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Summary

The actual, physical resurrection of Jesus has been confessed by Christians throughout the centuries. In the post-Enlightenment world, however, it is not easy to speak of it as historical event, and as a result its theological meaning has been the primary focus. The historical aspect was disregarded as an element of the Easter event. What is then the reality of Jesus' resurrection, when its theological meaning can be assured, without mentioning it as a general historical event? Are the historicity of Jesus' resurrection and its theological meaning inextricably connected? These questions are the focus of this study, which consists of two parts. In answering these questions, the thought of Wolfhart Pannenberg and N.T. Wright is central with respect to five aspects of these questions: (1) Is belief in Jesus' resurrection compatible with historical reality? (2) What is the nature of Jesus' resurrected body? (3) What is the role of the resurrection within the N.T. idea of salvation? (4) What is the nature of the realized Kingdom of God? (5) What is the eschatological hope that is affirmed by the historicity of Jesus' resurrection?

In Part I we ask: Can Jesus' resurrection be proven to be a historical fact? After a brief introduction on the discussion concerning the historicity of the resurrection, Chapter One explores the question of the compatibility between the belief in Jesus' resurrection and historical reality. Critical of any attempts to deny the historicity of Jesus' resurrection or to downplay its importance in faith, Wolfhart Pannenberg suggests a redefined concept of reality in which faith and historicity are combined. According to Pannenberg, reality is reality only when it is grasped as a whole at the end of history. In the present we only experience reality as it is anticipated. Jesus' resurrection especially has brought the eschaton into the present, and in this sense his resurrection is the point where reality as a whole can be anticipated in the examination of its historical facticity. History, then, is the ground of faith. Jesus' resurrection is not an event that can be confirmed only by faith, but the event that is transforming power. Pannenberg warns against Kantian dualism and the attempts by Ritschl, Barth, and Bultmann to separate redemptive history from general history. The separation of Christian truth from rational inquiry and salvation history from general history has been influenced by scientism, which is characteristically atheistic and anthropocentric (Chapter One A).

N. T. Wright is also critical of any attempts to reduce faith in Jesus' resurrection to Gnosticism, as some existential interpretations have done. With respect to the reality of Jesus' resurrection, Wright analyzes Marxen's phenomenological view, Troeltsch's empirical principle, the existential interpretations found in Bultmann, Lüdermann, and Crossan, and Frei's presupposition that the resurrection is the epistemological ground of faith. Suggesting that the critical realistic view of reality be applied to Jesus' resurrection, Wright argues for integrating history and theology and that the Jewish stories, symbols, praxis, and questions of that time be investigated in relation to the resurrection (Chapter One B).

Chapter Two takes up the question of the nature of Jesus' resurrected body. With respect to the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection, Pannenberg examines the metaphor of resurrection and concludes that resurrection did not refer to an immortal soul. The metaphor is necessary because the resurrection is impossible to explain; the immortal soul, on the other hand, does not require any metaphors. With respect to the nature of Jesus' resurrected body, Pannenberg argues that, although two types of stories emerged independently, they nonetheless depend on each other for validation because only Jesus' appearances after his death could explain why the disciples gathered together again, and if Jesus' body was decaying in the tomb, his appearances could not say anything about eschatology, such as the realization of the Kingdom of God (Chapter Two A).

In applying critical realism to Jesus' resurrection, Wright compares the Jewish hope of resurrection and pagan belief systems in which, according to Wright, there was no need for or possibility of resurrection. Resurrection hope is based on the faithfulness of God, the creator. In this Jewish hope, resurrection was the metaphor for the restoration of Israel and the vindication of God's people. In this context, the two types of Easter stories give a plausible answer to the origin of the early church because, despite the lack of the political changes expected, the early Christians introduced some radical modifications with regard to the hope of resurrection. The two types of stories provide answers to the question of why (Chapter Two B).

In Chapter Three we draw some conclusions from the preceding discussion, applying their concepts of reality, Pannenberg and Wright propose a successful model for the compatibility of faith and reason and the historical examination of Jesus' resurrection by refocusing on the corporeality of the resurrected body. Even if Wright criticizes Pannenberg's eschatological realism, both do propose that Jesus' resurrection is historical. As an alternative methodology for examining the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection, critical realism can be

suggested as the term to describe Pannenberg's and Wright's attempts (Chapter Three).

In Part II we focus on the theological implications of Jesus' resurrection as a historical fact. Chapter Four discusses the role of the resurrection within the N.T. idea of salvation. The modern concepts of the Kingdom of God and the existential emphasis on the eschaton have made eschatology a matter of values. Eschatology and the Kingdom of God were not directly linked to the historical facticity of Jesus' resurrection. In their arguments on the realization of the Kingdom of God, however, Pannenberg and Wright presuppose the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. For Pannenberg Jesus' resurrection is the affirmation of God's Self-Disclosure in history. That had been expected as the event of the end, the resurrection was the proleptic realization of the end, and hence it reveals Jesus' divinity. Salvation is assured because of Jesus' resurrection, and God disclosed Himself in Jesus Christ (Chapter Four A).

Wright sees Jesus' resurrection as the climax of Israel's history. According to Wright, the hope of resurrection concerned the hope of the final return of Israel from exile, the coming of the Kingdom of God, and the end of the world. Nonetheless, despite the lack of any political changes, the early Christians began to believe that the Kingdom had arrived. The misunderstanding regarding the realization of the Kingdom of God is the result of misunderstanding Jewish apocalypticism. Jesus and his contemporaries did not expect the abandonment of the world; they expected the renewal of Israel and a new creation. Acknowledging that the concept of *parousia* has been misunderstood by apocalyptic eschatology as doomsday eschatology, Wright emphasizes its primary meaning, i.e. God's coming as the King of the cosmos. For the early Christians, Jesus' resurrection was the sign of the *parousia*, of God's coming: hence, the Kingdom of God had been realized. Even if God's means of restoring Israel was not what Israel expected, i.e. its political fulfillment, Jesus' resurrection confirmed what he taught and did as the Messiah (Chapter Four B).

If the end is realized, the Kingdom of God has come. For the correct meaning of the realized Kingdom of God, we should focus on its non-spatial aspect. In Chapter Five concerning the question on the nature of the realized Kingdom of God, Pannenberg defines the Kingdom of God as realized under Jesus' lordship and the *parousia* as the presence of the King within God's new creation under Jesus' lordship. Concerning the metaphysical relationship between time and eternity, Pannenberg identifies the Kingdom under the Son's lordship with the Kingdom of God the Father. He warns of the possible danger of anthropological interpretations of the Kingdom of God, emphasizes that the Kingdom of God

as the eschatological future is brought about by God Himself, not by humans. If the futurity of the Kingdom as conveyed in Jesus' message is a primary concern, we should note that the Kingdom is not a goal that is achieved through human labor and that the church is only the precursor of the Kingdom (Chapter Five A).

Wright extends the concept of *parousia* to include the realization of the apocalyptic hope. The difficulty of understanding the realization of the hope and *parousia* is the existence of much suffering and injustice in Christian lives under Jesus' lordship. But the Jewish concept of the *parousia* as God's coming in Jesus' resurrection may mean that people are called to be the people of the true King. That is the nature of God's Kingdom in the paradigm of apocalyptic eschatology. Because of such sufferings, it is impossible to define eschatology in an ethical sense only. We should not stop hoping for the physical arrival of the Kingdom. In this sense, Wright combines individual eschatology and social eschatology by arguing that, in the realized Kingdom, the new Israel is called to live by a new ethics under Jesus' lordship. Eschatology does not simply concern the individual but is tied to the corporate work of the new Israel in this present world (Chapter Five B).

What is then the eschatological hope for the present life that is affirmed by the historicity of Jesus' resurrection? That is the question we deal with in Chapter Six. The tension between "already" and "not yet" as the nature of the realized Kingdom has to do with the relation between our physical life and eternal life. Pannenberg and Wright look at eschatology not as a matter of timing but as the aim of God the Creator. That does not mean abandonment of the future eschatology. Warning against the existential interpretations offered by Barth, Bultmann, and other nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars, Pannenberg defines the concept of the *parousia* not in temporal terms but as decisive evidence. The evidence of the *parousia* as the confirmative exaltation of Jesus through the resurrection also encouraged early Christians in dealing with the matter of Jesus' second coming. Pannenberg's concept of the proleptic realization of the end strongly supports the concept of the *parousia* in Jesus' lordship between the "already" and the "not yet." The "*parousia already*" can be the guarantee for the "*parousia not yet*." Here, the term "apocalyptic" does not mean the expectation of a catastrophic end of the world (Chapter Six A).

As such, according to Wright, eschatology should not be regarded as doomsday eschatology, and the nature of hope in apocalyptic eschatology should be redefined. The people of Israel awaited God's final reign, the day of the Lord, in which all sufferings and

injustices would disappear. This hope took the shape of apocalyptic. The aim of history can be derived from the apocalyptic hope of resurrection. The dualistic view of Jesus' resurrection is unable to explain the aim of present life and general history, Wright sees the goal of universal history and creation in light of Jesus' resurrection. Creation and eschatology come together in the resurrection of the body as the goal of history. Here the concept of the good creation links up directly to the nature of eschatological hope. The nature of eschatological hope is the transformation of the cosmos, and the hope of resurrection concerns the *life after life after death* in the transformed body (Chapter Six B).

In my reexamination of theological issues in Chapter Seven, it is emphasized that Pannenberg and Wright make Jesus' resurrection the central theme of the realized Kingdom of God. Since the first-century Jews have understood the Kingdom of God in the sense of God's reign, we must understand the Kingdom not in spatial terms but as lordship. According to the traditional imagery in Scripture with respect to God's coming, Jesus' resurrection is to be considered the historical actuality of a supra-sensible reality (Chapter Seven A). At the same time, the resurrection historically confirmed Jesus' divinity. Pannenberg and Wright attempt to cross the gap between the historical and theological Jesus. That is the work that needs to be refocused in this post-Enlightenment world that regards a divine Jesus to be an illusion. Appealing to theology "from below" cannot be regarded as unbelief (Chapter Seven B). The concept of *parousia* as God's coming redefines the tension between time and eternity and between the *parousia already* and *not yet*. It is to be reemphasized that the principle of Jesus' understanding of *parousia* can apply to the interpretation of Jesus' second coming. How *parousia already* guarantees *parousia not yet* can be seen in the paradigm of Jesus' understanding of the Son of Man as coming on the clouds in power and glory. Within the *parousia already*, Christians are called to be the true people of God under Jesus' lordship awaiting the *parousia not yet* as the completion of history (Chapter Seven C). In this respect, apocalyptic eschatology should not be understood as doomsday eschatology but as cosmological, targeting the whole still suffering universe (Chapter Seven D). Christian ethics, therefore, emerges in a different way as part of the realized Kingdom of God in Jesus' lordship. Demythologization is not necessary to gain ethical insight from Jesus' resurrection. The realized Kingdom of God confirmed by Jesus' resurrection calls the church to be the precursor of the Kingdom of God (Chapter Seven E). The eschatological hope here is that this physical world will be transformed into God's *telos* of creation. Therefore, it is not life after death but the life after life after death that is the eschatological hope that Jesus' resurrection

reveals (Chapter Seven F). History and theology go together, and therefore, theological meaning of Jesus' resurrection cannot be separated from its historicity. Jesus' resurrection as a historical event reshapes and reemphasizes the nature of eschatological hope.

In a brief Recapitulation I try finally to reap the harvest of research as to the relation of faith and history (1), the corporeality of the resurrected body (2), the Kingdom of God and Jesus Messiahship (3), Christian life (4) and the nature of eschatological hope (5).