... John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell⁵² a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, 'They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.'

Justin's Hortatory Address To The Greeks

In Justin's *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, Justin argues that Plato taught the resurrection of the dead and credits Plato with knowledge of the prophets.

Here Plato seems to me to have learned from the prophets not only the doctrine of the judgment, but also of the resurrection, which the Greeks refuse to believe. For his saying that the soul is judged along with the body, proves nothing more clearly than that he believed the doctrine of the resurrection.⁵³

Justin goes on to give a specific example from mythology of the punishment of Hades.

Since how could Ardiaeus and the rest have undergone such punishment in Hades, had they left on earth the body, with its head, hands, feet, and skin? ... But Plato, having fallen in with the testimonies of the prophets in Egypt, and having accepted what they teach concerning the resurrection of the body, teaches that the soul is judged in company with the body.

⁵⁰ The Epistle of Barnabas, Chapter 21

⁵¹ Justin - 2 Apology 81.

⁵² Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

⁵³ Chapter 27 - Plato's knowledge of the Judgement

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Fragments Of The Lost Work Of Justin On The Resurrection

Justin was one of the most extensive early writers on the resurrection of the dead⁵⁴. Acknowledging one of the more common objections to the resurrection, i.e., the impossibility of the task of reconstruction, Justin wrote:

They who maintain the wrong opinion say that there is no resurrection of the flesh; giving as their reason that it is impossible that what is corrupted and dissolved should be restored to the same as it had been.⁵⁵

Justin also argues against the Gnostics who assert the inherent weaknesses and sinfulness of the flesh as an argument against the resurrection:

And besides the impossibility, they say that the salvation of the flesh is disadvantageous; and they abuse the flesh, adducing its infirmities, and declare that it only is the cause of our sins, so that if the flesh, say they, rise again, our infirmities also rise with it.⁵⁶

Justin also discusses the amount of material continuity of the resurrection body and appeals to the familiar defense of the omnipotence of God.

If the flesh rise again, it must rise either entire and possessed of all its parts, or imperfect. But its rising imperfect argues a want of power on God's part, if some parts could be saved, and others not; but if all the parts are saved, then the body will manifestly have all its members⁵⁷.

The resurrection of the sex organs in particular seemed to be problematic to the people that Justin was discussing. The objectors used the argument that if there's a resurrection from the dead then there's no need for those particular members to call into ridicule the entire notion of the resurrection.

But is it not absurd to say that these members will exist after the resurrection from the dead, since the Savior said, "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but shall be as the angels in heaven?"(1) And the angels, say they, have neither flesh, nor do they eat, nor have sexual intercourse; therefore there shall be no resurrection of the flesh⁵⁸.

Justin deals with the doctrine of the Docetists who assert that Jesus only appeared to be in

⁵⁴ Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection, Chapters 2-10

⁵⁵ Ibid, chapter 2

⁵⁶ Ibid, chapter 2

⁵⁷ Ibid, chapter 2

⁵⁸ Ibid, chapter 2

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

a body of flesh, but was not actually in flesh.

By these and such like arguments, they attempt to distract men from the faith. And there are some who maintain that even Jesus Himself appeared only as spiritual, and not in flesh, but presented merely the appearance of flesh: these persons seek to rob the flesh of the promise.

In chapter 3⁵⁹, Justin provides a refutation to the objection that if the person has a [sex] member, they have to use it. Pointing to the example of the mule in nature and those that have sexual organs, but do not ever use them in procreation as they are sterile, Justin demonstrates that the members may not have to perform the same function as now. This argument is a response in kind to the imaginary objector that Justin is dealing with in this text.

In chapter 4⁶⁰, Justin deals with the issue of whether the dead will rise deformed. Justin points out that Jesus healed the blind while he was here on the earth and would do the same in the resurrection. The resurrection body would be the previous body but in a perfected state.

For they have not seen on the earth blind men seeing again, and the lame walking by His word. ... For if on earth He healed the sicknesses of the flesh, and made the body whole, much more will He do this in the resurrection, so that the flesh shall rise perfect and entire. In this manner, then, shall those dreaded difficulties of theirs be healed.

In answering the question of how God can raise the dead, Justin appealing to the omnipotence of God, wrote that if the heathens believe in the power of their gods, which are really not Gods, then how much more so the real God of the universe would have power⁶¹. Justin then notes the character of his argument as being secular and physical, but defends his line of reasoning with the unbeliever⁶²:

But now we are demonstrating that the resurrection of the flesh is possible, asking pardon of the children of the Church if we adduce arguments which seem to be secular and physical: first, because to God nothing is secular, not even the world itself, for it is His workmanship; and secondly, because we are conducting our argument so as to meet unbelievers.

In the next chapter, Justin defends his view by appealing to the Greek philosophers. Justin points out the contradictions between the different schools of Greek philosophy themselves and selects the Epicurean model of the atom as his “scientific basis” for analysis of the resurrection. Thus, Justin makes his case based on the indestructibility of

⁵⁹ Ibid, chapter 3

⁶⁰ Ibid, chapter 4

⁶¹ Ibid, chapter 5

⁶² Ibid, chapter 5

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

matter even after matter is dissolved⁶³. This is a prefiguration of the argument from the conservation of mass and energy.

Again, according to Epicurus, the atoms and the void being indestructible, it is by a definite arrangement and adjustment of the atoms as they come together, that both all other formations are produced, and the body itself; and it being in course of time dissolved, is dissolved again into those atoms from which it was also produced. And as these remain indestructible, it is not at all impossible, that by coming together again, and receiving the same arrangement and position, they should make a body of like nature to what was formerly produced by them;

...

And shall not God be able to collect again the decomposed members of the flesh, and make the same body as was formerly produced by Him?

In an endearing section Justin argues for the worth of the body⁶⁴ in God's sight.

But these persons seem to be ignorant of the whole work of God, both of the genesis and formation of man at the first, and why the things in the world were made.(2) For does not the word say, "Let Us make man in our image, and after our likeness?"(3) What kind of man? Manifestly He means fleshly man, For the word says, "And God took dust of the earth, and made man."(4) It is evident, therefore, that man made in the image of God was of flesh. Is it not, then, absurd to say, that the flesh made by God in His own image is contemptible, and worth nothing? But that the flesh is with God a precious possession is manifest, first from its being formed by Him, if at least the image is valuable to the former and artist; and besides, its value can be gathered from the creation of the rest of the world. For that on account of which the rest is made, is the most precious of all to the maker.

Next, Justin argues that the body does not cause the soul to sin and that man is a dichotomous (body and spirit) creature⁶⁵.

But in what instance can the flesh possibly sin by itself, if it have not the soul going before it and inciting it? ... We must meet, therefore, those who say, that even though it be the special handiwork of God, and beyond all else valued by Him, it would not immediately follow that it has the promise of the resurrection.

Justin then argues against annihilationism⁶⁶ of the body.

Then the sculptor and painter, if they wish the works they have made to endure, that they may win glory by them, renew them when they begin to decay; but God would so neglect His own possession and work, that it becomes annihilated, and

⁶³ Ibid, chapter 6

⁶⁴ Ibid, chapter 7

⁶⁵ Ibid, chapter 8

⁶⁶ Ibid, chapter 8

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

no longer exists. Should we not call this labor in vain? As if a man who has built a house should forthwith destroy it, or should neglect it, though he sees it falling into decay, and is able to repair it: we would blame him for laboring in vain; and should we not so blame God?

Justin contends that a resurrection of the soul and not the body would be pointless⁶⁷.

And if it be not impossible, as has already been proved, that the flesh be regenerated, what is the distinction on the ground of which the soul is saved and the body not? Do they make God a grudging God?

Justin argues against the Gnostic concept that soul is “part of God” and the flesh is opposed to God⁶⁸. Justin shows that the resurrection of Christ is a proof of the resurrection of the flesh⁶⁹ of the believer.

Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh?

In Chapter 10, Justin⁷⁰ argues for a strict literalistic understanding of nature of the resurrection body and points out that the body itself is redeemed by Christ.

The resurrection is a resurrection of the flesh which died. ... For the body is the house of the soul; and the soul the house of the spirit. These three, in all those who cherish a sincere hope and unquestioning faith in God, will be saved.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus wrote a treatise in which, among other doctrines, he defended the doctrine of the resurrection of the body titled “Irenaeus Against Heresies”. In this book, Irenaeus argues against those who deny the physicality of Christ⁷¹ and affirms the resurrection of the body.

And then the doctrine concerning the resurrection of bodies which we believe, will emerge true and certain [from their system]; since, [as we hold,] God, when He resuscitates our mortal bodies which preserved righteousness, will render them incorruptible and immortal.

Irenaeus ties the doctrine of the resurrection in with the celebration of the eucharist⁷²:

Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of

⁶⁷ Ibid, chapter 8

⁶⁸ Ibid, chapter 8

⁶⁹ Ibid, chapter 9

⁷⁰ Ibid, chapter 10

⁷¹ *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Book II, chapter 29, found in *Early Church Fathers, Volume 1*.

⁷² Ibid, book IV; 18, 5.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

Irenaeus makes an argument by extension from the present condition to the eternal⁷³.

But if the present temporal life, which is of such an inferior nature to eternal life, can nevertheless effect so much as to quicken our mortal members, why should not eternal life, being much more powerful than this, vivify the flesh, which has already held converse with, and been accustomed to sustain, life? ... It is manifest, too, that God has the power to confer life upon it, inasmuch as He grants life to us who are in existence. And, therefore, since the Lord has power to infuse life into what He has fashioned, and since the flesh is capable of being quickened, what remains to prevent its participating in incorruption, which is a blissful and never-ending life granted by God?

Irenaeus argues along several other angles to demonstrate that resurrection is possible. These include the prolonged life of the Old Testament characters, the translation of Enoch and Elijah, the preservation of Jonah in the whale, and the account of the three Hebrews thrown into the fire as further evidence of the power of God to transform and sustain for eternal life⁷⁴. Irenaeus notes that man consists of body, soul, and spirit, and that all three are part of the original creation of man and must, therefore, be part of the resurrected man⁷⁵.

Neither is the spirit a man, for it is called the spirit, and not a man; but the commingling and union of all these constitutes the perfect man.

Irenaeus argues against a spiritual resurrection⁷⁶.

In the same manner, therefore, as Christ did rise in the substance of flesh... Nay, for souls are incorporeal when put in comparison with mortal bodies; for God "breathed into the face of man the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Now the breath of life is an incorporeal thing... What therefore is there left to which we may apply the term "mortal body," unless it be the thing that was moulded, that is, the flesh, of which it is also said that God will vivify it... We must therefore conclude that it is in reference to the flesh that death is mentioned;

⁷³ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 3, 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 7.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

which [flesh], after the soul's departure, becomes breathless and inanimate, and is decomposed gradually into the earth from which it was taken. This, then, is what is mortal. And it is this of which he also says, " He shall also quicken your mortal bodies... He has taught, beyond all doubt, that such language was not used by him, either with reference to the soul or to the spirit, but to bodies that have become corpses... For our face shall see the face of the Lord? ...

Irenaeus points out the miracles that Jesus performed during His life time of raising people from the dead as a proof that He is capable of raising the dead⁷⁷. Irenaeus deals with the common defense of the immaterial nature of the resurrection bodies with an interesting note⁷⁸:

... so is it with respect to that [favorite] expression of the heretics: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" while taking two expressions of Paul's, without having perceived the apostle's meaning, or examined critically the force of the terms, but keeping fast hold of the mere expressions by themselves, they die in consequence of their influence (περιουσιας), overturning as far as in them lies the entire dispensation of God.

The same argument has been used by contemporary authors to buttress their case for the physical resurrection⁷⁹.

Irenaeus then proceeds to interpret the passage in terms of the rest of Paul's writings⁸⁰. He tied his view of the recapitulation of Adam in Christ to argue that Christ had to share the same physical nature (substance) as man and that the death and resurrection of the flesh were necessary to complete the cycle of recapitulation⁸¹. Irenaeus presents his apologetic in terms of the Old Testament prophetic writings⁸².

Irenaeus argues against the followers of Valentinus⁸³, who apparently taught different substances were to be used for different parts than the earthly substances. Irenaeus then presents the argument that the believers go to an intermediate state after death and prior to the resurrection⁸⁴.

... it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 13.

⁷⁸ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 13, 2.

⁷⁹ Sider, *The Pauline Conception of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians XV. 35-54*, NTS, page 436.

⁸⁰ Ibid, Book V, Chapters 13-14.

⁸¹ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 14, 2.

⁸² Ibid, Book V, Chapter 15, 4.

⁸³ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 15.

⁸⁴ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 31.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Later, Irenaeus contends that the original Adamic state of perfection would be restored in the resurrection when the just will receive their rewards⁸⁵. Irenaeus speculates further about the state of the animal and plant world at the time of the resurrection, where even the grape plants (of a particular use in communion) can speak⁸⁶:

And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me."

Per Irenaeus, the resurrection state will be one of joy⁸⁷. Irenaeus argues against those who would try to allegorize the literal promises⁸⁸ and explained many of the eschatological details as:

For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.

St. Augustine

Augustine confirmed the historical view of the doctrine of the resurrection and wrote that "No doctrine of the Christian Faith is so vehemently and so obstinately opposed as the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh"⁸⁹.

The Eastern Fathers

The Eastern Fathers are frequently quoted as holding to a spiritualized view of the resurrection⁹⁰. Chasing down the actual quotes has proved to be difficult.

Summary of the Teachings of the Early Church Fathers

There are numerous other examples of literalistic interpretation of the resurrection of the believer in the early church fathers. In fact, it's difficult to find any example of any teaching other than a strict literalistic teaching in the early church fathers.

⁸⁵ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 32.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 33.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 34.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Book V, Chapter 34.

⁸⁹ Maas, A.J. Ps. Ixxxviii, sermon ii, n. 5, as quoted in the Catholic Encyclopedia, on the Internet at: <http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/12792a.htm> (12/97)

⁹⁰ Berkof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, p 265. Berkhof states that Origen described the resurrection body as spiritual and that the two Gregories, Chrysostom, and Synesius agreed with Origen on the nature of the resurrection body.

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

A Special Case - Origin

Origin is quoted by both sides of the contemporary debates --- often against each other. For instance, Geisler notes the similarities of Origin's view with that of Harris⁹¹ in a matrix of similarities. Also, Jerome attacked Origin's view of the resurrection⁹². Origin's view of the resurrection was the germ seed for many of the later controversies. Origin's view is complex and requires a detailed analysis⁹³. Origin's view of the resurrection was condemned at the local Council of Toledo in 447⁹⁴.

In *Origin contra Celsus*⁹⁵, Origin argues against the teachings of the Docetists who taught that Jesus only appeared to really suffer in the flesh and Origin affirmed the reality of the resurrection of Jesus⁹⁶.

And it escaped him that certain heretics have declared that Jesus underwent His sufferings in appearance, not in reality. ... But we do not view His sufferings as having been merely in appearance, in order that His resurrection also may not be a false, but a real event. For he who really died, actually arose, if he did arise; whereas he who appeared only to have died, did not in reality arise.

Commenting on the state of the resurrection body of Jesus, Origin wrote that Jesus was in an "intermediate body"⁹⁷.

And truly, after His resurrection, He existed in a body intermediate, as it were, between the grossness of that which He had before His sufferings, and the appearance of a soul uncovered by such a body.

Origin admits that the characteristics of the resurrection body of Christ were that the body had physicality in his appearances.

And hence it was, that when His disciples were together, and Thomas with them, there "came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger," etc.

However, Origin also stressed the supernatural aspects of the appearances.

And in the Gospel of Luke also, while Simon and Cleopas were conversing with each other respecting all that had happened to them, Jesus "drew near, and went with them. And their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to

⁹¹ Geisler, *In Defense of the Resurrection*, pages 148-155

⁹² Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, page 87-88

⁹³ A complete and detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this paper and only a few points of Origin's view of the resurrection will be engaged here. This would make an excellent paper topic all by itself.

⁹⁴ Geisler, *In Defense of the Resurrection*, page 148

⁹⁵ Origin Contra Celsus, On the Internet at: <http://home.sol.no/~noetic/contc2.txt> (11/97)

⁹⁶ Ibid, chapter 16

⁹⁷ Ibid, chapter 62

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

another, as ye walk?" And when their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, then the Scripture says, in express words, "And He vanished out of their sight."

Origen's main discourse on the subject of the resurrection of the believer is in *De Principiis*⁹⁸. In this discourse, Origen discusses the subject of the nature of the resurrection of the believer.

But that these subjects may be arrived at in proper order, it seems to me that we ought first to consider the nature of the resurrection, that we may know what that (body) is which shall come either to punishment, or to rest, or to happiness; ...

Origen is cognizant of the credal forms of the doctrine of the resurrection.

But now, also, for the sake of logical order in our treatise, there will be no absurdity in restating a few points from such works, especially since some take offence at the creed of the Church, as if our belief in the resurrection were foolish, and altogether devoid of sense; and these are principally heretics, who, I think, are to be answered in the following manner.

Origen also wrote about the resurrection body⁹⁹:

If it is certain that we are to make use of bodies, and if the bodies which have fallen are declared to rise again (for only that which before has fallen can be properly said to rise again), it can be a matter of doubt to no one that they rise again, in order that we may be clothed with them a second time at the resurrection.

Quoting Paul¹⁰⁰, Origen wrote about the "spiritual" body¹⁰¹:

But if it is true that these rise again, and that they arise "spiritual" bodies, there can be no doubt that they are said to rise from the dead, after casting away corruption and laying aside mortality; otherwise it will appear vain and superfluous for any one to arise from the dead in order to die a second time.

Origen had a [characteristically] vague definition of the "spiritual" body¹⁰²:

And this, finally, may be more distinctly comprehended thus, if one carefully consider what are the qualities of an animal body, which, when sown into the earth, recovers the qualities of a spiritual body. For it is out of the animal body that the very power and grace of the resurrection educe the spiritual body, when it transmutes it from a condition of indignity to one of glory.

⁹⁸ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book 2, chapter 10, from the *Early Church Fathers*, Volume 4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid* 10, 1.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Cor 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, Origen, 10,1.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 10,1

History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Origen criticizes the literalist view held by [some] other Christians of the resurrection body at length¹⁰³ and quotes the several of favorite passages of those who hold a “spiritualized” view.

We now turn our attention to some of our own (believers), who, either from feebleness of intellect or want of proper instruction, adopt a very low and abject view of the resurrection of the body. ... Because if they believe the apostle, that a body which arises in glory, and power, and incorruptibility, has already become spiritual, it appears absurd and contrary to his meaning to say that it can again be entangled with the passions of flesh and blood, seeing the apostle manifestly declares that "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, nor shall corruption inherit incorruption."

Summary

It is the nearly uniform testimony of the church fathers that the resurrection body will be material and will have identity with the body that is raised. The creeds, councils, and fathers are in agreement with this view. There have been those who have disputed the view, but only on points of detail.

Although, in the modern debates over the resurrection of the body, both sides have appealed to the early church fathers to support their views, the literalistic view seems to be the predominant view of the early church fathers. Even the most extreme examples, such as Origen, do not deny the essential physicality of the resurrection body.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 10,3.

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History of the Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Believer

Early Church Views on the Resurrection of the Believer

by Douglas Gilliland

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