

JOSEPH LONGARINO

# Pauline Theology and the Problem of Death

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Mohr Siebeck

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In memory of my grandmother, Anne Yorke (1938–2020)



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June 1, 2021

Joseph Longarino

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## Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>Abr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>Am. prol.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De amore prolis</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BThSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CJAn	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity
<i>Congr.</i>	Philo, <i>De congressu eruditionis gratia</i>
<i>CRBR</i>	<i>Critical Review of Books in Religion</i>
CSCO.Ae	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptorum Aethiopicum
<i>Decal.</i>	Philo, <i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Det.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i>
<i>Deus</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
<i>Diatr.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Diatribai (Dissertationes)</i>
<i>DLZ</i>	<i>Deutsche Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>EC</i>	<i>Early Christianity</i>
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>Ep.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae morales</i>
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
EtB	Études bibliques
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FB	Forschung zur Bibel

<i>Fug.</i>	Philo, <i>De fuga et inventione</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Greg</i>	<i>Gregorianum</i>
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Hip. et Plat.</i>	Galen, <i>Hippocrates et Plato</i>
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	<i>Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Ira</i>	Seneca, <i>De Ira</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement Series
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBTh	Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTC</i>	<i>Journal for Theology and the Church</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum allegoriae</i> ; Plato, <i>Leges</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>Med.</i>	Seneca, <i>Medea</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>MoTh</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	Philo, <i>De mutatione nominum</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
<i>Phron</i>	<i>Phronesis</i>
<i>Post.</i>	Philo, <i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	Philo, <i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
<i>QG</i>	Philo, <i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>

<i>Rect. rat. aud.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De recta ratione audiendi</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	Plato, <i>Respublica</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJTh.OP	Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
<i>SPhiloA</i>	Studia Philonica Annual
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
<i>TDNT</i>	Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>Tusc.</i>	Cicero, <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De virtutibus</i>
<i>Virt. mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De virtute morali</i>
<i>Virt. prof.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus</i>
<i>Virt. vit.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De virtute et vitio</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
<i>ZZ</i>	<i>Zeichen der Zeit</i>





## Introduction

Should Christians be mortal? The question may seem odd at first. Mortality appears to be such a self-evident given of existence that it seems puzzling even to question it. Yet Christian faith holds to an even more puzzling given: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here God is supposed to have broken death's perennial hold on humanity. While God's triumph over death starts in Christ's resurrection, the consequences of this victory are not limited to Christ – at least not forever. Pauline scholars have debated just what the implications of the resurrection of Christ are for humanity in the present age. As God unites people to Christ by the Spirit, how does Christ's resurrection affect them? To what extent does his resurrection extend through the Spirit to those in Christ now?

Pauline scholars have generally failed to deal with a very basic issue raised by the previous questions. Specifically, they have never adequately managed to answer the question of why, in light of everything Paul says, Christians are still mortal. In fact, Pauline interpreters have almost universally not even noticed that this question constitutes a problem for Pauline studies. Yet, as I argue in the first chapter, even a minimalistic interpretation of Paul's texts raises this issue, which makes its virtually universal neglect by scholars particularly striking. This neglect of the question might raise the suspicion that the problem is illusory. However, a consideration of the spectrum of Pauline interpretation over the last century and a half will make clear just how this question continues to haunt any reading of Paul.

From this survey, two interrelated questions emerge. First, in view of the totality of Paul's claims, how is it possible that Christians are still mortal? This question in turn provokes a second: given Paul's overall thought, why does God permit mortality to remain as a feature of creation in general and of Christian experience in particular? In other words, for Paul, what purpose might mortality serve in God's plan?

In the second chapter, I pick up the first of these questions, concentrating on the way this problem arises from Paul's claims about sin and death.<sup>1</sup> If, in Paul's view, sin is the cause of death (Rom 5:12; 8:20) and God has acted against sin through Christ and the Spirit (5:12–21; 6:1–23; 8:1–13), how is it

---

<sup>1</sup> Portions of chapters two and three appear in Joseph Longarino, "Paul and the Assumed Flesh of Christ," in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christology*, ed. Darren O. Sumner and Chris Tilling (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming). Reused here with permission.

possible that death still has a foothold in creation, particularly in those in whom Christ and the Spirit dwell? To address this question, I adjudicate recent debates about the conception of sin in Romans 5–8. Is sin best conceived of as a force intrinsic to the human constitution, at least in this age, or as a force that is extrinsic to the human constitution even as it can operate internally to the person? Gaining clarity on this debate enables us to better understand what exactly God has done in Christ and the Spirit to overcome sin. I argue that even though Christ and the Spirit free people from the domination of sin, sin nevertheless remains intrinsic to the constitution even of Christians. I maintain, further, that Paul signals that this is the reason why Christians are still mortal, as the most plausible reading of Rom 8:10 indicates.

In the third chapter, I fill out the account provided in chapter two by attending to Paul's statements in Romans 5–8 about Jesus and sin. Scholars have perennially disputed what exactly Paul means when he says that God "sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin" and thereby "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Interpreters have also had difficulty explaining what Paul intends by the claim that "the death he (Jesus) died, he died to sin once and for all" (6:10). The argument presented in chapter two will be extended to illuminate these puzzling statements and to integrate Paul's Christology with his soteriology.

In the fourth chapter, I take up the second question driving this work, namely, in Paul's view, what purpose might death serve in God's dealings with humanity, particularly with those in whom Christ and the Spirit dwell? While Paul never asks or answers this question explicitly in his letters, he does provide significant material that permits us to discern the parameters of an answer to this question. In Romans, we learn that, although in Adam death features as the great sign of the broken relationship between humanity and God, in Christ and the Spirit death becomes a means of communion between God and humanity. Death becomes the point where God most palpably expresses his love for humanity, and where humanity is in turn brought most fully to rely on God in faith, hope, and love. In Paul's other letters, particularly 2 Corinthians and Philippians, Paul shows that God uses death to foster communion among humans as well. As people are encountered by God's comfort in tangible experiences of their own mortality, they are enabled to care for others above themselves. Instead of the threat of death causing everyone to fight for self-preservation, God turns death into a means whereby people can enter into deeper love and solidarity with each other. In this way, God deprives death of its sting, so to speak, subverting it to serve his own purposes for humanity, using it to shape people more fully into the image of his Son.

Over the course of this work, I hope to call attention to questions that illuminate the significance of mortality in Paul's letters. It is in bearing their mortal condition that, perhaps surprisingly, Christians are brought to their deepest encounter with God, their profoundest expression of love, and their fullest likeness to Christ.

## Chapter 1

# The Problem of Mortality in Paul and Pauline Scholarship

Should Christians be mortal, according to Paul? Obviously, Paul thinks that Christians *are* mortal, but the question is, in light of everything else he says, *should* Christians be mortal? In an earlier period of Pauline scholarship, a substantial number of interpreters believed that the resurrection of Christ spelled the end of death – right now in this age – not just for Christ, but also for those united to Christ. In contrast to most modern scholars, these older interpreters emphasized that mortality was already being displaced in the bodies of believers. Given this view, how could death abide in Christian experience? Why were believers still mortal? Even though most scholars have rejected the conclusions of this older position, they have not managed to explain why its questions and problems should no longer haunt Pauline interpreters.

To understand how this problem still challenges Pauline studies, it is instructive to investigate how this position emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century. After examining the shape that this foundational discourse took, I will explore the reactions and counter-reactions to it that significantly influenced the course of Pauline studies up to the present. As we will see, no subsequent interpreter has successfully handled the questions raised by the older position. Pauline interpreters therefore must still confront the question of why Christians remain mortal in the present age.

### 1.1 Pauline Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a divide had emerged within New Testament studies. Some scholars tended to assimilate the New Testament to modern sensibilities. Others, by contrast, stressed the historical distance between the New Testament and modern readers. The former tendency was characteristic of the so-called liberal school of theology, while the latter was typical of devotees both of the history-of-religions school and of “consistent eschatology.” To be sure, liberal scholars also attempted to contextualize the New Testament historically. However, to mitigate the strangeness of the texts to modern readers, these scholars often claimed that the historically conditioned form of expression (“theology”) was separable from the more

fundamental religious experience (“religion”) at the heart of the text.<sup>1</sup> Scholars from the other two camps, however, resisted making such a distinction. They preferred to keep the New Testament writings firmly embedded within their historical context, no matter how foreign the milieu might seem to modern readers.<sup>2</sup>

The liberal school commonly related the New Testament to Greek philosophy, which, in their view, helped to bridge the gulf between ancient and modern readers.<sup>3</sup> The history-of-religions approach and consistent eschatology, however, moored the New Testament writings in contexts that were palpably foreign to their modern audience. Scholars from the history-of-religions school often highlighted the esoteric Hellenistic mystery religions as the proper historical backdrop for the New Testament writings.<sup>4</sup> Advocates of consistent eschatology, though, identified the seemingly fantastical world of Jewish apocalyptic as the most illuminating historical framework.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The epitome of the liberal view of Paul can be found in Heinrich Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911), 2:255–62. See the overview of the liberal school in Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 17–21; earlier, Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1912), 163, 166; Rudolf Bultmann, “Zur Geschichte der Paulus-Forschung,” *TRu* 1 (1929): 33–40, who calls the liberal interpretation “rationalistisch-idealistisch.”

<sup>2</sup> Concerning Paul, William Wrede, *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (London: Green, 1907), 76, famously said, “The religion of the apostle is theological through and through: his theology is his religion.” Schweitzer remarks that surrendering the distinction between “theology” and “religion” meant being left with “an entirely temporally conditioned Paulinism, of which modern ways of thought could make nothing” (*Paul and His Interpreters*, 166). This disagreement in biblical studies more broadly, concerning whether the verbal representation provided by the text is dispensable with respect to its substance, is brilliantly elucidated by Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> Schweitzer notes that liberal scholars such as Otto Pfleiderer and Holtzmann grounded Paul in Greek philosophy in order to universalize Paul’s thought and thus relate him to the modern world (*Paul and His Interpreters*, x, 80, 110). See Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch*, 2:243: “Jedenfalls aber hat Pls, indem er erstmalig mit hellenistischen Denkformen an die christl. Vorstellungswelt herangetreten, dieser den Uebergang gebahnt von der semitischen zur griechischen und über diese hinweg auch zur modernen Welt.” The German education system of the time encouraged viewing Greco-Roman antiquity as the standard of culture.

<sup>4</sup> The classic work of the history-of-religions school on the mystery religions is Richard Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen nach ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen* (Leipzig; Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1910). An influential application of this approach to the New Testament can be found in Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that these schools were hermetically sealed off from each other. The history-of-religions school itself had two phases. In the first phase, scholars focused

This broad division within New Testament studies produced two different ways of interpreting the present manifestation of salvation in Paul. One line of interpretation, corresponding broadly to the sensibilities of the liberal school, might be called ethical-subjective.<sup>6</sup> The other line of interpretation, finding a home largely but not exclusively among proponents of the history-of-religions approach and consistent eschatology, might be termed physicalist-objective.<sup>7</sup> In both interpretations, salvation is understood to be instantiated in the present as the human person is united to Christ in his death and resurrection. However, this union is construed very differently by the divergent lines of interpretation.

### 1.1.1 The Ethical-Subjective Interpretation

In the ethical-subjective interpretation, union with Christ entails a resurrection with Christ, but this resurrection is understood not as a physical phenomenon but rather as a new way of life devoted to Christ. The great liberal theologian Otto Pfleiderer describes dying and rising with Christ as “the putting away of our old man and the beginning of a new moral life, in no other way than by the psychological means of our grateful devotion to him who died for us.”<sup>8</sup> The psychological joining of the believer with Christ in grateful devotion does

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primarily on the background provided by the Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigrapha. In the second, they concentrated on the context offered by Hellenistic and Near Eastern religion. “Consistent eschatology” drew especially on Jewish apocalyptic literature, and representatives of this group sometimes formed a part of the history-of-religions movement but were sometimes outsiders, as in the case of Albert Schweitzer. See the helpful discussion of the history-of-religions school in David Way, *The Lordship of Christ: Ernst Käsemann’s Interpretation of Paul’s Theology*, OTM (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 31–32.

<sup>6</sup> Examples include Carl Holsten, *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus: Altes und Neues* (Rostock: Stiller, 1868); Otto Pfleiderer, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology*, trans. Edward Peters, 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1877); Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch*.

<sup>7</sup> Representatives include Hermann Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre* (Kiel: P. Toeche, 1872); Richard Kabisch, *Die Eschatologie des Paulus in ihren Zusammenhängen mit dem Gesamtbegriff des Paulinismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1893); Wrede, *Paul*; Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*. I use the term “physicalist” to highlight the physical change in the believer’s bodily substance, though this change is often embedded within a broader “physical” or “natural” change in the cosmos, which has sometimes been denoted by *naturhaft* instead of *physisch* by German scholars. I use “physicalist-objective” to capture this change in the believer and the cosmos. In a note to his translator, Schweitzer explains, “*naturhaft* is intended to convey that it is not a question of a purely spiritual redemption, but that the whole physical and hyperphysical being of the man is thereby translated into a new condition. Body and soul are redeemed together; and in such a way that not only the elect portion of mankind, but the whole world is completely transformed in a great catastrophic event” (*Paul and His Interpreters*, 162 n. 3).

<sup>8</sup> Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:112

manifest the resurrected πνεῦμα-life of Jesus, but in a limited sense. While the πνεῦμα constitutes the material of the heavenly body of Jesus,<sup>9</sup> the πνεῦμα does not alter the bodies of believers in the present. Rather, their πνεῦμα-life is manifested as devotion to God, which is “the present inward anticipation of the future heavenly state.”<sup>10</sup> Believers will join Christ physically in his resurrection, but for now their union with Christ’s death and life is a union of inmost feeling.<sup>11</sup> In this way, the resurrected life of Christ is “stripped of its one-sided, supernatural, apocalyptic character, and becomes the new life of Christians in the truly spiritual, in the *ethical* sense of the word.”<sup>12</sup> True, occasionally Paul suggests, as in Rom 6:1–11, that this union with Christ is achieved through Christ’s death and resurrection per se, rather than by psychological devotion to him. Nevertheless, according to Pfeleiderer, in these passages, Paul is simply externalizing and formalizing into doctrine the more fundamental inner, ethical religious experience he advocates.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.1.2 The Physicalist-Objective Interpretation

A rather different picture can be found in the physicalist-objective (“physicalist” for short) interpretation. This interpretation shares certain assumptions with the liberal reading. Both readings maintain that death and resurrection with Christ are two sides of the same event that affect believers in the present time. In contrast to much of later scholarship, both groups consider the future tense that speaks of rising with Christ in Romans 6 to be logical rather than temporal.<sup>14</sup> For these earlier interpreters, Paul is asserting that believers are risen in the present time, although the different camps interpret this

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<sup>9</sup> See Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:19. Pfeleiderer traces back to Holsten the idea that the πνεῦμα is the heavenly material and the σάρξ the earthly material (54). Cf. Holsten, *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und Petrus*, 17. However, Holsten identifies the πνεῦμα as clinging to the material δόξα, which is the substance of the heavenly life. See Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 199–200.

<sup>10</sup> Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:19.

<sup>11</sup> Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:17.

<sup>12</sup> Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:20 (emphasis original). This aversion to “apocalyptic” resurfaces throughout the history of scholarship, particularly in Rudolf Bultmann and his followers. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 139, sets Bultmann within a tradition of anti-apocalyptic sentiment going back at least to the “demything by historical-critical liberalism.”

<sup>13</sup> Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:112. Similarly, Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch*, 2:256: “Der ganze Lehrbegriff bezeichnet doch nur die Art und Weise, wie sich der Apostel die entscheidende Grunderfahrung seines Lebens objektivierte, nach Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen theoretisch zurechtlegte.”

<sup>14</sup> The future indicative features in the apodosis of both Rom 6:5 (Εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα) and Rom 6:8 (εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ).

resurrection in conflicting ways.<sup>15</sup> Both interpretations also conceive of the  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  as the material of the heavenly body, in contrast to the  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\varsigma$ , which is the substance of the earthly body.<sup>16</sup> The physicalists, though, push these assumptions further in what they entail for the present resurrection of believers. The physicalist interpreters contend that even now the  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\varsigma$  is destroyed and the divine  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  changes the physical substance of believers, so that the resurrection begins in the bodies of believers in the present age.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Later scholarship tends to emphasize that the future tenses witness to an “eschatological reservation.” See below, particularly on Ernst Käsemann.

<sup>16</sup> On the liberal side, see Holsten, *Paulus*, 17; Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism*, 1:19, 54. On the physicalist side, see Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 199–200.

<sup>17</sup> While this position is grounded in the foundational figures discussed here, this view reemerges in part or in whole in subsequent scholars as well. Some scholars reproduce the position quite closely. So, W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 5th ed. (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler, 1998), 56, 317–20, follows Schweitzer in speaking of physical union with Christ and a bodily transformation that is currently underway. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69, distances himself from Schweitzer but his own proposal is very similar: the material  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  physically transforms the bodies of believers into pneumatic bodies even now, although this transformation will be complete only at the resurrection (48, 51, 55, 69, 72). Likewise, Frederick S. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*, ECL 19 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 44, 153, 217, holds that the body of believers is materially changed at baptism when the material  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  infuses their bodies, resurrecting their “somatic interior” (heart, spirit, inner person, etc.). This process presently affects the “somatic exterior” as well (body, flesh, members) and culminates in its resurrection (201, 204). Other scholars may be deemed defective physicalists since they do not follow the physicalist position to the same extent as the previous scholars. For example, Stanley K. Stowers, “What is Pauline ‘Participation in Christ’?” in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. Fabian E. Udoh et al., CJAn 16 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 352–71, endorses Schweitzer’s view of a physical union with Christ and extends it by incorporating the idea of the material  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ . However, while he calls the change material, he does not speak of it as inducing immortality, but rather holy living. On this line of interpretation, see Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious Ethical Life*, 2nd ed., WUNT 2/283 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 39, follows Adolf Deissmann, whom I regard as a defective physicalist. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. William E. Wilson, 2nd ed. (New York: Doran, 1926), 140, 182–83, 202, speaks of Christ as analogous to the air in which the believer lives and which fills the believer. Deissmann also affirms that those united to Christ have died and risen again, and one should not add an “as it were” to such statements. He does not, however, make the same claims about the physical substance of the body as the physicalists do. In his later work, Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 73, exhibits a greater affinity with the claims of the physicalists concerning the constitution of a new type of body for the believer. Yet he proposes that the body consists of a new flesh, whereas the physicalists describe the new bodily material as pneumatic rather



### 1.1.2.1 Hermann Lüdemann

The physicalist view was prepared for in a significant way by Hermann Lüdemann in 1872.<sup>18</sup> According to Lüdemann, the flesh (σάρξ) is the material substrate of the earthly body but it is not the body (σῶμα) itself.<sup>19</sup> The σάρξ, moreover, is essentially connected to ἁμαρτία, as is indicated above all in Romans 7.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, to be delivered from sin, it is not enough for the flesh to be purified; rather, the flesh must be destroyed.<sup>21</sup> Christ takes up the flesh (Rom 8:3), so that when he dies, the flesh – and the sin inextricably intertwined with it – may be destroyed (*vernichtet*), abolished (*aufgehoben*), and removed (*entfernt*).<sup>22</sup> In their union with Christ through baptism, believers experience the same death and have their flesh destroyed as well.<sup>23</sup> As their flesh is abolished, sin is removed from their existence (*Exstirpation der Sünde*).<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously, though, they are joined to the resurrected Christ, who is a πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν (1 Cor 15:45). As a result, believers become united with the life-giving principle of the divine πνεῦμα.<sup>25</sup> Even though they continue to bear a mortal σῶμα, their spiritual union with the divine πνεῦμα ensures that their own πνεῦμα contains within itself the possibility of eternal existence (Rom 8:10).<sup>26</sup> And since for Paul the πνεῦμα can only ever exist with a σῶμα, the life of the πνεῦμα will eventually suffuse the σῶμα so it too will never die (Rom 8:11).<sup>27</sup> Lüdemann thus does not claim that the σῶμα is already reconstituted by the divine πνεῦμα in substance, which would make it immortal already.

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than fleshly. In Campbell's most recent work, *Pauline Dogmatics: The Triumph of God's Love* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 112, he focuses less on the body and more on the "resurrected mind" as the primary feature of "our present [partial] resurrection." However, he also writes that we are somehow connected to Jesus's death and resurrection, which together execute or terminate our sinful condition and "provide a new form for humanity that is free from infiltration and occupation by sinful lusts" (132).

<sup>18</sup> Ridderbos, *Paul*, 17, classifies Lüdemann among the liberal scholars because he interprets Paul's thought from the perspective of Greek anthropology, but Lüdemann's work can also be seen as a destabilizing force within the liberal school. Lüdemann focuses exclusively on the ontological dimension of Paul's understanding of salvation, unlike F. C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig: Fues, 1864), 160–63.

<sup>19</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 3, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 53, 59, 68.

<sup>21</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 68.

<sup>22</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 99, 121.

<sup>23</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 126.

<sup>25</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 147–48. Lüdemann interprets the πνεῦμα of Rom 8:10 as the human πνεῦμα (130–31).

<sup>27</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 131.

However, given Lüdemann's premises, it is not clear how the body remains mortal. If the divine πνεῦμα already communicates eternal life to the human πνεῦμα and the human πνεῦμα must inevitably communicate this life to the σῶμα, what inhibits the πνεῦμα from imbuing the σῶμα with eternal life even now? Why must such a transformation wait until the parousia? The organic process of transformation envisioned by Lüdemann does not fit well with the idea that the transformation of the body can happen only at the parousia. For Paul, such a transformation, while connected to the prior ongoing work of the Spirit, is nevertheless a cataclysmic event (1 Cor 15:51–52). Yet an organic process would seem to make a second intervention by God unnecessary, since God would have supplied in baptism all the momentum needed for the change to occur eventually on its own.

Further, since Lüdemann names the σάρξ as the original substrate of the σῶμα and yet also asserts that the σάρξ is already destroyed, abolished, and removed, it is not clear what the σῶμα consists of after baptism. Apparently recognizing this difficulty, Lüdemann concedes that the body is still constituted by σάρξ, which implies that when Paul speaks of the destruction of the flesh, he actually means that the power of the flesh has been decisively broken. Since the flesh is not entirely destroyed and still rears its head, Paul has to warn believers against the flesh.<sup>28</sup> Yet if, according to Lüdemann, believers can live a decidedly different life post-baptism even as they retain their flesh, one wonders if Lüdemann's explanation can be sustained. His initial premise was that, to deal with sin, the flesh could not simply be reformed but had to be destroyed. However, if in fact Paul does not mean that the flesh is destroyed but rather that the relation of Christians to their flesh is decisively changed, it seems that Lüdemann's account must be mistaken and a more consistent explanation needs to be offered.

### 1.1.2.2 Richard Kabisch

The physicalist interpretation was extended by Richard Kabisch in 1893, who argued that Christians are resurrected physically in the present. Like Lüdemann, Kabisch thought that Christians are physically changed, but he anchored this material transformation within a broader cosmic revolution.

Kabisch was the first major figure to try to explain Paul's logic in terms of Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>29</sup> In this thought-world, according to Kabisch, the earthly

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<sup>28</sup> Lüdemann, *Anthropologie*, 141.

<sup>29</sup> I do not intend to evaluate the meaning of apocalyptic in this chapter. I use the term because it features prominently in the ongoing conversation among scholars. I try to make clear what scholars mean when they employ the term. For a helpful introduction to apocalyptic, see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). For criticism of the use of the term "apocalyptic" in Pauline studies, see R. Barry Matlock,

realm has fallen under the power of Satan and his demons. Consequently, anything made from the earthly realm, such as σάρξ, is intrinsically connected to ἁμαρτία, which is tightly bound up with the indwelling of the evil powers themselves.<sup>30</sup> Humanity therefore needs a new form of bodily existence whose material substance is not subject to demonic powers.<sup>31</sup> Since humanity is currently composed of σάρξ, their bodies need a new substance: the heavenly πνεῦμα. The necessary deliverance comes via union with Christ, which is accomplished in baptism. When believers join Christ in his death, their σάρξ really ceases to exist (*Untergehen der Existenz*).<sup>32</sup> Simultaneously, they are united to Christ in his resurrection, receiving his new life. Explicitly setting himself against Pfleiderer, Kabisch holds that this new life is not to be limited to an ethical meaning or to the inner person. Rather, Paul intends “a revitalization of the body, the physical life.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, “even the physical qualities [of the resurrected Christ] pass over to [those united to him].”<sup>34</sup> Kabisch thus goes beyond Lüdemann by claiming that, while the outer, physical body of the person had formerly been composed of σάρξ, it is now transformed by the πνεῦμα.<sup>35</sup> Although parts of the body of the believer may still die, the indwelling pneumatic substance of Christ ensures that in the body there is “already a hidden substantial kernel (*Kern*) capable of ... resurrection.”<sup>36</sup> This spirit-body

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*Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism*, JSNTSup 127 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996); J. P. Davies, *Paul Among the Apocalypses? An Evaluation of the "Apocalyptic Paul" in the Context of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature*, LNTS 562 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Emma Wasserman, *Apocalypse as Holy War: Divine Politics and Polemics in the Letters of Paul*, AYBRL (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 164–67.

<sup>31</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 168–69, 320.

<sup>32</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 99.

<sup>33</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 111: “So ist auch das neue Leben nicht eine Wiederbelebung des inneren Menschen ... sondern des Leibes, das physische Leben, das nun den Charakter der Unvernichtbarkeit trägt.”

<sup>34</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 269: “Auch seine physischen Qualitäten auf sie übergehen.”

<sup>35</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 116.

<sup>36</sup> Kabisch, *Eschatologie*, 271: “Da an diesem Leibe alles, was sarkisch ist, ja doch vernichtet werden soll, so muss, da trotzdem derselbe Leib bei der Auferstehung herauskommen soll, bereits ein verborgener, ‘in, mit und unter’ dem Fleischesleib vorhandener, der Entfaltung, Verklärung bzw. Auferweckung fähiger substanzieller Kern in dem Leibe vorhanden sein.” Kabisch alludes to Luther’s teaching on consubstantiation, which he seems to take to imply that the substance of mortal and immortal realities can occupy the same space at the same time. Debates about substance would take us too far afield here, though this area may be worth further philosophical discussion.

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