

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

- Berkhof, L. (1941). *Systematic theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, pp. 486–87.
- Calvin, J. (1960). *Institutes of the Christian religion*, 2 vols. (ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battles). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1, pp. 592–621.
- Chafer, L. S. (1947). *Systematic theology*, 8 vols. Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 3, pp. 372–378.
- Cocoris, G. M. (1984). *Evangelism: A biblical approach*. Chicago: Moody Press, pp. 65–72.
- Grudem, W. (1994). *Systematic theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, pp. 713–717.
- Hodge, C. (1993). *Systematic theology*, 3 vols, repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2, pp. 232–732.

restorationism

C. Mark Steinacher

“Restorationism” describes movements whose stated aim is to reproduce or “restore” what its followers believe to be salient 1st century Christian practices and beliefs. Movements in many eras have tried to return their contemporary church to an imagined pristine purity. These include the Benedictine and Franciscan monastic movements, 16th century Anabaptists, and Plymouth Brethren. A particular outburst of restorationist movements occurred in early 19th century North America.

The “Restoration movement” generally refers to a group of movements derived from the ministry of Barton Warren Stone (1772–1844) and the work of father and son Thomas Campbell (1763–1854) and Alexander Campbell (1788–1866). Both groups arose near the then frontier, east of the Mississippi. Both sought the twin goals of restoring pure New Testament faith and creating complete Christian unity.

Stone’s faction is the older, rooted in the 1801 Great Camp Meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky and the 1804 dissolution of the Springfield Presbytery. Believing any denominational label unnecessarily separated believers, members

refused any name except “Christian.” The Campbells also left a branch of Presbyterianism, creating the Christian Association of Washington. In the 1820s the Disciples of Christ emerged. The Campbells were assisted by Walter Scott (1796–1861). Scott contributed what is commonly referred to as the “Five Finger Exercise,” a memory device to recall their cardinal doctrines: faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The majority of the two currents flowed together in the early 1830s. A few “Christian” congregations stood aloof, expanding links to similar “Christian Connexion” bodies originating in Virginia (an offshoot of Methodism) and New England (an offshoot of Congregationalism). The Restoration movement divided after the Civil War over missionary societies and musical instruments. Current denominations derived from the Stone-Campbell stream include the Disciples of Christ, the Independent Christian Churches, and the Churches of Christ.

SEE ALSO: Campbell, Alexander; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Churches of Christ; Conner, Walter Thomas

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

- DeGroot, A. T. (1965). *Disciple thought: A history*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University.
- Rollmann, H. (1995–2005). Restoration movement. At www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/restmov.html, accessed January 17, 2008.
- Steinacher, C. M. (1999). *An aleatory folk: An historical-theological approach to the transition of the Christian church in Canada from fringe to mainstream 1792–1898*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada.

resurrection

Gary R. Habermas

For Christianity, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are at the very center of both Christian theology as well as practice. This is generally conceded across the scholarly spectrum.

Approximately 300 verses in the New Testament address the resurrection. These texts are related to almost the entire range of Christian theology, apologetics, and practice.

THE HEART OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

From the beginning of Christian preaching and teaching, the resurrection of Jesus was essential to proclamation and truth. The earliest creeds or traditions found in the New Testament are actually oral teachings that predate the passages in which they appear. Some of these creeds are exceptionally early, dating from about the time of the crucifixion, or very soon afterwards (such as 1 Cor. 15:3-7). Other traditions are found especially in Paul (Rom. 1:3-4; 10:9) and Acts (3:13-16; 4:8-12; 10:36-43). These creeds usually specify at least a minimum of data that were considered the central portion of the Christian gospel: the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

For example, in the most crucial of these pre-Pauline texts, Paul passes on a report that he received from others (1 Cor. 15:3-7), where the death, resurrection, and appearances of Christ formed the heart of the apostles' message. He emphasizes the role that Jesus' appearances played in establishing these claims. The other apostles shared this same message (15:11).

Then in a powerful series of assertions, Paul links the resurrection to the crucial role it plays in the truth of Christian theology and faith. For if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christian preaching is valueless and the Christian faith is fallacious (1 Cor. 15:14). Furthermore, the apostolic eyewitnesses are then mistaken (15:15). This means that faith is ineffective and no one's sins ever have been forgiven (15:17). Striking at the heart of the matter, believers who have died are bereft of any Christian hope (15:18). In a simply devastating text, Paul concludes that, if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, then of all people, Christians ought most be pitied (15:19).

Building another bridge from Jesus' resurrection to a practical application, Paul grounds Christian conduct (and perhaps even ethics) in this event. Rather radically, apart from a resurrection, believers should "eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (15:32). It seems that Paul

is asserting that without a hope of resurrection, believers may as well embrace a hedonistic philosophy of life. As such, the resurrection is both the foundation for behavior, as well as the factor that dissuades Christians from following other philosophies.

Paul ends all these negative speculations on a positive, triumphant note. It is precisely since Jesus Christ *has* been raised from the dead, that Christianity is true. Most directly, believers will also be raised like their Master (15:20-23).

In other early pre-Pauline creedal texts, Paul also passes on teachings that accentuate the crucial nature of the resurrection message. One such tradition (Rom. 1:3-4) recites a brief christology, emphasizing that Jesus was actually indicated to be the Son of God, Christ, and Lord by his resurrection. Romans 14:9 likewise argues from the resurrection to Jesus' Lordship. Declaring that Jesus is Lord and believing that he was raised from the dead provides salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). In a follow-up comment of his own, Paul even indicates the striking sense of this tradition: to call on and believe in Jesus as Lord is compared to Old Testament texts where Jehovah is the subject (10:10-13). Lastly, Jesus' resurrection guarantees the raising of believers (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:14).

The creedal passages in the Acts preaching also relate the resurrection to other doctrines. The principal sign that God approved of Jesus' teachings was provided by the miracles that Jesus performed, particularly his resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:22-32). This event was the "proof" of the central Christian message (17:30-31). Similarly, the resurrection is also connected to both christological titles (2:36; 3:15; 10:36) and salvation (4:12; 5:31; 10:43).

Beyond the early creedal texts, many other portions of the New Testament also indicate the centrality of Jesus' resurrection. This event both ensures and is otherwise related to various Christian doctrines and practices. In an incredibly beautiful text, Jesus' resurrection is the reason for the Christian hope of eternal inheritance that cannot ever pass away, fade, or be taken from believers. Accordingly, Christians should even praise God and experience the greatest joy in spite of their grief and persecution (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

The resurrection of Jesus is also coupled to salvation (1 Pet. 1:21; 3:18), Jesus' ascension

(1 Pet. 3:21–22), and Jesus' role as the heavenly High Priest of believers (Heb. 7:23–25). It was the call to suffer and eschew sin, as Jesus did (1 Pet. 4:1–2; Heb. 5:8). It was simply the central belief and message in the early church (Acts 4:2).

The Gospels likewise give a very prominent place to the resurrection. This event was the major sign that would vindicate the truth and authority of Jesus' teachings (Matt. 12:38–40; cf. 16:1–4). We are told that Jesus predicted this event (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34; 14:27–28). It guaranteed the believer's resurrection (John 11:25). Jesus' death and resurrection was even the major message of the Old Testament (Luke 24:25–27). Each Gospel ends with at least the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection appearances (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21).

In addition to doctrine and apologetics, the New Testament authors also relate Jesus' resurrection to many areas of daily religious practice. This event was the reason for the apostles' transformation and power (Acts 4:33), as well as for the very birth of the Christian church (Acts 1:12–26). After all, it was the resurrected Lord who had commanded evangelism (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19–20; Luke 24:46–49).

John explains that Jesus employed the truth of the resurrection to comfort those who suffered grief (11:21–27). Jesus' appearances answered his disciples' doubts (Matt. 28:17; Luke 24:36–43; John 20:24–29). Likewise, Jesus' resurrection assists believers in understanding their own suffering by focusing on the crucial importance of eternity (2 Cor. 4:7–18; 1 Pet. 1:3–9; 4:12–19).

Other practical help comes from the power that is provided to the believer by Jesus' resurrection (Phil. 3:10). Examples are the very real possibility of a personal remedy for overcoming sin (Rom. 6:6–7; 8:8–11) and the fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15). Because of Jesus' victory over death, the Christian ought to practice good works (1 Cor. 15:57–58; 16:1–4; Rom. 7:4; Heb. 13:20–21) and think continually from a heavenly perspective (2 Cor. 4:16–18; Col. 3:1–4).

Therefore, believers have the ammunition to live new and powerful lives. This should issue forth in praise and worship, just as that experienced by the women (Matt. 28:9), the disciples (Matt. 28:17), and Thomas (John 20:28), after they saw the risen Jesus. Later, after the ascen-

sion, the believers again experienced worship, praise, and joy (Luke 24:52–53).

Even a brief overview seems sufficient to signify that, for New Testament writers, the resurrection of Jesus held a unique place. Clearly, early believers thought that this historical event provided the central claim for their doctrine, apologetics, and daily faith. Eternal life was secure, resting on the reality of Jesus' victory over death. Without such truth, the Christian message was reduced to that of another human philosophy.

CENTURIES OF BELIEF AND LATER CHALLENGE

The earliest post-New Testament writers report similarly on the centrality and importance of Jesus' resurrection. Clement of Rome (c.97 CE) asserts that the resurrection demonstrates the truthfulness of Jesus Christ's message, indicating that Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God was particularly approved by God (1 Clement 19:1–4). Further, this event is the prime example of the believer's resurrection (11:16–12:10).

Ignatius (c.107 CE) insists on the factual nature of Jesus' resurrection body, mentioning that it was preceded by Jesus' punishment and crucifixion, brought about by Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch (Magnesians 3:13; Trallians 2:11–12; Smyrnaeans 1:4–12). Jesus' flesh was raised, and after his offer to his disciples to touch him, they did so. He also ate before them (Smyrnaeans 1:9–12), all quite reminiscent of Luke 24:36–43. This event is an example of the resurrection of believers (Trallians 2:12), and the source of their eternal faith, peace, hope, joy, and happiness (Trallians 1:1; Philadelphians 1:1; 2:21).

Polycarp (c.110 CE) speaks similarly, mentioning several times Jesus' resurrection, including the hope that it provides for the believer's resurrection (Philippians 1:6; 2:11; 3:9; 4:11). In words reminiscent of 1 Peter 1:3–9, Polycarp encourages his readers to respond with unspeakable rejoicing (1:4).

Over the next century or so, the nature of Jesus' resurrection body became a major theological matter. Ignatius particularly supported the view that Jesus' flesh was raised from the dead. This position was also favored later by

Tertullian (d. c.225 CE), of the Carthaginian school of thought. But the Alexandrian school, championed especially by Origen (d. 254 CE), preferred a resurrection body of other than flesh. Strong bodily or even fleshly views of Jesus' resurrection body gradually became the more widely accepted position in the medieval church and even afterward.

Through the centuries until the Enlightenment, by far the majority of commentators accepted the doctrine of Jesus' bodily resurrection and appearances. Relatively few major controversies on this subject disturbed the landscape. Of course, there were many responses to those who criticized Christianity, such as Origen's 3rd century work *Against Celsus*, a response to Celsus' *True Discourse*, an attack on Christianity from the previous century. Celsus had charged that Christian belief in the resurrection was due to the wild imagination of a few women.

Prior to the Enlightenment, a few thinkers such as Pietro Pompanazzi (d. 1525) challenged the belief in miracles. The work of philosopher Benedict Spinoza (d. 1677) marks one of the most important challenges to miracles, as well as to the belief in the inspiration of the Bible. But it is in the work of another philosopher a century later, David Hume (d. 1776), that we see the fullest expression of the growing criticisms against miracles.

In the 18th century, naturalistic doubts were also more frequently expressed regarding miracles, and the resurrection, in particular. Even before Hume, English Deists such as Thomas Woolston (d. 1731) and Peter Annet (d. 1768) questioned the resurrection of Jesus. A notable historical response appeared from Thomas Sherlock (d. 1761), who especially addressed Woolston's views. Bishop Joseph Butler (d. 1752) is often given the chief credit for hastening the philosophical demise of Deism. German rationalist Hermann Reimarus (d. 1768) followed views of those like the Deists in an unpublished manuscript released posthumously by Gotthold Lessing (d. 1781).

But without question, the 19th century was the time when naturalistic theories of the resurrection bloomed. This was the age of German Liberalism. Many scholars wrote "Lives of Jesus," inaugurating the so-called "First Quest for the Historical Jesus." Many alternative hypotheses were developed. The most notable attempts were

made by Friedrich Schleiermacher (d. 1834), Heinrich Paulus (d. 1851), David Strauss (d. 1874), and Otto Pfliegerer (d. 1900).

Two interesting developments resulted. First, the so-called Old Liberals seemingly could not develop their own alternative theories without providing multiple critiques of their colleagues' positions. Examples are easy to find. Strauss gave what to this day is probably the most influential critique of the swoon theory, versions of which were held by Schleiermacher and Paulus. But the latter two scholars also took aim at Strauss' subjective vision view. However, the most influential critique of Strauss' view was made by Theodor Keim (d. 1878), who is often credited with decimating it.

On the other hand, after developing his approach from the perspective of the history of religions, Pfliegerer admitted that he was still unable to explain Jesus' resurrection in this manner. Still, the final nails in this approach were hammered by 20th century critical scholars, who exposed its flaws.

As a whole, the 19th century Liberals rejected each other's theories plank by plank. In contrast, the critical scholars of the 20th century usually rejected wholesale these liberal hypotheses against the resurrection, registering their blanket disapproval of these methods.

The second development in the 19th century was a backlash against the Liberals by more moderate and conservative scholars. Often holding major positions at universities such as Cambridge, Aberdeen, Harvard, and Yale, scholars such as B. F. Westcott, William Milligan, George Fisher, Kirsopp Lake, James Orr, and W. J. Sparrow-Simpson all wrote major treatises on the resurrection from 1865 until just after the turn of the 20th century. They also took aim at the naturalistic resurrection theories.

For the vast majority of the 20th century, critical scholars largely went in other directions. Influenced chiefly by Karl Barth (d. 1968) and Rudolf Bultmann (d. 1976), scholarship entered what has been called the "No Historical Quest" period. Studies of historical Jesus issues took a back seat to other concerns. A brief "New Quest for the Historical Jesus" was short-lived. But this general lack of interest in the historical aspects of Jesus research now seems to have been an interim phase. After the deaths of Barth and Bultmann, scholarship entered its "Third Quest

for the Historical Jesus," attempting to avoid the extravagances of the earlier searches.

THE LATE 20TH CENTURY AND BEYOND

In recent decades, whatever one's view of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, certain research trends have been acknowledged at least generally by the vast majority of scholars, whatever their overall theological stance. In turn, these *general* trends are based on *particular* historical data that are almost always conceded by these same scholars. While not being able to pursue the later, factual foundation in this essay, a list of the former research trends provides a strong and reliable barometer of what critical scholarship thinks must be accounted for in any research on this subject. Ten areas will be mentioned.

The key datum that needs to be addressed is as well accepted by contemporary scholars as any historical occurrence from this period: many of Jesus' disciples were utterly convinced that they had experienced appearances of their risen Lord. How will these experiences be explained? The ten areas below indicate why the earliest disciples' convictions are so well entrenched.

- 1 To summarize from our previous discussion, the development of alternative theories to account naturally for the resurrection data began to experience its growth in the 18th century and blossomed during the 19th century. While there are always scholars who take this tack, and even though a limited surge has occurred lately, these attempts are still a decided minority.

The primary reason for the scholarly reticence against such theses is that each of these hypotheses tends to run aground on several of the trends that we will mention here, as well as on the underlying data. Hypotheses need to be tested against the information we have, and most scholars have concluded that none has passed the test of providing a better explanation of everything we know. In other words, natural alternative approaches are each opposed for multiple reasons, all drawn from the material accepted by the vast majority of

scholars, even those of differing theological positions.

- 2 Contemporary scholarship concurs that the Apostle Paul is the major witness to the resurrection appearances of Jesus. He was in the right place at the right time. Formerly a passionate enemy of the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:3-7), Paul's previous life changed immediately when he saw the risen Jesus (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). He converted from Judaism to become one of Christianity's greatest scholars.
- 3 Few conclusions in contemporary scholarship are more widely or readily accepted by scholars than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, Paul passed on to his readers one or more very ancient creeds. For a variety of textual reasons, this brief tradition is definitely pre-Pauline. It records succinctly the Gospel content that is the central proclamation of the earliest church: Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared soon afterwards to many observers, both individuals and groups.

Paul attests to the essential nature of this message (1 Cor. 15:1-2) and that he had passed it on as he had received it from others (15:3). The consensus among contemporary scholars is that Paul probably received their creedal report, or at least its contents, in his first journey to Jerusalem, which occurred just three years after his conversion. This would place his reception of the tradition in approximately 35 CE. Paul stayed in Jerusalem for 15 days, speaking with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19).

Given Paul's immediate and overall context pertaining to the Gospel message (Gal. 1:11-2:10), the Greek in Galatians 1:18 signifies that Paul sought information on this topic from these two apostles. Of course, the Gospel creed was earlier still, for Peter and James knew it before Paul did. Some very influential scholars even place the formalizing of this traditional material in 30 CE. Regardless, the historical events on which the tradition

was based preceded even that time. All told, this is an exceptionally early and valuable piece of information.

- 4 Paul even went back to Jerusalem 14 years later, again to inquire about the nature of this Gospel (Gal. 2:1-10). He sent the same message that he had been preaching before the other apostles just to be absolutely sure that it was not mistaken (2:2). Peter and James were present, as before, but so was the Apostle John. As one, they corroborated Paul's message (2:9-10). In fact, they added nothing to it (2:6).

Paul's ancient research was fruitful, especially since he was able to confer with the three major leaders in the early church, each of whom also believed that he had seen the risen Jesus. One could hardly imagine four better witnesses to the crucial resurrection reports.

Later, Paul added the important proviso that, beyond their apostolic approval of his presentation of the Gospel, he also knew what they were teaching. Their message was the same as his, so that their audiences would hear the same message on the resurrection appearances (1 Cor. 15:11; cf. 15:12, 14-15).

- 5 As a corollary, the earliest disciples were transformed radically by their conviction that they had been present with the resurrected Jesus. Hardly a single scholar questions this apostolic resurrection revolution. They were more than willing to die for this certainty. Although the point stands without details of their martyrdoms, it is helpful that of the four chief apostles just mentioned, 1st century sources confirm the deaths of three of them. Clement discusses the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, relating that both apostles were persecuted on many occasions before finally being killed (1 Clement 3:10-17). Jewish historian Josephus records the martyrdom of James, the brother of Jesus (Antiquities of the Jews 20:9:1).
- 6 James, the brother of Jesus, was most likely a skeptical unbeliever during Jesus' ministry (Mark 3:21-35; John 7:5), apparently being among those family

members who considered that Jesus was even insane (Mark 3:21, 31). But only a very few years later, James reappears as the leader of the large Christian church in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18; 2:9; Acts 15:13-21). According to the pre-Pauline creedal statement in 1 Corinthians 15:7, the only intervening event is a resurrection appearance of Jesus to his brother, and most scholars agree that this experience was the cause.

- 7 We have mentioned that creedal passages in many other New Testament portions also contain early traditions. Most scholars recognize that many of these succinct snippets of early preaching are found in Acts, many of which were listed above. Each of these early creedal traditions centers on the Gospel message of the deity, death, and resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples (see especially 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31).
- 8 Although some scholars disagree, a majority concede that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was found empty just a short time afterwards, pointing in the direction of the disciples' claim. These scholars find several strong reasons to support an empty tomb. The argument that most find persuasive is the Gospels' unanimous agreement that women were the earliest witnesses. Due to the widespread prejudice against the testimony of women, it would be counterproductive to invent such a scenario. Therefore, the accounts gain credibility. Further, multiple sources confirm the empty tomb, which is strong confirmation in the ancient world, where such backup is coveted.

Additionally, the city of Jerusalem would have been the very last location for the early apostolic resurrection preaching to get started unless the tomb really had been vacated, for a tomb that was either occupied or still closed would have been a catastrophic discovery. Also, the early pre-Pauline creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, teaching that Jesus died, was buried, was raised, and appeared, strongly implies that

the burial site had been vacated. For reasons such as these, among others, most scholars conclude that Jesus' tomb was indeed empty.

- 9 Regarding the mode of Jesus' resurrection appearances, the emphasis has recently begun to shift to emphasize both portions of Paul's concept of the "spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:35-50), endeavoring to do justice to each. This may even be the predominant position today. According to this conceptualization, Jesus was raised in a real body, while manifesting new, transformed qualities. Far from being ethereal or a only a glorified spirit, his body occupied time and space, and could have been touched.
- 10 Almost all contemporary scholars hold that there is a relation between the resurrection of Jesus and the truth of various concepts in Christian theology and practice, although there is variation in the application. Less conservative thinkers might tie this event to more general theological, ethical, or political truths such as forgiveness, reconciliation, liberation, peace, and meeting the needs of others. More conservative scholars are inclined to endorse Jesus' own theological views as following from the truth of the resurrection, including Jesus' views of himself, along with the necessity of repentance, faith, and eternal life. But what they share is the view that the centrality of the resurrection somehow points to the truth and practice of other important themes.

CONCLUSION

For reasons such as these, virtually all recent scholars conclude that Jesus' disciples at least thought that they actually had seen the risen Jesus, who was now alive again after dying by crucifixion. This is because each of the ten areas addresses specifically the nature of the disciples' experiences. Even those who reject the actual resurrection appearances generally concede these scenarios. A view needs to be chosen that best accounts for what we know.

Together, these ten research areas indicate a rich, complementary set of considerations virtually unparalleled in ancient documents, especially when dealing with religious beliefs. Observed from many angles, it is apparent that Jesus' disciples were deluged by a set of conditions that convinced them that Jesus was truly alive and that they had seen him. Whatever view individual scholars take today on both the nature of the disciples' experiences and their cause, our positions should theoretically make the best sense of the information that we have, such as that outlined here.

SEE ALSO: Historical Jesus; Miracles; Risen Christ

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

- Bynum, C. W. (1995). *The resurrection of the body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Craig, W. L. (1985). *The historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus during the Deist controversy*. Texts and Studies in Religion, vol. 23. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen.
- Davis, S. T. (1993). *Risen indeed: Making sense of the resurrection*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Habermas, G. R. (2000a). *The resurrection: Heart of the Christian life*. Joplin, MO: College Press.
- Habermas, G. R. (2000b). *The resurrection: Heart of New Testament doctrine*. Joplin, MO: College Press.
- Habermas, G. R. (2003). *The risen Jesus and future hope*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Habermas, G. R. (2005). Resurrection scholarship from 1975 to the present: What are critical scholars saying? *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 3(2), 135-153.
- Habermas, G. R. (2006). Experiences of the risen Jesus: The foundational historical issue in the early proclamation of the resurrection. *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 45, 288-297.
- Habermas, G. R., & Licona, M. (2004). *The case for the resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.
- Stewart, R. (ed.) (2006). *The resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in dialogue*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

Wright, N. T. (2003). *Christian origins and the question of God*, vol. 3: *The resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

return of Christ

C. Mark Steinacher

The return of Christ is broadly accepted within Christianity, from charismatic splinter groups to the largest single organization, Roman Catholicism. This acceptance is not as self-evident as might appear, given that other biblically justified practices, such as the sacraments, are universal. Routine emphasis on Christ's return tends to be more frequent among evangelists, the doctrine being relatively unpopular since the early 20th century's Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. A core paradox is the tenet's attempt to make sense of time by speaking about its destruction upon Jesus' return; the goal lends meaning to the interim.

Sources for the belief include Old Testament (Ezekiel and Daniel), other Jewish sources (the Apocrypha or the Essene Community), and the New Testament (notably the Gospels, the Thessalonian letters, and the Revelation). A variety of hermeneutical approaches exist: "nonhistorical" (or "idealist" or "spiritual"); "historicist" (or "church-historical"); "futurist" ("end-historical"); and "preterist" (or "contemporary-historical"). Given this publication's scope and nature, emphasis here lies on the broad brushstroke history of interpretation entailing the literal return of Christ, rather than enumerating and discussing individual eschatologically oriented passages.

A number of quasi-synonymous terms represent the return of Christ. "Apocalypticism" is derived from a Greek word meaning "unveiling" or "revealing." In popular parlance, the term is associated with disaster, although this is foreign to the root meaning. Also Greek-based are "eschatology" (referring literally to the "last," comprising death, afterlife, and "the end of things"), "parousia" (referring to "appearance to and presence with") and "chiliasm" (for the "thousand-year" Kingdom referred to in Revelation 20:2-7). The Latin "millennialism"

derives from the Vulgate's equivalent for thousand years.

The plethora of possible positions may be reduced to four overarching groups, based on their understanding of the coordination of the return of Christ to the millennial Kingdom. Roughly in chronological order of their emergence, these are: traditional premillennialism, postmillennialism, amillennialism, and dispensational premillennialism.

TRADITIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

At its heart, the view posits the existence of a literal thousand-year period between Christ's return and the fulfillment of all aspects of God's Kingdom. This edenic period will be marked by unnatural longevity and fecundity. A nebulous and ill-defined premillennialism appears to have been the ancient church's dominant eschatology, although using modern terms to describe its thought is imprecise and anachronistic. Key writers include Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Lactantius. The concept was eclipsed in the Eastern Church by Origen's non-literal hermeneutic; in the West, Augustine's amillennialism displaced it. Dormant until the 1627 German publication of Johann Heinrich Alsted's *The Beloved City*, the concept was popularized in English by Joseph Mede, Alsted's contemporary. The label fits the 19th century ideas of the proto-Adventist William Miller. Henry Drummond and Henry Alford are more traditional proponents of the same era. A leading current advocate is Eldon Ladd.

POSTMILLENNIALISM

As "post" suggests, this view entails Christ's return at the millennial era's close. Adherents believe that the Holy Spirit is creating the Kingdom through the church. Some posit a literal thousand years; others envision flexible timing, depending on the effectiveness of the church's work to render "the kingdoms of this world" into God's Kingdom. Great effort may speed Christ's return. Ancient antecedents include Eusebius of Caesarea and Ambrose. Joachim of Fiore's flirtation with postmillennialism is anomalous for the Middle Ages. The