Crossan and the resurrection of Jesus: Rethinking presuppositions, methods and models

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I dedicate this project to my devoted Christian wife of forty-seven years, Desley. Without her support and encouragement, this research would not have been achieved. ‘An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels’ (Proverbs 31:10; ESV)

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Summary

When historical Jesus' scholar, John Dominic Crossan, stated that Jesus' resurrection appearances were apparitions and not physical appearances, was it possible to test this conclusion? To what degree are a scholar's conclusions affected by his presuppositions?

Crossan's definition of history was that it 'is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse' (Crossan 1999:3). The outworking of this view was that the New Testament Gospels are regarded as mega-parables, fictitious creations. His application of this view was, 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens' (Crossan 2012:5). A pattern emerged in which Crossan stated that he was using a method of postmodern interactivism (Crossan 1998a:42). But how is this discerned and articulated with as objective a methodology as possible?

What do presuppositions of postmodern, reconstructive, interactivism do to Crossan's conclusions regarding Jesus' resurrection appearances? Here the parameters were restricted to literary and historical dimensions of Crossan's speech acts.

The problem investigated was to seek to identify Crossan's presuppositions and methods in his study of the resurrection of Jesus to determine if they were valid or not when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection was considered. A presupposition-hypothesis method was used to test for verification or falsification, using a critical realist epistemology.

A research gap indicated a need for a more objective model to isolate a researcher's presuppositions of Jesus' resurrection. The Beaver and Geurts framework (2011) was chosen that led to probability and not certainty about the content of presuppositions. Presuppositional 'triggers' were identified from Crossan's resurrection data.

The hypothesis tested was: *J D Crossan's presuppositions and methods, in his study of the resurrection of Jesus, are not valid when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection is taken into consideration*.

Twenty-three presuppositions were discovered and these were developed into 18 hypotheses, three of which were tested:

Hypothesis 9: The divine manifestation of Christianity for a postmodern world is deconstruction (his term is reconstruction) and it is not done once for all, but is reinterpreted for each generation's issues. It was found that reconstruction mutilates the voice of the author by imposing an *a priori* metaphorical dogmatism on the text. Crossan's postmodern, reconstructive, interactive hermeneutic was shipwrecked on the 'rocks' of contradiction, inconsistency and a self-defeating methodology.

Hypothesis 10: The New Testament resurrection narratives are not historical documents. Crossan defined history as a postmodern reconstructionist and reached postmodern, reconstructive conclusions, thus using a question begging logical fallacy. He also did not apply this methodology consistently.

Hypothesis 12: It does not matter what a person believes about whether Jesus' tomb was empty or not; the importance is its meaning, which is independent of factuality. Crossan imposed his own understanding of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection through his use of free play, relativistic, multivalent, postmodern, non-supernatural stratagem on the text. Thus, Crossan's idiosyncratic meanings replaced objective, hermeneutical testing of the text of Scripture.

Therefore this dissertation's hypothesis was verified.

Key terms
Anti-supernaturalism
Deconstruction
Historical Jesus
Indeterminate meaning
Jesus’ resurrection
John Dominic Crossan
Literal interpretation
Megaparables
Metaphorical interpretation
Philosophical crusher

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' burial by his friends was not an historical event. But were they friends or enemies who buried him? It was probably done by his enemies. If he was buried at all, and there are some doubts, he was possibly not buried in a tomb hewn out of stone, but was put in a shallow grave to be eaten by scavenging dogs. The Easter events do not relate to actions that happened on a given day but the story is about how Jesus' followers struggled to make sense of his death and how they were experiencing his empowerment in their lives as a result of his resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was not in bodily form where one could touch and feel the physical Jesus. His resurrection appearances were apparitions.[1]

These are the views of historical Jesus' scholar, John Dominic Crossan (Crossan 1991:395-400; Crossan & Watts 1996:152-53; Crossan 1998a:550). In the *New Yorker* of 24 May 2010 in a popular piece on those who are reconstructing the historical Jesus, Adam Gopnik (2010:1) wrote of complexities of fact that produce ambiguities of faith as one pursues knowledge. He observed that in Gospel study one of the curious criteria of historical criticism is that the more difficult a remark is to understand the more likely it is to be true. As applied to Jesus, the more 'nasty' a saying by him, the more probable it is true. The contrast is that if Jesus says something that sounds 'nice', historical criticism is more likely to attribute it to somebody else. Gopnik used Crossan's research to report some of his own views on the historical Jesus.

By contrast, church historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette (1975a:57-58) stated that, based on 'the records that have reached us', Jesus' body was laid sorrowfully in the rock tomb and sealed with a large stone, by direct statement or inference, thus indicating that his body was not found in the tomb the next morning. The boulder had been removed and the tomb was empty. Jesus' disciples were 'profoundly convinced that they had seen the risen Jesus' by talking with him, watching him and viewing the wounds in his hands and side. The one who had been a doubter was convinced by touching these wounds. The biographer, almost certainly Luke, a companion of Paul, told of how he had obtained all of the information from *eyewitnesses* and the narratives were written, based on this *eyewitness* information. Latourette's understanding as a historian was that this information was written less than a generation after the events described.

Other supporters of eyewitness testimony (autopsy) do not provide evidence to endorse Crossan's reconstruction of what happened to the body of Jesus. Samuel Byrskog (2002:138) wrote that 'the enthusiastic resurrection belief was not opposed to a real historical sensitivity'. For Richard Bauckham (2006:131), three of the four Gospels (the exception being Matthew), 'must embody the testimony of witnesses who were participants in the story from beginning to end – from the time of John the Baptist's ministry to the time of the resurrection appearances'. These witnesses did not provide evidence from the intracanonical Gospels that is compatible with Crossan's specific details of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Another eminent historical Jesus' scholar, N T Wright, concluded that Crossan's 'explaining away the evidence' is applying 'to the texts a ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion' where the resurrection accounts are 'declared worthless as history' and 'trivialize Christianity' (Wright 2003:19).

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[1] An apparition is a ghostly appearance, phantom, or anything that appears, especially if it is remarkable or phenomenal (The Macquarie Dictionary 1997. S v apparition).

Which of these constructions of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is closest to the understanding of what happened at Jesus' death in passages such as Matthew 27:46-66? The focus in this study will be on Jesus' resurrection.

Although Wright (1996:8) considers that 'all history involves imaginative reconstruction' and that 'there is always a leap to be made between the actual evidence and the fully-blown reconstruction'. However, Wright's assessment of Crossan's (1991) writing was that 'the book is almost entirely wrong' (Wright 1996:44). Is this an accurate assessment or not by Wright?

Ben Meyer's review (1993:576) of Crossan (1991) concluded that it is 'unsalvageable' as historical Jesus' research because it does not include a struggle with the evidence. Instead of wrestling with the data, Meyer judged that Crossan had given pre-packaged material with literary finesse, but it was only 'the proposal of a bright idea'.

Why do Crossan's views on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus diverge from the understanding of Easter as recorded in the four intracanonical Gospels? This study examines Crossan's teaching and investigates whether his divergent conclusions are related to the presuppositions that underlie his views of the resurrection accounts in the Gospels.

To begin this study, it is necessary to define some foundational terms that make an impact on this research.

1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.1.1 The historical Jesus

Who is the historical Jesus? Wright (1992:139) considers that theologians and others are unsure which Jesus to include in their work because historical Jesus' scholars 'choose a Jesus who just happens to fit the programme that was desired on other grounds'. For Wright, the Jesus of theology is the 'the Jesus who lived and died as a Jew of the first century'. Robert Funk (1985), by contrast, claimed that 'what we need is *a new fiction* that takes as its starting point the central event in the Judeo-Christian drama and reconciles that middle with a new story that reaches beyond old beginnings and endings' (emphasis added). Rather than pointing to the need for a 'new fiction' about the historical Jesus, Luke Johnson (1996:142, 177) wrote that 'the "real Jesus" for Christian faith is the resurrected Jesus' who is 'the truly uncomfortable Jesus, the genuinely "counter-cultural" Jesus' who is not the reconstructed Jesus, the politically correct revolutionary Jesus (of Crossan) but is 'the one inscribed in the canonical Gospels'.

Albert Schweitzer contended that the Jesus of Nazareth, who was Messiah, preached the kingdom of God and died to give His work its final consecration, *never had any existence* (Schweitzer 1936:396; emphasis added). This historical Jesus should be replaced by 'the Jesus who is a spiritual power in the present…. It is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help us' (Schweitzer 1936:398, 399). This overthrow of the historical Jesus of Nazareth by the one who 'comes to us as One unknown' and people 'shall learn in their own experience Who He is' (see Schweitzer 1939:401), prepared the way for the Christ of faith, the modern Jesus, thus confirming Rudolph Bultmann's (1969, 1984) disjunction between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history.

For Crossan (1973:xiii), 'the term "historical" Jesus means the language of Jesus and most especially the parables themselves…. We have literally no language and no parables of Jesus except and insofar as such can be retrieved and reconstructed from within the language of their earliest interpreters'. He explained that he has 'always thought of the historical Jesus as a homeland Jew within Judaism within the Roman Empire' (Crossan 2007:1). Paul Barnett (1999:418) defends the thesis that the historical Jesus was Jesus of Nazareth who, through his death, bodily resurrection and ascension, became the Christ of faith. Barnett (1999:10) is convinced that 'the "Christ of faith" was one and the same as the "Jesus of history"'.

Richard Bauckham (2006:2-3) notes that the phrase, 'the historical Jesus' is 'seriously ambiguous' and has at least three meanings: (1) 'Jesus as he really was in his earthly life'; (2) 'Not all that Jesus was, but Jesus insofar as his historical reality is accessible to us', and (3) The Jesus, not of the Gospels, but the person behind the Gospels. This is the Jesus who is reconstructed through a methodology of alleged ruthless objectivity and scrutiny. This Jesus is created by historians who do not believe the story in the Gospels unless it is independently verified. As a result, there is not one historical Jesus, but many Jesuses.

Crossan's reconstructing the text, choosing extrabiblical material, and using other methodological issues, have caused him to define the 'historical Jesus' as 'the past Jesus reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse' (Crossan 1998a:30). In his autobiography (Crossan 2000:xv), he defined the historical Jesus as 'the reconstruction of Jesus' life as lived in the first century's first quarter, long before it was creatively recorded and necessarily reinterpreted by the Gospel writers in that century's last quarter'. Therefore research on the historical Jesus, 'is open-heart surgery on Christianity, and maybe also on civilization itself'.

1.1.2 Stratification

Crossan (1994a:XI-XII) explained that his method located the historical Jesus 'where three independent vectors' intersect. These vectors are:

- Firstly, cross-cultural anthropology for the Mediterranean region;
- Secondly, 'Greco-Roman and especially Jewish history in the first quarter of Jesus' century', the Jewish homeland being a colony of the Roman Empire; and
- Thirdly, the 'most difficult sector is the literary or textual one'.

In analysing the literary or textual vector, Crossan (1994a:XII-XIII) gives 'some general conclusions accepted by most critical scholars today'. These are:

- There are Gospels inside and outside the New Testament.
- The four New Testament Gospels are 'a deliberate arrangement in which some Gospels are accepted and included while others were rejected and excluded'.
- In the intra- and extracanonical Gospels there are three successive levels or strata which include '*retention* of original Jesus materials, *development* of those retained materials, and *creation* of totally new materials' (Crossan 1994a:XIII; emphasis in original).
- Differences and discrepancies among intra- and extracanonical versions are due 'to quite deliberate theological interpretation of Jesus'.

- The Gospel writers experienced a 'creative freedom'[2] in developing Gospel material that 'we could never have dared to postulate had such a conclusion not been forced upon us by the evidence'. Crossan explains that the first Christians experienced 'the continuing presence of the risen Jesus or the abiding empowerment of the Spirit' that enabled them to transmit the Jesus tradition with this creative freedom, a freedom that the evidence demonstrates.

In his methodology, when Crossan is faced with these main layers or stratification of development, he uses 'two basic strategies' (Crossan 1994a:XIII). These are:

- 'I focus especially on the earliest stratum of the tradition, on materials I date to the period between 30 and 60 C.E.', [3] and
- 'I never build on anything that has only a single independent attestation…. Multiple or at least plural independent attestations in the primary stratum point to the earliest material'. He acknowledges that this 'methodological discipline' is 'a process that may not guarantee truth but at least makes dishonesty more difficult'.

Elsewhere, Crossan (1998a:140, 141, 143) noted that before interpretation of the text is possible, there needs to be methodological agreement over the nature of the text to be debated. It is here that Crossan introduced 'the necessity of stratification'. By this he means that intracanonical and extracanonical texts combine to form three layers, strata or voices. The first stratum is 'the voice of Jesus'; the intermediate stratum is from anonymous community voices who talked about Jesus; the third stratum was created by the Gospels' authors. He considers three strata are integrated into a single choir, but they are all cited as the single voice of Jesus himself. Those interested in the historical Jesus or in the earliest Christian community (as is Crossan's interest), face the problem of establishing the strata for their own interests. The 'methodological challenge' is to discern how to do it one way and not that of another: 'Thus, *inventory precedes interpretation* and *method precedes inventory*' (Crossan 1998a:143; emphasis in original).

Crossan stated that establishment of his methodology precedes the inventory that he chooses and his interpretation of that inventory follows. One of the questions to be investigated in this study is: *Why choose his method and not another?*

In his adoption of a socio-cultural stratification model, Crossan (1994a:104) includes 'three facets within cross-cultural anthropology' that are 'the three main layers of a cross-cultural model of peasantry' that help to understand Jesus' roots as a Mediterranean, Jewish peasant. His model incorporates Gerhard Lenski's (1966) classes of social stratification, Bryan R Wilson's (1973) typology of peasant resistance, and James C Scott's (1990) 'peasant dream of radical egalitarianism'.[4]

Crossan (1998a:147) acknowledged that his method was interdisciplinary (applying the disciplines of anthropology, history, archaeology, and literary criticism), interactive (the reciprocal interaction of those four disciplines), hierarchical (moving upwards from the first of these disciplines, anthropology), and his method begins with the context and not the text. Therefore, Crossan's methodology uses three main strata (voices) to arrive at the text of the Gospels from intra- and extra-canonical sources (see Crossan 1998a:140-141, 143). These are:

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[2] Examples of this 'creative freedom', according to Crossan (1994a:XIII), are when Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source for Jesus' sayings and actions. They were free to add, delete, change, correct and create their individual accounts. This was their 'own particular interpretation of Jesus'.

[3] In this study, the acronyms BC/AD will be used instead of BCE/CE to distinguish chronology before and after the birth of Christ, except where they appear in quotations.

[4] Because of a more limited focus and scope, these areas will not be investigated in this study.

- The voice of Jesus (retention of original Jesus' materials);
- The anonymous voices of the Jesus-community (development of the Jesus' material); and
- The voices of the authors of the Gospels, that is, creation of totally new material by these writers.

Ben Witherington III (1997a:77-78) questioned the objectivity of Crossan's stratification method because the texts of the earliest strata of the Gospel tradition are not accessible. Witherington says that part of Crossan's answer is that earlier level texts are available in the Gospel of Thomas (GThom) and the Gospel of Peter (GPet).

Wright regards the Gospel of Peter as 'clearly much later' (Wright 1996:49) than Crossan's (1991:429) placing it in the 'Cross Gospel's' first stratum (AD 30-60). Wright considers the suggested date of composition of the Gospel of Peter in the AD 50s to be 'purely imaginary' (Wright 1996:49).

In this project, an investigation of Crossan's perspective on stratification will be applied only for establishing strata for Gospel origins and the elevated place that Crossan gives to the Cross Gospel in the Gospel of Peter.

This leads to another aspect of Crossan's methodology and hermeneutics – postmodernism.

1.1.3 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is difficult to define because of its diverse applications, emphases, and reactions to modernism. Jimmy Long (2000:325) states that if a definition of postmodernism is given, by definition it cannot define postmodernism, but give a modern definition, because postmodernism cannot be defined.

However, some attempt needs to be made with a definition because of its pervasive influence in disciplines such as philosophy, literature, art, theology, architecture, mass media (film, television and music), sociology, psychology, technology, fashion and other areas. Knowledgerush (1999-2003) traces the term postmodernism to a Latin etymology, meaning 'after what is now'. So, postmodernism refers to a philosophical and cultural movement that has the core premise of rejection of metanarratives[5] that advocate universal truth. Postmodernism attempts to lead to ways of thinking that promote a unity of knowledge and experience.

Interactivism is how Crossan understands postmodernism: 'The past and present must interact with one another, each changing and challenging the other, and the ideal is an absolutely fair and equal reaction between one another' (Crossan 1998a:42). When applied to Jesus, Crossan's postmodern hermeneutics concludes that 'there is not in my work any presumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45). His pre-commitment to postmodernism seems to be emerging as a presupposition. But how is this discerned and articulated?

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[5] According to Albert Wolters (2005:506-507), the term, 'metanarrative' originally appeared when Jean-Francois Lyotard described postmodernism as having 'incredulity toward metanarrative'. In this sense, a metanarrative 'refers to any overarching, universal account of reality and human life that purports to explain everything'. Authors of biblical hermeneutics have begun using the term in a positive sense, 'to refer to the overall story told by the Christian Scriptures'. Thus, the term 'has close links with the idea of "worldview"'.

Of Crossan's (1991) publication, Wright wrote of 'the postmodern tone which predominates in the book', but he regards its massive inventory of material as looking 'like a thoroughly modernist piece of work, appearing to lay firm, almost positivist, foundations for the main argument of the book' (Wright 1996:50). Crossan did not deny this postmodern assessment by Wright, but emphasised 'a postmodern sensibility – that is, an equal awareness of your own and your subject's historicity – does not *preclude* but *demands* attention to method' (Crossan 1998a:45; emphasis in original).

Could this be the postmodern perspective of Crossan when he gave his 'working definition of history' as '*the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public* discourse' (Crossan 1998a:20; emphasis in original)? He further explained this possible postmodern presupposition with his statement that he saw the New Testament Gospels as '*News* [which – SDG] indicates that a regular update is involved' and that 'Jesus is constantly being actualized for new times and places, situations, and problems, authors and communities' (Crossan 1998a:21).

1.1.4 Deconstruction (or reconstruction)

Crossan's preferred term is reconstruction rather than deconstruction. He admits that there is 'the problem of reconstruction' and 'this book is one scholar's reconstruction…. If you cannot believe in something produced by reconstruction, you may have nothing left to believe in' (Crossan 1991:424, 426). To address this need for a reconstruction of the New Testament, Crossan's scholarship was associated with the Jesus Seminar which met twice a year for over five years, using coloured beads and ballot boxes for disputed New Testament Greek readings. This was a contemporary equivalent, said Crossan (1991:424-425), of the grades of disputed readings given in the critical apparatus of the United Bible Societies' third edition of *The Greek New Testament*, as A, B, C, or D.

The terms deconstruction and reconstruction often are used interchangeably in discussions on postmodern philosophy.

Examples of how postmodern deconstruction may be impacting New Testament scholarship are evident in the writings of Crossan. Of the Gospels, he wrote that they were inaugural models, but each Christian generation needed to rewrite the Gospels to reconstruct their historical Jesus with integrity and say and live this reconstruction. He considers history and faith to be 'a dialectic for sarcophilic Christianity'. There is no presumption that earliest Christianity's historical Jesus was 'something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:40, 45). No past activities, in his view, can 'avoid repeated reconstruction'. Presuppositional postmodernism seems to be emerging.

Therefore, when Crossan (1998a:45) states that 'within Christianity the Bible is the Word of God made text, just as Jesus is the Word of God made flesh', he is not speaking of biblical authority relating to any infallible Word of God, the Scriptures. His postmodern deconstruction of the text 'is a dialectic between history and faith' that is interpreted from his postmodern horizon.

Elsewhere he wrote of the New Testament, including the Gospels as 'inspired by God', but because this inspiration comes through a human heart and mind, influenced by personal prejudice and the interpretation of the Christian community, along with fear, dislike, hate, faith, hope and charity, it can come to us 'as inspired propaganda, and inspiration does not make it any the less propaganda' (Crossan 1995:XI). Which presuppositions trigger his understanding of the Gospels as 'propaganda'?

For Crossan (1991:423) the nineteenth century dream of ‘uncommitted, objective, dispassionate historical study’ is ‘a methodological screen’. Instead, he challenges the readers through his method and historical hermeneutics as they presume ‘that there will always be divergent historical Jesuses’ with resultant ‘divergent Christs’. The structure of Christianity, for Crossan, will be without variation, ‘*This is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*’ (emphasis in original).

Thus, he advocates the reconstruction of the biblical text, including the addition of extra-biblical material, to arrive at an accurate picture of the historical Jesus.

Crossan (1999:5) does not use the terms *search* or *quest* for the historical Jesus or Christian origins. Instead, he writes of reconstruction that can happen over and over during different times and communities. For him, Jesus’ reconstruction is ‘a creative interaction of past and present. But what keeps that dialectic of us and them as even and honest as possible? Method, method, and, once again, method. It will not guarantee us the truth because nothing can do that’.

1.1.5 Mythology

What is myth when applied to the Gospels? He asks of the death, burial, empty tomb and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus: ‘Is this fact or fiction, history or mythology? Do fiction and mythology crowd closely around the end of the story just as they did around its beginning? And if there is fiction or mythology, on what is it based’? He answers that Jesus’ burial by friends ‘was totally fictional and unhistorical’ and the burial, probably by enemies, was in a shallow grave accessed by ‘scavenging animals’ and the text has ‘fictional overlays’ designed to hide information. Is what happened on Easter Sunday the story of one day or of several years? Is it the story of a single group of *all* Christians gathered, or is it ‘one group who claimed to be the whole’ (Crossan 1994a:160; emphasis in original)? What presuppositions underlie this metaphorical understanding of the events of resurrection Sunday?

For him, the Gospels as myth mean that they are fictional and unhistorical. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, according to both Matthew and Luke, is ‘in mythology rather than history’ (Crossan 1994a:18). Jesus’ burial is mythological fiction and the Easter story is ‘so engraved in our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology’ (Crossan 1994a:161).[6] In this regard, Marcus Borg (1997a:101) offers a parallel to Crossan’s explanation. Borg uses the term myth, not as untruth, but as a story about God and human beings that can be true and powerful as a symbolic narrative that is not like uncomplicated historical reports. Borg's statement of the Gospel myths is that, ‘though not literally true, they can be really true; though not factually true, they can be actually true’. What confusing language! Which presuppositions could Crossan and Borg, writing associates and Fellows of the Jesus’ Seminar’, be disguising with their use of semiotics rather than semantics? [7]

1.1.6 Parables and megaparables

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[6] This is how Schaff (1882:599-600) explained: ‘The Synoptic and Johannean Gospels are alike fictitious, and resolve themselves into myths and legends or pious frauds. This is the position of the extreme left wing of modern criticism represented chiefly by [David F – SDG] Strauss. It is the legitimate result of the denial of the supernatural and miraculous, which is as inseparable from the Synoptic as it is from the Johannean Christ; but it is also subversive of all history and cannot be seriously maintained in the face of overwhelming facts and results’.

[7] Semiotics is ‘the theory and study of signs and symbols, especially those with social relevance’. Semantics in linguistics is ‘the systematic study of the meanings of words and changes thereof’ (The Macquarie Dictionary 1997. S v semiotics).

Standard definitions of parables have been, according to Mickelsen, that 'a similitude or a parable is often an extended simile. An allegory, on the other hand, is an extended metaphor.... Jesus used parables to teach spiritual truths' and 'to throw light on the reign of God'. Mickelsen cited Friedrich Hauck's points that 'the understanding of the parables presupposes hearers who are willing to go along with the ideas of the speaker and who are capable of grasping the [point of] similarity between the image and the thing itself'. A similitude is an extended simile (Mickelsen 1963:212, 215).

This is not how Crossan understands parables. He wrote of parable, as ' a fictional story invented for moral or theological purposes', and 'there were not only parables *by* Jesus – like that of the Good Samaritan – but parables *about* Jesus – like that of the lethal crowd in the Passion play [of Oberammergau –SDG]'. He explained that 'the factual history of Jesus' crucifixion had become parable – parabolic history or historical parable' (Crossan 2012:3; emphasis in original). His basic definition was that '*a parable is a metaphorical story*. But what is a metaphor?... Metaphor means "carrying something over" from one thing to another and thereby "seeing something as another" or "speaking of something as another"'. Thus, 'a parable, that is a *metaphorical story*, always points *externally* beyond itself, points to some different and much wider referent' (Crossan 2012:8; emphasis in original).

His understanding of parable extends to Jesus' appearance to people on the Emmaus road (Lk 24:28-32), where 'that story is parable about loving, that is, feeding, the stranger as yourself and finding Jesus still – or only? – fully present in that encounter' (Crossan 2012:4). He explained the parabolic understanding of this resurrection appearance in the statement, 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens'. For him, that is 'an introductory definition of a parable: a story that never happened but always does – or at least should' (Crossan 2012:5).

As for megaparable, he considers all of the New Testament Gospels to be megaparables. His teaching on parables extends to the content of all four Gospels where he wants his readers 'to think of each gospel version as a book-length *megaparable* about the life, death, and resurrection of the historical character Jesus of Nazareth' (Crossan 2012:6; emphasis in original). However, 'all parables are *participatory pedagogy*' (Crossan 2012:245; emphasis in original). What is a megaparable? He wrote that 'the consensus of modern scholarship' is that 'Jesus really existed, that we can know the significant sequence of his life – from John the Baptist to Pilate the prefect – but that he comes to us trailing clouds of fiction, parables *by* him and *about* him, particular incidents as miniparables and whole gospels as megaparables' (Crossan 2012:251; emphasis in original). He explains that 'the four gospels not only contain *parables about* Jesus, but are best understood as four discrete *megaparables about* Jesus. But are those Gospels, acting as megaparables, to be interpreted primarily as *challenge* parables' (Crossan 2012:153; emphasis in original)?

1.1.7 Presuppositions

What are presuppositions? How does one objectively identify them in a speech act? Crossan explained his presuppositions in terms of prejudices and ideas from his life experiences and situations that may have influenced his work in historical reconstruction, positively or negatively. He explained that he did not have all these ideas – presuppositions – before he began his work. He developed them in interaction with his work and he 'cannot any longer tell which influenced which' (Crossan 1995:211). That is, he cannot discern if his presuppositions influenced his historical Jesus' studies or the studies impacted his presuppositions.

N T Wright correctly identified the study of the New Testament as involving literature, history and theology and stated that if presuppositional matters are not explored, ‘we can expect endless and fruitless debate’ (Wright 1992:31).

1.1.7.1 Definition

A presupposition is a phenomenon by which speakers or writers mark linguistically the information that is ‘taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content of a speech act. Expressions and constructions carrying presuppositions are called “presupposition triggers”, forming a large class including definites[8] and factive verbs’[9] (Beaver & Geurts 2011).

Anthony Thiselton considered that the term presupposition ‘conveys the impression of rooted beliefs and doctrines which are not only cognitive and conceptual, but which also can only be changed and revised with pain, or at least with difficulty. Neither element is *necessarily* involved in [using the term – SDG] “horizon”’ (Thiselton 1992:45; emphasis in original). He prefers the term ‘horizon’, explaining that ‘every reader brings a horizon of expectation to the text. This is a mind-set, or system of references, which characterizes the reader’s finite viewpoint amidst his or her situatedness in time and history’. He emphasised that ‘patterns of habituation in the reader’s attitudes, experiences, reading-practices, and life, define and strengthen his or her horizon of expectation’. His perspective is that it is easier to change a horizon because a text ‘can surprise, contradict, or even reverse such a horizon of expectation’ (Thiselton 1992:34).

The Christian-based linguistics organisation, SIL International, defines a presupposition as ‘background belief, relating to an utterance’ that (1) must be known by both the speaker and addressee to be considered appropriate in a given context; (2) will be a necessary assumption for an utterance, whether the form is an assertion, denial or question; and (3) it generally can ‘be associated with a specific lexical item or grammatical feature (presupposition trigger) in the utterance’ (SIL International 2004).

Examples of the need to examine presuppositions would be in Crossan’s statements such as: (1) ‘Mark’s solution is to create the Barabbas incident in 15:6-15. I do not believe for a second that it actually happened’ (Crossan 1991:390); (2) ‘I understand, therefore, the story of Lazarus as process incarnated in event and not the reverse. I do not think that anyone, anywhere at any time brings dead people back to life’ (Crossan 1994:95); (3) ‘Christianity is historical reconstruction interpreted as divine manifestation. It is not (in our postmodern world) that we find once and for all who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction’ (Crossan 1995:217).

1.1.7.2 Why examine Crossan’s presuppositions?

If historical scholarship is not used to discover absolutes or certitudes, but only by its best reconstruction to arrive at a decision ‘beyond a reasonable doubt’ (Crossan 1995:x), how does a scholar decide between divergent conclusions concerning aspects of the historical Jesus by various scholars? It is important to note Crossan’s perspective regarding those who offer a contrary opinion: In quoting '*secondary* literature, I spend no time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are'. Instead, he only quotes those who 'represent my intellectual debts' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv; emphasis in original). Why would he want to preserve his opinion and scholarship and retain it in-house? Is there a possible presuppositional bias coming through? An example of divergence from some scholars is Crossan's conclusion that Barabbas, Simon of Cyrene (father of Alexander and Rufus), and Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:7, 21, 43) were the 'fictional creation' of Mark (Crossan 1995:177). By contrast, Wright (1996:420) regards Barabbas as a *lestes* (Greek word), a revolutionary figure, the leader of a murderous civil uprising in Jerusalem, and although this content in the Gospels (Mt 27:15-23, Mk 15:6-14, Lk 23:17-23 and Jn 18:39-40) has been queried, 'there is at least as strong a likelihood that it is historical' (Wright 1996:546, n. 30). How can it be non-historical and created by Mark (Crossan) and a likelihood of its being historical (Wright)? John Meier (1991:346) treats the Pharisee, Nicodemus, who helped Joseph of Arimathea provide Jesus with an honourable burial (Jn 19:39-40) as operating in an historical situation without questioning the historical veracity in John's Gospel.

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[8] The term ‘definites’ is meant to convey the placing of limits or boundaries on anything. A definite is the antithesis of being imprecise or vague.

[9] A factive verb affirms the truth of the following statement or clause. An example is, ‘I *know* that Crossan’s view on the use of redaction by New Testament authors is correct’. ‘Know’ is the factive verb. However, sometimes a comparative meaning can be expressed with, ‘This *is* Crossan’s view….’, or some other sentence, where ‘is’ functions as the factive.

There could be different presuppositions operating with each scholar that need to be exposed to help discern possible reasons for divergence of understanding.

What causes Crossan to state that his method for the stratified data is to use a 'multiplicity of independent attestation' with a key emphasis on 'independent attestation' and 'the complete avoidance of any unit found only in single attestation even within the first stratum' (Crossan 1991:xxxi-xxxii)? However, in his single attestation in the first stratum, he used three sayings that have single attestation in Gospel of the Hebrews (GHeb), 'Spirit as Mother', 'Joy in Love', and 'Grieving Another' (Crossan 1991:441). What presuppositions cause the exceptions in the first stratum when he stated that data found with only a single attestation 'could have been created by that source itself' (Crossan 1991:xxxiii). How does his inconsistent insistence on use of greater than single attestation for historical veracity compare with attestations from secular history?

Craig Blomberg (1987:240) has noted that the burden of proof that 'guides most historians in their work' is the assumption that the burden of proof lies squarely with the person who doubts the reliability of a specified portion of a text, unless there are good reasons for believing otherwise. Neil J McEleney stated that this presumption is understood in the reading of all history and that 'without it no historiography, ancient or modern, would win acceptance' (in Blomberg 1987:240, n. 4). This method has been accepted by both conservative and other scholars.

Therefore, why would Crossan discard this burden of proof used by historians, even if it relates to single attestation? How much of ancient history would be discarded if single attestation were forbidden? What is driving Crossan's push for elimination of single, independent attestation?

1.1.7.2.1 How Crossan views presuppositions

How does Crossan understand presuppositions for himself and in his scholarship?

> By *presuppositions* I do not mean positions beyond current debate or even future change. Neither do I mean theological commitments. Rather, I mean historical judgments based on present evidence and requiring constant future testing against hew theory, method, evidence, or experience. I have learned these presuppositions from scholarly tradition, have studied them internally, have tested them externally, and have found them consistently more persuasive than their alternatives. But if they are

> wrong, then everything based on them is questionable; and if they are *proved* wrong, then everything based on them will have to be redone.
>
> (Crossan 1998a:109; emphasis in original)

So his presuppositions are from the scholarly tradition which has been tested internally and externally and found to be persuasive. However, by ‘scholarly tradition’, which scholarly judgments does Crossan support? He affirms the view of those who ‘represent my intellectual debts’ (Crossan 1991:xxxiv), but he excludes most historians and historical Jesus’ scholars in the evangelical camp.

1.1.7.3 How to discern presuppositions

While writing of earlier Bultmannian, post-Bultmannian, neo-orthodox and ‘new quest’ generations, John Montgomery observed a trend that could be repeated in Crossan, ‘presuppositionalism is allowed to reign and the Jesus of the primary documents is subordinated to a priori commitments’ (Montgomery 1969:10). How does one discern presuppositional or *a priori* commitments in a writer’s statements using an objective guide?

1.1.7.3.1 Objective ways to identify presuppositions

Mandy Simons’ extensive examination of presuppositional theory (see Simons 2001, 2006, 2007) has investigated the impact of presuppositions on conversations, assessment on formal and informal grounds, and the assessment of presuppositions without a common ground. These views were assessed before choosing the following model for presuppositional identification in Crossan. William Craig (1998) has raised some specific issues in relation to Crossan, the Jesus Seminar and their presuppositions, but his language sometimes becomes provocative with statements such as ‘politically correct religion’ and ‘pretensions of the Jesus Seminar’ (of which Crossan is a fellow). While some of his points are valid, his language could be tamed. Graham Stanton is penetrating in his assessment that conscious or unconscious presuppositions adopted by an interpreter ‘are far more influential in New Testament scholarship than disagreements over method’ (Stanton 1979:60). He also pointed to Carl Braaten’s cynical, but correct, comment that onlookers of New Testament scholarship become sceptical when they observe ‘a convenient correspondence between what scholars claim to prove historically and what they need theologically’ (Stanton 1979:64).

In assessing a model that has some objective strategies for isolating presuppositions, Beaver and Geurts (2011) has been chosen as it summarises some of the identification markers (triggers) for discerning presuppositions. From a lexical perspective, these are agreed by philosophers and linguists as examples of some presupposition triggers:

(1) Factives. A factive verb confirms the truth of the following statement or clause. For example, ‘I *know* that Crossan’s view of the Cross Gospel was not affected by the Jesus Seminar’s assessment of his position’.[10] *Know* is a factive verb. This can also be expressed in this form, ‘Crossan’s view of the Cross Gospel was not affected by the Jesus Seminar’s assessment of his position’.

(2) Aspectual verbs such as *stop* or *continue*. An example could be, ‘Linnemann has *discontinued* her use of many of the premises of the historical-critical method after her conversion to Christ’. Here *discontinued* is an aspectual verb.

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[10] All examples in this series were developed by this researcher.

(3) Temporal clauses that begin with conjunctions such as *before*, *after or since*.
(4) Manner adverbs. An example could be: ‘Crossan uses language *deceptively*’. Here *deceptively* is the manner adverb which conveys *how* an action is or should be performed.
(5) Sortally restricted predicates of various categories. A sortal is something that takes a numerical modifier. Therefore something that is sortally restricted means that predicates (or complements after the verb to be) have restricted boundaries. An example would be: ‘John was a bachelor monk’. This restricts his description to being an adult male.
(6) Cleft sentences. An example is: ‘Jesus set me free’, meaning that someone set me free.
(7) Quantifiers. For example, ‘I have written to every headmaster in North Lakes’. This restricts the statement to headmasters in the North Lakes suburb of northern Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
(8) Definite descriptions. As an example, ‘The historical Jesus scholar, J D Crossan, wagged his finger at the people when he made his presentation’. Thus, Crossan is a Jesus scholar with an idiosyncratic gesture in public speaking.
(9) Names. An example would be, ‘The author was Burton Mack’. So, Burton Mack has existed.
(10) Intonation (focus, contrast). For example, ‘He set me FREE (emphasis)’. So, someone set me free.

There are a couple writing or speaking behaviours that distinguish presuppositions from other literary language and statements. Beaver and Geurts (2011) stated that the first is known as ‘the hallmark of presuppositions’ and is one that has been extensively studied. It is *projection*. Elsewhere, Beaver explained that ‘the projection problem for presuppositions is the task of stating and explaining the presuppositions of complex sentences in terms of the presuppositions of their parts’ (Beaver 1996:5).

Consider this information from Crossan about his visit to Oberammergau to attend the Passion Play and that he found the story he ‘knew so well as a written *text* was so profoundly unconvincing as *drama*’. He wondered if ‘that infamous scene in which the crowd claims responsibility for Jesus’s death by shouting, “His blood be upon us and upon our children,” was fact or fiction. It did not seem convincing as history. What was the reason for the crowd’s change of attitude from acceptance to rejection? Could this story function more as parable than history?’ This insight led him to others and if it were parable, ‘a fictional story, invented for moral or theological purposes, then there were not only parables *by* Jesus – like that of the Good Samaritan – but parables *about* Jesus – like that of the lethal crowd in this passion play’. Thus for Crossan, ‘the factual history of Jesus’s crucifixion had become parable – parabolic history or historical parable’ (Crossan 2012:1-3; emphasis in original). However, elsewhere Crossan states, ‘Read the text’ (White & Crossan 2005:43; Crossan 2007:138) and ‘any study of the historical Jesus stands or falls on how one handles the literary level of the text itself’ (Crossan 1991:xxix).

These presuppositions follow: (1a) There was a relevant and identifiable scholar named Crossan; (1b) there were results from his study of Oberammergau and the Passion play, the Emmaus road story, and the text of the crucifixion; (1c) something infiltrated his thinking; (1d) Crossan did something that was contrary to another way of thinking about Jesus’ passion; and (1e) Crossan, the scholar, is responsible for the change.

Now consider these sentences: (2a) It was not Crossan, the scholar, whose thinking about the Passion was changed (*negation*); (2b) if Crossan's view of the Passion was changed, his view will be exposed as a movement away from orthodoxy (*antecedent of a condition*); (2c) is it Crossan, the scholar, whose view of the Passion was infiltrated or changed? (*question*); (2d) maybe/it is possible that it is the scholar who allowed and encouraged this changed view of the Passion (*possibility modal*); (2e) presumably/probably it is Crossan, the scholar, who changed his view of the Passion – in the name of infiltration (*evidential modal, probability adverb*); and (2f) the chairman and committee of the Orthodox Religious Society endorsed the view that it was Crossan, the scholar, who caused his view of the Passion to be changed to become heterodox (*belief operator*).

As these sentences are examined, it is discovered that where he stated that after attending Oberammergau and seeing the Passion Play enacted, what he 'knew so well as a written *text* was so profoundly unconvincing as *drama*' and he wondered if 'that infamous scene in which the crowd claims responsibility for Jesus's death by shouting, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," was fact or fiction. It did not seem convincing as history' (Crossan 2012:2). Crossan's changed view of the orthodox doctrine of the Passion is embedded[11] under various 'operators'. Crossan has used these verbs to embed presuppositions in operators: '*knew* so well as a written text'; and '*was so profoundly unconvincing* as drama'. Elsewhere he wrote, 'It is no longer possible in retrospect *to think* of that passion fiction as *relatively benign propaganda*…. I *think* I know what happened to their bodies…. I have no reason to *think* Jesus' body did not join them' (Crossan 1995:XII, 188; emphasis added); '*the units, sequences, and frames of the passion narrative were derived not from history remembered but from prophecy historicized*' (Crossan 1995:4; emphasis in original); 'recall how, *in my opinion*, the Johannine tradition….' (Crossan 1995:24; emphasis added); 'I *doubt* it was followed in Jerusalem by….' (Crossan 1995:188; emphasis added); that 'is how I *imagine* the author's intention…. I do not *think* that theological vision is late but early' in the Cross Gospel (Crossan 1995:197; emphasis added); 'what *really worked* for me' was that evolution could not contradict reason in Genesis 1 (Crossan 1995:215; emphasis added); and 'Mark *created*…. Matthew *created*…. John *copied*…. Why are those stories about the women *created* at all?' (Crossan 1998a:552; emphasis added). These are only a few examples of Crossan's use of various presuppositions that are embedded under various operators.

What is observed is that the presuppositions in (1a) to (1e) above do not follow from these embeddings, but there actually are presuppositions that do follow. In these instances we say that the presuppositions are *projected*. The inference of projection is stronger in some cases than in others.

It would be difficult to imagine stating (2a) without believing some relevant and identifiable scholar, Crossan, existed. However, (2f) could be stated if Crossan was humorously giving a parody on the results of his research. Unless there are special factors, anyone who made statements (2a) to (2f) would be expected to believe the presuppositions in (1a) and (1b).

Projection that emerges from an embedding, especially in the use of negation, is a standard diagnostic tool for uncovering presuppositions. When trying to recognise presuppositions, it is a sensible practice to seek to find many embeddings because it is not always transparent how to apply any embedding as a diagnostic. In the 'indicators' of Crossan's presuppositions that are listed in §1.3.4, it will be noted that projection of presuppositions is often used by him.

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[11] Verbs such as hear, discover, know, see, think and believe are often used to embed clauses that are indicators of presuppositions. The embedded clause carries the main thought of the presupposition. Beaver & Geurts (2011) stated that 'it makes sense to try several such embeddings when testing for presupposition, because it is not always clear how to apply a given embedding diagnostic'.

Beaver and Geurts (2011) classify another identifying factor for presuppositions – 'cancellability'. This is what causes a 'projection problem' to become problematic. If a part of the meaning of statement α was never affected by the linguistic context in which α is embedded, it would require a theoretical explanation. Presuppositions generally make projections, but sometimes do not, and much empirical and theoretical work on presuppositions since the 1970s has involved trying to explain when presuppositions project or do not project.

The classical explanation of when presuppositions are 'cancelled' is when presuppositions are denied directly when the trigger is embedded under another operator. Otherwise it is probably an inappropriate denial by the author or speaker. An example of a trigger embedded under another operator could be, 'Crossan has an infiltrated and changed view of Jesus' resurrection, but there is no scholar called Crossan', or, 'Crossan changed his view of Jesus' resurrection, but he did not do anything that was wrong'.

Beaver and Geurts (2011) have noted that many scholars have ceased to use the term 'cancellation' for some or all cases. One reason given is that the language of 'cancellation' appears to suggest that an inference was made and it has since been removed. They stated that 'in many cases there are theoretical reasons not to regard this as an apt characterization'.

The above explanations of identifying presuppositions are not always unassailable, but they are indicators of how presuppositions may be exposed in an author's writings.

As shown later in this chapter and in Chapter 2, a verification method of research is used in this study that incorporates 'interrelated criteria of truth', which are logical non-contradiction, empirical adequacy, and existential viability. The only hypotheses accepted are those that are non-contradictory, supported by adequate evidence, and able to be affirmed without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25).

1.1.7.3.2 Some other matters for consideration in identifying presuppositions

As applied to unstated presuppositions or axioms that Crossan seems to use to reach his conclusions, some further areas need to be enumerated in this verification model to help with the identification of presuppositions. The following are adaptations from the antidote to theological subjectivism in hermeneutics proposed by Lewis and Demarest (1987:29-31):

(1) When there is conflict with presuppositions, there can be no resolution if hermeneutical eisegesis is used in reading ideas into the Gospels. Both of those in conflict need to start from the position that their different views are hypotheses that need to be tested. Both need to submit their presuppositions 'to the test of standard logical criteria of truth and hermeneutical principles for interpreting literature in general and of the Bible in particular' (Lewis & Demarest 1987:30). Further standards of responsible interpretation include:

(2) The meaning of any statement, including a biblical statement, depends on the ordinary or normal meaning of a statement, using literal language, incorporating figures of speech, but it needs to be seen in terms of the context and the author's purpose.

(3) A biblical statement needs to fit the historical and cultural situation of the original writer and readers.

(4) To understand the meaning of a sentence, it must be coherent with the writer's own context. For example, an author's use of a word, when traced through the person's writings, is a stronger indicator of meaning than the etymology of the word.

(5) The Scriptures do 'not affirm and deny the same thing at the same time in the same respect'. The meaning of any biblical statement, taken alone, will not be contradictory with other scriptural teaching on the same subject. This follows the Reformers 'analogy of faith' by which Scripture interprets Scripture (Lewis & Demarest 1987:30-31).

(6) The intended meaning of a statement or sentence is that which is literal[12], historical, grammatical and contextual and will not be determined by some deeper, secret, or plural meaning. Crossan's writings seem unable to refuse the pull away from the historical-grammatical hermeneutical understanding of the biblical text and its context toward a postmodern hermeneutic or eisegesis of the text. An example would be his historical reconstruction which he stated was an interaction of present and past and that there is no 'presumption that the historical Jesus and earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan1998a:45).

(7) More extensive passages on a topic are given priority over incidental references. The following points do not come from Lewis and Demarest (1987) but from this researcher.

(8) At times there seems to be a question begging logical fallacy when Crossan sneaks his postmodern conclusion into his premise. It is circular reasoning as the conclusion becomes the premise. An example would be the one above in Crossan (1998a:45). To expose presuppositions, questions need to be asked to uncover strata of thought. However, a prominent question for various Crossan interpretations is, 'Why does Crossan hold this belief or presuppositional bias?' In attempting to answer these questions, dimensions of Crossan's worldview may emerge. By worldview, reference is made to a fundamental life orientation, a view of reality that is expressed in a set of presuppositions that may be held consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently. This worldview is used as a foundation for how a life is lived; hence this also influences one's scholarly decisions in writing for publication (Sire 2004:17). Questioning Crossan's conclusions may lead to the discovery of the crux presupposition of his worldview that has a trickle-down effect on other presuppositions. Is there an antithesis between Crossan's core presupposition and his teaching on Jesus resurrection, as revealed in Scripture and the inductive view of the Scripture's own statements about the nature of its own authority?

(9) Has Crossan's 'method displaced the meaning of the text' and has he failed to make historical method a servant rather than a master of the interpretive task? Stiver noted Wolterstorff's use of the 'first hermeneutic', which determines the meaning of a text in view of its time and its author or authors (Stiver 2005:511-512).

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[12] Here, 'literal', following the School of Antioch, 'means the customarily acknowledged meaning of an expression in its particular context. For example, when Christ declared that he was the door, the metaphorical meaning of "door" in that context would be obvious. Although metaphorical, this obvious meaning is included in the literal meaning'. By application to this research, '"literal" refers to the customary and socially acknowledged meaning in an actual, ordinary, earthly situation. "Figurative" refers to the transfer of the literal, ordinary meaning from one sphere to another so as to convey by analogy or comparison a different or deeper or higher truth' (Mickelsen 1963:33, 307).

All scholars operate with some presuppositions, including this researcher.

1.1.7.4 Some of this researcher's primary presuppositions

This researcher brings his own religious and philosophical presuppositions to the research task and these presuppositions need to be subjected to the criticism of others who are seeking truth or accuracy from the research task. This researcher's presuppositions and *a priori* commitments include:[13]

(1) The personal, Almighty, Creator God exists.
(2) When in accordance with His divine will, God intermittently acts in ways that are outside of the natural order through supernatural actions; miracles have happened in the past and may happen in the present and future.
(3) The Scriptures in the original manuscripts are inspired of God – breathed out by God (θεόπνευστος).
(4) The Jesus of the Scriptures has foundational roots in history.
(5) The Scriptures reveal that Jesus is the revelation of the Creator God.
(6) Since God does not lie, what He reveals in Scripture is true, although subject to human interpretation.
(7) This research is conducted by an individual who has experienced the risen Jesus Christ who changed his own life through repentance and faith in Christ.
(8) The researcher's worldview has been effectively shaped by this Christian understanding, experience and the whole of the Christian story based in Scripture.
(9) The Scriptures are interpreted according to historical, grammatical and contextual principles.[14]
(10) The researcher has considerable experience in contending with philosophical, apologetical and historical objections to the Christian faith for which plausible answers have been discovered.
(11) This researcher's presuppositions and *a priori* commitments are open to genuine criticism.
(12) The researcher is under no illusion that he approaches the topic with a bias. However, he is not convinced that this bias in sympathy with the evangelical Christian faith imperils his goal of pressing towards objectively assessing the evidence, any more than another historian with an alternate bias. His discovery of evidence to the contrary will not be allowed to sustain his bias. All new evidence will be subjected to hypothesis-verification methodology.
(13) The aim is to arrive at an assessment of the presuppositions governing Crossan's interpretation of the resurrection Gospel accounts of the historical Jesus, using a critical realist epistemology. Objectivity in this appraisal, as with all other quests for the historical Jesus, is what theologian Karl Rahner called an 'asymptotic goal', a goal towards which one must keep pressing but it is never likely to be achieved (Meier 1991:4).
(14) The critical realism used in this project is that defined by N T Wright: 'This is a way of describing the process of "knowing" that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence "realism"), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and*

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[13] Some of these were suggested by Eddy and Boyd (2007:23-24).

[14] This means that for Bible interpreters the task is to find the meaning of a statement (whether narrative, command or question) as it was meant for the original author, first hearers and readers. However transmission of meaning needs to be considered for modern readers (Mickelsen 1963:5). The biblical text here will be understood literally, unless the immediate context indicates otherwise.

> *the thing known* (hence "critical")'. This path leads to assertions about reality that can only be made provisionally, and the 'knowledge' gained (except knowledge of self) is never independent of the knower. In 'critical reason', it is reason that actively provides the critique (Wright 1992:35; emphases in original).

1.1.7.5 Some dangers and benefits of exposing presuppositions

If this project argues for the view that the portrait of the historical Jesus' resurrection in the canonical Gospels is reliable history and Crossan provides reasons for the fictional nature of some of the canonical data, it may not be clear which presuppositions are influencing both scholars' research. If the claims of historically reliable Gospels are true, the presuppositions undergirding them need to be validated. Can presuppositions be labelled as 'true' or should some be 'more reliable' than others? How is reliability defined?

While it is true that every researcher uses presuppositions and these must be uncovered to prevent 'endless and fruitless debate' (Wright 1992:31), there is a complicating factor. In speech-acts whether in person or in writing, many presenters or researchers do not overtly make known all of their presuppositions. Therefore, it is the listener's or reader's responsibility to try to discern these 'hidden' presuppositions from what is stated. This depends on the listener's or reader's background in the scholarly task and experience in identifying the manifestations of presuppositions. It is never possible to be absolutely certain of a person's presuppositions. Probability is all that can be achieved. But these probable presuppositions may have some major consequences for the conclusions reached in Crossan's writings. The decoding of his presuppositions begins with asking questions of his stated conclusions.

The same applies to Crossan's claims about God and Jesus' resurrection. Presuppositions cannot be ignored for him or any other historical researcher. It will become evident as this process continues that disagreements about presuppositions often trigger different outcomes when data are analysed.

What are Crossan's and this researcher's presuppositions regarding the following?

(1) The nature of the New Testament as history or non-history (including myth, fiction, allegory, metaphor and symbol);
(2) The criteria of historicity;
(3) Deconstruction as a procedure and its postmodern influences;
(4) The validity of extracanonical versus intracanonical data, especially the use of the Gospel of Peter (Cross Gospel) as a very early document which Crossan claims was the foundation of the New Testament Gospel accounts of Jesus' passion-resurrection;
(5) The legitimacy of the use of form, redaction and source criticisms, including the Q hypothesis being described by Crossan as the Q Gospel;
(6) The best methodology to pursue in analysing Gospel data;
(7) Hermeneutical procedures used;
(8) Whether or not the diversity suggested by Crossan in early Christianity, as illustrated by the prominence given to extracanonical works such as the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Peter, supports the Bauer-Ehrman hypothesis;[15]

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[15] The Walter Bauer thesis, adopted by Bart Ehrman and other scholars, including some of the Jesus Seminar, was 'that heresy preceded orthodoxy' in the early church, which moved from diversity to unity (Köstenberger & Kruger 2010:38). For an assessment of the Bauer-Ehrman thesis see Köstenberger & Kruger (2010:23-40).

(9) Whether one can speak of true presuppositions or not;
(10) Logical fallacies used; and
(11) Crossan's partiality towards certain researchers when he stated that he accepted general conclusions from 'most critical scholars today' (Crossan 1994a:XII) and cited secondary literature of those who 'represent my intellectual debt' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv).

The major benefits achieved in tentative assessments of Crossan's presuppositions should be to have a better understanding of the assumptions influencing his worldview that lead to his scholarly conclusions about Jesus' resurrection tradition. These presuppositions may need to be challenged if there is other evidence that can be applied in the hypothesis-verification methodology.

1.2 WHY CHOOSE JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN?

Crossan has become an eminent historical Jesus scholar in the last four decades. He was born in Ireland in 1934, raised a Roman Catholic, entered the monastic Servite Order in the United States, attended a Servite seminary in Chicago, and was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1957, two years later receiving his theological doctorate in Ireland.[16] He then taught in Roman Catholic biblical institutes and seminaries in Rome, Chicago and Jerusalem until he resigned from the priesthood in 1968, to marry and to be able to think critically according to his training and not be criticised for such reasoning. He taught biblical studies at the Roman Catholic, DePaul University (Chicago), where he remained for 26 years. The university appointment required that his published research be highly original and creative.

His reputation as a critical thinker and biblical scholar received international acclaim when he joined the Jesus Seminar in 1985 in the USA. He was co-director of this Seminar from 1985-1996, the aims of the Seminar (Funk 1985) being to 'inquire simply, rigorously after the voice of Jesus, after what he really said' in a way that could border on blasphemy for many and the scholars would do it in full public view with significant mass media attention. Crossan also was chair of the Historical Jesus Section of the Society of Biblical Literature USA from 1992 to 1998.

Over the last forty years, Crossan has published dozens of journal articles, eighteen books on the historical Jesus with titles such as *The historical Jesus* (1991), *Jesus: A revolutionary biography* (1994a), *Who killed Jesus?* (1995) and *The birth of Christianity* (1998a), the latter three becoming national best sellers in the United States. The list of his popular-level publicity in print, radio and television is numerous, attracting national and international media attention (see, for example, Copan 1998; Kohn 1999). My personal e-mail inquiry of Crossan's major publisher, Harper Collins, stated that the publisher was not at liberty to reveal the author's sales statistics. However, Crossan stated that he 'wrote about one million words on the historical Jesus in the 1990s, had three more books on the *Publishers Weekly* list for several months apiece, and found myself translated into nine foreign languages including Korean, Chinese, and Japanese' (Crossan 2000:xvi). In a brief biography of Crossan (2006-09), it was stated that 'in the last forty years he has written twenty-five books on the historical Jesus, earliest Christianity, and the historical Paul. Five of them have been national religious bestsellers for a combined total of twenty four months'. The 'scholarly core of his work is the trilogy' (see Crossan 1991; 1998a; Crossan & Reed 2004).

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[16] The following biographical details are from Crossan (2000).

Of his publication, *The historical Jesus: The life of a Jewish Mediterranean peasant* (1991), Crossan (1993) wrote that this book was in the top ten of religious bestsellers (based on a Publishers' Weekly report), taking it to number one in June 1992. There are other editions for the British and Australians and translations in Portuguese, Spanish, German and Italian.

Crossan (2000:xvi) described his mass media exposure in the USA as including cover stories in the Easter 1996 editions of *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*. At that time, he made television appearances on A&E's 'Mysteries of the Bible', PBS's *Frontline* program, 'From Jesus to Christ', and an ABC news special with Peter Jennings. While he tried to be in the forefront of scholarly research, he also stayed on the cutting edge of 'popular interpretation'.

How Crossan still demands mass media attention is seen in the May 24, 2010 edition of *The New Yorker* (Gopnik 2010:3) in which the content of Crossan (1991) is mentioned with Crossan's emphasis on Jesus' commensality and social radicalism, the best known being Jesus' status that contrasted 'between John the Faster and Jesus the Feaster'. Jesus had a reputation of eating and drinking with the prostitutes and highwaymen, turning water into wine, and establishing a mystical union at a feast through the use of bread and wine. Crossan, as co-founder of the Jesus Seminar, was stated in Gopnik's article as making a persuasive case for Jesus' 'fressing' (a slang word associated with eating in large quantities) as pointing to a radical lifestyle with table manners referring to his heavenly morals.

The rationale for this research is to pursue Crossan's challenge that Gospel presuppositions dictate methods and models for examining the historical Jesus and early Christianity and that wrong presuppositions weaken or may invalidate a research project. The foci of this study will be some of Crossan's controversial presuppositions of the resurrection tradition (Crossan 1991:104).

Jesus' resurrection tradition will be pursued for presuppositional triggers he uses to disguise his presuppositions. The presuppositions will be examined for validity using the hypothesis-verification model. Of necessity, this task will involve hermeneutical examinations of the canonical Gospel texts as well as extracanonical material.

Which view of the historical Jesus would be discovered if the strata chosen were the New Testament Gospels as historical accounts, the resurrection tradition was not based on the Cross Gospel from the Gospel of Peter, Mark did not use 'his own theological creativity', and the Gospels were not 'consummate theological fictions' (Crossan 1991:389-390)?

Crossan's views have had pervasive influence in both the academy and popular culture. His challenge to orthodoxy is represented by these kinds of statements:

- The Gospels are 'consummate theological fictions' that are 'neither histories nor biographies' and 'tell us about power and leadership in the earliest Christian communities' (Crossan 1991:390, xxx; 1994a:190).
- 'His methodology begins with cross-cultural anthropology by which he tries to almost forget his previous knowledge of Jesus' (Kohn 1999).
- His postmodern emphasis maintains that 'there is not in my work any presumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45).

To the above sayings can be added extracanonical documents such as *The Gospel of Thomas* (GThom), *The Gospel of Peter* (GPet), and *The Didache* (Did) as early documents to add to the strata of the canonical Gospels.

1.2.1 The challenge of methodology

Crossan is one of the leading contemporary advocates of reconstruction of the Scriptures (Crossan 1998a:103). He admitted: 'I believe, as a Christian, in the Word of God, not in the words of specific papyri or the votes of specific committees. But fact and faith, history and theology intertwine together in that process and cannot ever be totally separated' (Crossan 1998a:46).

Crossan (1998a:139) himself issued the challenge to debate his methodology: 'When I finally published *The Historical Jesus* in 1991, I intended not just to present another reconstruction of Jesus but to inaugurate a full-blown debate on methodology among my peers…. There still [in 1998 – SDG] is no serious discussion of methodology in historical Jesus research'.

By way of an example 'of methodological avoidance' in historical Jesus' research, Crossan mentioned Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans' 1994 publication in which they 'edited a massive and very useful survey of current research on the historical Jesus' but in over six hundred pages published by Brill of Leiden that 'cost around $175,… there is no chapter on method or methodology…. There is after all, very little methodological scholarship in historical Jesus research to evaluate or survey' (Crossan 1998a:139-140). In this regard, Crossan (1998a) seems to have overlooked the methodological issues in Wright (1992:3-144; 1996:8-11, 86-89, 122-144, 540-611, 660-662) and Lewis and Demarest (1987:21-40). Meyer (2002), which is a reprint of a 1979 edition, has written on 'Jesus and critical history' (Meyer 2002:76-94) and Wright (1992:98, n. 32) considers that Meyer's research 'is probably the finest statement on historical method by a practising contemporary New Testament scholar'. John W. Montgomery (1965; 1970:267-313), in an earlier generation, also addressed methodological issues in theology, although on a limited scale.[17]

1.2.2 The impact of methodology on Crossan's estimate of Gospel origins and content

There have been challenges to Crossan's scholarship including that by noted British historical Jesus' scholar, N T Wright, whose assessment of the content of Crossan (1991) was that it 'is almost entirely wrong' (Wright 1996:44). Crossan's (1993) challenge to the content of biblical revelation was in statements such as 'Christianity often asserts that its faith is based on fact not interpretation, history not myth, actual event not supreme fiction. I find that assertion internally corrosive and externally offensive'. Further, there are 'two major disjunctive options that I summarize as prophecy historicized versus history remembered' (Crossan 1998a:520). He supports the 'prophecy historicized' position to account for the origins of the passion-resurrection narrative. By 'prophecy historicized' he is not referring to biblical texts as prophecies about Jesus, but it 'means that Jesus is embedded within a biblical pattern of corporate persecution and communal vindication' (Crossan 1998a:521). He is using a metaphorical interpretation *after* the event that was read back into the biblical text. He understands Psalm 69 as 'a general metaphor for lethal attack' that was 'actualized during the crucifixion of Jesus' with the mention of gall and vinegar drink (Crossan 1998a:522).

The *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1994, published an article, 'Searching for Jesus: Can this man change what Christians believe? John Dominic Crossan of DePaul University'. The writer summarised Crossan as saying that 'Jesus was a mortal man in the fullest sense of the term. He was conceived and born in the conventional way (no Virgin Birth), did not perform miracles (no Lazarus, no loaves and fishes, no lepers), did not undergo resurrection (no Easter) and after his execution, was probably eaten by wild dogs (no joke)' (see Crossan 2000:133). Crossan's response to the article's content was, 'No mistake in that, but no sense of parable either' (Crossan 2000:133). He adopts a metaphorical view of Jesus' conception because he stated that he wanted to be an ethical historian. He does not accept the divine conception of Jesus or of Augustus as factual history. Instead, 'I *believe* that God is incarnate in the Jewish peasant poverty of Jesus and not in the Roman imperial power of Augustus'. Is this being honest with the biblical text or is it an imposition on the text? Are presuppositions driving these conclusions? Has being 'an historian trying to be ethical and a Christian trying to be faithful' involved a redefinition of the meaning of ethics and faithfulness (Crossan 1998a:29; emphasis in original)? What are some of Crossan's presuppositions that draw him to this kind of conclusion?

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[17] The latter chapter is titled 'The theologian's craft: A discussion of theory formation and theory testing in theology'.

1.2.2.1 Crossan's estimate of the New Testament Gospels

Crossan (1994a:XIV) admitted that 'my endeavour was to reconstruct the historical Jesus as accurately and honestly as possible. It was not my purpose to find a Jesus whom I liked or disliked, a Jesus with whom I agreed or disagreed'. However, what is his view of the Gospels? 'This or that in the Gospel was not history. Of course not, but that's only the negative. It was never intended as history but as parable. That's the positive. And then the work of understanding the parable's point begins' (Crossan 2000:134).

Crossan (1994a:145) states that his proposal is that the first followers of Jesus 'knew almost nothing whatsoever about the details of his crucifixion, death or burial'. What do we have in these accounts? We do not have '*history remembered*' but have '*prophecy historicized*' (emphasis in original). By 'prophecy' he refers to units that are a backward look '*after* the events of Jesus' life were already known' and Christ's followers 'declared that texts from the Hebrew Scriptures had been written' with Jesus in mind. Thus, prophecy 'is known after rather than before the fact'.

Crossan (1994a:196) is thus sceptical of 'the exact sequence of the events at the end of his life' because it 'lacks multiple independent accounts'. What are his presuppositions that cause him to reach this conclusion about the sequence of events about the end of Jesus' life that surely must include the resurrection of Jesus?

Another dimension to Crossan's methodology of the Gospels is his interpretation that the content of the Gospels includes parables *by* Jesus and parables *about* Jesus. He regards the Gospels as megaparables (Crossan 2012:6).

1.2.2.2 The effects of Crossan's stratification on methodology

The effects of his methodology for Crossan (1991:xxviii) are to involve 'a triple triadic process' that synthesises anthropology, history, and literature (Crossan 1991:xxxvii-xxxix). 'Weakness in any element imperils the integrity and validity of the others…. My method … demands an equal sophistication on all three levels at the same time' (Crossan 1991:xxix).

Crossan (1991:305) claimed that 'religion is official and approved magic: magic is unofficial and unapproved religion. More simply: "we" practice religion, "they" practice magic'. Therefore, the effect for Crossan is that Elijah and Elisha are categorised with Honi and Hanina as 'magicians', as was Jesus of Nazareth. He wrote that 'it is endlessly fascinating to watch Christian theologians describe Jesus as miracle worker rather than magician and then attempt to define the substantive difference between the two'. Therefore, he sees others as engaging in 'an ideological need to protect religion and its miracles from magic and its effects' while he is free to describe the supernatural as magical.

At the literary level, Crossan (1991:310) claims that there is 'no textual Gospel of miracles similar to that textual Gospel of sayings'. However, 'while we have as high as sixfold independent attestation in the primary stratum of the sayings, we never get higher than twofold for that of the miracles'. This leads him to 'almost conclude that miracles come into the tradition later rather than earlier, as creative confirmation rather than as original data', but he resists that conclusion by supporting 'the better explanation' that 'miracles were at a very early stage' but were 'washed out of the tradition' behind Mark's Gospel and John's Gospel (Crossan 1991:310-11). Where are they to be found? He treats miracles such as the Gerasene demoniac's story (Mk 5:1-17) as symbolic (1991:314) and seeks affirmation of the miracles and other New Testament material.

The inventory of intracanonical and extracanonical materials is listed by Crossan in four chronological strata (Crossan 1991:427-434). The extracanonical material used is: First Stratum (AD 30-60); Second Stratum (AD 60-80): Third Stratum (AD 80-120); and Fourth Stratum (AD 120-150) (Crossan 1991:427-434)

While here summarising Crossan's perspective on the various strata in formation of sources, this is not a significant emphasis of this study. It will be investigated only when it applies to Gospel origins and with particular application to the Cross Gospel of the Gospel of Peter.

1.2.3 Crossan's presuppositions and their influence on his interpretation of Jesus' resurrection

In addition to the use of the extracanonical material in the strata, Crossan (1991:434-450) also is committed to the 'multiple independent attestation' of the Jesus' tradition. He states that his discipline 'is to work primarily with plurally attested complexes from the primary stratum of the Jesus tradition' (Crossan 1991:410). However, there is a further factor that influences the Gospel accounts. He has stated that he engages in textual 'freeplay, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions' (Crossan 1976:34).

He emphasises 'the tremendous importance of that first stratum. It is, in terms of methodological discipline, data chronologically closest to the time of the historical Jesus. Chronologically most close does not, of course, mean historically most accurate' (Crossan 1991:xxxii).

Crossan's (1991:xxx) methodology follows scholarship that 'over the last two hundred years' has emphasised 'comparative work on the Gospels' which has 'established certain results and conclusions'. Based on Crossan (1991:xxx) these conclusions include:

- There are Gospels inside and outside of the New Testament;
- The four intracanonical Gospels do not represent a total collection or a random sampling, but were 'deliberately selected by a process in which others were rejected for reasons not only of content but even of form';
- The process involved 'retention, development, and creation of Jesus materials' in both intracanonical and extracanonical sources. Note the creation of Jesus' material;
- The differences and discrepancies among the various Gospel accounts and versions do not result primarily from 'vagaries of memory or divergences in emphasis but to quite deliberate theological interpretations of Jesus';

- ‘The continuing presence of the risen Jesus and the abiding experience of the Spirit gave the transmitters of the Jesus tradition a *creative freedom* we would never have dared postulate were it not forced on us by the evidence’ (Crossan 1991:xxx; emphasis added).

What presuppositions are being projected by these kinds of conclusions? The creation of Gospel material meant ‘not only composing new sayings and new stories, but, above all, composing larger complexes that changed their contents by that very process’ (Crossan 1991:xxxi). To support this view, he calls on the support of Helmet Koester: ‘In the first and early second century, the number of gospels in circulation must have been much larger, at least a good dozen of which we at least have some pieces, and everybody could and did rewrite, edit, revise, and combine however he saw fit’ (Koester[18] in Crossan 1991:xxxi).

Crossan (1991:xxx) promotes the view that when Matthew or Luke used Mark as a source for Jesus’ sayings and actions or what others said and did, these writers ‘are unnervingly free about omission and addition, about change, correction, or creation in their own individual accounts – but always, of course, subject to their own particular interpretation of Jesus’. Presuppositional projections seem to abound in these kinds of assertions. What are they?

Crossan admitted the importance of correct presuppositions when he stated that ‘gospel presuppositions necessarily dictate methods and models for research on the historical Jesus and early Christianity’. He understands that the Synoptic Gospels are absorbed, partially or totally, into John’s Gospel. His view was that one may want ‘to debate these specific presuppositions’, but ‘one must have some set of gospel conclusions’. His assessment was that ‘any work done on a wrong presupposition will be seriously weakened or even totally vitiated’ (Crossan 1991:104).

1.2.3.1 Crossan’s understanding of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

Concerning Christ's resurrection, Crossan's view (1999:29) is that the apostle Paul did not consider Jesus’ resurrection as ‘a special or unique privilege’ because he was Messiah, Lord, and Son of God. Crossan does not see that Jesus’ case would be a parallel to that of Elijah, taken up by God and without ‘wider communal or cosmic effects’. His perspective is that Jesus’ resurrection is ‘an apparition with cosmically apocalyptic consequences’, but it is an apparitional vision ‘of a dead man *who begins the general resurrection*’ (emphasis in original).

Crossan’s (1991:395) literary stratification or layers’ model causes him to state that ‘it is very simple to compose a single harmonized version of the former narratives [of the passion and burial stories – SDG] up to the finding of the empty tomb but flatly impossible to compose one for the latter traditions’. However he objects: ‘An almost total discrepancy prevailed for what was, I would presume, even more important, namely the extraordinary return of Jesus from beyond the grave to give the disciples their missionary mandate and apostolic commission’ (Crossan 1991:395). ‘I would presume’ is a presuppositional trigger.

1.3 IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH GAP

The Jesus Seminar rightly warned: ‘Beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you’ (Funk, Hoover & the Jesus Seminar 1993:5). The presuppositional differences between Crossan and those like Wright who have promoted the historical origins of

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[18] This is from Koester (1983:77).

Christianity have created different versions of the understanding of Jesus' resurrection. Are these differences related to the contrast in presuppositions of these scholars or are there other influences that are causing this disparity of versions of Jesus at the end of his physical life? Have deconstruction presuppositions influenced the non-historical, even fictional propaganda, assessments by Crossan? After all Crossan did state that the New Testament, including the Gospels come to us 'as inspired propaganda, and inspiration does not make it any the less propaganda' (Crossan 1995:XI).

Even Crossan identified some of his own presuppositions or the early church's presuppositions (Crossan 1973:5; 1991:xxxi, 157; 1998a: xxi, 149; in Copan 1998: 30, n. 18; 61). He confirmed his belief in the supremacy of reason under his heading, 'autobiographical presuppositions' (Crossan 1995:211-215). These are followed by his 'theological presuppositions' (Crossan 1995:215-218) and 'historical presuppositions' (Crossan 1995:218-221). However, there was no attempt to identify an objective model to discern the content of his presuppositions. Instead, they were stated.

1.3.1 How some scholars view presuppositions

It is relatively common to read scholars who write of the need to investigate the presuppositions of other scholars. What follows are some representative understandings and assessments by a variety of scholars from various theological, historical and philosophical persuasions.

In the study of the New Testament, the three disciplines of literature, history and theology are pursued. Wright was firm on the need to pursue a writer's presuppositional agenda: 'If we do not explore presuppositional matters, we can expect endless and fruitless debate' (Wright 1992:31);

In Daniel Little's articulation of a philosophy of history, he wrote, 'There are plentiful examples of scientists and historians whose conclusions are guided by their interrogation of the evidence rather than their ideological presuppositions. Objectivity in pursuit of truth is itself a value, and one that can be followed' (Little 2012).

Professor emeritus of philosophy, Arthur Danto, took a different slant. While not using the term 'presupposition' but 'feelings' and 'the baggage of attitudes', he referred to presuppositional issues that influence historians:

> Historical statements are made by historians, and historians have motives for making historical statements about one past thing or another. Not merely that, but historians have certain feelings about the past things they are concerned to describe. Some of these feelings may be personal, some may be shared by members of various groups the historian belongs to. Such attitudes induce historians to make emphases, to overlook certain things, indeed to distort. Because of the baggage of attitudes they bring with them, they themselves are not always able to detect the distortions they make.
>
> (Danto 1985:31)

Writing of 'the enduring legacy of Reimarus', the deistic Enlightenment mind-set, 'the historical-critical method, and the quest for the historical Jesus with their philosophical and religious presuppositions', Greg Boyd sought to 'expose the arbitrary presuppositions' along with faulty lines of reasoning, circular methodologies and 'speculative assumptions' in both Crossan and Mack that have caused these two scholars to minimise or 'completely neglect' noteworthy contributions by conservative New Testament scholarship. He named Crossan and Mack for pursuing the chief presuppositions of rejecting the supernatural and divine revelation and searching for an ‘alternative, “de-supernaturalized”’ historical Jesus. He asserted that this is the presupposition of naturalism (Boyd 1995:13, 23, 113).

Montgomery (1969:176) noted that the coherence test to ascertain the truth of a presupposition only refers to ‘internal consistency’ and not external fitting of the facts. However, Wright demonstrated from Crossan’s (1991) research that multiple attestation in methodology could not be applied consistently by Crossan, so Crossan ‘relies, as we all must, on the larger question: does this saying *cohere* with the overall hypothesis being advocated’ (Wright 1996:51; emphasis added)?

Funk (1996:24-26) articulated his presuppositions as seven ‘ground rules’ to reduce frustration when examining the historical Jesus. They are: (1) Human knowledge is finite, fallible and open-ended, including that of the Bible. (2) The ‘frame of reference of our questions’ should be worldwide and not confined to the Bible and religion. (3) Facts depend on what we observe and all of the available evidence. Our copies of the Bible contain many inaccuracies and this affects our assessment of the Bible’s reliability in the original language. (4) For information and evaluation, people must go ‘to those who qualify as scholars and experts’. (5) In spite of the sciences, methodological advances and the knowledge explosion, it is still uncertain whether ‘we can tell the difference between illusion and reality’. (6) The ‘quest for truth’ must be sprinkled with humour, and (7) in spite of dispelling illusions and reaching firm conclusions, we will turn out to be wrong in some or many ways ‘down the road’.

The Jesus Seminar demonstrated the importance of presuppositions by naming them ‘the seven pillars of scholarly wisdom’ which are based on ‘modern biblical criticism’ (Funk *et al.* 1993:2-5). The pillars as presuppositions or assumptions were acknowledged with the statement in the seventh pillar of ‘the current assumption’ and ‘the gospels are now assumed to be’ (Funk *et al*. 1993:4-5).[19] The pillars are: (1) There is a distinction between the historical Jesus, discovered by historical excavation or criticism and the Christ of faith based on the creeds. (2) The synoptic Gospels are closer to the historical Jesus than the Gospel of John. (3) The Gospel of Mark is prior to Matthew and Luke. (4) The hypothetical source Q is identified as an explanation of the ‘double tradition’, material common to Matthew and Luke that is not in Mark. (5) ‘The liberation of the non-eschatological Jesus of the aphorisms and parables from Schweitzer’s eschatological Jesus’. (6) The recognition of the contrast between the oral culture in which Jesus was at home, and the print culture of today, was indicated by ‘short, provocative, memorable, oft-repeated phrases, sentences, and stories’. (7) Who bears the burden of proof? Previously it was assumed that scholars had to prove that synoptic Gospel details were *not* historical. Now the assumption is that they are narratives that have taken the memory of Jesus and embellished them with mythic elements that were an expression of the church’s faith in Jesus. By these ‘plausible fictions’, the Gospels enhance the story for their first-century audience that knew firsthand of ‘divine men and miracle workers’. The Jesus Seminar’s warning was: ‘Beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you’ (Funk *et al.* 1993:5). Could this also apply to the Jesus Seminar’s view of Jesus? Crossan has been a prominent fellow in the Jesus Seminar.

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[19] Randy Nelson (1999:36) has noted that ‘Funk calls these assumptions “Seven Pillars of Scholarly Wisdom”’ and stated that the ‘modern critical study of the Bible begins with the revolt of scholarship against the tyranny of the churches’. Nelson is citing Funk & Smith (1991:1) and Funk *et al*. (1993:2-5).

David Farnell wrote that 'the [Jesus – SDG] Seminar's final presuppositional "test" is "beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you." The "test" applies especially to the Jesus Seminar that *a priori* has determined the nature of the "historical Jesus" by adopting biased presuppositions, thereby producing a "Jesus" wholly congenial to themselves' (Farnell 1998:204; emphasis in original).

John Meier, in his quest for more objectivity in the quest for the historical Jesus, considered that 'the most important hedge against rampant subjectivism is an honest admission of one's own personal stance, one's own point of view and background'. He regards it as 'most important' because 'I never cease to be amazed at how present-day writers will first censure past critics for not being sufficiently self-critical and then proceed to engage in an uncritical projection of their own ideas and agendas onto a portrait of the historical Jesus'. His criticism was not designed 'to drive us into academic agnosticism but to remind us that whatever is written is written from some point of view'. He reminded his readers that 'rejection of a traditional faith stance does not mean neutrality, it simply means a different philosophical view that is itself a "faith stance" in the wide sense of the phrase'. Is there a way out of this presuppositional dilemma? 'The solution is to admit honestly one's own standpoint, to try to exclude its influence in making scholarly judgments by adhering to certain commonly held criteria, and to invite the correction of other scholars when one's vigilance inevitably slips' (Meier 1991:5-6).

The Christian myth of the early Jesus movement that eventually made it to the narrative Gospels was formed in northern Syria and Asia Minor, according to Mack (1993:2). For these Christians, Jesus' death was interpreted as martyrdom, inflated as an event of crucifixion and resurrection, and this myth 'drew on hellenistic mythologies' that related the destiny of a divine being or son of God. This is a presupposition based on Mack's understanding that 'myths project an imaginary world in which a people see themselves reflected at a distance' (Mack 1993:208). Therefore, the narrative Gospels cannot be regarded as trustworthy documents recording 'stupendous historical events at the foundation of the Christian faith' (Mack 1993:10) and 'the Bible's mystique is oddly misnamed by calling it the "Word of God"' and the Christian Bible is 'a masterpiece of invention' (Mack 1995:15, 308).

Luke Johnson noted that 'clearly, scholars' preunderstanding of Jesus deeply affects their way of assessing the data' (Johnson 1999:58).[20]

In opposing the Jesus Seminar's approach to the historical Gospels, Donald Hagner's assessment was that the Seminar's method was unconvincing because they arrived at a conclusion that was assumed from the beginning, before an analysis of the evidence. He noted that the first of the Seminar's methodological and programmatic presuppositions was its necessity to distinguish between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. He saw this as an *a priori* assumption of what the followers of Jesus stated in the Gospels and other New Testament writings, making such writings untrue to history. He also challenged the Seminar's assumptions about the writing of history and how the memory of Jesus was embellished by mythic elements of the church's faith in Jesus (Hagner 2001:ix-x).

Gerhardsson (2001:30-31) stated that it was difficult to pursue Bultmann's thinking because his assessment was not based on a 'detailed analysis of the traditional gospel material' but was built on *a priori* presuppositions where he maintained that (1) the messianic characteristics of the Gospel tradition were secondary, based on the view that Jesus was like the picture painted by the earliest Christian kerygma; (2) the Jesus tradition could only be formed after the first Easter; this has been refuted by Heinz Schürmann's sociological research which showed the Gospel tradition in the community that gathered around the earthly Jesus; (3) there was a need to clearly distinguish between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity. This has been shown to be untenable. It is now known that Hellenistic culture had a secure footing in Palestine even before the time of Jesus among Aramaic-speaking Jews.

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[20] Johnson (1999:59, n. 40) gave 'the most transparent example' as that of Robert Funk in his opening address to the formation of the Jesus Seminar in 1985 and this preunderstanding (presupposition) of Jesus followed in the writings of the Seminar exemplified in Funk *et al*. (1993) and Funk (1996:143-216).

Schweitzer (1936:390-391) criticised the negative theology of the critical study of the life of Jesus. His presupposition was that the Jesus of Nazareth who was Messiah, preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, founded the Kingdom of heaven on earth, and died to finally consecrate his work, 'never had any existence'. He was the creation of rationalism, given life by liberalism and clothed with an historical garb by modern theology. Schweitzer's Jesus 'was a mighty spiritual force' that streamed from him and flows to and through our time.

Schweitzer called his presupposition 'the truth', which was Jesus not as he was historically known, but 'as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it'. It is not the historical Jesus who provides this truth, 'but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men' (Schweitzer 1936:399).

An examination of presuppositions is inferred in Oden's assessment that the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' that has been applied to the Jesus of history by critics of the historical Jesus, should now be applied to the history of the historians. This hermeneutic of suspicion, in Oden's view, should now be 'prudently applied to the critical movement itself'. He asks why it has taken so long for the criticism of criticism to take effect in biblical scholarship. In referring to 'new ecstasies of faddism' in German academic tradition, his statement was that 'in honest historical labor' the facts are followed attentively, but in speculative criticism the text is preyed upon by critics with ideological and 'blatant predisposing interests'(Oden 1989:226-227). Oden's assessment was hard-hitting when he stated that a primary ethical demand of historical study is violated when presuppositions congenial to a researcher are imposed on documents and then the researcher borrows from 'the canonical prestige of the document by claiming that it corresponds with our favored predispositions. That lacks honesty' (Oden 1989:224).

Gregory Dawes (2001:x-xi) noted that both Karl Barth and Rudolph Bultmann rejected many of the assumptions on which the historical Jesus quest was based. In the preface to the first German edition of his seminal writing, David Strauss (1860:3-4) wrote of the influence of the presuppositions of others but he seems to have been oblivious to one of his own dominant presuppositions. He stated that the exegesis of the ancient church had the 'double presupposition' that the Gospels contained history and that this history was supernatural. While rationalism rejected the supernatural presupposition, it clung to the Gospels as history. Strauss maintained that this latter view must be abandoned. He stated that he was liberated from his own religious and dogmatic presuppositions by his philosophical studies.

He wrote that if theologians regarded the 'absence of presuppositions' in his work 'as unchristian', he wanted them to know that he 'regards the believing presuppositions of theirs as unscientific'. Then he stated that in his work he 'will nowhere depart from the seriousness of science' and judgments passed on his work should be confined 'to the domain of science'. Here Strauss is unaware of the fact that his own work is driven by his estimate of the superiority of the presuppositions of science. However, he wants others to see his work as having the 'absence of presuppositions'. Here is another example of a writer who, in this publication, did not see how his own presuppositions drove his theological agenda. Later Strauss revealed, 'My criticism of the life of Jesus was from its origin intimately related to Hegelian philosophy' (in Boyd 1995:298, n. 37). Two reviewers of Strauss's book (1860) referred to it as 'the Iscariotism of our days' and 'the most pestilential book ever vomited out of the jaws of hell' (Borg 1991).

Strauss was a student of the German historian, F C Baur, who had a reserved attitude of 'cold recognition' towards Strauss's work. Strauss interpreted this outlook by his teacher when he wrote to Märklin, stating that he partly understood this as 'I am no historian. I have been prompted by dogmatic [or antidogmatic] interests; and he may disapprove of this from his historico-theological point of view' (Krüger 1900:525). Strauss here acknowledged the role of his presuppositions of 'dogmatic [or antidogmatic] interests'.

This is only a limited sample, from various historical, philosophical and theological persuasions, of those who make claims about presuppositions but do not provide a model for identifying the nature of presuppositions.

A notable example of the lack of a presuppositional model is in the recent dissertation by Tawa Anderson (2011), with the title, 'The myth of the metaphorical resurrection: A critical analysis of John Dominic Crossan's methodology, presuppositions, and conclusions'. If an analysis of Crossan's presuppositions is included in a research project, it should be expected that a diagnostic procedure for classification of presuppositions would be included. It was not. However, a qualification needs to be made that Anderson was responding to some of the presuppositions that were self-identified by Crossan.

Anderson did have sections on 'theological presuppositions: inviolable starting-points' (2011:82); 'conclusion: Theological presuppositions and Jesus' resurrection' (2011:104); 'hermeneutics, methodology, material investments, and worldview presuppositions' (2011:243); 'worldview presuppositions and the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (2011:246); and 'acknowledging directing worldview presuppositions' (2011:250). Anderson also had a chapter on 'Hermeneutics, methodology and presuppositions' (2011:106-203). At no point was there a description of a model that assisted with the classification of presuppositions in an author's writing or verbal presentation. In this important study, presuppositions are mentioned, listed and discussed but no model is used to assist with the identification of them in Crossan's interpretation of the resurrection as metaphor.

Joel Willitts (2005) set out to assess the presuppositions and procedures of six historical Jesus' scholars. However, he relied on the scholars to state or infer their presuppositions or for Willitts to use his own concepts of identifying presuppositions that were not stated. No formal model for identification of assumptions was outlined. However, he did appeal to the criteria of historicity/authenticity at several points in assessing a scholar's procedures. This was his intent:

> I investigated the procedures and the presuppositions of six historical Jesus scholars. In conversation with them, I intended to develop a clearly defined set of procedures informed by critically formulated presuppositions. My goal was to end up with a personal handbook on studying the historical Jesus that could guide me through my research. The six scholars chosen for the study were E.P. Sanders. John Dominic Crossan, John P. Meier, N.T. Wright, Gerd Theissen (and Dagmar Winter), and Dale C. Allison.
>
> (Willitts 2005:62)

He claimed that these six scholars were 'representative of mainstream research in the field of historical Jesus studies. The scope of the study is limited to the introductory sections of their works as well as other places where the author allowed the reader to see his methods and presuppositions'. Then Willits stated that his article argued for 'the need for an urgent reassessment of the pursuit of the "historical Jesus' by (I) assessing the contributions of significant figures in the field of historical Jesus research, and (2) identifying areas in presupposition and procedure that, in my view, make the current pursuit problematic' (Willitts 2005:63).

Of Crossan, he stated that he 'has described his presuppositions and procedures. In his discussion on the Gospels, he defines presuppositions as "historical conclusions reached at an earlier stage, but taken for granted in the present argument" (Willitts 2005:72). He identified Crossan's presuppositions as:

- The predilections he believes he brings to his work on Jesus are solely related to the Gospels; their number, nature and relationships. Crossan specifically states that he does not include "dogmatic or theological acts of faith" within the idea of presupposition' (Willitts 2005:72);
- 'He opines that he is concerned with "honesty", not "spurious objectivity"…. Crossan is unable to deliver what he promises. His answer to the problem, which he calls "attainable honesty", is an equally spurious quest of methodological consensus' (Willitts 2005:72).
- 'Crossan's positivistic confidence in his ability to excise from the Gospels the earliest "stratum" of Jesus tradition. This is not an uncommon presupposition among historical Jesus scholars, but Crossan is more extreme than most. According to Crossan, all Gospel texts contain three layers: the *earliest stratum (*"the voice of Jesus"): the *intermediate .stratum* ("*the* anonymous voices of the community talking about Jesus"); and the *latest stratum ("the* voices of Gospel authors")' (Willitts 2005:72; emphasis in original).
- 'His suppositions related to the sources for Jesus must be noted. For Crossan, both the canonical (what he calls 'intracanonical) and non-canonical (what he calls "extracanonical") Gospels are primary sources for information on Jesus. In regard to the canonical Gospels, he holds to a radical version of the traditional two-source hypothesis. Although he holds a rather traditional view of Markan priority, he refers to Q as the "Q Gospel' and believes that "it is a Gospel in its own right, with textual, generic, and theological integrity, and not just a source. It is also possible to discern redactional layers within its compositional history" (Willitts 2005:73).
- 'Crossan believes that the Gospel of John is *dependent* on the Synoptics, although containing an independent tradition of sayings and miracles. With regard to the non-canonical sources, Crossan is in a *very* small minority of scholars who hold to the independence of the *Gospel of Thomas*' (Willitts 2005:73).
- 'Crossan, moreover, is virtually alone in his view of the independence of the *Didache* and the existence and independence of the *Cross Gospel.* Of the *Cross Gospel* he writes, "There exists within the present *Gospel of Peter* a consecutive source ... the *Cross Gospel* is a passion-resurrection narrative quite different from that in Mark"' (Willitts 2005:74; emphasis in original).

However, no methodological framework was suggested by Willitts for assessing the identification and authenticity of presuppositions.

This current project’s focus on a model to provide more objective identification of presuppositions in writers and especially is acknowledged as a research gap

The above scholars, both liberal and evangelical in their theological persuasions, accepted the important role of presuppositions in understanding conclusions reached by others and themselves in research. A wide range of New Testament researchers throw around the term 'presuppositions' or language that points to presuppositions, but there is an absence of writers who provide objective models to discern presuppositions and then proceed to use them with an assessment of a scholar's focus. This is part of the identified research gap.

1.3.2 Crossan revealed some of his own presuppositions

Crossan (1997:351) admitted that historical Jesus’ research methods depend on presuppositions and the validity of conclusions will rise or fall, based on the nature of the presuppositions used. He conceded in hyperbolic fashion that ‘if mine are wrong, then all is delusion’. ‘All is delusion’ is somewhat excessive as an assessment. Crossan (1998a:109) defined his presuppositions as involving the nature, number and relationships among the Gospels and he learns his presuppositions from the scholarly tradition.

What are his presuppositions that lead to his conclusions? His presuppositions need to be tested against the logical, biblical and historical evidence. Could it be dangerous to build on his presuppositions ‘and watch for the cracks to appear’ in the structure (Crossan 1998a:96)? If his advocated procedure is followed to find ‘cracks’ in the structure, what ‘cracks’ could already be appearing? Could he be relying on his chosen scholarly tradition and missing the scholarly tradition of a different approach to the history of Christianity? Is he myopic in his use of the scholarly tradition? Could there be a presuppositional bias?

Crossan admitted some of his own ‘presuppositions and prejudices’ that will be investigated in this research project for legitimacy. These include autobiographical, theological and historical presuppositions (Crossan 1995:211-221) and some of the New Testament texts that are allegedly ‘inspired by God’, but they ‘can also come as inspired propaganda’ (Crossan 1995:xi). He described these presuppositions as ‘ideas’ which developed before and during his work.

By presupposition, he explained that he does not mean that he had all of these ideas before he began his research work, but that the presuppositions have developed in interaction with his research ‘so that I cannot any longer tell which influenced which’ (Crossan 1995:211). These prominent presuppositions are:

1.3.2.1 Autobiographical presuppositions

‘Autobiographical presuppositions’ is his language and by this, Crossan affirms the validity of the content of his previous books on the historical Jesus (Crossan 1995:211).

1.3.2.2 Theological presuppositions

In his autobiography he discussed his leaving the monastic priesthood and that he approached two Roman Catholic universities in Chicago for teaching positions, but he was turned down. His assessment was that ‘it was never a question of my competence, but only of my ex-priest status and/or my controversial orthodoxy’ (Crossan 2000:91). Controversial orthodoxy! He admitted that as ‘an ex-priest and controversial theologian’, he might not be acceptable to a Roman Catholic college or university. However, he was hired in 1969 as an associate professor of biblical studies at DePaul University, Chicago, where what happened between his bishop and him was considered none of the university's business but he was hired 'in terms of our need and your competence, nothing else'. He remained there for twenty-six years until his retirement in 1995 (Crossan 2000:94-95).

His own background is Irish and Catholic. For him, the resurrection of Jesus means that those people who experienced human empowerment in Lower Galilee in the first century in and through Jesus, that same empowerment is available now. Empty tomb and physical appearance stories about Jesus are parables of faith, parallel to the Good Samaritan story. The meaning of the name Jesus Christ is that Jesus is a 'fact' open to proof and disproof of his existence; Christ is an 'interpretation' which is not open to proof or disproof. The conjunction of Jesus Christ is an act of faith (Crossan 1995:217).

An understanding of Christianity is obtained through reconstruction for a postmodern world; thus, the Gospels are 'even more normative as process than as product' (Crossan 1995:217). The Christian faith does not tell us what we need to know about the historical Jesus but tells us how the fact of the historical Jesus 'is the manifestation of God for us here and now (interpretation). You cannot believe in a fact, only in an interpretation'. It is a 'lethal deceit' to try to turn interpretation into a fact. He considers that Christians and all other human beings 'live from out of the depths of myth and metaphor' (Crossan 1995:217-218).

1.3.2.3 Historical presuppositions

For Crossan (1995:218-221), these presuppositions include historical reconstruction involving two great religions from the first century – Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. There are three related presuppositions: Firstly, each of these two religions is a legitimate branch of a 'common trunk'. Secondly, each of these two religions has asserted itself as the 'sole legitimate heir of the past', thus denying the validity of the other's claim. Thirdly, because Christianity was able to obtain the political and military support of the Roman Empire, it was able to promote its claim and persecute Judaism.

'The reconstructed historical Jesus must be understood within his contemporary Hellenistic Judaism' and contemporary Judaism, as modern scholarship asserts, is 'a richly creative, diverse and variegated one' (Crossan 1995:218). Other dimensions of his historical assumptions include:

(1) Presuppositions of Gospel traditions must be decided before reconstructing the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity. These presuppositions control the method used for research and include the nature and function of the Gospels and the relationships among them (Crossan 1998a:100, 103).

(2) The same principles are used to determine the relationships among extracanonical Gospels as with intracanonical Gospels. His six presuppositions about sources are: (a) The priority of Mark's Gospel; (b) the existence of the 'Q Gospel'; (c) the dependence of John on the synoptics; (d) the independence of the Gospel of Thomas; (e) the independence of the Didache; and (f) the existence and independence of the Cross Gospel in the Gospel of Peter. He admitted that none of these presuppositions is original, infallible or non-controversial, but every scholar who works on reconstructing the historical Jesus and earliest Christianity must make a decision about these matters (Crossan 1998:114, 119-120).

(3) An anthropological and historical presupposition is that the vision of a dead man did not birth Christianity. Instead, the birth of Christianity was an interaction between the historical Jesus, his first companions and the continuation of that relationship even though he was crucified. The focus of this

problem or presupposition is not on the birth but on the growth of Christianity, so it relates to those who were with Jesus before and after his crucifixion. The apostle Paul is included in the growth of Christianity but he was not as important in the first century as he was in the sixteenth century (Crossan 1998a:xxi). There seem to be some metaphorical and existential presuppositions suggested by those statements.

1.3.3 Questions to ask of Crossan's presuppositional model

The topics of this research are limited to: (1) The resurrection tradition; (2) Interpretation of the resurrection accounts; (3) Presuppositions acknowledged; (4) Postmodernism and deconstruction; and (5) Mythology, fiction, legend and magic.

Does the New Testament evidence for the resurrection of Jesus agree with Crossan’s data? This study will ask the following questions with regard to Crossan’s presuppositional model and its conclusions, based on the above five topics:

1.3.3.1 The resurrection tradition

(a) Jesus resurrection was an apparition (Crossan 1998a:xxviii-xxxi). Can this be justified from the biblical material?
(b) Jesus’ resurrection is seen as a communal process for past, present and future resurrections (Crossan 2007:187). What leads to such an interpretation?
(c) Mark created the empty-tomb story as he did the disciples sleeping in Gethsemane (Mk 10:32-42; 16:1-8). So does that make the empty tomb a fictional invention or something else?

1.3.3.2 Interpretation of the resurrection accounts

(a) Why does he accept general conclusions from some critical scholars but not others (Crossan 1991:xxxiv; 1994aXII)?
(b) Is it accurate to state that there are discrepancies in Gospel accounts and these are due to deliberate, premeditated, theological interpretations, using creative freedom (Crossan 1991:xxx)?
(c) Could there be possible logical fallacies used to defend his view of the historical Jesus (1994a:160; 1995:XI, 159, 184, 188, 202, 220-221; 1998a:29, 415)?

1.3.3.3 Presuppositions acknowledged

(a) Historical Jesus research methods depend on presuppositions and if Crossan’s are wrong ‘then all is delusion’ (Crossan 1997:351). Is this an accurate estimate?
(b) Is it possible to test presuppositions by waiting for cracks to appear in the structure (Crossan 1998a:96; Vanhoozer 1998:204)?
(c) See §1.3.2.1; §1.3.2.2 and §1.3.2.3 for examples of the autobiographical, theological and historical presuppositions that Crossan acknowledges in his work.

1.3.3.4 Postmodernism and deconstruction

(a) There is a postmodern tone that predominates in Crossan’s 1991 publication (Wright 1996:50) and his historical reconstruction is understood as the interaction of present and past in textual stratification hermeneutics (Crossan 1995:5). What presuppositional agenda leads to this kind of hermeneutic?
(b) Has this postmodern epistemology led to the death of the biblical author (Vanhoozer 1998:66)?

1.3.3.5 FC and RC

(a) His justification of three stages proposed by FC and RC is retention, development and creation (Crossan 1994a:XIII; Crossan & Reed 2001:12). What influences such an interpretation?

(b) The empty-tomb story and sleeping disciples in Gethsemane are creations by the Gospel writers (Crossan 1998a:557). Can this be demonstrated from the biblical text?

1.3.3.6 SC (including extracanonical and Q Gospel)

(a) What rationale is given for including extracanonical Gospels in first and second strata (Crossan 1991:427-430; Wright 1996:49)? How will these affect his understanding of Jesus' resurrection, especially in light of his support for the Gospel of Peter in the first stratum?

(b) What are the problems associated with his version of SC that may affect the stratification model and its impact on Jesus' resurrection (Crossan 1998a:482; Crossan and Reed 2001:12; Koester 1990:216, 240; Meier 1991:116; Wright 1996:49; Jesus Seminar 1998:227; Evans 2005:261; Quarles 2006:112)?

(c) Is the 'game fixed' with the use of extracanonical material (Johnson 1996:47; Crossan 1998a:103)? If 'wrong on sources, wrong on reconstruction' is his presupposition (Crossan 1998a:482), can his view of sources used for the resurrection tradition be affirmed?

(d) He makes minimal use of the Book of Acts and New Testament epistles (Crossan 1991; 1994a; 1995; 1998a:15). Why?

(e) There are issues with the Q hypothesis which Crossan calls the Q Gospel (Crossan 1991:429; 1994a:XI; 1995:44, 192; 1998a:110, 408, 433). Why is the Q hypothesis elevated to the position of being regarded as the Q Gospel when no Q document has ever been discovered?

(f) 'Do we have one, two, three, four, or five *independent* [Gospel – SDG] sources? And if, as I believe, we have only one independent source in Mark, it all comes down to these two issues: Is there any pre-Markan tradition in Mark 16:1-8, and what is Mark's purpose for this incident' (Crossan 1998a:556)? Is this an accurate understanding of the nature of these sources?

1.3.3.7 Mythology, fiction, legend and magic

Christ's resurrection is regarded as fiction that has intermingled history and myth (Crossan 1994a:160; Schaff 1882:149-160). How is this verified?[21]

1.3.4 Indicators of presuppositions influencing Crossan's research[22]

Is the New Testament evidence for the resurrection of Jesus better interpreted according to the stratification of the Gospels or is Crossan expressing the outworking of his presuppositions about the resurrection and the Gospels?

Based on the questions above, this is raising some of the content from Crossan's publications that could point to presuppositions that he brings to the study of the historical Jesus and the analysis of sources. They are possible triggers in Crossan's assumptions.

(1) Why is the most difficult vector literary stratification (Crossan1994a:XII)? Could this stratification model be an imposition on the text of the Gospels that

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[21] Christ's birth (Mt 1-2 and Lk 1-2) also is symbolical and fictional rather than being actual and factual according to Crossan (2007:106). Again, how can this be determined and affirmed?

[22] Many of these presuppositional indicators are derived from the questions asked in §1.3.3.

demonstrates a presupposition that supports Wright's claim that Crossan's (1991) reconstruction of the historical Jesus is 'almost completely wrong' (Wright 1996:44)?

(2) What are the presuppositional elements of Crossan's (1991:424, 426) reconstruction/deconstruction[23] methodology that could be contributing to the stratification arrangement that Crossan uses for the resurrection tradition?

(3) Why does Crossan accept the general conclusions from 'most critical scholars today' (Crossan 1994a:XII), yet he ignores or minimises the contrary conclusions of other critical scholars? Is there a presuppositional bias in favour of liberal modernist or postmodernist scholars who 'represent my intellectual debt' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv)? What emphasis has he given to the conclusions of Aune (1991), Barnett (1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009[24]), Blomberg (1985, 1987, 1992, 1995), Bock (1995, 2002a, 2002b), Boyd (1995), Bruce (1960), Byrskog (2002), Carson (1992, 2002a, 2002b), Carson and Woodbridge (1986, 1992), Craig (1995, 1998), Davids (1992), Farnell (1998), Gerhardsson (1998a, 1998b, 2001), Habermas (1996), Hengel (1973, 1979, 2000), Ingraffia (1995), Johnson (1996a), Ladd (1967, 1975), Linnemann (1990, 1992, 2001), Marshall (1970, 1977, 1988), Montgomery (1969, 1970), Robinson (1976), Thiselton (1980, 1992), Thomas (1998a, 1998b), Vanhoozer (1990, 1998, 2002), Wenham (1992), Wilkins and Moreland (1995), Witherington (1990, 1994, 1997a), and Wright (1992, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2003)?

(4) Why is it so damaging in applying to the biblical texts of Christ's resurrection 'a ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion' where the resurrection accounts are 'worthless as history' (Wright 1996:19)? Why is Crossan so opposed to the historical hermeneutic of Christ's bodily resurrection (Crossan 1991:394, 404; 1994a:160-166; 1998a:xxvii-xxxi, 548-550; Borg & Crossan 2006:190-216)? Is there a presuppositional bias?

(5) If Crossan's (1991) historical research is 'unsalvageable' (Meyer 1993:576), will other models of historical evaluation assist in making 'salvageable' assessments in Gospel research?

(6) Could there be a presuppositional bias against other historical models in Crossan's assessment? Or does Wright have a presuppositional preference when he states that 'in the last few decades' systematic theologians have unsurprisingly chosen 'a Jesus who just happens to fit the programme that was desired on other grounds'? Wright stated that when one uses the word 'Jesus' in theology, there is no point in using it unless one is referring 'to the Jesus who lived and died as a Jew of the first century'. To study Jesus, Paul and the Gospels in the first century, Wright maintains, does not require the adoption 'wholesale and uncritically' of an Enlightenment worldview of any on offer from the contemporary secular culture (Wright 1992:139).

(7) Is it nonsensical to seek an historical rather than a fictional Jesus? Crossan makes fictional claims about the Gospels (1994a:160).

(8) Extracanonical Gospels seem to receive an inordinate prominence in Crossan's writings, especially in the first and second strata. Why the emphases and early dates for the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Egerton Gospel, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Egyptians and the Secret Gospel of Mark (Crossan 1991:427-430)? Wright (1996:32) regards it as 'highly

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[23] Here reconstruction and deconstruction are used as synonymous terms. Crossan prefers the term reconstruction.

[24] There was an earlier edition of the 2003 revised edition in 1986 (see Barnett 2003:ii).

contentious' to have the Gospel of Thomas placed at an earlier stage of the tradition than the canonical Gospels. He stated in 1996 that the Gospel of Peter has 'not been accepted yet by any other serious scholar' and that its dating by the AD 50s is 'purely imaginary' (Wright 1996:49). Barnett (2005:213) placed the dating of the Gospel of Peter and the Gospel of Thomas in the third century. Burton Mack (1993:181) dates the Gospel of Thomas to 'the last quarter of the first century' while Blomberg (1987:208) dates it as 'probably in the mid-second century' and the Gospel of Peter provided 'additions to the canonical accounts' (Blomberg 1987:217). Meir makes the pointed statement that to call the Gospel of Peter and Gospel of Thomas a supplement to the four intracanonical Gospels 'is to broaden out our pool of sources *from the difficult to the incredible*' (Meir 1991:141, emphasis added). Is the Gospel of Thomas dependent on or independent of the canonical Gospels (Bauckham 2006:236-237)? What presuppositions influence Crossan's (1991:427-430) use of extracanonical Gospels, especially in the first and second strata? Is this pointing to a movement away from a historical Jesus to a postmodern one by which Crossan affirms his presumption that 'there will always be divergent historical Jesuses' and divergent Christs because the structure of Christianity is '*this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*' (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original)? Could this be a postmodern, presuppositional imposition on the biblical texts? Is an assessment of the impact of reader-response theories instrumental in showing elements of the stratifications that Crossan uses? Other presuppositional indicators in Crossan's writings include the following, but they will be explored in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, where bibliographic references are included.

- Postmodern epistemology;
- Reasons for the Gospel of Peter being in the first stratum;
- Method leads to inventory and then interpretation. Which presuppositions influence this trajectory?
- The early dating of some extracanonical material;
- FCs three levels of stratification;
- Gospels as consummate theological fictions;
- Starting with context rather than text;
- Differences and discrepancies in New Testament Gospels are due to deliberate theological interpretations of Jesus;
- The Gospel of Q rather than the hypothesis of Q;
- The criteria of historicity with dominant influences;
- Logical fallacies used;
- Presuppositions on the authority of Scripture;
- The meaning of parable and megaparable in his uses of them;
- Read the text was his instruction to the producers of a film on Jesus. Does he do this accurately himself?
- Diversity in early Christianity and the Bauer-Ehrman hypothesis;
- His working definition of historical reconstruction;
- The historicity and assumptions around Jesus' resurrection;
- Transmitters of Jesus' tradition had a creative freedom;
- Support for dialectic between history and faith; Jesus' last breath was not history but of faith and a symbol;
- Use of the Cross Gospel in the Gospel of Peter as foundation for passion accounts; and

- The opposition to eyewitness testimony.

These are some of the indicators in Crossan’s writings of possible presuppositions that influence his conclusions that are contrary to orthodox Christian teachings.

1.3.5 The gap: Examination of the influence of presuppositions in the development of Crossan's stratification model

Tawa Anderson (2011) has examined Crossan’s interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection, pursuing some of the presuppositions surrounding Crossan’s interpretation of the metaphorical resurrection of Jesus. Anderson’s investigation found these presuppositions:

- There were three theological presuppositions – religious pluralism, human finitude and divine consistency – that were regarded as inviolable precepts by Crossan in regard to Jesus’ resurrection (Anderson 2011:82-105).
- Crossan’s hermeneutics of resurrection involve presuppositions of structuralism and deconstruction (Anderson 2011:108-123).
- In examining Crossan’s conclusions in relation to the metaphorical resurrection, it was Anderson’s assessment that the Crossan ‘edifice’ is driven primarily by ‘governing worldview presuppositions’ rather than an ‘objective application of a rigorous methodology’ (Anderson 2011:202, 204). These presuppositions include methodological naturalism and the Gnostic redefinition of Jesus’ resurrection as spiritual, rather than a physical, historical event (Anderson 2011:244, 246).

Craig (1995:167-168, n. 4) does offer a brief critique of Crossan’s methodological principle of only allowing scriptural passages that have multiple, independent sources, even if also found in the first stratum. Craig noted that this leads to agnosticism about Jesus’ burial and resurrection as there is a lack of multiple, independent accounts at the end of Jesus’ life. He exposed this as Crossan’s idiosyncratic approach to the Gospels, driven by presuppositions that demonstrate a prejudice against the New Testament documents and ‘can only be described as historically irresponsible’. This included Craig’s brief assessment and rejection of the second-century Gospel of Peter as providing an early passion account that was used by the canonical Gospels. However, this hardly provides an extensive assessment of the presuppositions influencing Crossan’s stratification model of the resurrection in New Testament Gospel texts. This is one of the gaps that this project will address – a more comprehensive examination of presuppositions influencing Crossan’s choice of sources for the stratification model and of Crossan’s interpretation of those sources as they reveal the nature of Jesus’ resurrection.

Dennis Ingolfsland (2002:407, 414) examined Crossan’s first strata sources, applied Crossan’s criteria of multiple, independent attestation to see if the result would confirm Crossan’s view of Jesus as a peasant Jewish cynic. Ingolfsland found a picture of Jesus using Crossan’s methodology that was contrary to Crossan’s conclusions. He discovered that ‘three first strata sources either directly called Jesus the Messiah or presented him in messianic terms’. Three first strata sources indicate that Jesus is the one who brings salvation; four first strata sources found that Jesus considered himself as God’s incarnation or his followers thought in those terms; three strata affirm the resurrection of Jesus. Ingolfsland was not affirming Crossan’s support for the Cross Gospel, Apocalyptic Scenario, or the miracles’ collection. While Crossan’s first strata could not discover a Jesus who was the Jewish Messiah, Saviour, incarnation of God, he performed astounding miracles and rose from the dead. What presuppositions are being used by Crossan to assess the sources in the first stratum to arrive at a very different Jesus to the one found by Ingolfsland? This will be one of the goals of this research.

Boyd (1995:51-67) placed Crossan in the 'Post-Bultmannian Quest' (revived by the Jesus Seminar) that continued Bultmann's presuppositions and the assumptions of form critical methodology. This Quest included other presuppositional features of Christian diversity (including the Bauer thesis), primacy of extracanonical Gospels, acceptance of the sayings' source Q, a non-apocalyptic Jesus, a history-of-religions approach, sociological elements, and the rise of the thesis of the cynic-sage Jesus.

Some researchers such as Bock (2002b:158-160) have exposed the 'dominant suppositions' of the broader discipline of historical criticism. Others like Linnemann (1990), a former student of Bultmann, Fuchs, Ebeling and Gogarten, have provided a more in-depth study of the presuppositions and limitations of the historical-critical method. Since her conversion to Jesus Christ and becoming a practitioner of evangelical Christianity she did use some hyperbolic constructions in her rejection of the presuppositions of her training, academic teaching and research. However, as a former insider, her estimates cannot be ignored that historical-critical theology is conducted as if there is no God; biblical writings are human creations by the authors; what the text of Scripture clearly states in Old Testament and New Testament cannot be true; and there is a denial that the Lord God Almighty reigns (Linnemann 1990:84-88). In literary criticism, questions are answered on the basis of assumptions, none of which 'admits to definitive verification' (Linnemann 1990:94).

However, these assessments of presuppositions are on the broader framework of the historical-critical method, with an occasional foray into a narrow aspect of Crossan's presuppositions.

If there are governing worldview presuppositions (Anderson 2011), what are the core presuppositions influencing the choice of the chronological content of Crossan's stratification of the New Testament Gospels as applied to Jesus' resurrection accounts? This is a research gap that is evident.

Frans Neirynck (1994) has offered an extensive investigation of sources of knowledge about the historical Jesus, and particularly analyses the extensive inventory in Crossan (1991). He noted John Meier's assessment that the four canonical Gospels 'turn out to be the only large documents containing significant blocks of material relevant to the quest for the historical Jesus'. Meier admits that his view is contrary to some scholars, but 'I do not think [a presuppositional trigger – SDG] that the rabbinic material, the *agrapha*, apocryphal gospels, and the Nag Hammadi codices (in particular the *Gospel of Thomas*) offer us reliable new information or authentic sayings that are independent of the NT' (Meier (1994:139-140; emphasis in original).

However Neirynck's (1994) emphases were on the legitimacy of the choice of materials in Crossan's stratification, dating and whether these strata contain dependent or independent sources. He does make the occasional comment that may be a presuppositional evaluation; an example would be his assessment of Crossan's 'Collection of Miracles' in Mark and John where Neirynck (1994:225) indicated that 'Crossan's argument is extremely weak'. It should be noted that Neirynck's primary emphasis was not on identifying Crossan's presuppositional influence on the passion-resurrection accounts in the stratification method.

The evidence presented above indicates the multiplicity of presuppositions underlying Crossan's stratification model of the resurrection accounts of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels that need to be covered in this project.[25]

1.4 THE PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED

In developing his methodology of literary stratification in determining the facts and the interpretation surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, as indicated above, Crossan has given indicators that his method and content are driven by certain presuppositions. What are these presuppositions regarding the resurrection accounts that cause Crossan to make such provocative statements about Jesus and the content of the New Testament texts that have for centuries represented the primary source evidence for Jesus?

What are some of the presuppositions that influence Crossan to regard the Gospels as 'consummate theological fictions' that are 'neither histories nor biographies' and 'tell us about power and leadership in the earliest Christian communities' (Crossan 1991:390, xxx; 1994a:190)?

Crossan considers the first stratum as 'the *original* one. I call it the Cross Gospel and date it to the 40s of the first century' and this stratum has the trial, abuse, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus conducted and viewed by Jesus' enemies. However, the canonical Gospels, he assessed, are in the second canonical stratum where the burial of Jesus, seeing the resurrected Jesus ('apparition of Jesus'), and presence at the empty tomb are not by enemies but by Jesus' friends (Crossan 1995:223). What presuppositions drive Crossan to accept the Cross Gospel, embedded in the Gospel of Peter, as an independent source for the passion-resurrection accounts in the New Testament Gospels? The phrase, 'I call it', is a presuppositional trigger.

Crossan (1991:xxix) states that 'any study of the historical Jesus stands or falls on how one handles the literary level of the text itself'. While admitting that his 1991 publication 'is a scholarly reconstruction of the historical Jesus', he challenged readers and scholars: 'Because there is *only* reconstruction… if you cannot believe in something produced by reconstruction, you may have nothing left to believe in' (Crossan 1991:426; emphasis in original). Therefore, is his understanding of reconstruction (Crossan 1991) influenced by the 'the postmodern tone which predominates in the book' (Wright 1996:50) and his other publications on the historical Jesus?

Crossan (1998a:103) admitted the presuppositional challenge: 'You must decide your presuppositions about gospel traditions before reconstructing either the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity. Everyone must. Everyone does'. Which of Crossan's presuppositions cause his conclusions to vary from those of other historical Jesus' scholars?

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[25] In assessing the research gap, the following journals were examined to discern whether the topic of this study has been addressed in the years 1997 to early 2012, except for years otherwise indicated: *Asia Journal of Theology* (2001-2012); Catholic *Biblical Quarterly*; *Bibliotheca Sacra*; *Colloquium: The Australia and New Zealand Theological Review* (1995-2012); *Interpretation* (1997-2007); *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1997-2011); *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (2003-2012); *Journal of Biblical Literature*; *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*; *The Master's Theological Journal*, *New Testament Studies*; *Pacifica: Journal of the Melbourne College of Divinity*; *Scottish Journal of Theology*; *Southern African Baptist Journal of Theology* (2007-2011); *Southwestern Journal of Theology* (1998-2011); *Theology Today*; *Trinity Journal* (1997-2011); and *Tyndale Bulletin*. No topic was found in these journals that approached or replicated the specific focus of this study on Crossan's presuppositions using an objective model for identification.

Assessment of Crossan's presuppositions will be made using some objective criteria for uncovering presuppositional triggers that may also be embedded under various operators from which are projected certain presuppositions (Beaver & Geurts 2011). Using the Beaver and Geurts model provides a more objective basis for identification of triggers to discern presuppositions. It does not offer a fool-proof way of being certain of Crossan's presuppositions, but it provides a more objective framework.

In short, Crossan's presuppositions surrounding the passion-resurrection accounts of Jesus will be uncovered to discern some of the influences driving Crossan's agenda for the historical Jesus that may impact on his stratification method.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

Since Crossan (1998a:103) has acknowledged the presuppositional challenge in his own scholarship and that the historical Jesus and earliest Christianity cannot be reconstructed without use of presuppositions, this research will pursue his challenge by identifying his presuppositions. What therefore are the presuppositions that lead to Crossan's controversial understanding of the resurrection tradition?

Wright's view is that three criteria constitute a good hypothesis in any field: (a) 'It must include the data. The bits and pieces of evidence must be incorporated, without being squeezed out of shape any more than is inevitable' (Wright 1992:99); (b) 'it must construct a basically simple and coherent overall picture' (Wright 1992:100), and (c) 'the proposed explanatory story must prove itself fruitful in other related areas, must explain or help to explain other problems' (Wright 1992:100).

Wright (1992:101) warns how 'some New Testament scholars have evolved highly sophisticated ways of getting off the horns of the dilemma posed' by criteria (a) and (b). If the research data 'do not fit the simple hypothesis', these scholars find 'ways of dealing with the recalcitrant data' by showing that it is from the later church and not from Jesus himself. 'The data thus disappear from the picture of Jesus, but at a cost'. What is the cost? It is 'the resultant complexity of the picture of the church and its creative activity and traditions. Anyone who has studied modern traditio-historical criticism of the gospels knows just how intricate that can be, and how few fixed points there really are'. By this process, the critic seeks to understand Jesus' thoughts better than the Gospel writers did and the critic can relativise some parts of Jesus' thought in the light of other alternatives.[26] However, Wright added a qualifier that 'when scholars try to keep Jesus and the early church at arm's length from each other that extra phenomena are imported' (Wright 1992:101).

Meyer (2002:80) stated that 'the way to knowledge is through the designation of particular unknowns…. History consists in specifying unknowns (i.e., in asking questions) and systematically converting them into knowns (constructing and cross-checking answers). The sequence is: question, hypothesis, verification'.

When applied to Crossan's stratification, Wright (1996:50; emphasis in original) judges that Crossan's 'inventory is the *result*, not the *ground*, of a position about early Christianity adopted for quite other reasons. This is where the real debate must take place'.

Lewis and Demarest, in pursuing an integrative theological model, stated that the verification method of research 'defines a topic, surveys influential alternative answers in the church, amasses relevant biblical data in their chronological development, formulates a comprehensive conclusion, defends it against competing alternatives, and exhibits its relevance for life and ministry'. They stated that theology as a science uses '*interrelated criteria* of truth'. These include logical non-contradiction, empirical adequacy, and existential viability. The only hypotheses accepted are those that are found to be (1) noncontradictory, (2) supported by adequate evidence, and (3) affirmable without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25; emphasis in original). These criteria will be used in this study, with the exception of relevance for life, ministry and existential viability.

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[26] This sentence is adapted from Wright (1992:101, n. 35).

This research will follow Meyer's suggested sequence of question, hypothesis and verification, within the framework recommended by Lewis and Demarest (1987). To develop a hypothesis, what are some of the questions being asked of Crossan's historical Jesus' construct, especially in light of presuppositions inferred or acknowledged by him?

1.5.1 Hypothesis stated

Based on the above introductory material, which criteria have the most dominating impact on Crossan's historical Jesus' construct, particularly with emphasis on passages dealing with the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, the early chapters of Acts, and early literature external to the Christian Scriptures?

Why do some of Crossan's constructs on the historical Jesus differ so substantially from those of some other historical Jesus' scholars (see above)?

Thus, the hypothesis to be tested in this research is: '**Crossan's presuppositions and methods, in his study of the resurrection of Jesus, are not valid when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection is taken into consideration**'. A model is chosen that is an attempt to use a more objective method to isolate presuppositions.

One of the problems with hypotheses is that 'there may be more than one possible hypothesis which fits the evidence' (Wright 1992:109). One additional hypothesis that emerged in reading of Crossan's publications was the possible influence of postmodern hermeneutics on his presuppositions and/or conclusions. Another was that Crossan claimed that 'gospel presuppositions necessarily dictate methods and models for research on the historical Jesus and early Christianity' and 'any work done on a wrong presupposition will be seriously weakened or even totally vitiated' (Crossan 1991:104). Have Crossan's presuppositions strengthened or weakened, even drastically reduced the effectiveness, of his own work on the historical Jesus, especially his understanding of the resurrection tradition?

1.5.2 Verification

The above hypothesis will be tested on the grounds stated of 'getting in the data, achieving appropriate simplicity, and proving fruitful in other fields' (Wright 1992:103).

To state that 'getting in the data' means it includes 'a creation of the early church' is a judgment that Wright considers has not yet been demonstrated and is one of the 'speculative hypotheses' being used by critics who have assumed that they know more about Jesus' life and ministry than 'the picture we find in the gospels'[27] (Wright 1992:106). The hypothesis that some of the Jesus' data originated with the creativity of the early church is militated against, in Wright's view, by three factors:

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[27] Here Wright footnotes Bultmann (1968:145, 262).

‘The comparative chronological closeness of the gospels to the subject-matter they purport to describe’ (Wright 1992:106);

(a) ‘The high probability that the earliest Palestinian Christianity continued in many important respects the sort of ministry in which Jesus himself had engaged’ (Wright 1992:106); and

(b) ‘We have available within current scholarship several quite plausible hypotheses about Jesus which include whole reams of data that it was formerly thought impossible to include’[28] (Wright 1992:106; see also Neill & Wright 1988:379-403).

This study affirms Wright’s (2003:20) presupposition that ‘detached objectivity’ is not possible in historical work as the historian's work involves ‘a dialogue between the historian, in community with other historians, and the source materials; and that at every point the historians’ own worldview-perspectives are inevitably involved’. The historical-critical method has limitations: ‘All historians dealing with ancient subjects necessarily work in the realm of probabilities and not certainties’ (Witherington 1997a:12). This study will also proceed in light of Crossan’s warning about historical Jesus’ research having a ‘stunning diversity’ that he describes as ‘an academic embarrassment’ because there is the suspicion ‘that historical Jesus research is a very safe place to do theology and call it history, to do *autobiography* and call it biography’ (Crossan 1991:xxviii; emphasis in original). Should this aphorism also be applied to Crossan’s research and the presuppositions he adopts?

The remainder of this study will seek to verify or falsify the hypothesis stated above.

1.6 HOW THIS STUDY WILL PROCEED

The following chapters will accumulate evidence to verify or falsify the hypothesis, using the following path:

1.6.1 Chapter 2

An examination will be made of: (a) various approaches to historical method, (b) Crossan’s historical method, and (c) establishing the framework of a scientific, verificational method that is used in this project.

In the chapters which follow, the presuppositions influencing Crossan’s doctrine of Jesus’ resurrection will be examined through an inductive investigation of the data.

Abduction, as a logical inference, will be employed throughout the study. Deductions will be drawn from all views. The method reflects a recursive interplay of induction, abduction and deduction as the scientific, verificational method is used to support or reject the hypothesis.

1.6.2 Chapter 3

This will provide an extensive examination of Crossan’s data to discover the prominent presuppositions on the resurrection tradition of Jesus Christ. This identification of presuppositions will be made using the Beaver and Geurts (2011) model. The conclusions do not exceed the estimate of probability. Identifying presuppositions is not always irrefutable, but they are indicators of how presuppositions may be exposed in an author’s writings. Particular emphasis will be placed on an attempt to identify key presuppositions that may lead to the discovery of a *crux presupposition* that may have flow-on effects to other presuppositions.

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[28] Here Wright’s footnote (1992:106, n. 45) was, ‘SeeTheissen (1978, 4, 121); Borg (1984:132f., 190)’.

1.6.3 Chapter 4

This will provide an examination of the validity or otherwise of three presuppositions used in a hypothesis-verification process.

1.6.4 Chapter 5

The conclusion of the research will be presented to verify or refute the hypothesis.

1.6.5 Chapter 6

The bibliographical works consulted are stated.

1.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

As an introductory chapter, terms were defined for this study of the historical Jesus, including stratification, postmodern deconstruction and mythology. Some emphasis was placed on the primary focus of this research – definition of the term, presupposition, and why an examination of Crossan's presuppositions is worthy of research. The Beaver and Geurts (2011) model to be used was outlined as a more objective base for identification of presuppositions.

In choosing this examination of Crossan's presuppositions, the challenge of his methodology was surveyed with its impact on his stratification model. An overview was given of pointers to his presuppositional understanding of Jesus' resurrection tradition

A research gap was identified as the need to use a more objective model for identifying presuppositions. This inquiry will research which presuppositions are influencing Crossan's conclusions on the resurrection of Jesus. Crossan acknowledged his use of autobiographical, theological and historical presuppositions and these were noted along with other researchers and their views of the effects of presuppositions on any researcher's data.

This researcher raised questions concerning Crossan's stratification model and his conclusions concerning Jesus' resurrection. Some initial indicators of presuppositions were noted. The research gap was identified as the need for a more comprehensive understanding of Crossan's assumptions, especially using a more objective model of identification.

The problem to be investigated was stated along with the proposed hypothesis to be tested with a verification-falsification method. How the study will proceed over 5 chapters was summarised at the conclusion of the chapter.

Chapter 2

Establishing historical method

2.1 INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Crossan (1991:423) correctly observes that it is ‘a methodological screen’ to support the nineteenth century dream of ‘uncommitted, objective, dispassionate historical study’. He admits that his use of both intracanonical and extracanonical Gospels is controversial (Crossan 1998a:103). Therefore, in establishing an historical method for this study, textual stratifications involving both canonical and extracanonical material by Crossan will be examined only as they impact on the resurrection tradition. Crossan’s (1991:xxix) emphasis is that the study of the historical Jesus will stand or fall on how a scholar ‘handles the literary level of the text itself’.

Crossan (1999:5) knows the need to emphasise ‘method, method, and, once again, method’. He issued the challenge to debate his methodology, but he admits that method will not guarantee us the truth, because nothing can do that (Crossan 1998a:139-140). But method, as self-conscious and self-critical as we can make it, is our only discipline (Crossan 1998a:44). He claims that when he published *The Historical Jesus* (1991), he intended his reconstruction of the historical Jesus to launch a ‘full-blown debate on methodology among my peers’ (Crossan 1998a:139). By the time of his 1998a publication, his view was that there had been little scholarly discussion of historical Jesus’ methodology.

With that kind of statement, Crossan seems to have overlooked methodological issues relating to the historical Jesus that had been investigated by N T Wright (1992:3-144; 1996:8-11, 86-89, 122-144, 540-611, 660-662) and Ben Meyer (2002:76-94). The latter is a reprint of a 1979 edition written on ‘Jesus and critical history’, which Wright (1992:98, n. 32) regards as ‘probably the finest statement on historical method by a practising contemporary New Testament scholar’.

Bauckham (2006:506) regards reconstruction (an aspect of Crossan’s methodology) as seriously faulty methodology that results in the accumulation of minimal ‘uninteresting facts’ of an historical figure, Jesus Christ, who has been ‘stripped of any real significance’. Therefore, for authoritative and accurate historical data on Jesus Christ, Bauckham (2006:506) refers to the eyewitness testimony provided by the Gospel writers and not to extra-biblical revelation. His methodology requires that this testimony must not be accepted uncritically and is required to be tested for internal consistency and coherence as well as testing for consistency and coherence with other relevant historical evidence and context. He warns of the need to practise historical methodology that does not prejudice one from accepting ‘exceptionality in history’ and reduces the extraordinary to the ordinary. In this investigation of the presuppositions used by Crossan for the resurrection account, one of the issues is an examination of preference for extracanonical material and lesser prominence given to intracanonical data, especially when the content of Luke 1:1-4 is considered.

The methodology of the Jesus Seminar (Funk et al 1993:16), by contrast with Bauckham, led to an assessment that the evidence in the New Testament Gospels indicates that it is hearsay (secondhand) evidence and none of the Gospel writers ‘was an ear or eyewitness of the words and events he records’ and the authors of the written Gospels were anonymous; the names now assigned to the Gospels are 'pious fictions'.

In the following, a methodology is outlined to pursue an examination of the parameters of this study.

2.2 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.2.1 Delimiting the study

The effects of methodology for Crossan (1991:xxvii-xxxix) involve a triadic process that synthesises anthropology, history, and literature. While Crossan views the three elements affecting the integrity and validity of each other in his method, this study will be restricted to an examination of the presuppositions influencing Crossan's teaching on Jesus' resurrection tradition.

2.2.2 Defining the approach

Lewis and Demarest consider that the verification method of research 'defines a topic, surveys influential alternative answers in the church, amasses relevant biblical data in their chronological development, formulates a comprehensive conclusion, defends it against competing alternatives, and exhibits its relevance for life and ministry'. They state that theological method as a science uses '*interrelated criteria* of truth'. These criteria include logical contradiction, empirical adequacy, and existential viability. The only hypotheses accepted are those that are found to be (1) noncontradictory, (2) supported by adequate evidence, and (3) affirmable without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25; emphasis in original). These criteria will be used in this study, with the exception of relevance for life, ministry and existential viability.

This research will follow Meyer's (2002:80) suggested sequence of question, hypothesis and verification, within the framework recommended by Lewis and Demarest (1987). This involves:

- defining the topic of examining the presuppositions used by John Dominic Crossan that led to his conclusions on the resurrection tradition.
- assessing the influential alternative answers to these presuppositions in the scholarly literature;
- inductively accumulating data from Crossan (Borg & Crossan 2006; Crossan 1991; 1994a; 1995, 1997, 1998a, 1999, 2000, 2007, 2012; Crossan & Reed 2001; Crossan & Watts 1996); and
- formulating a comprehensive conclusion to support or deny the hypothesis. This will be accomplished by defending it against alternatives.

2.2.3 Which data are important?

Crossan (1991:xxxii) emphasises 'the tremendous importance of that first stratum' for historical Jesus' studies, which is the period 30-60 AD, because it is closest chronologically to the time of the life of Jesus, which he believes is more accurate historically. Thus, he gives primary, but not exclusive, attention to that stratum.

Bauckham (2006:479) follows Byrskog (2002) in arguing that the best historical evidence comes from historians who participated in the events (known as direct autopsy). In examining the presuppositions of Crossan, the methodological information outlined in §1.1.7 will be used as a strategy of investigation.

The Gospels as primary historical documents will be examined, with consideration of the historical validity or otherwise of the extra-canonical material, especially the Gospel of Peter, which Crossan locates in the first stratum (AD 30-60).

2.2.4 Are the Gospels historical?

What is history? Tudor historian, Sir Geoffrey Elton (1967:10-12), stated that since history 'deals with events, not states, it investigates things that happen and not things that are', it may be defined as 'those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left a present deposit; and it deals with them from the point of view of happening, change and the particular' (Elton in Barnett 1997:18). Elton is not explaining history from a Christian perspective, but his understanding of history has application to the Gospels and Christian history. Barnett (1997:19) defined history as dealing with phenomena and how to explain them. He assessed that the phenomenon of the origin of early Christianity 'is well attested. Its sudden emergence is as historically secure as any event in Palestine in that century'.

In Richard Niebuhr's (1957) study of theological method he examines the link between Christ's resurrection and historical reason. If he is 'to sketch a critical concept of history and historical reason', he relies on the idea of history from biblical scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Niebuhr 1957:4). Within a framework of biblical criticism, he considers that history speaks with the 'voice' of 'faithful memory' and 'curious reason' (Niebuhr 1957:5). Thus historical reason requires that there cannot be an either/or *a priori* metaphysical approach to the resurrection of Christ versus the historical critical method (Niebuhr 1957:23). Instead, 'the resurrection tradition continues both to attract and repel our sense of the historical' (Niebuhr 1957:28). The 'inner history of the interpreter' cannot be separated from the historically natural causalities that are involved in history (Niebuhr 1957:127). What 'typifies the character of historical reason'? For Niebuhr, Christ's resurrection represents the epitome of historical reason because it involves an historical event in nature, something more than nature's causal relationships, and interpretation of history that involves critical memory of that event by the Christian community. He states that the historical event is not needed logically to imply what preceded or followed the event, but it is an 'indispensable tool for the interpretation of those other events' that include the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters to the apostolic churches (Niebuhr 1957:170-171).

This is a confusing analogy as Niebuhr finds the historical event (based on nature) of the resurrection of Christ logically unnecessary, but still needed for the events described in the New Testament.

Which presuppositions will guide the criticism of Christ's resurrection as historical event and replaced by the rewritten resurrection apparition back into the earthy life of Jesus, based on the Cross Gospel from the Gospel of Peter, according to Crossan (1991:396)?

Could this fresh appropriation in each generation be a pointer to contemporary reader-response theories in postmodern interpretation of the scriptures?[29]

Wright (2003:39), in his historical method (described in Wright 1992:29-144) regarding Christ's resurrection, recognised that all knowledge of the past and other matters is mediated through sources, perceptions, and the 'personalities of the knowers'. Thus, he accepts that there can be 'no such thing as detached objectivity'. Historical work involves the interactions of the historian with other historians, source materials, and the 'worldview-perspectives' of the historian.

By contrast, Crossan's methodology (1998a:552) includes Mark creating the women's discovery of the empty tomb and the burial story; Matthew created the 'apparition of Jesus to the women' after his resurrection, to make Mark's ending more positive; and John copied that vision from Matthew.

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[29] See §1.1.4, 'Deconstruction (or reconstruction)'.

Within the scholarly community there is division over the gospels' historicity. What, then, is meant if Christianity is described as a 'historical religion'?

2.2.4.1 The controversy: The Gospels as historical or non-historical documents

Barnett (1997:11) begins his volume on Jesus and the logic of history with the statement that Christianity is an historical religion in two senses: Firstly, Christianity has continuously been part of world history, and secondly, Jesus was a real man who lived and died at a particular place and time.

Donald Hagner (1991:88) stated that 'the Bible is after all the story of God acting in history'. Bock's (2002b:139) perspective is that both methods and presuppositions influence the study of the New Testament Gospels. Bauckham (2006:2-3) admits there is a 'crucial methodological problem' in pursuing and understanding the historical Jesus amidst alternatives such as Jesus who is seen through the needs and interests of various early Christian groups, and many Jesuses constructed and verified by many historians. For Bauckham (2006:3), the Gospels present a combination of fact and interpretation that includes both 'the empirically observable and the intuited or constructed meaning'. For him, the historiography of the Gospels is presented through the verifiable history of testimony (eyewitnesses; Bauckham 2006:5). Moisés Silva (1986:111) maintains that 'hardly anything is more crucial to the Christian faith than the historicity of Jesus' life, death and resurrection'.

However, Crossan (1991:404) sees the 'background of Jesus' resurrectional victory over death' as a basis for the 'nature' miracles of Jesus being 'actually creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority'. What presuppositions are causing Crossan to come to a metaphorical understanding of Jesus' resurrection rather than a bodily resurrection?

Wright (1992:26-27) saw the need for a creative synthesis of the pre-modern authoritative text, a modern importance of Christianity integrated into history and involved with theology, and the postmodern emphasis on the text and its readers. For him, this involves putting forward hypotheses about the historical situation in which the New Testament writings were developed. Wright's historical reconstruction involves the Judaism and Christianity of the first century.

German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002),[30] propounded the view that people understand texts or laws when they project their self-understanding towards the meaning of texts. Those who understand texts, contrary to traditional hermeneutics, are projecting themselves onto texts. He admitted that this could be problematical for the self-understanding of faith (Gadamer 2004:251, 253).

Therefore, what is the nature of history and the historical model when applied to the New Testament Gospel texts? Why should it be necessary to discuss the nature of history and of historicity of these texts? Should it not be common sense to understand that the historical Jesus who lived in a given place and time was a person of history and that a reasonable understanding would be to pursue a straight-forward historical method in examining the textual stratification reporting on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? That would have been possible if it were not for the last century of the development of literary and hermeneutical phenomena in biblical studies of form criticism (FC) and postmodern deconstruction (or reconstruction), the latter incorporating a reader-response paradigm.[31]

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[30] Lifespan details are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Hans-Georg Gadamer).

[31] See §2.4.2.1.3 below for a further discussion of reader-response theories.

While reconstruction and deconstruction are often used interchangeably[32] in historical Jesus studies, Silva (1986:111) considers there is a legitimate use of reconstruction among evangelicals when they gather knowledge to fill the gaps of evidence for New Testament studies. As an example, he affirms the historical centrality of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, but nobody knows with certainty the exact dates of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. To search for this information is an acceptable use of reconstruction for Silva.

However, a more radical understanding of the term 'deconstruction' has been used in the last half-century. It is associated with the writings of the late French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, who died in 2004. Caputo (2004) indicated that Derrida (1985:86-87) derived the term, deconstruction, from Heidegger's use of two words, *Destruktion* and *Abbau*. From *Destruktion*, the meaning of deconstruction is not destruction but 'destructuring that dismantles the structural layers in a system and so on'. The use of *Abbau* has a similar meaning but the concept conveyed is 'to take apart an edifice in order to see how it is constituted or deconstituted' and he applied this to the whole of Western philosophy. It has since transitioned to many other disciplines, including biblical history and hermeneutics.

Some of the scholarly debate on methodology for the study of Jesus has involved contrasting approaches based on the paradigms of historical-critical challenges to historicity, reader-response theories, and Christianity's historical origins that are subject to the laws of historical evidence to be verified or falsified. How do these scholars respond to the historicity or otherwise of the New Testament Gospels?

One response has been to regard the Gospels as non-historical.

2.2.4.2 The Gospels as non-historical documents

After describing seven different scholars with divergent images of Jesus, Crossan (1991:xxvii-xxx) observed that this 'stunning diversity' gives the suspicion 'that historical Jesus research is a very safe place to do theology and call it history, to do autobiography and call it biography'. Thus, Crossan's historical Jesus' methodology adopts a 'triple triadic approach' that embraces social anthropology, Hellenistic or Greco-Roman history, and the literature of Jesus' sayings, deeds, stories or anecdotes, confessions and interpretations. However, this triad needs to cooperate for an equal and effective synthesis. Thus, 'the Gospels are neither histories nor biographies, even within the ancient tolerances for those genres'. Instead, they are 'good newses' which provide some community's opinion or interpretation. Therefore, Crossan does not ground the New Testament Gospels as historically secure as does Barnett. For Crossan, the resurrection of Christ has nothing to do with bodily resuscitation but is an 'apparition' with metaphorical application by which the '*embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced by believers' (Crossan 1998a:xxviii, xxxi; emphasis in the original).

This is parallel to Bultmann's statement about 'the incredibility of a mythical event like the resuscitation of a dead person – for that is what the resurrection means, as is shown by the fact that the risen Lord is apprehended by the physical senses' and 'an historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable'. Also, the resurrection is 'an article of faith because it is far more than the resuscitation of a corpse – it is the eschatological event' (Bultmann 1953:**II**).

Did Paul see Christ's resurrection as other than a physical event where Christ appeared to others after the resurrection (1 Cor 15:5-7)? What did he mean by the statement, ‘Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me’ (1 Cor 15:8)? Crossan’s view (1998a:546) is that ‘it is obvious that Christ’s appearance to Paul himself in 15:8-11 is not part of his *received* tradition’ (emphasis in the original) and there was some redactional involvement. Crossan follows Koester in affirming that Paul knew the story of Christ’s suffering and death, not as historical information, but as a story ‘that made Jesus present for the participants in the celebration of the eucharist’ (Crossan 1998a:547). Thus, Christ’s passion had spiritual significance for those who participated in the Lord’s Supper, but it was not based on historical details. However, it needs to be remembered that Christ’s appearance to the apostle Paul was not in the passion-resurrection-ascension time frame.

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[32] See §1.1.4.

What happened to Saul/Paul on the Damascus Road (Ac 9:1-9) was a unique encounter with the risen and ascended Christ, yet Paul includes this unexpected meeting in sequence with those to whom the risen Christ appeared physically before the ascension (1 Cor 15:5-8). Paul’s encounter could not have been received in the tradition from others, but Barnett (1999:183) understands this as Paul experiencing ‘a revelation of Christ as he will be at the parousia’. Barnett (1999:193, n. 11) sees the parallel with how the Gospel came to Paul through a revelation (ἀποκαλύψσις) as stated in Galatians 1:11-12, 16.

Crossan (1994a:145) proposed that Jesus’ first followers ‘knew almost nothing whatsoever about the details of his crucifixion, death, or burial’ but he adds ‘that Jesus was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be’ since both Josephus and Tacitus agree with the Christian accounts on this basic fact. With this intracanonical and extracanonical evidence, Crossan (1991:372) takes ‘it absolutely for granted that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate’. Historical facts are assured because of the Christian accounts that also are substantiated by non-Christian witnesses, Josephus (Jewish) and Tacitus (Roman).

2.2.4.2.1 Historical-critical challenges to the historicity of New Testament texts

Some of the primary challenges to New Testament historicity come from the association of the Gospels with mythology, FC assessments, and postmodern reader-response theories.

(a) The Gospels as mythology[33]

Mack (1993:2) contends that it was mythology, created and embellished by early Christian groups in northern Syria and Asia Minor that accounted for the recording of miraculous events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. This myth drew on Hellenistic mythologies that told of the destiny of a divine being or a son of God. For Mack (1995:308), the Bible was not written by eyewitnesses but is ‘a masterpiece of invention’ that is ‘the record of three hundred years of intellectual labor’ and is a human construction.

What is myth? While Rogerson (1978:13) admits that the study of myth may be of advantage to biblical interpretation, he also acknowledges that the definition of myth has so many opinions that it is not possible to have one definition. If this assessment is accurate, Oswalt (2009:32) rightly concludes that no further discussion is possible as each person provides his or her own distinct definition with the multiplicity of meanings of myth. However Oswalt concludes that it is possible to state that myth is A and not B, based on the evidence. There will be further discussion of Oswalt’s assessment of myth in Chapter 4.

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[33] See also §1.1.5.

Crossan (1991:xxix) stated that 'possibly the key chapter' of this seminal publication was chapter 13, 'Magic and Meal'. Here he claims that 'religion is official and approved magic' and that Jesus of Nazareth was a magician like Elijah, Elisha, Honi and Hanina and he does not think that he can distinguish miracle from magic and Jesus, as magician and miracle worker was a 'very problematic and controversial phenomenon' (1991:305-306, 311). How does this relate to myth? Crossan (1994a:160-161) states that the Easter story at the end of Jesus' life, like the Nativity at the beginning is 'so engraved on our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology'. For him, the miracle of Christ's resurrection is regarded as fictional mythology as 'Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical and the fiction was 'created to hide'. Therefore, what happened on that first Easter Sunday morning was not the story of one day but of several years, and instead was the story of all Christians gathered together as one group in Jerusalem or of one group that claimed to be the whole. However, Crossan regards Jesus' resurrection was mythical fiction and was an apparition.

Mack (1993:2-3) uses the term 'myth' in two senses: the first as a created invention – a fiction – and the second as an interpretation and denial of the supernatural events surrounding the symbols of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, with the gospels containing 'too many miracles for comfort' (Mack 1993:17). This demonstrates a presuppositional position against the supernatural.

Wright (1992:426) supports the use of 'myth' in the Gospels when it describes 'foundational stories for the early Christian worldview' and mythological language is used and historians decode it when compared with other apocalyptic writings of that era. His view is that the Gospels have this kind of mythological quality because of the underlying Jewish worldview. However, he does note that creational and covenantal monotheism 'demands that actual history be the sphere' in which Israel's God reveals himself.

Crossan's use of fiction, mythology, legend and magic in relation to the historical Jesus' resurrection will need to be investigated for possible presuppositional influence.

(b) Form criticism and historicity of the Gospels

FC refers to the oral, pre-literary forms prior to the written biblical material. David Aune (2010:140) described FC, based on the German term, *Formgeschichte* (form history), as representing a critical method that was developed to 'identify and analyse units of originally oral discourse' in texts of ancient Israel and early Christianity. With the Gospel texts, form critics attempted 'to identify individual pericopes that may have had an oral origin'. Then they assigned 'each form to a particular *Sitz im Leben* ("situation in life") in the early church'.

Crossan places SC, FC and RC under the general heading of '*tradition-criticism* (or *transmissional analysis*)' and this 'attempts to trace the genetic relationship and historical trajectory of large and small units of the tradition about Jesus'. His conclusion is: 'I do not think, however, that we can *bypass* it' (1998a:97; emphasis in original). Here he is referring to the necessity of the use of tradition criticism in Jesus' studies. 'I do not think' is a presuppositional trigger that needs to be investigated. Wright (1996:87), in contrast, considers that the critical tool of FC needs to be bypassed in the search for Jesus and be replaced with the method of hypothesis and verification. Crossan objects to Wright's claim that these procedures are illegitimate, and he accuses Wright of being 'flatly incorrect' (Crossan 1998a:97). Which presuppositions by Wright or Crossan can be supported?

Crossan (1998a:97) describes FC as the search to find the forms in which oral units were transmitted and to correlate these forms 'with the situations that produced and used them'. Wright (1992:52-53) notes that instead of 'historical study of Jesus *via* the text' (emphasis in the original) of the New Testament Gospels, the FC emphasis has given way to study of the communities presumed to stand behind the text who transmitted the traditions and to a study of the evangelists.

Within FC ranks there is a tendency to deny or downplay the historicity of the Gospels. Soulen and Soulen (2001:63) noted that FC's initial thrust 'weakened the Gospels as historical sources for biography'. Meyer's (2002:112) view was that form critics may have 'underestimated' the historical, literary and theological worth of redactions, and in the process could have 'dismembered gospel traditions'. Wright (1992:420) notes that FC was not designed as a tool to discover more about the historical Jesus, but in the hands of FC exponents such as Bultmann, it was a tool to discover more about the early church.

It is not one of the significant emphases of this project to include an assessment of FC and RC, but it will be necessary at certain points to pursue these methods, especially in light of Crossan's about the resurrection tradition: 'Mark created the empty tomb story just as he created the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane…. The empty tomb story is neither an early historical event nor a late legendary narrative but a deliberate Markan creation…. Mark created the empty tomb narrative to replace any risen apparition story as the conclusion of the gospel' (Crossan 1999:11-12, 16).

(c) Reader-response theories of Gospel interpretation[34]

Thiselton (1980:xix) in his hermeneutical reflections on the New Testament, contends that 'two horizons' are presented. By horizon he means that metaphorically there are 'limits of thought' of a given perspective. The goal of biblical hermeneutics, he states, is 'to bring about an active and meaningful engagement between the interpreter and text, in such a way that the interpreter's own horizon is re-shaped and enlarged'. He sees this as parallel to Gadamer's goal of hermeneutics as the '"fusion" of horizons'. Thiselton regards the two horizons as 'separate but close' and acknowledged that 'the most distinctive contribution' of his 1980 publication involved the work of Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein especially (Thiselton 1980:xix). However, his aim was 'not to impose certain philosophical categories onto the biblical text' and 'the distinctive horizon of the text must be respected and differentiated … from the horizon of the interpreter' (Thiselton 1980:xx).

While deconstruction is associated with Derrida's postmodern philosophy (Derrida 1985:86-87) and Derrida acknowledged his indebtedness to Heidegger, Bartholomew (2005:163) recognised that Paul de Man was another major figure in deconstruction philosophy and that the roots of deconstruction were in the soil of phenomenology[35], structuralism[36], Derrida and Nietzsche. Ingraffia (1995:14) regards Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida as 'the three figures I consider to be the founders of postmodern theory'. Ingraffia seeks 'to separate the God of the Bible from the god of the philosophers' and sees 'the confusion between these two Gods which has caused Christianity to be uncritically equated with ontotheology'[37] (Ingraffia 1995:14). Ingraffia considers that this quotation from Heidegger should be placed as an epitaph over all attempts to 'use metaphysical concepts to articulate the faith' (Ingraffia 1995:236): 'Only epochs which no longer fully believe in the true greatness of the task of theology arrive at the disastrous notion that philosophy can help to provide a refurbished theology if not a substitute for theology, which will satisfy the needs and tastes of time' (Heidegger[38] in Ingraffia 1995:236).

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[34] See some discussion on reader-response theories in §1.1.5.

[35] Smith (2008), in *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, defined 'phenomenology' as the philosophical movement which studies the structures of human experience through the 'phenomena' or appearance of things as they are. It studies experience from the subjective point of view. Although it has been practised for centuries, it attained prominence in the first half of the twentieth century through Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others.

[36] Bruce Benson (2005:772-773) describes 'structuralism' as 'the view that meaning in language and culture is based upon internal relations within the linguistic or cultural system as a whole' and not substantially from outside of the system. It can be applied to cultural phenomena such as language, individual texts and practices in society. To some degree he considers 'narrative criticism' and 'form criticism' to be 'structuralistic'.

Ingraffia's conclusion is that this statement by Heidegger can be applied with accuracy to the ontotheologies of the postmodern theories of Nietzsche, Derrida and Heidegger himself. Yet Heidegger can seek an application by alluding to the apostle Paul for Paul's rejection of worldly philosophy: 'For the original Christian faith philosophy is foolishness' (Heidegger in Ingraffia 1995:236). Ingraffia concludes that ontotheology is humanity's attempt 'to think its way to God' (Ingraffia 1995:236-237).

Crossan wrote of 'the necessity of a break-out from ontotheology' (in Thiselton 1992:88). However, could Crossan's postmodern theology be a variety of ontotheology, if compared with biblical theology, when he makes statements such as these: (1) 'I argue, above all, that the structure of a Christianity will always be: *this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*. Christianity must repeatedly, generation after generation, make its best historical judgment about who Jesus was then and, on that basis, decide what that reconstruction means as *Christ* now' (Crossan 1994a:200; emphasis in original). (2) 'There is not in my work any presumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45).

Crossan understands postmodernism as the past and the present interacting 'with one another, each changing and challenging the other, and the ideal is an absolutely fair and equal reaction between one another' (Crossan 1998a:42). For him, 'as a Christian', he believes 'in the Word of God, not in the words of specific papyri or the votes of specific committees[39]. But fact and faith, history and theology intertwine together in that process and cannot ever be totally separated' (Crossan 1998a:46).

How does Crossan favour the New Testament as mythology, use of FC, and as using reader-response approaches to understanding? Some of Crossan's presuppositions underlying these issues will be pursued in this study.

Briefly, it is noted that Crossan believed that when Matthew and Luke stated that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, they were 'in mythology rather than history' (Crossan 1994a:18); 'Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical' (Crossan 1994a:160); and Jesus' baptism and passion are linked together mythologically (Crossan 1991:234).

Crossan (1998a:97) explained that FC 'seeks to determine the forms in which oral units are transmitted and to correlate them with the situations that produced and used them'. The synthesis of forms, sources and redactions relate to work done by scholars and presuppositions developed about the Gospels. His assessment is that 'I do not think, however, that you can *bypass* it' (emphasis in the original). However,

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[37] Westphal defined onto-theology as '*the affirmation and articulation of the Highest Being, who is the ultimate explanation of the whole of being*' (Westphal 2005:548; emphasis in original).

[38] This is from Heidegger (1961:7).

[39] The context of Crossan's statement refers to the compilation of a Greek New Testament such as the United Bible Societies text (Crossan 1998a:46).

Wright's (1996:87) view is that normal critical tools such as FC 'are being tacitly (and in my view rightly) bypassed in the search for Jesus' so that researchers can pursue a clear method that uses hypothesis and verification. Wright (1992:418-443) accepts that there is a valid use of FC in the materials used in the synoptic Gospels. Language such as 'I do not think', is a presuppositional trigger by Crossan.

The use of metaphor as a reader-response interpretation is seen in Crossan's hermeneutics of narratives such as the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-17) where an individual is cured but 'symbolism is also hard to miss or ignore', an example of the symbol being the 'political dialectic between possessed individual and possessed society, between demonic microcosm and demonic macrocosm' (Crossan 1991:314-315). What presuppositions could be driving this assessment?

2.2.4.3 The Gospels as historical documents

While Wright (1992:426) acknowledges that it is acceptable for the New Testament Gospels to be described as 'myth' only 'in the sense that they are foundational stories for the early Christian worldview', he stressed that they have these 'mythical' features because of the underlying Jewish worldview. This kind of monotheism that is creational and covenantal 'demands that actual history be the sphere in which Israel's god makes himself known'.

Barnett (1997:11) regards Christianity as an historical religion in two senses: (a) It has been a continuous part of world history for a long period of time, and (b) 'Jesus was a real man who was born, lived and died at a particular time and place'. Demonstration of this can be shown by applying the same methodology to the data on Jesus as for one of his contemporaries, the emperor Tiberius. The origins of Christianity are not mythical but historical. Here mythical is used in the sense of that expressed in §1.1.5, where Crossan regarded Jesus' burial as mythological fiction and the Easter story is 'so engraved in our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994a:161).

According to Barnett (1997:164), the best context for locating Jesus is through text-based historical inquiry and not through sociological analysis as the latter, although useful, has limitations because of the historical distance from the first century until the present. There also is a 'distance' between the reader and the text, in that a reader's knowledge and milieu may impact on the reader's ability to read a text with understanding. Barnett rates the Gospels as 'self-consciously historical'. Elsewhere he wrote that the New Testament is simultaneously theology, religion and history (Barnett 1999:13).

Wright (1992:137, 377-378) argues that Christianity is committed to history, but acknowledges that reading of texts and attempts to reconstruct history take place 'within particular worldviews' (Wright 1992:137).

Evans (2007:54-55) provides this comparison of dates of origin of the New Testament gospels and related sources:

- AD 60-70, Gospel of Mark;
- AD 75-80, Gospel of Luke, Acts, Gospel of Matthew;
- AD 90-95, Gospel of John;
- AD 120, Gospel of Egyptians, POxy 840, Gospel of Nazoreans, Gospel of Ebionites;
- AD 140, Gospel of Hebrews;
- AD 150, Apocryphon of James, Fayyum Fragment, POxy 1224;
- AD 160, Gospel of Mary;
- AD 170, Gospel of Peter; and

- AD 180, PEgerton 2, Gospel of Thomas.

The dates of origin for these sources have been contradicted by many scholars and will be assessed in Chapter 4 when evaluating Crossan's presuppositions influencing the dating of extracanonical and intracanonical material associated with the resurrection tradition.

2.2.4.4 The model here pursued

It is non-negotiable that the New Testament Gospels are rooted in historical events that actually happened, according to Wright (1992:9). In this project, this history will be examined through reconstruction by use of hypothesis and verification (Meyer 2002:19, 72-73).

However, in assessing Crossan's deconstruction presuppositions, it will be noted that history involves use of eyewitness testimony that incorporated Gospel (oral) tradition and interpretation (Byrskog 2002:305, 252). This eyewitness testimony, although not the primary focus of this research, will be seen to be unsympathetic to the use of deconstruction that is used by a radical reader-response methodology (see Vanhoozer 2002:259). It is acknowledged that the interpreter's 'inner history' is involved in analysing the natural causalities that are involved in history (Niebuhr 1957:127).This study will use a critical realist epistemology.

While the Bible is not a textbook on history, it is as Long (1994:57) puts it: A historical impulse runs through the Bible and although not always evident in every place, this historical influence is 'nonetheless pervasive'.

Therefore, an eclectic historical model will be pursued in this project that critically examines historical and non-historical presuppositions of scholars using a hypothesis-verification methodology.

2.3 THE SPECIFIC METHODOLOGICAL TASK

The various divergent conclusions concerning the historical Jesus are often related to the methodology and presuppositions used by scholars. Crossan noted that 'when I finally published *The Historical Jesus* in 1991, I intended not just to present another reconstruction of Jesus but to inaugurate a full-blown debate on methodology among my peers' (Crossan 1998a:139), but such did not happen in his view. Which presuppositions have influenced Crossan's choice of methodology?

Wright, in his chapter on 'Easter and History', has developed his own extended treatment of an historical method used to historically evaluate Christ's resurrection (Wright 2003:686-718). Wright (2003:656) admitted that his methodology for Christ's resurrection was in contrast to that of Crossan (1994a:197) who stated, 'Emmaus never happened; Emmaus always happens'. Wright regarded this kind of statement as 'a typical combination of provocative denial and winsome appeal' (Wright 2003:656) that is a summary of what is happening in scholarship and other circles. This promotes the view that the resurrection stories in the Gospels and especially those in Luke 'have nothing to do with things that actually took place in the real world of space and time' but they have 'everything to do with what goes on in an invisible reality' that Jesus is 'alive' in some kind of sense, the tomb is empty, and the believers are strengthened because they experience Jesus (Wright 2003:656). Wright (2003:657) considers that Luke himself would not have agreed with Crossan's judgment. Rather, the resurrection was an event that Luke presented that was a surprise to the women (Lk 24:1-8), the eleven (Lk 24:9-11), Peter (Lk 24:12), the two on the road (Lk 24:13-35), and to the disciples in the upper room (Lk 24:37, 41). Wright states that Luke is resolute about 'the bodiliness of the risen Jesus' (Wright

2003:657) in that Acts 1:3 states that Jesus presented himself alive by 'many convincing proofs' and this refutes any proposal that Jesus 'was a phantom, a ghost or a hallucination'. Wright does not support Lüdemann's (1994) conclusion that because dead people do not rise from the dead, therefore neither did Jesus (Wright 2003:685, n. 2). With his affirmation of the evidence for the physicality of Jesus' risen body (Wright 2003:658), what are the essential elements in Wright's methodology for examining Christ's resurrection?

Two things are regarded by Wright as 'historically secure' concerning Christ's resurrection – the emptiness of the tomb and the meetings of people with the risen Christ (Wright 2003:686).

Wright concluded that the 'the kind of proof which historians normally accept' for the tomb-plus-appearances present a combination for early Christian belief that 'is as watertight as one is likely to find' (Wright 2003:707). The way to disprove this evidence, he says, is to declare *a priori* that every piece of evidence about early Christianity is 'a late fiction' (Wright 2003:708). Conversely, Wright concluded that historians of various persuasions have no options but to affirm that the empty tomb-appearances scenario deal with real and significant events that are 'provable events' that historians can write about, using the double similarity and double dissimilarity criteria (to Judaism on the one hand and early Christianity on the other) for methodological control (Wright 2003:709).

His historical methodology led him to this understanding: '*The fact that dead people do not ordinarily rise is itself part of early Christian belief*, not an objection to it' (Wright 2003:712, emphasis in the original). In the resurrection debate, he regards the scholarly view that Christ's resurrection was 'the work of the early church' as equivalent to the 'mad scientist' hypothesis (Wright 2003:716-717).

In this study, Crossan's historical Jesus reconstructions are assessed with reference to Ricoeur, Derrida, Rorty, Poirier, Wright (who advocates a critical realist epistemology), Hengel, Koester, Barnett, Bauckham, Vanhoozer and others. Vanhoozer (1998) asks, 'Is there a meaning in this text?' in his critique of postmodern epistemology and its influences on historiography. An assessment of historiography also requires an examination of extra-canonical writings and canonicity.

This study adopts Meyer's (2002:81) perspective that one of the main questions to be addressed in an historical Jesus inquiry is whether the data of the intracanonical Gospels alone are the data for determining the nature of the historical Jesus or are the data of extracanonical material needed to gain an accurate picture? Meyer believes that scholars must be repeatedly asking, 'Is this a potential datum on Jesus?' Which criteria legitimately determine the data used for Crossan's historical Jesus inquiry?

Were the data of the stratification created and edited by the early church or were they received from eyewitnesses? Is one of Crossan's presuppositional issues associated with his sociological Jesus, whose historicity cannot be assured through historical investigation, including that of eyewitnesses?

To answer these questions, the following methodology will be pursued that critically relies on Meyer (2002:76-110), which Wright (1992:98, n. 32) regards as one of the best statements on historical method by a New Testament scholar. Meyer (2002:24) agues that 'critical history has been unambitious and ambitious history' but there have been some uncritical dimensions to historical study. He names Straussan followers such as William Wrede ([1901] 1971) and Bultmann (1934; 1953; 1963; 1968; 1969; 1971; 1984) as not pursuing a reconstruction of history, and concludes that ‘the fearless hypotheses of a Reimarus [1970 – SDG] or a Schweitzer [1936 – SDG] collapse like playing cards’.

Meyer (2002:76) considers that historians have divergent presuppositions and methods for interpretation and explanation of historical events and that to understand history it must be considered not as event but as knowledge of event with insights into history’s actuality and meaning. When measured by the scales of the New Testament Gospels, Meyer (2002:56) concludes that the quest for its historical duration ‘has been fundamentally if unintentionally un-Christian’. Since Meyer’s original publication of this work was in 1979 and he died in 1995, would his assessment of the last thirty years of the quest’s scholarship receive a more positive Christian appraisal? This study will pursue the divergent presuppositions used by Crossan in arriving at his conclusions concerning the resurrection accounts of the New Testament. Could Crossan be pursuing unintentional un-Christian assumptions?

2.3.1 Interpretation and explanation

Meyer (2002:76-81) gives a critical analysis of the integration of history, interpretation and explanation. He uses interpretation to indicate ‘mediation of meaning’ and meaning relates to the subject’s (author’s) intention to communicate (Meyer 2002:76-77). Meaning may need to be mediated if, say, there is a language-gap between the author and the audience. This gap may include diverse linguistic, cultural and time zone usage, but whether the subject be Plato, Caesar, Jesus or Crossan, this study seeks to clarify which presuppositions are influencing the movement by Crossan away from the Jesus of history to the Jesus of metaphor and sociology, especially as applied to Jesus’ resurrection.

Meyer (2002:77-78) explains that for interpretation to be more comprehensive, other tools may need to be used as historical agents were not always engaged in autopsy. Some linguistic tools may be needed to engage with the data to explain ‘an ulterior task’ in historical interpretation. Historians also need to be aware of some unpredictable events that may ensue in the interface between intention and happenings in the midst of the event. The intention of a cocktail party may be to the expectation of all concerned, but when this social event unfolds, elements of irregularity may transpire. Similar situations may unfold in events of history. Therefore, meaning may be impacted by various intentions. Could Crossan be disinterested in the world of historical events because of *a priori* commitments?

The question of ‘Why?’ is not answered through historical interpretation, but may be discovered through ‘historical explanation’ obtained through historical criticism, involving ‘pure exegesis’ and consideration of historical context. The aims of this criticism, in order to arrive at a successful outcome, involve control of data and establishment of facts (see below; Meyer 2002:78).

Meyer (2002:79) admitted that while the historical method may have parallels with the scientific method, there are divergences such as with scientists who often do not need to include considerations of times and places. Times and places are important elements in historical investigation.

Empirical science aims for abstract ‘invariant correlations’ as it commences with ‘concrete data’. For historians, however, their aim is to pursue concrete variables through their generalisations. Meyer (2002:79) notes that ‘history, pre-critical, critical, or “scientific”, lacks the distinctive note of science, the quest of invariants’. Thus, interpretation and explanation in history do not relate to new proposals but deal with the aims of historians, which include: (1) the history of human actions; (2) the purpose of human actions; and (3) the interaction of purposes with the instruments used. Historical interpretation functions as it relates to explanation, but actions and interactions can also reveal intentions that need to be tested. Thus, interpretation and explanation reveal historical unknowns for which a known is sought. Meyer (2002:79) rightly sees ‘the “critical” phase of history’ as precisely ‘the structured process of finding answers to questions aimed at interpretation and explanation’. However, Meyer (2002:79-80) also sees the historian’s ‘own encounters with the answers’ as ‘a metacritical phase’[40] in which the historian listens and learns through ‘dialogical reactions, insights, and judgments’, thus going beyond the principles of historical criticism. Is Crossan interested in examining the intention of the biblical authors, or does his postmodern supposition prevent such an investigation?

To obtain knowledge through choosing certain unknowns, Meyer (2002:80) rightly demonstrates that the historian asks questions to convert unknowns into knowns. This is through using the sequence: question, hypothesis, and verification. Verification is used in history in the wider sense of cross-checking. This cross-checking will involve a movement between knowns and unknowns. In critical history, verification operates in a combination with controlling the data and establishing the facts (see below). Controlling the data is not an *a priori* designation but a final achievement. The data to be used will not be obvious until the hypotheses are formed.

2.3.2 Controlling the data[41]

For guidelines on how to control the data in historical inquiry, Meyer (2002:81-87) provided these valuable pointers. The quest is to discern answers to questions, using unknowns to define knowns. Data for this project will not be understood until this study is complete. The question before us for this study of the historical Jesus relates to whether or not the data of the four Gospels of the New Testament are the only data on Jesus for the resurrection tradition or whether there are extracanonical data to consider. Control of data requires assessment on whether intracanonical and extracanonical literature refers to the Jesus of history (the past). The constant question before the historian is: ‘Is this a potential datum on Jesus?’ (Meyer 2002:81).

One of the questions of this study is to determine whether the New Testament Gospels and other literature being examined by Crossan to form a picture of the historical Jesus’ resurrection tradition, is a use of legitimate historical methodology or is so influenced by his presuppositions that the New Testament Gospel authors cannot be heard as they were intended.

Meyer’s concern is that Gospel literature is ‘stamped by the confessional concerns of the church’ but also it ‘was created by the church’ to meet the church’s concerns. His view is that ‘the origin and character’ of Gospel material must be understood ‘unless the materials run counter both to the Judaism of the time (a possible source for the church) and to the certainly ascertained tendencies of the church' (Meyer 2002:82).

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[40] ‘Metacritical’ (Thiselton 1992:5-6) is used in the Ricoeur and Gadamer sense of finding criteria to determine the validity of what texts do within a community or on any given occasion. Metacriticism asks: ‘*Can we critically rank the different criteria by which we judge what counts as meaningful or productive effects of texts within this or that context in life?*’ (Thiselton 1992:6, emphasis in the original). With metacritical hermeneutics interpreters seek a trans-contextual basis to evaluate contextual criteria of interpretation ‘for the purposes in relation to which each set of criteria gains currency’. Metacriticism attempts to discover and examine the principles of criticism in critical theory or in an assessment of certain critics. A metacritic attempts to find the principles underlying critical determinations and judgements (see Thiselton 1992:313-343).

[41] This heading is from Meyer (2002:81).

The aim of the historical criticism of this study is to generate knowns from suppositions. Are the suppositions of Crossan's stratification model for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus' resurrection verified or not?

Another question to consider is why certain materials have been conserved in the New Testament Gospels and not the extracanonical material of later discoveries such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Egerton Gospel and other extracanonical material. In assessing the extracanonical materials, should they be placed on equal authority with the canonical materials? Why has precedence been given to canonical material through the centuries but some scholarship in the last century includes the extracanonical writings on an equal footing with the intracanonical material?

It is Meyer's view that methodological scepticism has stifled historical investigation from the beginning. Independent verification follows the pattern of intention, being knowledgeable and veracity. However, in biblical criticism, the factor of intention is sometimes indefinable, thus leading the critic to sometimes 'concentrate on establishing oblique patterns of inference' (Meyer 2002:85). One of these 'oblique patterns' has been the use of the 'index of discontinuity' by which the historicity of a Jesus tradition is inferred by whether the tradition is 'discontinuous with the tendencies of the community which transmits it' (Meyer 2002:86). Meyer (2002:86) notes that this index is often used by the methodological sceptic but it can be used as a positive index for historicity. He prefers to call this 'the index of originality', a prime example being Jesus' 'consorting with publicans and sinners'.

2.3.3 Establishing the facts[42]

Meyer (2002:86) stated that there is no criterion of historicity proposed by the critics that 'is invariably requisite to the inference of historicity'. He prefers the use of the term 'index' rather than 'criterion' for establishing historicity, as the term index proposes a tendency of more modest proportions than the fixed understanding of criterion.

In Crossan's inventory of the Jesus tradition, he placed primary emphasis on the need for chronological stratification and independent attestation (1991:427-450). Within the chronological strata, the strata are: (1) AD 30-60; (2) AD 60-80; (3) AD 80-120; (4) AD 120-150. He uses 'a triple triadic process' that involves an interplay of social anthropology, Greco-Roman history, and the literature of specific sayings. At the literary level he pays 'acute sensitivity to the chronology of stratification, the multiplicity of (independent – SDG) attestation, and the interweaving of retention, mutation, and creation within the Jesus tradition' (1991:xxviii-xxix, xxxi). He stated one of his presuppositions, 'I do presume that one should work in sequence through those strata and that proper method demands an emphasis on the primary stratum that no other stratum can claim' (1991:xxxii). The first stratum is AD 30-60, but the controversial nature of this stratum for Crossan is that he places extracanonical material at that early date, including the Gospel of Thomas I, Egerton Gospel, Gospel of the Hebrews, Sayings Gospel Q, and the Cross Gospel (in GPet) (Crossan 1991:427-429). He warns of the need to 'tread very carefully' when there is only 'a single independent source' (1995:22).

Meyer (2002:87) considers 'the logic of history' to be the organisation of data to reach an interpretation and explanation. He objects to historians making their own mind the determinant of historical knowledge, especially when they are in 'unfamiliar surroundings' and they fall back on 'ready-made cognitional theories'. Instead, he favours the work of Collingwood (1946), an historian and philosopher, who redefined the way of searching for the historical unknowns by seeking the 'inside' (the purpose) of an event and thus providing meaning and direction for that event. The event is an historical fact and the 'facts' emerge as the conclusion of an inquiry. Rational principles are used to infer the facts from the data. Meyer agrees with the emphasis that 'for the historian there is no difference between discovering what happened and discovering why it happened' (Collingwood 1946:176-204). Could this also be what Crossan attempts to do in his use of presuppositions, based on previous research (Crossan 1998a:96-120)? Could one of Crossan's major presuppositional handicaps be that he uses his own mind as the determinant of historical knowledge? Could this be seen in his rejection of the Gospel accounts' descriptions of what happened with the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances? This study will attempt to identify and then verify or invalidate some of Crossan's presuppositions on this topic.

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[42] This heading is from Meyer (2002:87).

Wright (1992:109) affirms Collingwood's idea of history involving the study of what happened combined with 'human intentionality'. This does not deny the importance of examining data at the beginning of an inquiry to specify the unknowns and set the boundaries for the investigation.

Meyer (2002:88) uses the example of Charles de Gaulle retiring from the presidency of the French Fifth Republic in 1969 as a datum of history, but 'why it happened' is the unknown that needs to be converted into a known, thus becoming what Collingwood asserts as 'historical fact'. This conclusion cannot be reached without an examination of the supply of data available to the historian. In the process of inquiry, data are critiqued to establish facts through the following principles of historical criticism:

2.3.3.1 History is knowledge[43]

It is Meyer's (2002:88-89) assessment that history is not a belief but uses the tools of question and hypothesis instead of accepting unquestioned authority. This is in sympathy with the court practice of examining eyewitness testimony, not to provide truth, but to examine the data**.** The advantage of the court hearing testimony is to increase the availability of data to be examined and not to rely on belief. In court, the data from the witness may become only probable if other particulars do not correlate with the witness's testimony. If a court cannot correlate eyewitness testimony with other data, the court may need to move to the next best conclusion of inference.

Meyer's view is that belief needs to be substituted by 'supposition under remote control' (Meyer 2002:89) in court, science and by analogy in history. For history, he says that the historian can always know what he is doing through seeking answers to good questions. This also means that the historian also can know when he or she is pretending by supposition or belief. The historian is not functioning as a historical researcher when he or she 'supposes the unverifiable' and thus is using supposition and belief instead of examining the data. Is this analysis by Meyer coming close to an accurate assessment of Crossan's method? Is Crossan using supposition and belief to disguise an objective examination of data? Are Crossan's theological presuppositions examples of covering up pretension by supposition or belief instead of engaging in accurate examination of the historical data?

Wright (1992:109) affirms that 'history … is real knowledge, of a particular sort' which studies '"what happened" in the sense of "what physical events would a video camera have recorded"' but it also studies '*human intentionality*' (emphasis in the original) which, in Collingwood's (1946) language, involves looking at the 'inside' of an event to try to discover what human beings involved in the event 'were doing, wanted to do, or tried to do' (Wright 1992:109). What physical events happened with the empty tomb and resurrection appearances? Crossan's contention was that Jesus' resurrection as resuscitation was a remote possibility but 'meant communal resurrection … *within* the general resurrection' and it was not unique (Crossan 1998a:549). Of those who went to the empty tomb, including the women (see Mt 28:8-10; Lk 24:12 and Jn 211-2), Crossan is 'not imagining these as historical but fictional units, as competing visualizations about priority and primacy' (Crossan 1994a:187). Also, the stories, based on the empty tomb and appearances 'tell nothing whatsoever about the origins of Christian *faith* but quite a lot about the origins of Christian *authority*. They tell us about power and leadership in the earliest Christian communities' (Crossan 1994a:190). 'Empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables expressing that faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story' (Crossan 1995:216). However, he explained that in the resurrection of Jesus, 'Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women to change Mark's negative ending into a more positive one' (Crossan 1998a:552). Were there any uniquely physical events that took place in association with the Jesus' empty tomb and the resurrection appearances?

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[43] This sentence is from Meyer (2002:88).

2.3.3.2 Historical knowledge is inferential[44]

For history, knowledge is mediated, thus remaining inferential. Too often, the indices to historicity have roots in generalisations that are often implicit rather than explicit, an example being the inference, 'Men are not gratuitously self-contradictory'. Inferences are not suppositions or intuitions, but are communicable conclusions of history (Meyer 2002:89).

Meyer asked a worthy question: 'How can the historian know that what he calls a known is more than a guess?' (Meyer 2002:91). Insights are drawn from questions that have been squarely answered. When no further questions about data are pertinent, then the relevant questions have been answered and inferences can be drawn. There are irrelevant questions such as, 'But, what if …?', and this question retreats from the available evidence.

Meyer affirms the value of the conditional syllogism, 'If A, then B. But A. Therefore B', that reveals the elements in the process of inference. The major and minor propositions permit the conclusion. The inference can be analysed 'in terms of conditioned/conditions' in which a true inference may have limited conditions. By this, Meyer means that truth does not depend on knowledge of all things but on knowledge of some things, requiring specific conditions for fulfilment. However, 'historical relativism is not viable as a theory of knowledge. But … therefore' (Meyer 2002:90).

2.3.3.3 The technique of history is the hypothesis[45]

Since history revolves around the formation and resolution of certain questions to try to discern unknowns, the procedure for discovering the unknown is the technique of the hypothesis, which is quite different from discovering unknowns through exegesis (Meyer 2002:90).

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[44] This is a statement from Meyer (2002:89).

[45] This is Meyer's statement (see Meyer 2002:90).

By contrast, Meyer (2002:90) notes that in the discipline of exegesis the aims are to discover a writer's questions, data and answers. The process in understanding an exegetical document may be piecemeal, cumulative and dialectical. This could involve changing the structure of a hypothesis, partial confirmation of that hypothesis, and reconstructing a revised hypothesis, its presuppositions and other unintended consequences. The unknown in exegesis has been fixed in advance.

Meyer is convinced that there is 'a quantum leap' to the unknown when compared with exegesis (Meyer 2002:90-91). In history there is a different approach in that the unknown comes from the historian's own questions. The answers to these questions from others provide the historian with potential data from which he must choose. The historical hypothesis comes with the freedom for the researchers to select whatever unknowns they desire. 'Data are dead until they become relevant to the uncovering of unknowns' (Meyer 2002:91). From a question to discover the unknown, a number of answers need to be considered and discerned. From the range of answers, selections are narrowed. This is the process of using the hypothesis to answer the unknown.

As applied to the quest for the historical Jesus, Meyer considers that it has foundered in two ways: Firstly, for Strauss, Wrede and Bultmannians, 'there were not enough knowns to support hypotheses', and secondly, for Reimarus, Holtzmann and Schweitzer 'there were hypotheses galore, but without control of their presupposed knowns' (Meyer 2002:91).

Wright (1992:98-104) supports the historical method's use of inquiry that proceeds by establishing hypotheses that need verification. He defines a hypothesis as a construct of the human mind in which a story is developed about a set of phenomena and a story, which is an interpretation, offering an explanation of these data. There are three requirements of a good hypothesis in any field (Wright 1992:99-100): (a) it must include the data; (b) its overall picture must be simple and coherent; and (c) the explanatory story needs to be fruitful in other related areas. History, like other sciences, proceeds by the use of hypothesis and verification.

Crossan (1998a:98-101) objected to Wright's (1996:87-89) version of the historical hypothesis. Wright stated that nobody would grumble about a book on Alexander the Great if the author harmonises a couple of sources as that would be his or her job so that the data could produce a coherent, rather than a scattered, framework. Crossan's (1998a:98) objection is that Wright's method of hypothesis and verification happens 'without any prior judgments about sources and traditions'. Wright (1996:87-88) did write that the serious historian's task is not to reconstruct traditions about Jesus and place them in the history of the early church, but to advance serious historical hypotheses to see how relevant data about Jesus fit. Wright admits that this proposal may seem controversial in some quarters of the Third Quest, where he places himself (Wright 1996:87), but he is suggesting that this is a common sense way of studying Jesus, by placing him with other figures of ancient history and using the same method of hypothesis and verification.

Could Crossan's objection to Wright's methodology be harmonised with the development of hypotheses (needing verification) that involve investigation of data from sources and traditions? In harmony with this study, are hypotheses such as those possible to examine the nature of Jesus' resurrection? One hypothesis could be, 'It is valid to include the Gospel of Thomas I, the Gospel of the Hebrews, and the Cross Gospel (embedded in the Gospel of Peter) in the first stratum (AD 30-60) of an inventory of the Jesus tradition' (see Crossan 1991:427-429). Another hypothesis could be, 'It is not valid to claim that Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women' (Crossan 1998a:552).

2.3.3.4 Hypotheses need verification or falsification

With the hypothesis, it poses the ‘what?’ or ‘why?’ questions for investigation (Meyer 2002:91). He asserts that verification reflects on the questions of whether the hypotheses are true or false. However, the hypotheses and verification questions require a shift from one question to the other in the learning process. Hypotheses, when being refined, are reshaped by judgments that accept or reject some things. ‘As intelligent insights require judgments, so hypotheses require verification’ (Meyer 2002:91).

How is it possible to conclude that a hypothesis has been verified? The mark of successful historians is that they know the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. They can go beyond relevant, deduced evidence to secondary questions that remain unanswered (Meyer 2002:91).

A pointer to successful verification is found, Meyer asserts, in defining the conditions of the hypothesis as fully as possible, provoked by asking why a historian is sure of the knowns as they are a way for determining the relevant unknowns. ‘When all its conditions are known and known to be fulfilled, the hypothesis is invulnerably verified’ (Meyer 2002:92).

This obtuse indicator may seem like a handicap because of the relativist’s demand that ‘everything must be known for anything to be known’ (Meyer 2002:92). He claims that when testing the facts of knowledge, this demand is self-defeating as every hypothesis comes with limited conditions. There is another indicator that may act as an inhibitor and that is a historian’s understanding that within the limits of the question of the hypothesis, there will be further related questions that have not yet occurred to him or her. This may mean that other scholarly researchers make the hypothesis unassailable or reverse it. ‘Verification is invulnerable when no further pertinent questions arise’ (Meyer 2002:92).

The problem investigated in this study is delimited to Crossan’s presuppositions as they apply to his understanding of the resurrection accounts in extracanonical and intracanonical documents that are used. There also may be hermeneutical issues relating to the choice of documents and interpretation of those documents.

This proposal will be evaluated, arriving at a confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypothesis, through examination of the primary evidence provided by Crossan in his publications. The elements of the proposal will be evaluated by use of the criteria of logical non-contradiction, adequate evidence and affirmed without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25).

An inductive method will be used to analyse the particular data from Crossan’s publications to determine his presuppositions, based on the Beaver and Geurts (2011) model. This study will use the inductive principle from the sciences, including theology, ‘that theory is to be determined by facts, and not facts by theory’ (Hodge 1979:14). However, this inductive reasoning will yield probable conclusions and not absolute certainty, because ‘induction is always an argument by analogy’ (Geisler & Brooks 1990:133). For Lewis (1986:70), the inductive method commences with a supposed ‘objective’ mind that observes specific phenomena to infer ‘general conclusions with degrees of probability’. This is the reasoning of the scientific method, but differences need to be noted. One of these is that the historical enterprise needs to consider times and places which will influence the causes and conditions being examined, as indicated by Meyer (2002:78-79). Meyer is correct in his analysis that the ‘structured process’ of history is to discover answers to the interpretations and explanations of history.

2.3.3.4.1 Potential problems in the hypothesis-verification process

Wright (1992:104-109) warns of some problems that may arise in working towards verification of a hypothesis. These include the following:

Firstly, 'what precisely counts as inclusion of data' in reaching a verification (Wright 1992:105-106)? He observes that hypotheses need to treat the evidence on its own terms, noting the genre and intention of the Gospels as contemporary examples of this need. In the 'would-be historical reconstruction of Jesus', he considers that the 'tools of thought and criticism' have too often been used in an indiscriminate way, such as dismissing the evidence for Jesus in the Gospels as a production of the early church. He emphasises that 'in history, it is *getting in the data* that really counts' (Wright 1992:106; emphasis in the original). He questions whether it really counts as an example of 'getting in the data' if one says this is a creation of the early church. It may be, but a workable hypothesis about this theory needs to be developed to support or refute this theory. It is his view that 'such a story has not yet been suggested' and verified.

Secondly, a potential problem can develop in 'satisfying the criterion of simplicity' (Wright 1992:107-108). Historians who like tidiness can inflict this desire on material when 'history is not about tidiness, but, most often about the unrepeatable and the unlikely'. Wright adds that 'not all forms of simplicity are of equal value', but simplicity can count strongly in areas of human aims and motivation and 'in *the continuity of the person*' (Wright 1992:107; emphasis in the original). As an example, Wright (1992:107-108) raises several hypotheses that are promoted about Paul's thought. They achieve simplicity but at the expense of removing evidence by suggesting passages are self-contradictory, incoherent or 'glossing of old texts'. How is one assured that the index of simplicity is satisfied? When striving for simplicity, historians can become guilty of striving for tidiness when such is not there because of the nature of the complexity of human beings. A persons 'unusual or abnormal behaviour' calls for 'special investigation and explanation'. Because actions and events have consequences, looking for simplicity may help in assessing motivation for behaviour taking a certain direction. However, with Jesus and Paul, the complexity of many hypotheses can lead to 'major undoings' if there is not consistency of thought with the data supplied and the 'promise of coherence with wider fields of study'. Wright prefers the option of simplicity to a writer vacillating among decisions.

Wright (1992:108-109) notes 'a different sort of simplicity' that attracts some New Testament scholars that is 'extremely questionable'. A questionable hypothesis is one that claims that in the development of ideas, they moved from simplicity to complexity. But 'this is just not true of ideas and how they work' as the simpler is more likely to develop after years of hard work in moving from the complex to the simple.

Wright (1992:108) gave the example of F.C. Baur in the nineteenth century in his attempt at a simple, tidy solution of Jewish Christianity developing one way, Gentile Christianity developing another way, and the two combining to make early Catholicism. He says that this scheme 'fails as *history*' (his emphasis) because of 'the havoc it makes of the actual data – history simply does not seem to have moved like this, in neat unilinear patterns'. Instead there were regress, progress and 'downright change'. There was not a simple and smooth observable development. He concludes that in trying to deal with a simple hypothesis, 'the simplicity of Baur's idealist scheme was deceptive' because the time available for it to develop was 'simply too short; there is too great a multitude of data' as the evidence for Jewish Christianity is late and for Gentile Christianity is very early, thus causing the theories of history-of-religions derivations to collapse. Wright warns: that ‘there is a tidiness proper to full human life. There is also the tidiness of the graveyard’ (Wright 1992:109).

Thirdly, there is another potential problem with hypotheses and verification (Wright 1992:109) and this relates to the possibility that ‘there may be more than one possible hypothesis which fits the evidence’ and this particularly applies when examining ancient history as there is so little data with which to work. His view is that the theoretical possibility of two or more equally good solutions to a hypothesis is a problem with which most historians are able to grapple satisfactorily. As there often is too much information for one researcher ‘to hold *all* of the data in his or her head at the one time, we need each other’ (Wright 1992:109; emphasis in the original). Therefore historians should welcome other researchers who draw to our attention the ‘bits of evidence we have overlooked’ that lead to unnecessary complexities in hypotheses.

2.3.4 Beyond criticism[46]

When one is interpreting and explaining the past when using the above methodology, Meyer (2002:92-94) contends that the end result is the obtaining of knowledge and perhaps wisdom. Historical explanation releases one from ‘imprisonment in routine’ to present ‘a cure for the mindless worship of contemporaneity’ (Meyer 2002:93). Meyer’s view is that historical interpretation and explanation are ‘proximate and open goals’ that ‘transcend historical criticism’. It is a positivist illusion to think that facts speak for themselves. However, the historian’s motives, values and ulterior purposes are not controlled by history but by the historian’s intellectual and moral being, thus amounting to meta-critical presuppositions.

2.3.5 An epistemology of critical realism

It is Bock’s (2002b:161) view that a form of critical realism is helpful in the study of history and the historical method because it assists in avoiding ‘many of the pitfalls of more skeptical approaches’.

Critical realism is an epistemology (Wright 1992:35) in which, through the process of knowing, two aspects are acknowledged: (a) the thing known is distinct from the knower (hence ‘realism’), and (b) the only access to this reality is through ‘appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence “critical”)’. This means that there will be a critical reflection on the objects or products of inquiry into reality. Wright (1992:44) sketches the critical-realist epistemology in action:

Story-telling humans -- > Story-laden world
initial observation (already within story)
< ---
is challenged by critical reflection on ourselves as story-tellers (i.e., recognizing that our claims about reality may be mistaken)
--- >
but can, through further narrative, find alternative ways of speaking truly about the world, with the use of new or modified stories.

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[46] This heading is from Meyer (2002:92).

Wright sees some similarities between critical realism and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic of 'suspicion and retrieval'. Thiselton (2002:253) considers critical realism to be a 'slippery' term because it 'denotes the belief that there is more to reality than what we perceive or know' and is a common sense acknowledgement that for finite human beings, 'epistemology is unlikely to be necessarily co-extensive with ontology'. Wolfe's (1982:72) challenge is addressed by critical realism: 'The crucial criticism of a belief system is not whether it involves faith, but if it can survive testing'. Critical realism (Moritz 2005a:150) encourages 'cross-disciplinary integration, for the critical realist's configuration of truth has to remain open to further refinement by whatever tools are appropriate to the subject matter'.

Critical realism will be an important dimension of the epistemology adopted in this research.

2.4 CRITERIA OR INDICES FOR HISTORICAL METHOD

In this quest for evidence of historicity, Meyer's (2002:84) view is that it is necessary that there is openness to 'a scale of probability' in which 'no method will be admitted to which caution, nuance, and the admission of doubt are alien'. However his perspective is that the presence of these indices favours historicity, but their absence does not directly imply non-historicity. In developing his historiography, Meyer (2002) relies on some insights by Collingwood (1946) and Lonergan (1958; 1972). Evans (2007:47) uses the term, criterion, based on the Greek, as meaning judgment or a 'basis for passing judgment'. Wright (1992:104) notes that there is currently significant debate among philosophers of science about the weight that should be attached to the various criteria used to establish verification or falsification of hypotheses in any field of study. Also under discussion is the working out of what is considered adequate evidence for each index. These are important problems that need clarification. A balance is required to include the data, but also to achieve verification by stating it with simplicity.

Blomberg (1992:249) calls into question a 'major presupposition' that lies behind the pursuit of the criteria of authenticity. His issue is with the assumption that 'the Gospel traditions are inherently suspect unless good reasons can be advanced for accepting them'. He is convinced by the evidence that 'excellent reasons' can be given to support the historical reliability of the Gospels, apart from presuppositions about the inspiration of Scripture. Blomberg's view is that instead of reverting to the criteria of authenticity, there should be an assumption of authenticity and then one should 'ask if there are good reasons for denying it (e.g., irreconcilably contradictory accounts)' (1992:249). On this basis, problems in Gospel traditions are pursued critically and judgements given on an individual basis.

Bock (1995:99, n. 31) does have a legitimate concern about the naming of them as 'the criteria of authenticity' (used by Evans 2007:46) as this suggests a passing of these tests to determine that historical events are authentic. Instead, these criteria should only be seen as tests to help in arguing for a saying's authenticity, he contends, and not as 'a necessary qualification to establish authenticity'. What are these indices of historicity? Here they will be summarised.

2.4.1 Discontinuity or dissimilarity

For Meyer (2002:86), this means that 'historicity is inferred when a tradition about Jesus is discontinuous with the tendencies of the community which transmits it'.[47]

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[47] Meyer's (2002:86) assessment is that this differs from the index of the methodological sceptic in four ways: (a) it is not proposed as the only way to historicity; (b) it is an index and not a criterion; (c) it

Meier (1994:5) defines discontinuity as a focus on Jesus' words or deeds 'that either cannot be derived from the Judaism(s) of Jesus' time or from the early church'.

Wright (1996:131-132) prefers the term dissimilarity where historical Jesus data are similar to Judaism and the early Christian world but are also dissimilar. He states that the parable is an example of this criterion 'as a retelling of Israel's story; but it also only makes sense as a profoundly subversive retelling of that story'.

The criterion of dissimilarity must be accompanied by the criterion of 'double dissimilarity' according to Wright (1996:132). This occurs when something is credible within first-century Judaism, though 'deeply subversive', and also is credible 'as the implied starting point (though not the exact replica) of something in later Christianity'.[48] If there is not this kind of 'double dissimilarity', the historian cannot guarantee that the saying or deed originated with Jesus. The discontinuity with Judaism is called 'the index of originality' by Meyer (2002:86).[49]

Theissen and Merz abandoned the use of two criteria as they were not convinced that dissimilarity and coherence (see below) are reliable criteria to separate the authentic from the inauthentic tradition of Jesus (Theissen & Merz 1998:115).

2.4.2 Irreducibly personal idiom

Meyer (2002:86-87) considers that this criterion is evident with Jesus' use of 'Abba'[50] and 'amen'[51]. He also discerns Gospel parables as a 'royal road to authentic sayings-material' and providing a foundation for assessing historicity of parallels. [52]

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discerns between the contradictory and discontinuous; and (d) it desists in requiring that the data have a parallel in Judaism.

[48] Evans (2007:49-50) claimed that the criterion of dissimilarity is one of the most discussed today and is designed 'to rule out sayings and deeds that may have originated in Jewish circles … or in early Christian circles'.

[49] While the criterion of dissimilarity or discontinuity is supported by many historical Jesus scholars, there are some reasons to be somewhat sceptical of its use. Davids (1992:832) noted that for this criterion to support historical authenticity, two elements must be satisfied: (1) It must be dissimilar to Jewish tradition, including apocalyptic and Rabbinic tradition; and (2) it should be discontinuous with the post-Easter church's traditions. This includes the church's faith, practice and life situation. Theissen and Merz (1998:115) regard dissimilarity and its contrast with the Judaist background of Jesus as a means of undermining the Jewish features of Jesus' life. Therefore, for them, an emphasis on dissimilarity will diminish the Jewish characteristics in Jesus' life.

[50] The only Gospel use of αββα is found in Jesus' Gethsemane prayer (Mk 14:36) when he prayed, 'Abba, Father'. This word is used also in early Christian prayers by Paul in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. What is of note with both Jesus and Paul is that they both were addressing predominantly Gentiles when they used an Aramaic expression. For Jesus, he used αββα in conjunction with the Greek expression for father, πατήρ. Hurtado (1992:273) stated that Mark's use of αββα, an Aramaic term to address God, was probably intended for his readers to see Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane as 'a precedent for their own submission to God and a reminder that the basis of their filial relationship to God lay in Jesus' own'. *Abba* in the first century emphasised a child addressing his or her father. A seminal article on this topic was written by Joachim Jeremias (1967) in which he maintained that Jesus' use of this word had no equal in Jewish literature and that it did not refer to childishness but indicated the need for adult surrender to obedience to the Father. The Greek word studies of Kittel (1964:5-6) and Hofius (1975:614-621) emphasised that αββα was an Aramaic word that was the language of a child towards his/her father and when applied to God would have sounded disrespectful because it was a word of everyday language in the life of a family, used by both children and adults. Hofius (1975:615) noted that this use of a 'childish and familiar term' in prayer, which would have been unheard of among Jews, and expressed 'the unique relationship of Jesus to God'. There is a dissenting view to this understanding of αββα by Barr (1988:28-47) who did not support its informal, childish use, but admitted that it may have originated with Jesus.

[51] Αμὴν appears 'some 25 times' in the Old Testament and was used 'on solemn occasions to confirm a curse or adjuration by identifying oneself with it, to accept a blessing, or to associate oneself with a

2.4.3 Resistive form

When traditions are recorded in different forms such as narrative, sayings, parable, and diverse strata in Mark, Luke and John, historicity is indicated (Meyer 2002:87).

2.4.4 Multiple attestation

Attestation in multiple forms of data may indicate historicity, but it is not in itself a decisive index (Meyer 2002:87) because other indices such as originality or discontinuity may apply. For Meier (1994:5), this criterion chooses Jesus' sayings or deeds that are located 'in more than one independent literary source' and/or 'more than one literary form or genre'. Evans (2007:47-48) indicates that these independent sources could include the Synoptics and Q and that 'a good amount of material that enjoys multiple attestation is itself a witness to the antiquity and unheard richness of our sources'.[53]

The Jesus Seminar (Funk et al 1993:26) has a different view of the meaning of multiple attestations. They need to be 'attested in two or more independent sources' and another is located in two different contexts independently circulated during an

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doxology.' (Bietenhard 1975:97; see Nm 5:22; Dt 27:15-26; Ps 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48; Jer 11:5; 28:6). Bietenhard (1975:98) indicated that in the Gospels *amēn* appears 100 times (31 in Mt; 13 in Mk; 6 in Lk, 20 in Jn); it only comes from the mouth of Jesus and often is associated with the phrase, 'Amen, I say to you….' For Jesus, he begins a phrase with ἀμὴν, which labels the following words 'as certain and reliable. He stood by them and made them binding on himself and his hearers. They are an expression of his majesty and authority' (Bietenhard 1975:99). Examples, based on the Greek text, from the Gospels include Mt 10:23; 13:17; Mk 3:28; 9:1; Lk 4:24; 12:37; and Jn 3:3-5; 5:24. Hawthorne (1992:7) noted that in 'no English version, except those based on the *Textus Receptus* (cf. KJV and NKJV and only at Mt 6:13; 28:20; Mk 16:20; Lk 24:53; Jn 21:25) does it appear as 'amen.' Rather, it is always translated as 'verily,' 'solemnly' or is not translated at all other than in a way to give emphasis to what is being said: 'Believe me,' 'I tell you this,' 'Remember this' and so on. Αμὴν also appears in the writings of Paul, often associated with prayers and doxologies (examples include Rm 1:25 Gl 1:5; Eph 3:21; Phlp 4:20).

[52] Examples would be: (1) In the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), Jesus chose a person from a group that was regarded as unorthodox by the Jews. The parable was to demonstrate compassion from a person who unselfishly helped others. By choosing a Samaritan, Jesus was giving his audience an example that would be least likely to be attractive to them. (2) In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus used an idiom or figure of speech of hyperbole, Jesus said, 'It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth' (Mk 4:31). (3) In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus used an idiom that was common in everyday language for times of special occasions: 'And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to celebrate' (Lk 15:23-24). (4) 'He who has ears, let him hear' (Mt 13:9; Mk 4:9), at the conclusion of the parable of the sower was a characteristic personal idiom from Jesus (see also Mt 13:43 to conclude the parable of the weeds; also Mk 4:23; Lk 8:8; and 14:35). (5) In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Mt 20:15), Jesus said, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' (NKJV). The owner of the vineyard used the term 'evil eye' when he questioned the workers about their complaints regarding his generosity. The idiom of the eye being evil is almost lost in Western society but in the Hebrew language there was a relationship between the eyes and envy, covetousness and desire. The Hebrews used the phrase, 'your eye look grudgingly' (Dt 15:9) and in Proverbs 23:6, 'Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy; do not desire his delicacies'. For 'stingy', the ESV has the footnote, 'Hebrew: *whose eye is evil*'. Thus, the eye is seen as an avenue for envy, strife and evil desires as a Hebrew idiom – also used by Jesus. (6) Although it is not a parable, when Jesus was teaching on the cost of discipleship he used the idiom of exaggeration (hyperbole) when he stated, 'If anyone does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple' (Lk 14:24).

[53] Examples can be found in information about 'the lamp' in Mark 4:21, compared with the sayings source in Matthew 10:26 and Luke 11:33. The 'evil generation' of Mark 8:12 has a parallel in the sayings source in Matthew 12:39 and Luke 11:29. Is this view in harmony with Crossan's understanding of multiple attestation?

earlier period. With this limitation, each of the Gospels is not regarded as an independent source.[54]

2.4.5 Multiform attestation

Myer (2002:87) stated that this ‘is the recording of traditions in diverse forms’ (e.g. narrative and sayings) and diverse strata (e.g., material in proto-Luke, Mark and John). He does not find multiple attestation to be decisive by itself as seen in Aramaic substratum. He does not regard all of the indices of historicity to be automatic decisive factors in determining historicity. While the presence of these indices favours historicity, ‘their absence does not of itself imply a verdict of non-historicity’. Where no inference of historicity is possible, Meyer is satisfied with placing strata in the question-mark column rather than disposing of them as an assumption.[55]

2.4.6 Semitisms and Palestinian background[56]

This is sometimes referred to as the Aramaic substratum (Meyer 2002:87). Like multiple attestation, this is not a decisive indicator of historicity. The Semitisms (Evans 2007:50-51) refers to the observation of Aramaic or Semitic thought patterns and ancient tradition in the Gospels, particularly in Matthew and John. A sub-stratum refers to a different language that influences another language that replaces it. In the New Testament, this may be seen in Aramaic expressions in the Greek. Examples of some Semitisms in the New Testament include (based on Black, in Marlowe n d).

- **Order of words**. Most Semitic languages tend to place the verb at the beginning of a sentence or clause. It can also be found in examples in New Testament Greek.[57]
- **Casus pendens** (a hanging case). Although this structure was used in classical Greek, it has a more common association with Hebrew or Aramaic than κοινὴ Greek. The example given by Black was a portion of Matthew 6:4, ‘…. καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι’, whose literal English translation, reflecting a Hebrew idiom, is, ‘And your father, the one seeing in secret, he will repay you’.[58]

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[54] One example of this different view of multiple attestation could be the passage that begins with ‘blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’ (Mt 5:3-12) with parallel passages in Luke 6:20-26; Gospel of Thomas 54; 69:1-2; and 68:1-2. ‘Give to everyone who begs from you’ is another example that has parallels in Matthew 5:42 and the Didache 1:5.

[55] This applies to ‘similar material attested in various forms’ (Denton 2004:139) such as the same material in saying, narrative and parable. One of the Jesus Seminar’s ‘rules of attestation’ (Funk et al 1993:26) is that ‘the same or similar content attested in two or more different forms has had a life of its own and therefore may stem from an old tradition’. This is one of three criteria (e.g., multiple independent sources, multiple contexts and multiple forms) used by the Jesus Seminar to isolate a body of sayings ‘on purely objective grounds’. Examples include the parable of the sower in the Synoptics (Mt 13:1-9; Mk 4:1-12; Lk 8:4-10) which has another form in the Gospel of Thomas 9:1-5. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:12-21) is in a sayings’ form in the Gospel of Thomas 63:1-4. The parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:12-24) has another form in the Gospel of Thomas 64:1-12. There are multiforms between the parable of the wicked tenants and the vineyard (Lk 20:9-18 and GThom 65:1-8).

[56] This phrase is from Evans (2007:50).

[57] These include the second part of the Magnificat (Lk 1:51-55), the place of imperative verbs in the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:9-13), and the place of the verbs in 1 Timothy 3:16 that has some qualities of a creedal hymn.

[58] While these types of constructions are not restricted to Hebrew, the regular use of them by Jesus indicates a Semitism.

- **Missing conjunctions**. When an expected conjunction is absent, known as asyndeton (Greek, meaning ‘unconnected, loose’), many scholars indicate that this is divergent from the Greek language usage where Greek sentences are linked with a connecting particle.[59]
- **Coordination of clauses**. A sentence in classical Greek usually consisted of a main verb with other verbs in subordinate adverbial clauses of a variety of kinds. By contrast, the Hebrew language is disposed to place verbs alongside each other and joined by the Hebrew, *waw* (and). Grammatically, this is called, *parataxis*[60] (‘I set side by side’). This Hebrew pattern is found in Greek passages with καὶ (and) joining verbs. See Mark 10:33-34 as an example.
- **Redundant pronouns**. The Hebrew relative pronoun does not have a gender and cannot be grammatically declined. Therefore, in the clause which follows, a personal pronoun is needed. There are a few New Testament passages that show this influence with an unnecessary pronoun after the relative pronoun. See Mark 7:25 which literally reads, ‘A woman *whose* little daughter *of her* was possessed by an unclean spirit’. While such a structure can be found in Greek, it is native to Hebrew and Aramaic.
- **Substitutes for the indefinite pronoun**. Here εἷς (one) and ἄνθρωπος (a man, a person) are substituted with the indefinite pronoun, τίς (a certain person, someone, a….). While there are parallels in κοινὴ Greek, it is sourced probably from the Semitic.[61]
- **Redundant use of the preposition**. Repetition of a preposition before every noun in a series which it governs is one of the features of Semitic usage. In literary Greek, one would not see such a construction, but the κοινὴ in Mark 3:7-8, 6:56, and 11:1 follows the Semitic parallel. English translations differ in this treatment of redundant prepositions. Some translate each preposition, while others translate only the first preposition.[62]
- **The use of the positive adjective for the comparative or superlative**. In the Semitic languages, except Arabic, there is no form for the comparative and superlative adjectives such as ‘bigger’ and ‘biggest’. They use the positive adjective, ‘big’, instead. While, the comparative can be used for the superlative in κοινὴ, there does not seem to be a parallel for the positive use of the adjective in κοινὴ.[63]

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[59] This practice is seen especially in the Gospels and Acts. See examples in Matthew 15:19, John 5:3 and Acts 20:17-35. This is explained as a Semitic influence.

[60] For a fuller treatment of *parataxis*, see Marlowe’s (n d) examples from J B Lightfoot’s assessment of Semitisms in the New Testament. Lightfoot’s work was published in 1893 (see Lightfoot 1893:144-146).

[61] The use of εἷς as an indefinite pronoun can be found in two constructions: (1) As an adjective in Matthew 8:19 where it is translated as ‘a scribe’, and (2) as a full pronoun followed by a genitive construction or the partitive ἐκ, an example being Mark 5:22, ‘a ruler of the synagogue’.[61] Ἀνθρωπος in the Greek is used like the Hebrew, *ish*, and the Aramaic, *barnash*, in some of the sayings of Jesus, particularly from Mark’s Gospel. See examples in Mark 1:23, 3:1, 4:26, 5:2, 10:7, 10:9, and 12:1.

[62] The ESV of Mark 3:7-8 translates all of the prepositions, while the New International Version[62] (2010) translates only the first preposition.

[63] There are examples of the positive adjective used for the comparative or superlative in the following examples (ESV): Mark 9:43, ‘And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better (Greek, καλός, literally ‘good’) for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire’. Mark 12:28 translates the phrase, ‘the most important’ (Greek for ‘most’ is πρώτος, literally, ‘first’). Luke 5:39 uses ‘the old is better’ (‘better’, Greek, χρηστός, literally, ‘good’). John 2:10 reads, ‘But you have saved the best (Greek, καλός, literally ‘good’) until now’ (NIV).

- **Redundant use of 'saying'**. In biblical Hebrew, there is not indirect speech and all speech is recorded as direct speech, whether they are the actual words or the general meaning of what is stated. This Hebrew construction closely conforms to the Greek participle, λέγων ('saying'). Mark 8:28 reads literally, 'And they told him, saying (Greek, λέγοντες, literally 'saying'). For other examples of this idiom, see Matthew 23:1-2; 28:18; Luke 14:3 and Luke 24:6-7.
- **Contrast in extreme terms**. For extreme emphasis, Hebrew can use intense terms as in Malachi 1:2-3, 'Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated'. There is a parallel example in Luke 14:26, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple'. Jesus' intention with this statement was to emphasise that his disciples must place all other objects of love below love for him. A parallel passage is Matthew 10:37, 'Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me'. Luke's style is Hebraic, but Matthew's is Greek.
- **Introductory 'it came to pass'**. The Greek verb, ἐγένετο, when combined with another verb can parallel the Semitic idiom, 'it was so', or 'it came to pass'. This Semitic pattern often appears in Luke's writings, but there are four examples in Mark. One example is Luke 2:6, 'And while they were there (Greek, ἐγένετο, literally, 'it came to pass'), the time came for her to give birth'. Because 'it came to pass' is an unnatural English expression, many translations use various kinds of phrases like the ESV, 'While they were there'.[64]

2.4.7 Embarrassment

For Meier (1994:5), this criterion 'pinpoints Gospel material that would hardly have been invented by the early church, since such material created embarrassment or theological difficulty for the church even during the New Testament period'.[65]

2.4.8 Coherence

Meier (1994:5) considers this criterion indicates historicity if Jesus' other sayings and deeds, discovered by use of the other criteria, fit in or cohere. Crossan (1998a:144) rejects this criterion because, in his view, 'it is subordinate to some or all of the others'. Evans (2007:51) sees a potential problem with this index because an assumption that something that is attributed to Jesus that is not supported by one or more of the above criteria, does not necessarily make the statement inauthentic.[66]

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[64] See the GNB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NEB, NAB and NASB for various alternate translations.

[65] Simply stated (Evans 2007:49), if it points to material that would have made the early church awkward or embarrassed, it is not what was created after the Easter event. An example could include the baptism of the sinless Jesus by John when John's baptism was for repentance of sins.

[66] Blomberg (1992:249) finds coherence to be 'a very subjective concept'. He presumes that in the minds of the Evangelists, 'all of the Gospel material cohered'. He asked the legitimate question, 'How is any modern scholar to say that apparent inconsistencies are sharp enough to call into question the truthfulness of accounts?' (Blomberg 1992:249). The validity of the criterion of coherence will depend on the degree to which researchers have reached an accurate picture of Jesus by using the other criteria. The Jesus Seminar (Funk et al 1993:5), of which Crossan was a fellow, concluded that 'eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him'. This indicates that only eighteen percent of the words of Jesus in the Gospels are authentic. It is not possible to use coherence as a legitimate criterion if these figures are demonstrated to be inaccurate.

2.4.9 Plausibility

Theissen and Winter (2002:190) have proposed this new criterion of historicity, which they summarised as

> the combination of different elements in the life of Jesus, who represents a unique constellation in the context of Judaism and at the same time permits the recognition of a meaningful conjunction with the origin of early Christian[ity] – is a criterion of historicity. We speak of comprehensive historical plausibility.
>
> (Theissen & Winter, in Swales 2008:1)

Swales (2008:6) explained that the criterion of plausibility is not using the alleged 'objective enlightenment epistemology' but proceeds by proposing hypotheses and plausible reconstructions. This plausibility may raise questions that are answered through 'a more plausible scenario or by other hypotheses' for which solutions are found that 'make better sense of the evidence'.[67]

2.4.10 Priority of indices

None of the following list of indices is given as a ranking estimate.

- Kloppenborg (n d) lists his primary 'criteria of authenticity' as: (1) dissimilarity, discontinuity, distinctiveness or difference; (2) embarrassment; (3) multiple attestation; (4) coherence; and (5) historical plausibility.
- Meier (1991:168-177) considers that the primary criteria for a disciplined historical method are: (1) embarrassment; (2) discontinuity; (3) multiple attestation; (4) coherence; and (5) rejection and execution.
- Meyer (2002:87) states that the current indices of historicity include: (1) discontinuity; (2) originality; (3) personal idiom; (4) resistive form; (4) multiple attestation; (5) multiform attestation; and (6) Aramaic substratum. Denton (2004:139) notes that Meyer in his publications 'consistently prefers discontinuity, originality and multiple and multiform attestation' while maintaining the linguistic indices, especially the form of personal idiom.
- Blomberg (1987:247-248) supports 'four criteria of authenticity': (1) multiple attestation or forms; (2) Palestinian environment or language; (3) dissimilarity; and (4) coherence.
- Evans (2007:48-51) considers the best criteria to be: (1) multiple attestation; (2) embarrassment; (3) dissimilarity; (4) Semitisms and Palestinian background; and (5) coherence or consistency which he calls a 'catch-all' because it relates to material that is consistent with data already judged as authentic.
- For Bock (1995:90-94) there are three 'dominant criteria': dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence.
- Overall, the prominent indices of historicity are dissimilarity, multiple attestation, embarrassment, Semitisms and Palestinian environment, and coherence.

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[67] Swales states that this methodological criterion is similar to Wright's hypothesis-verification method (see Wright 1992:37-46, 98-109) in which history comes to be understood through 'assessment of plausible scenarios' (Swales 2008:1).

2.4.11 Warnings about and objections to these indices

Blomberg considers that the proper procedure for evaluating Gospel material is ‘to assume from the outset that its testimony is reliable’, and then evaluate objections, the evaluation of which may cause a change in assessment of the Gospels’ contents. He objects to ‘much critical scholarship’ for its inversion of this process ‘by assuming the Gospels to be unreliable unless powerful evidence can be brought forth in defence of specific passages or themes’. This critical scholarship, by using these ‘stringent “criteria of authenticity”’, leads to an acceptance of ‘a much smaller percentage of the gospel material as authentic. Clearly much depends on one’s starting point’. Blomberg concludes that ‘critical scholarship is often *too* skeptical’ (1987:246; emphasis in original).

After listing Meier’s (1994:5) primary criteria for historicity, Crossan (1998a:144-145) acknowledges that these criteria have been advocated for quite some time but ‘their employment has not created any consensus on anything’. This influences his questioning reaction: ‘Why have they not worked to create even the vestige of consensus so far?’ He continues to ask whether any list of criteria represents a method: ‘Are criteria the *same* as method?’ (emphasis in the original). From this question, he asks of Meier’s criteria: (1) ‘How are these criteria theoretically based?’ (2) ‘How are these criteria operationally organized? Do you simply use now one, now the other; here this one, there that one?’ (3) ‘Are these criteria publicly usable?’ Crossan (1998a:145) suggests that if a group of scholars applied these criteria to Gospel traditions, they would not come up with a common inventory as they had not up to the time of his publication, because ‘those criteria are too general, broad, or vague for common use’. He does not consider *criteria*, no matter how good they are, to constitute *method* unless they can be included, based on some theoretical basis so that they can operate with application to everyone.

Crossan (1998a:145) sees the ‘weakness or vagueness’ of these historical criteria ‘in Meier’s interpretation of Jesus’ eschatology’ where Meier uses terms such as ‘in some way’, ‘somehow’, and especially ‘in some sense’. Crossan asks: ‘Is it not part of an interpreter’s job to define that “somehow” as closely as possible and not simply to repeat, as if repetition were *somehow* explanation?’ (emphasis in the original).

Evans (2007:51-52) considers that many sceptical scholars, with particular emphasis on prominent members of the Jesus Seminar, ‘go wrong’ when they misapply a criterion such as dissimilarity and ignore or misunderstand other criteria such as Semitisms and Palestinian background. Part of Evans’ critique of this sceptical view addresses the assumption that sayings and deeds of Jesus that are not endorsed by these criteria ‘must be judged as inauthentic’. He finds that this ‘severe, sceptical method leads to limited results that can be badly skewed’ if the starting points are ‘off-base and wrong-headed’. He regards this as happening when the extracanonical and intracanonical Gospels are thrown into the same mix, resulting in a new level of distortion as none of the five extracanonical Gospels ‘originated earlier than the middle of the second century’.

2.5 TWO DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO SOURCES FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS

Mark Goodacre[68] of Duke University (USA), acknowledged that the quest for the historical Jesus has been described as going in ‘phases’ or ‘waves’ which have become divisive and difficult in attempts to categorise them (Goodacre 2000a). Elsewhere, Goodacre (2000b) noted that this classification of the phases of the quest had become 'a nightmare to teach' when he was trying to explain the nuances of 'the third quest' to undergraduates. He particularly noted the progression in meaning that Wright has used since he coined the term, 'third quest', the meaning of the term for others, and what Wright indicates when he currently uses the term. It is Goodacre's view that he would prefer the explanation, '"varieties" within contemporary Jesus scholarship' but he cannot go in that direction because students will read Wright and hear of Wright's description of 'the third quest' and another explanation from Meier[69] who prefers to use the term, 'third quest' as referring 'to all contemporary Jesus scholarship, without apology or reference to other usages of the term' (Goodacre 2000b). The phases of the quest, says Goodacre (2000b), are fascinating for research but he finds it tough to teach with clarity.

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[68] Biographical details for Dr Mark Goodacre are available at: http://www.ntgateway.com/about/mark-goodacre/ (Accessed 15 March 2011).

While Wright (1996:3-124) discussed historical phases of the quest, his view was that he did not believe the history of scholarship should be divided into 'rigid "periods" ... except as heuristic aids to help us grasp currents of thought' (Wright 1996:25).

2.5.1 From the Old Quest to the Third Quest

For Wright (1996:13-124), these heuristic historical aids for the quest are:

2.5.1.1 The sixteenth-century Reformers

Wright (1996:13-16) acknowledged that since the time of Schweitzer ([1906] 1936), it has been traditional to consider that the quest of the historical Jesus began with Reimarus (1970).[70] While affirming that 'there is some truth in that' (Wright 1996:13), he considers that the 'overall history of the subject' goes back much earlier to the Reformers. Wright questions whether the Reformers' acceptance of the literal sense of the Gospels was able to help them to 'worthwhile theological results' while they demonstrated 'uncertainty about the value of the history of Jesus' life' in relation to their theology, including hermeneutics (Wright 1996:13, 16).

2.5.1.2 The Old Quest[71]: Reimarus to Schweitzer

Writing a biography of Jesus was a core reason for the research of members of the Old Quest of the historical Jesus. Schweitzer (1936:13) stated that 'before Reimarus, no one had attempted to form a historical conception of the life of Jesus'.

Wright (1996:16-21) considered that this period began with the posthumous publication of Reimarus'[72] *Fragments* (1970) by Lessing in 1778.

The intellectual milieu that provided the impetus for the rise of the Old Quest was the Renaissance and the Enlightenment's 'age of reason' (Nelson 1999:130-132). This quest included Strauss (1860), first published in 1835-1836, and his rationalistic, Hegelian philosophical emphases that discarded the miraculous in an *a priori* fashion. In addition, Ernest Renan (n d) offered the liberal 'lives' of Jesus in *Vie de Jesus*, first published in 1863. While there were manifestations of the Old Quest in England, France and the United States, 'it was largely a German phenomenon' and its rise and demise can be attributed to German influence (Nelson 1999:136-137).[73]

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[69] Goodacre seems to be referring to Meier (1991; 1994).

[70] Reimarus' lifespan was AD 1694-1778 (Cairns 1981:412).

[71] Wright (1996:19) used the term 'Old quest' to refer to this period, but his heading (Wright 1996:16) is, 'The rise of the critical movement: From Reimarus to Schweitzer'.

[72] Reimarus was professor of Oriental languages at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Wrede's (1970) writing on the messianic secret in Mark's Gospel, first published in 1901, viewed Jesus as a Galilean teacher and prophet while Mark's Gospel was theological fiction devised by the early church with an agenda divergent from Jesus' programme (Wright 1996:20).[74] Crossan (1998a:44) acknowledged that this 'First Quest lasted from Reimarus to Schweitzer, in round numbers from 1700 to 1900'.[75]

2.5.1.3 No quest to the New Quest: Schweitzer to Schillebeeckx

While Schweitzer was the turning point for the end of the Old Quest, he provided an alternative that recoiled from history as a way to deal with Jesus. Wright (1996:21-25) stated that Martin Kähler (1964) pointed in this direction with this publication that was originally written in 1892. Kähler's criticism was against those who thought that they could obtain 'purely objective' history.

During this period, 1906-1953, Bultmann (1934)[76] discarded stories that affirmed Jesus as an historical figure and issued faith-statements (appearing to be like stories of the historical Jesus) in an existential garb as he went in 'quest for the kerygmatic church', thus making the Gospels to be 'faith documents, not history-books…. History had nothing to do with faith' (Wright 1996:22-23). Wright notes that during this era, Karl Barth's writings 'ensured that little was done to advance genuine historical work on Jesus in the years between the wars' (Wright 1996:22).

There is an enigma in Wright's concluding this no-quest era with Schillebeeckx (his books on Christology were published in English in 1979 and 1980), but including the New Quest advocate, Ernst Käsemann, in this period. Käsemann gave his now famous lecture on 'the problem of the historical Jesus' in 1953 (Wright 1996:23) and Wright acknowledged this as the New Quest period, giving his reasoning that the New Quest 'did not represent a turning to history in the fullest sense' (Wright 1996:23). So is that Wright's major criterion for determining if a scholar belongs in a certain quest?

Schillebeeckx began his publications in the 1950s, but his major Christological works were the English publications of 1979 and 1980 in which Wright stated that he builds on traditio-historical criticism in which the synoptics were regarded as providing evidence from the early Christian communities and from this data, faith statements may emerge that provide glimpses of Jesus. Wright's view is that Schillebeeckx furnishes 'the mirror-image of Bultmann's: the resurrection accounts are stories from Jesus' lifetime, brought forwards' and that Schillebeeckx makes the leap 'from a purely historical Jesus to the incarnate Son of God', but this is not based on the main argument of the book (Wright 1996:24).[77]

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[73] Nelson (1999:137-138, n. 11) noted that scholars have used Reimarus to mark 'the beginning of the Old Quest even though they now recognize Reimarus' indebtedness to the writings of early English Deists, for example, John Toland, Matthew Tyndale, Peter Annet, Anthony Collins, and Thomas Woolston'.

[74] Beilby and Eddy (2009:11) also date the Old Quest from Reimarus to Schweitzer (AD 1778-1906). The quest that ended with Schweitzer and included Strauss and Renan was labelled as the 'so-called First (scholarly) Quest for the historical Jesus' by Witherington (1997a:10).

[75] Nelson's research placed the Jesus Seminar in parallel with the Old Quest: 'Although the Jesus Seminar's quest is not identical to the Old Quest, the Old Quest clearly provides the closest analogy' (Nelson 1999:137).

[76] Wright (1996:22) states that this was originally published in 1926.

[77] Beilby and Eddy (2009:21) chronicled 'the (so-called) "no quest" period', Schweitzer to Käsemann, from AD 1906-1953. Witherington (1997a:11) agreed that for much of the first half of the twentieth century, 'the scholarly quest for the historical Jesus was assumed to be dead' until Käsemann's 1953

2.5.1.4 The New or Second Quest

While the Old Quest focussed on the biography of Jesus, the New or Second Quest concentrated on the words of Jesus. Meyer's (2002:51) language was that the New Quest 'abandoned the quest for Jesus' biography' and its aim was 'to define the continuity between Jesus and kerygma' and Bornkamm's book was 'to seek the history in the kerygma of the Gospels and the kerygma in this history' (Bornkamm,[78] in Meyer 2002:51). Wright (1996:24) agrees that in the New Quest, attention was focussed on 'sayings of Jesus'.

Wright (1996:23) acknowledged that Käsemann's lecture began a new phase which he described as the New Quest and that Bornkamm (1960) produced the 'best known' of the books by the New Questers, which began with, 'No one is any longer in the position to write a life of Jesus' (Wright 1996:24).

Witherington (1997a:11) labelled this the Second or New Quest and said that with the waning of existential philosophy and demise of Bultmann's influence, the Second Quest as a movement was 'dead in the water by the early 1970s'. However, Wright (1996:25, n. 53) regarded the New Quest as continuing in Germany with the collection of studies in Werner Kümmel (1985).[79] Crossan (1998a:44) admitted that a Second or New Quest commenced with Käsemann as his reaction to Bultmann's historical Jesus' work.

In this study, Crossan is understood as a dominant scholar in the Renewed New Quest (Crossan 1991; Crossan 1994a; Crossan 1998a). Some have used another description for the New Quest – the Third Quest.

2.5.2 The Third Quest for the historical Jesus

Beilby and Eddy (2009:28) dated the Third Quest from the 1980s to the present. They acknowledged that the term 'third quest' originated with an article (Wright 1982:20-27) and that the distinctions among various Quest designations are not always helpful and distinguishable.

Witherington agrees with this chronology and contends that it was fuelled by new archaeological and manuscript data, methodological refinements and renewed enthusiasm for historical research (Witherington 1997a:12-13). For him, the distinguishing features of the Third Quest include placing Jesus in his historical context (Galilee) which was illuminated by the Hellenised influence which included the social level of Jesus and his disciples, the absence or presence of synagogues and religious practices, taxation, and the shape of family structures including the dominance of males. The Third Quest has been described by Sean Freyne as being 'rapidly in danger of becoming the quest for the historical Galilee' (in Witherington 1997a:15), because the assumption was that the more one could know about Galilee, the better one could understand the historical Jesus. The social, economic and religious environments in which Jesus lived are characteristics of the Third Quest and in some ways were a reaction to the Second Quest which was culturally

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lecture to a gathering of Bultmann's former Marburg students where he presented a contrary view to Bultmann's. He argued that the Gospel traditions were interpreted documents but 'they could preserve authentic historical memories'. Bultmann's scepticism was 'too extreme' in Käsemann's view (Witherington 1997a:11).

[78] This quote is from Bornkamm (1960:18).

[79] When Wright wrote in 1996, he maintained that the New Quest was not yet finished because 'it would be silly to imagine that all scholars suddenly gave up on one kind of work and took up another', just as it was 'silly' to gain the impression in Gospel scholarship in the twentieth century that suddenly 'everyone' (every scholar – SDG) was doing form criticism, redaction criticism or some other specialty (1996:25). However, Wright affirmed that the main publications of the New Quest were 'of little lasting value' (1996:24). Beilby & Eddy (2009:24) placed the New Quest in the period, 1953 to the 1970s.

distant in analysing Jesus (Witherington 1997a:14-15). This means there is a strong emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus in his first century context with a commitment to historical inquiry (Witherington 1997a:41).[80]

To understand any social system, Byrskog stated that it is impossible to do without considering the 'cultural heritage' of a given society (2002:43). Thus historical investigation must include an examination of cultural relationships. For him, history is 'an account of what people have done and said in the past' and he acknowledges that this can involve 'various kinds of biased, pragmatic and didactic features' in the writing of history. So, the 'sense of history' is to be 'defined as an interest in the past, seen as some sort of continuity, within a context of time' (Byrskog 2002:44).

The 'death of the author' is increasingly coming to centre stage in biblical scholarship and this issue raises the 'problem of how to preserve and do justice to the authoritative textual witness' according to Vanhoozer (2002:258). Therefore, he opposes the postmodern, reader-response, deconstruction of the biblical text and wonders 'what has happened to the "about what" of discourse', which is the 'question of reference to historical reality' (Vanhoozer 2002:258). He pursued a similar emphasis in his earlier publication (Vanhoozer 1998).

While Crossan (1998a:44) acknowledges that Wright places Crossan's scholarship in a 'renewed "New Quest"', Crossan does not like the categorisation of terms such as 'search and quest' as they are 'positivist delusions'. He would prefer for Wright to put Crossan in a Third Quest and Wright and his group into a Fourth Quest which concludes that 'the historical Jesus, like the Holy Grail, is to be found once and for all forever'. Crossan's response is, 'That is not how I see it' (Crossan 1998a:44). As indicated above, Crossan has revealed his postmodern assumptions that the historical Jesus of earliest Christianity is not 'something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45).

Crossan's point it valid regarding the Third and Fourth Quests. If this were followed, the quests would be:

- First Quest: Reimarus to Schweitzer
- No Quest: Schweitzer to Schillebeeckx
- Second Quest: Käsemann to 1970s
- Third Quest (Funk and the Jesus Seminar 1985 – present, including Crossan)
- Fourth Quest (Wright and other scholars 1980s – present, emphasis on Jesus' Jewishness and historical inquiry)

The problem is complicated by the fact that Crossan's colleague, the late Robert Funk, designated those in support of Crossan's Third Quest as 'reNEWed questers' (Funk 1996:64).[81] Therefore, Crossan's designation will not be pursued in this project but Crossan's view will be that of the Renewed New Quest of the Third Quest. Thus, the Third Quest has two separate foci, those who follow Funk's model and those who pursue Wright's model.

Since Wright coined the term, Third Quest, and he considers that he himself is a Third Quester (Wright 1996:87), what does he mean by the term? He emphasises that this is not a watertight compartment, but he uses it for heuristic value. Some Third Quest characteristics for Wright's model include:

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[80] Bauckham acknowledged the serious problem of 'naïve historical positivism' that the popular media present. His view is that 'all history – meaning all that historians write, all historiography – is an inextricable combination of fact and interpretation, the empirically observable and the intuited or constructed meaning' and in the Gospels there is this unambiguous combination (Bauckham 2006:3).
[81] See below.

2.5.2.1 A real attempt to do history seriously

Wright (1996:84, 87) sees this as the pursuit of 'historical truth' using a 'serious historical method' instead of 'the pseudo-historical use of home-made "criteria"'. This means that form-critical tools are being bypassed (rightly so for Wright) and inquiry is proceeding by use of a clearly articulated method of hypothesis and verification. This is in opposition to the presupposition of form criticism that 'the synoptic material could not be historical'. Wright's stress on this historical methodology is stringent as the Third Quest's design is not to reconstruct traditions about Jesus but to advance serious historical hypotheses and to examine 'the *prima facie* relevant data to see how they fit' (Wright 1996:88). For the Third Quest, Wright believes that new hypotheses must be proposed that are not based on 'fixed point' assumptions from 'the history of scholarship. All must be questioned'. He admits that the Renewed New Quest and Crossan especially 'must be kept in mind throughout. But the essential argument must take place at a different level' (Wright 1998:88).

2.5.2.2 The Gospels as texts and works of literary art

For Wright, scholars must move beyond what early redaction-criticism conceived and the Gospels must be seen as 'works of literary art in their own right' but this does not denigrate their historical value (Wright 1996:89). The Gospel authors, especially among the synoptics, 'provide the bulk of the relevant source material' and they write about Jesus and not about their own church and theology. 'They substantially succeeded in their intention' (Wright 1996:89). This is in contrast to the Renewed New Quest where there needs to be 'a large dose of skepticism about what can be learned from the gospels' (Funk 1996:300).

In the Third Quest, Wright considers that 'five major questions have emerged' (1996:89-113) that need answering if progress is to be made in this quest and as the study of Jesus rejoins mainstream 'historical work after drifting, for more years than was good for it' around methods and criteria (Wright 1996:89).

2.5.2.3 The questions

These five questions are subdivisions of the major question:

> How do we account for the fact that by AD 110, there was a large and vigorous international movement, already showing considerable diversity whose founding myth (in a quite "neutral" sense) was a story about one Jesus of Nazareth, a figure of the recent past? How do we get … from the pluriform Judaism that existed within the Greco-Roman world of 10 BC to the pluriform Judaism and Christianity of AD 110 – from (roughly) Herod the Great to Ignatius of Antioch?
>
> (Wright 1996:90)

The five questions are: (1) 'How does Jesus fit into Judaism?' (2) 'What were Jesus' aims?' (3) 'Why did Jesus die?' (4) 'How and why did the early church begin?' (5) 'Why are the Gospels what they are?' These questions when combined form 'a jigsaw of Jesus himself' which is a piece of 'the larger jigsaw of the rise of Christianity as a whole'. The five questions address Jesus' relation to Judaism and to the early church (Wright 1996:113).

Who are the scholars identified with the Third Quest?

2.5.2.4 Important contributors to the Third Quest

By 1996 Wright had identified twenty writers whom he regarded as 'particularly important' contributors to the Third Quest (1996:84), remembering that these are supporters of the Wright view of Third Quest. These are, in chronological order: Caird (1965), Brandon (1968), Betz (1968), Hengel (1971, 1981a, 1981b), Vermes (1973, 1983, 1993), Chilton (1978, 1984, 1992), Meyer ([1979] 2002, 1992a, 1992b), Riches (1980), Harvey (1982, 1990), Lohfink (1984), Borg (1984, 1987, 1994a), Sanders (1985,1993), Oakman (1986), Theissen (1987), Horsley (1987), Freyne (1988), Charlesworth (1988), Witherington (1990, 1994, 1997a[82]), Meier (1991, 1994), and De Jonge (1991). Wright acknowledged that these publications are very different from each other, but they are answering similar sets of questions to those pursued by the Third Quest (Wright 1996:84).

Thus, the two major emphases of the Third Quest are: (1) An investigation of the social and cultural milieu in which Jesus and the early church lived, and (2) historical method applied primarily to the New Testament Gospels and the rise of early Christianity.

2.5.3 The Renewed New Quest for the historical Jesus

Coincident with the Third Quest has been the emergence of another Quest. This Quest has been identified with the scholarship of the Jesus Seminar, a group of scholars called together in 1985. Hays (1994) noted in rather provocative language that it was 'Funk's entrepreneurial venture, the Westar Institute' that involved a 'self-selected group', some of whom are 'fine scholars', but it 'does not represent a balanced cross-section of scholarly opinion'. Hays view was that the criteria for judgment that are employed in *The Five Gospels* (Funk et al 1993 – SDG) by the Jesus Seminar are highly questionable'. The Jesus Seminar scholars used more restrained language, stating that 'at its inception in 1985, thirty scholars took up the challenge. Eventually more than two hundred professionally trained specialists, called Fellows, joined the group' that met twice a year to debate technical papers and used coloured beads 'to indicate the degree of authenticity of Jesus' words' (Funk et al 1993:34). Funk's language was that he 'wrote to thirty colleagues' and asked them to join him 'in collecting and analysing all the words and deeds ascribed to Jesus in all the ancient sources up to about 300 C.E' (Funk 1996:7). These colleagues were asked to invite others to join the project and eventually two hundred scholars formed the Jesus Seminar.

How did it obtain the name of the Renewed New Quest? Funk is definite about how the labelling emerged. In the current quest he says that there are 'two categories of players'. For one, he used the pejorative term 'pretend questers' and the other, of which he is a member, is the "reNEWed questers" (I capitalize NEW to indicate that the precursor of this quest was the new quest of the 1950s' (Funk 1996:64).[83] Scholars are assigned to either category by their answers to 'three basic questions':

2.5.3.1 First test: Do you distinguish between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of the Gospels?

Funk's (1996:64) perspective was that if a quester did not want to make this distinction, then the scholar belongs to a rear-guard action in 'attempting to cover the retreat from orthodoxy'. Renewed New Questers 'seek to discriminate authentic from inauthentic material in the canonical gospels' relating to the sayings, parables and deeds of Jesus. This material is categorised into: (1) that which stems from Jesus of Nazareth, and (2) material that belongs 'to the overlay added by the gospel writers'. If a scholar is unwilling to acknowledge that there is material in the canonical Gospels that does not reflect the historical Jesus, that scholar is giving privilege to the Gospels because they are in the New Testament (Funk 1996:64). Favouring the intracanonical Gospels is not one of the criteria for being a member of the Renewed Quest.

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[82] A previous edition of this publication was in 1995 (Wright 1996:703).

[83] For the Renewed New Quest, Funk (1996:64) used the shortened form, 'renewed quest'.

Crossan (1991:xxx) acknowledges that for him the fourfold Gospel record constitutes the literary problem of the Gospels, especially in light of the fact that over the last two hundred years of comparative work on the Gospels, Gospels have been found outside the New Testament, so that both the intra- and extracanonical sources must be considered in drawing a picture of the historical Jesus. His outlook means that the continuing presence of the risen Jesus and the experience of the Spirit 'gave the transmitters of the Jesus tradition a creative freedom' in writing Gospels that 'are neither histories nor biographies' but are 'good newses' (Crossan 1991:xxx).

This is pointing to a presupposition that is underlying the Renewed Quest that will be examined in this project. Crossan admits that there are presuppositions underlying this position (Crossan 1998a:114) and that some scholars have accused him of 'fixing the evidence' (Crossan 1998a:114). He refers to Johnson (Crossan 1996:47) who stated that Crossan's inclusion of apocryphal and canonical writings on the same footing in the Jesus tradition 'suggests that the game is fixed'. Johnson makes this 'fixed' allegation because of 'Crossan's remarkably early dating for virtually all apocryphal materials', late dating of the canonical writings, and the assertion that the extracanonical are not affected by the canonical sources. Johnson's conclusion is that Crossan's assertions are 'presumed, not proved' (Johnson 1996:47). Johnson challenges Crossan's conclusions about the death of Christ, calling them 'flawed', because Crossan tries to demonstrate that the Cross Gospel in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter is an early edition of the passion accounts. Johnson suspects that this is 'textual prestidigitation' (sleight of hand, tricks – SDG) (Johnson 1996:47).

Funk required that Renewed Quest scholars use a second criterion (1996:64-65):

2.5.3.2 The second test concerns sources

Which data are used? 'If the quester is willing to employ sources other than the New Testament gospels, that scholar is engaged in the renewed quest' according to Funk (1996:64). If a scholar discredits extracanonical material, Funk believes that quester is 'fighting a rearguard action' that is 'probably clandestinely defending the canon' which was affirmed by a 'decision of some ancient church body or council' (1996:64).

2.5.3.3 Final test: Is anything about Jesus at risk in this Quest?

Are there any claims about Jesus at risk with these criteria according to Funk? Nothing about Jesus is immune from this historical investigation. If the scholar thinks that nothing in the creed or church dogma is at risk, that person 'is a pretend quester' (Funk 1996:65). Who belongs to the 'pretend' group? 'Fundamentalists and many evangelicals belong to the pretend group…. These questers collapse the historical Jesus into the creedal Christ and insist that the two are the same thing' (Funk 1996:65). These 'pretend' questers defend the canonical Gospels as reliable while denying that the extracanonical texts 'tell us anything significant about Jesus…. These questers are in fact apologists for traditional forms of Christianity'. Funk brushes aside Third Questers such as Wright because he does not authorise the distinction between the historical Jesus and the creedal Christ. Funk's view is that Wright and the 'pretend' questers express no interest in 'the Jesus of history beyond historical curiosity' (Funk 1996:65).

Wright's view of the Third Quest is quite different: 'Luke was precisely a *historian*, not too unlike Josephus' (Wright 1992:378; emphasis in the original) and that Christianity is committed to history, answers the Enlightenment questions, but it does not seek a 'neutral' or 'objective' history, which is 'a positivist fantasy'. Christianity appeals to 'genuine historical reconstruction of actual events in the past' and includes the 'inside' and 'outside' of events. 'Christianity has nothing to fear from the appeal to history. It makes the same appeal itself', says Wright (1992:137). Funk's retort was that New Questers include Brown (1993; 1994) and Meier (1991; 1994) and 'in their hands, orthodoxy is safe…. The third quest is an apologetic ploy' that Funk does not support (Funk 1996:65).

A distinguishing feature of Renewed Questers is that they 'distinguish the historical Jesus of the gospels and the Christ of the creeds' (Funk 1996:65). For Funk, these researchers are 'aboveboard in identifying a database derived from sources for determining who Jesus was' (the inference is that other questers are underhand is their use of databases), critically use all surviving sources in their serious historical reconstruction (the inference is that others are not 'serious' in their kinds of sources used for historical reconstructions), and 'everything is at stake. No Christian claim is immune to review and revision' (Funk 1996:66).

2.5.3.4 Important contributors to the Renewed New Quest

Both Funk (1996:322-325) and the Jesus Seminar (Funk et al 1993:538-541) have suggested these authors for further reading in support of their Quest. This is a sample of the authors in chronological order: Schweitzer (1936)[84], Bultmann (1934, 1963), Bornkamm (1960), Kuhn (1970), Robinson (1979, 1984[85]), Pagels (1979), Vermes (1981a, 1987), Tatum (1982, 1993), Crossan (1983a, 1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1998a), Sanders (1985), Sheehan (1986), Metzger (1987), Borg (1987, 1994a, 1994b), Kloppenborg (1987), Mack (1988, 1993, 1995), Sanders and Davies (1989), Kloppenborg et al (1990), Schaberg (1990), Spong (1990, 1992, 1994), Koester (1990), Mitchell (1991), Miller (1992), Patterson (1993a), Brown (1993, 1994), and Lüdemann (1994).

How will these Renewed New Quest emphases impact on Crossan's presuppositions for stratification methodology and outcomes for the resurrection data? As a fellow and co-director of the Jesus Seminar (Crossan 2000:174), how can Crossan's presuppositions be exempt from those articulated by Funk (1996:296-304), which Funk made as a requirement for joining the Jesus Seminar in 1985? He called for 'a wholly secular account of the Christian faith' with the aim to liberate Jesus from scriptural, creedal and experiential prisons that have 'incarcerated' Jesus (Funk 1996:298, 300). This will be assessed in Chapter 4 as it applies to Crossan. Crossan admitted that his reconstruction of the historical Jesus was 'a way of doing necessary open-heart surgery on Christianity itself' (2000:175). Is this not an admission that his presuppositions were somewhat different from orthodox Christianity? These presuppositions will be identified in Chapter 3 and assessed in Chapter 4.

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[84] The original English publication was in 1910 (Schweitzer 1936:iv).

[85] An earlier edition was published in 1959 (Funk 1994:322).

2.6 PROFORMA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF PRESUPPOSITIONS

Although not comprehensive, the following is a guide to identification of presuppositions by any communicator and will be used as a plan for objectively (as much as possible) discovering indicators of Crossan's assumptions. These are based on §1.1.7.3.1, 'Objective ways to identify presuppositions ', and are designed to assist with the recognition of presuppositional triggers. Methodological abduction will be used throughout this investigation in tandem with induction and deduction. Abduction is used here to refer to a procedure that is central to the scientific process of an 'inferential step from some initial puzzling fact to some theoretical hypothesis which can explain it' (Svennevig n d:1).

Indicators of presuppositional triggers	**Description**
Factive verbs	Confirms the truth of the following statement or clause, e.g. I *know* that….
Aspectual verbs	Verbs such as began/start, stop, continue, tried, forced, and agreed – projection of aspect (Fukuda 2008).
Temporal clauses	Begin with before, after, since, etc.
Manner adverbs	Conveys *how* an action is or should be performed.
Sortally restricted predicates	They have restricted boundaries, e.g. He is a bachelor.
Cleft sentences	Complex sentence where the subordinate clause has a similar meaning to the simple sentence.
Quantifiers	Modifying words indicating quantity.
Names	Specific named persons.
Intonation	Focus or contrast.
Projection (hallmark of presuppositions)	Verbs that embed presuppositions in operators; embedding, especially in the use of negation, is a standard diagnostic tool for uncovering presuppositions, e.g. I do not think, do think, know, imagine, believe, hear, discover; it is my opinion, etc.
Cancellability	Presupposition denied, but a trigger reveals it.

2.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

This chapter has involved explaining the methodological approach that will be used in this research project. In defining the limits of the project, the nature of the Gospels as historical or non-critical documents will be examined, including an assessment of whether they include mythology. Since Crossan's works show signs of some postmodern influences, reader-response theories of interpretation will be critically scrutinised.

The specific methodological task will see history as inferential knowledge, using the hypothesis-verification/falsification model within a critical realist epistemology.

The various indices used to assist with establishing historicity were explained, along with objections to the criteria. These indices were: discontinuity or dissimilarity, irreducible personal idiom, resistive form, multiple and multiform attestations, Semiticisms and Palestinian background, embarrassment, coherence and plausibility. The priority of indices was outlined.

There was an overview of two divergent approaches to sources in examining the historical Jesus. This included a history of the quests for the historical Jesus, from the Old Quest (Reimarus to Schweitzer), to the no-quest period between Schweitzer and Schillibeeckx and the New or Second Quest (from Bornkamm) to Third Quest which is dated from the 1980s to the present. Some characteristics of the Third Quest were identified. Within this Third Quest, Funk identified a Renewed New Quest in which he and the Jesus Seminar were involved from 1985.

The two contemporary divergent approaches are the Third Quest versus the Renewed New Quest. The latter Quest seeks to discriminate authentic from inauthentic materials using three tests that were outlined while the Third Quest's emphasis has an historical edge.

The chapter concluded with a proforma summary of criteria to use in identifying presuppositions, based on the Beaver and Geurts (2011) model outlined in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3

Crossan's presuppositions for Jesus' resurrection tradition

Crossan's position is that 'gospel presuppositions necessarily dictate methods and models for research on the historical Jesus and early Christianity'. It is his view that 'the synoptics are absorbed, partially or totally, into John. If that is your view of the gospels – and it *is* mine – the problem of the historical Jesus pushes you back and back along that absorptive path to the earliest stratum of the tradition'. At this point he did not want 'to debate these specific presuppositions', but 'one must have some set of gospel conclusions' and he will show us what his are. His view was that 'any work done on a wrong presupposition will be seriously weakened or even totally vitiated' (Crossan 1991:104; emphasis in original).

What are Crossan's presuppositions about Gospel traditions and how do these justify his conclusions concerning one aspect of the historical Jesus? The limited focus of this project is an examination of the presuppositions of the historical Jesus' resurrection tradition.

Use of language such as 'necessarily dictate' and 'are absorbed' are **factives** and 'pushes you back and back' introduces an **aspectual** verb. Here he is affirming the logical connection between Gospel presuppositions and the methods and models of research into the historical Jesus and early Christianity.

The identification of the presuppositions for this focus and questions to be asked of his understanding of the resurrection tradition, are based on the model raised in §1.1.7 and explained further in §3.1 and §3.2 (below). The model used here for identification of presuppositions is that of Beaver and Geurts (2011), defined and explained in §1.1.7 along with some objective ways to identify presuppositions in §1.1.7.3.1. These are summarised as a proforma in §2.6. Other matters to provide an antidote to theological subjectivism in hermeneutics, as proposed by Lewis and Demarest (1987:29-31), will be used, as described in §1.1.7.3.2.

Beaver and Geurts' (2011) qualifications for identification of presuppositions will be used to guide this project. They state that 'we say that the presuppositions are *projected*. Certainly, the inference is more robust in some cases than in others…. Projection from embeddings, especially negation, is standardly used as a diagnostic for presupposition (hence the term "negation test"). It makes sense to try several such embeddings when testing for presuppositions, because it is not always clear how to apply a given embedding diagnostic' (emphasis in original). Therefore, identification or projection of presuppositions is associated with probability and not certainty.

As stated in §2.3.3.4, an inductive method will be used to analyse Crossan's data to determine his presuppositions. The foundation of this inductive principle is 'that theory is to be determined by facts and not facts by theory' (Hodge 1979:14). This will yield probable conclusions without absolute certainty, because 'induction is always an argument by analogy. It is an assertion that, because there is a similarity between two things, they will be similar in other aspects' (Geisler & Brooks 1990b:133).[86]

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[86] Geisler & Brooks (1990b:133) diagrammed such an argument:
A, B, C and D all have qualities p and q.
A, B, and C all have quality r.

The position here adopted is that the identification of presuppositional triggers is not always incontrovertible, but these triggers are indicators of how presuppositions may be identified in an author's writings.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

In the following, the names of the presuppositional triggers will be highlighted in **bold**.

3.1.1 Data for methodology

3.1.1.1 Methodology and intellectual debt

(a) 'Method, method, and, once again, method. It will not guarantee us truth because nothing can do that. But method, as self-conscious and self-critical as we can make it, is our only discipline' to obtain results in historical Jesus' research. If that is so, why should one accept Crossan's stratification method instead of others (Crossan 1999:5)? His 'working definition of history' is: '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). In historical Jesus' research, what evidence provides adequate historical veracity for Christ's death, burial and resurrection? Crossan claims, 'My methodology does not claim a spurious objectivity, because almost every step demands a scholarly judgment and an informed decision' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). Which scholarly judgement does he prefer? He affirms the view of those who 'represent my intellectual debts' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv), but he excludes most historians and historical Jesus' scholars in the evangelical camp such as Paul Barnett, N T Wright (only brief mentions), Ben Witherington, Craig Evans, Craig Blomberg, Richard Bauckham and Darrell Bock. Even Martin Hengel's research is not given a prominent place (except for Hengel's research into first century crucifixions; see Crossan 1994a:123-137; 1995:162-163; 1998a:541-542).

Crossan (1991:xxxiv) states that while different scholars might use 'widely divergent sources and texts', he expects that 'historical Jesus' research would at least have some common methodology'. For him, 'the third and most difficult vector is the *literary or textual* one' (Crossan 1994a:XII; emphasis in original),[87] but he takes the position that 'layering decisions are demanded both in archaeology and in exegesis' and 'two tendencies are at work in both those stratigraphies' – one 'tendency is to decrease [Jesus' – SDG] Jewish identity' and the other is 'to increase his social status' (Crossan & Reed 2001:14).

The presuppositional triggers used here include:

Aspectual verbs, 'would have', 'two tendencies are at work', 'layering decisions are demanded';

Quantifiers, 'nothing can do that', and 'our only discipline', 'at least', 'two tendencies';

Therefore, D has quality r also.

They explain that this seems a reasonable argument, with the proviso that there is some connection between the three qualities, p, q and r. Can it be known that an inductive analogy follows with certainty? No, because there may be no absolute certainty that r has exactly the same qualities as p and q.

[87] The first vector is cross-cultural anthropology and 'the second vector is *Greco-Roman and especially Jewish history* in the first quarter of Jesus' century' (Crossan 1994a:XII; emphasis in original)**.**

Intonation, 'method, method, and, once again, method', 'truth', 'past … by the present', 'reconstructed interactively … through argued evidence', 'spurious objectivity', 'scholarly judgment', and 'common methodology';
Projection, 'as we can make it, is our', 'history is', 'self-conscious', and 'self-critical'.

Therefore, Crossan's presuppositional projections include:

- History is determined by his chosen methodology of history.
- This method does not guarantee objectivity.
- This method is applied according to his choice of postmodernism's interactive reconstruction.
- No objective truth is gained through this method.
- Some common methodology should direct scholars who work with divergent sources.
- Stratigraphy (layering) is demanded both in archaeology and exegesis, but the literary one is the most difficult.
- Jesus' Jewish identity tends to be reduced as his social status increases.

3.1.1.2 Literary problems with Gospels

What is the literary problem in the Jesus' textual tradition? If one reads the four Gospels, one after the other, from beginning to end (called the vertical reading of the text), unity, harmony and agreement are the most forcible conclusions. However, when read horizontally (focusing on one unit and comparing it across Gospels), Crossan considers that this is where disagreement and discrepancies are observed and this kind of divergence was noticeable among pagan and Christian apologists by the middle of the second century AD (Crossan 1991:xxix-xxx). The discrepancies among Gospel accounts 'are not due primarily to vagaries of memory or divergences in emphasis but to quite deliberate theological interpretations of Jesus' (Crossan 1991:xxx).

Presuppositional triggers include:

Quantifiers, 'four gospels';
Intonation is indicated by the contrast of, (i) 'vertical reading' and 'read horizontally', (ii) 'unity, harmony and agreement' versus 'disagreement and discrepancies', (iii) 'pagan and Christian apologists', and (iv) 'vagaries' versus 'deliberate''
Projection, 'are not due', 'quite deliberate theological interpretations'.

These are presuppositional projections:

- There are discrepancies (or contradictions) when Gospel accounts are compared horizontally.
- Discrepancies among New Testament Gospels are caused by deliberate theological interpretations by the Gospel writers.

3.1.1.3 The Cross Gospel and the Gospel of Peter

The priority given to the Cross Gospel in the *Gospel of Peter* is outlined by Crossan: 'My working hypothesis is that the *original stratum* or Cross Gospel in *Peter* had only the guards at the tomb and nothing whatsoever about the women at the tomb. It was Mark himself who created the empty tomb story and its failed anointing as a fitting climax to the literary and theological motifs of his gospel' (Crossan 1995:185; emphasis in original).

The *Gospel of Peter* 5:15-6:22 is for Crossan ‘from the *original stratum* of Peter’, where Jesus’ body, based on Deuteronomy 21:22-23, is taken from the cross and buried before sunset. ‘The Cross Gospel, the original passion-resurrection story, within Peter, takes it for granted that Jesus was crucified, removed from the cross, and buried by his enemies’. Only this text from the *Gospel of Peter* is from the Cross Gospel’s original stratum. He added, ‘My working hypothesis is that the original Cross Gospel story had to accommodate itself to the increasing ascendancy of the canonical gospels after the middle of the second century’ (Crossan 1995:170-171; emphasis in original).

An assessment of the Cross Gospel’s validity or otherwise for Jesus’ resurrection is made in Chapter 4 by examining the material in §3.3.4.1. This deals with presupposition number 22 of this chapter.

Note that when Crossan (1998a:149) uses language such as ‘scholarly consensus’ of research over the last two hundred years, he is referring to his colleagues who agree with many of his positions as he cites those who ‘represent my intellectual debts’ and ‘in quoting *secondary* literature’ he does not ‘spend time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are’ (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). However, by the time of his 1998 publication, Crossan had changed that view with his comments against some of N T Wright’s writings (Crossan 1998a:44, 49-50, 95-99, 104, 258). Dorothy Sayers also received a similar appraisal (Crossan 1998a:91-93, 98-99).

But could the same apply to Crossan? Could there be a possibility that he already decided who Jesus was and he is setting out to bolster his claims, based on the intellectual debt of those with whom he agrees? Is he immune from his own criticism?

On methods, Crossan (1998a:139) said that he ‘started with historical criticism, next incorporated literary criticism, and finally added macro-sociological criticism to form an integrated interdisciplinary model’.

As indicated above, he admitted that he only cited scholars who represented his own intellectual debt (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). However, he broke that claim with his challenges to N T Wright’s scholarship (Crossan 1998a:44, 49, 95-104, 258) – even using a Wright epigraph at the beginning of Chapter 7 (Crossan 1998a:95) – and Crossan’s own divergence from Dorothy Sayers’ views in which he also used a Sayers’ epigraph (Crossan 1998a:91-99). He debated Luke Timothy Johnson’s critique of Crossan (Johnson 1996a) in Crossan (1998a:30-31; 103, 114) for Johnson’s ‘accusation’ (Crossan’s language) that Crossan’s method has ‘fixed’ the data by giving ‘an early date and independent status to “virtually all apocryphal materials” and a correspondingly late date and dependent status to “virtually all intracanonical materials”; and that my only arguments are citations from “like-minded colleagues”’ (Crossan 1998a:114).

Crossan stated (1995:147-148), ‘Because I can see no reason for Josephus to have created that Jewish responsibility [Pilate hearing Jesus accused by men of highest standing – SDG], I take it as historical that Jesus was executed by some conjunction of Jewish and Roman authority’[88] (see also Crossan 1991:372-375). He considers the '*fact* of the crucifixion' (Crossan 1991:372, 375; emphasis in original) is secure, based on two pieces of evidence: (1) 'The unlikelihood that Christians would have invented it', and (2) 'The existence of two early and independent non-Christian witnesses' (Crossan 1991:372), one a Jew (Josephus n db:18:63; 20:200, dated *ca* AD 93-94) and the other a Roman historian (Tacitus n d:15.44, dated *ca* AD 110s or 120s). In spite of the difficulties with these quotes and the possible partial or total interpolations by Christian editors of Josephus, Crossan states, 'I take it absolutely for granted that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate' (Crossan 1991:372). He has this kind of confidence with Jesus' crucifixion, but not so with Jesus' resurrection.

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[88] Crossan (1991:xiii) wrote that ‘a prudently neutral Jewish historian reported, at the end of the first century, “When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men … had condemned him to be crucified … And the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared”’. Why does he not mention at this point that this is Josephus when this quote is from Josephus (n d), *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.3.3? At this point Crossan (1991:xiii) also quoted from ‘an arrogant Roman historian’ who wrote of ‘Christus, the founder of the name [of Christian – SDG], had undergone the death penalty, in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus’. The quote is from Tacitus (n d:15)

He maintains with regard to Jesus' burial and resurrection, 'Nobody knew what had happened to Jesus' body' and 'with regard to the body of Jesus, by Easter Sunday morning, those who cared did not know where it was, and those who knew did not care' (Crossan 1991:394). Concerning the Emmaus road incident with Cleopas and another person after Jesus' resurrection (Lk 24:12-53), Borg and Crossan (2006:200-201) state that 'it is difficult to imagine that this story is speaking about events that could have been videotaped…. This story is the metaphoric condensation of several years of early Christian thought into one parabolic afternoon'. Elsewhere Crossan stated of the race to the empty tomb by Peter and the Beloved Disciple (Jn 20), 'I do not think that story was ever intended as a historical event, intended to describe something that first Easter morning. It always looked to me like a calculated and deliberate parable intended to exalt the authority of the Beloved Disciple over that of Peter' (Crossan 2000:165). Stated another way, 'Empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables expressing that faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story' (Crossan 1995:216). However, he explained that in the resurrection of Jesus, 'Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women to change Mark's negative ending into a more positive one' (Crossan 1998a:552). Further, his analysis is that 'it never occurs to Paul that Jesus' resurrection might be a special or unique privilege given to him because he is Messiah, Lord, and Son of God…. It was not, therefore, about the vision of a dead man but about the vision of a dead man *who begins the general resurrection*. It is an apparition with cosmically apocalyptic consequences' (Crossan 1999:29; emphasis in original).

Further, 'the exact sequence of what happened at the end' of Jesus' life 'lacks multiple independent accounts', but Christ's death is surer than the few days preceding his death (Crossan 1991:xii).

Presuppositional triggers take account of:

Factives, 'absolutely for granted'; 'I take it absolutely for granted'; 'his story is the metaphoric condensation of….'; 'empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables';
Aspectual verbs, 'I take it as historical' that Jesus was crucified;
Quantifiers, 'exact sequence' and 'lacks multiple';
Names, the Jew, Josephus; Roman historian, Tacitus; Pontius Pilate, Cleopas, Matthew;
Intonation, '*fact* of the crucifixion';

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and states (in this translation), 'Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular'.

Projection, ‘nobody knew what had happened to Jesus’ body’; ‘those who cared did not know where it was [Jesus’ body – SDG], and those who knew did not care’; of the Emmaus road incident with Jesus after his resurrection, ‘it is difficult to imagine that this story is speaking about events that could have been videotaped’; ‘I do not think that story was ever intended as a historical event’; ‘Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women’; ‘it never occurs to Paul that Jesus’ resurrection might be a special or unique privilege given to him’; ‘it was not, therefore, about the vision of a dead man but about the vision of a dead man *who begins the general resurrection*. It is an apparition....’

Therefore, presuppositional dimensions include:

- Crossan has no problem with the death of Jesus but he dissociates from any construct that includes the supernatural nature of a bodily resurrection.
- Empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories after Jesus’ resurrection are parables.
- The Emmaus road incident was not an historical event.
- The apparition of Jesus to the women after his resurrection was a product of FC, created by Matthew.
- The resurrection of Jesus’ was about a vision of a dead man who began the general resurrection but it was not valid historically; it was an apparition.
- To know the exact sequence of what happened at the end of Jesus’ life, the criterion of historicity of multiple attestation must be affirmed, even though criteria of historicity have created no consensus among scholars and the criteria are weak and vague.

The Jesus Seminar’s warning, endorsed by Crossan as a prominent fellow of the Seminar, was: ‘Beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you’ (Funk et al 1993:5). Could this also apply to the Jesus Seminar’s view of Jesus?

In articulating these seven presuppositions of scholarly wisdom, the Jesus Seminar used language (Funk et al 1993:3-5) that included these presuppositional triggers:

- **Factives**, ‘The gospel writers overlaid the tradition’; ‘the Jesus of the gospels is an imaginative theological construct’.
- **Aspectual verbs**, ‘two pillars [the first two – SDG] were now in place’; some of the pillars ‘were now in place’; ‘was the identification of’;
- **Intonation**, ‘consists of the recognition of the fundamental contrast’ of oral and print cultures.
- **Projection**, ‘Supports the edifice of contemporary gospel scholarship’; ‘is embellished by mythic elements … and by plausible fictions that enhance the telling of the gospel story’.

Therefore, presuppositional intonation includes:

- The assumptions of the historical-critical method are understood to be one of the fundamentals to understand Crossan’s and the Jesus Seminar’s views of the historical Jesus.

3.2 J D CROSSAN'S ANTI-SUPERNATURALISM

What are the consequences of a scholar's presuppositions about the nature of the supernatural? How do they affect his or her other theological conclusions? When Crossan debated Bill Craig in the Q&A, Craig asked Crossan, 'Are your preconceived ideas about the impossibility of the miraculous … so strong that, in fact, they skew your historical judgment so that such an event could never even be admitted into court?' Crossan's response was that 'it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way' (Crossan in Copan 1998:61).

Here will be an attempt to uncover some of Crossan's presuppositions regarding the supernatural (including miracles).

3.2.1 The rejection of the supernatural in Crossan's teaching

Borg and Crossan (2006:82-83) consider that Mark's Gospel has an 'apocalyptic eschatology', which is an 'expectation of dramatic and decisive divine intervention in the near future'. However, they stated that 'whether this kind of eschatology goes back to Jesus himself is a separate question. We do not think that it does. We see it as most likely a post-Easter creation of the early Christian movement. In our judgment, Mark's gospel expresses an intensification of apocalyptic expectation triggered by the great war'. They explain further that, 'from the vantage point of history, Mark's expectation of the imminent coming of the Son of Man – the return of Jesus – was wrong. To say the obvious, it didn't happen'. Their views are further explained in the statement that 'many of us do not have the same confidence in divine intervention. But we can share the same passion and hope'.

Here presuppositional triggers include:

- **Intonation**, Mark's Gospel as an 'apocalyptic eschatology' with an 'expectation of dramatic and decisive divine intervention in the near future';
- **Projection**, Does Mark's apocalyptic eschatology go back to Jesus? 'We do not think that it does. We see it as most likely a post-Easter creation of the early Christian movement'; 'in our judgment, Mark's gospel expresses an intensification of apocalyptic expectation triggered by the great war'; and 'Mark's expectation of the imminent coming of the Son of Man – the return of Jesus – was wrong. To say the obvious, it didn't happen'.[89]

This examination of the presuppositions of Crossan's understanding of the supernatural will focus on one area, his theology of miracles or supernatural interventions.

3.2.1.1 Miracles

Crossan is not the first to object to supernatural miracles revealed in the Scriptures. Bultmann's anti-supernatural views are renowned in theological studies:

> This closedness [because history is a unity of events caused by the succession of cause and effect – SDG] means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose

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[89] Following the principles of FC, a presupposition, not to be investigated here, would be: Mark's Gospel has teaching on apocalyptic eschatology that did not come from Jesus but was created by the early church.

> cause did not lie within history…. And there cannot be any exceptions in the case of biblical texts if the latter are at all to be understood as historical'.
>
> (Bultmann 1985:244)

Borg has admitted that 'the consequences of supernatural theism for my religious life as a Christian were severe…. It made believing in God difficult…. I have realized that one may be an atheist regarding the God of supernatural theism and yet be a believer in God conceptualized another way, namely in the way offered by panentheism. This is the God I never knew' (Borg 1997a:28, 29). For Paul Tillich, supernatural theism 'must be transcended because it is wrong. It is bad theology' (Tillich 2000:184).

In what follows, Crossan's data concerning miracles is examined to discern presuppositional triggers relating to supernatural intervention or otherwise.

3.2.1.1.1 Redefinition of miracles

Crossan was asked in a letter, 'Do you yourself believe in miracles?' His response was: 'Yes, but not as periodic intrusions in some closed natural order. I leave absolutely open what God *could* do, but I have very definite thoughts about what God *does* do. The supernatural or divine is not something that periodically or temporarily breaks through the normal surface of the natural or human world. The supernatural is more like the permanently hidden but perpetually beating heart of the natural', was his reply (Crossan & Watts 1996:96; emphasis in original).

In his debate with Craig, Crossan explained the content of his presupposition concerning the nature of the supernatural:

> The supernatural *always* (at least till this is disproved for me) operates through the screen of the natural. The supernatural is like the beating heart of the natural…. Miracles are acts of faith, which say, "Here the supernatural, which is permanently present, is made, as it were, visible to us." That is how I understand miracles. That is not naturalism. It is a belief that the supernatural never forces faith.
>
> (Crossan in Copan 1998:45-46; emphasis in original)

However, in this same debate, in a discussion on miracles, where a doctor might announce at Lourdes that God had intervened, Crossan stated that 'it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way' (Copan 1998:61).

Nature miracles are symbolic of authority and are not to be taken literally, as he stated with the examples of the nature miracles of Jesus' walking on the water and the miraculous catch of fish:

> Those miracles are not for ordinary people, but for the official followers of Jesus…. I consider those twin stories to be clearly symbolic: without Jesus nothing, with Jesus everything. In the boat of the Church it is Jesus who counts and Jesus who is in charge. The disciples even as leaders are totally dependent on Jesus…. It is the ancients who know how to tell a good metaphorical story (a parable, if you prefer) and we moderns who are silly enough to take them factually…. The nature miracles are authority parables. They are not about Jesus' power over nature, but about the disciples' authority in the Church.
>
> (Crossan & Watts 1996:79-80)

He associated miracles with social changes: 'I believe that miracles are not changes in the physical world so much as changes in the social world. It would, of course, be nice to have certain miracles available to change the physical world if we could, but it seems to me much more desirable to make certain changes which lie within our power in the social world' (Crossan & Watts 1996:88). Also, 'the so-called *nature* miracles are not about Jesus' physical power over the world but about the apostles' spiritual power over the community' (Crossan 1994a:170).

He gives further examples of miracles interpreted as metaphor: These are plurally attested miracles: the Beelzebul controversy[90], the leper cured[91], sickness and sin[92], and the blind man healed[93]. 'None of those plurally attested miracles makes a connection between Kingdom and cure', but the framework makes the 'programmatic social function very clear' (Crossan 1991:332). In terms of his methodology, the only exorcism considered, with 'a very powerful case' is the Beelzebul controversy (Crossan 1991:318). He states that the multiple attestation of Q (Luke 11:14-15) and Mark 3:22, means that it 'must, therefore, be taken very seriously' (Crossan 1994a:91). Regarding this information, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons' (Lk 11:15), he made 'one very tentative suggestion' and he asked, '*Did Jesus sometimes, or always, heal while he himself was in a state of trance*?' (Crossan 1994a:91-92; emphasis in original). He wants 'to leave the question open for the future', admitting that 'there is not much evidence for Jesus as an *entranced* healer using contagious trance as a therapeutic technique' (Crossan 1994a:93; emphasis in original). Why is he pursuing the topic if he admits 'there is not much evidence' for it?

More examples of his interpretation of miracles and the symbolic are provided: 'Revelations to *specific leaders* and/or *leadership groups* come to overpower and suppress revelations to the *general community*…. These are dramatizations of power and visualizations of authority' (Crossan 1994a:170; emphasis in original). Two examples are: (1) Emmaus and Jerusalem, Luke 24:13-36, and (2) Community and leadership (Crossan 1994a:174). For the latter, Crossan uses the example of the miracle of loaves and fish (feeding the five thousand) which appears in two different settings (his language is, 'as told independently') in Mark 6:35-44 and John 6:5-13. There is another account in Mark 8:1-10 (feeding the four thousand) but he believes that it 'is best seen not as separate tradition but as a deliberate doubling of the story by Mark himself. He thereby obtains a miracle on the lake's western shore in a Jewish context and on its eastern shore in a Gentile context' (Crossan 1994a:174). In Crossan (1991:401), his language was, 'I would argue exactly the opposite process' to Robert Fowler. Here Crossan described Mark 8:1-10 'as a Markan development' and the concern in the Jesus' movement from Jesus to disciples and then to the crowds 'from Jesus to *leadership group* to *general community*' (emphasis in original). So, He does not want to affirm miraculous intervention, but symbolism.

Of the story of the Gerasene demoniac and Jesus (Mk 5:1-17), he wrote that 'an individual is, of course, being cured, but the symbolism is also hard to miss or ignore. The demon is both one and many; is named Legion, that fact and sign of

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[90] Luke 11:14-15, 17-18//Matthew 12:22-26; also Matthew 9:32-34; Mark 3:22-26, identified as no. 121 (Crossan 1991:441).

[91] *Egerton Gospel* 3b [35-47]; Mark 1:40-45//Matthew 8:1-4//Luke 5:12-16; Luke 17:11-19, identified as no. 110 (Crossan 1991:440).

[92] John 5:1-9a, 12; Mark 2:1-12//Matthew 9:1-8//Luke 5:17-26, identified as no. 127 (Crossan 1991:441).

[93] John 9:1-7; Mark 8:22-26, identified as no. 129 (Crossan 1991:441).

Roman power; is consigned to swine; and is cast into the sea…. *Legion*, I think, is to colonial Roman Palestine as *bindele*[94] was to colonial European Rhodesia' (Crossan 1991:314, 315).

He has another metaphorical understanding of miracles when he cites and agrees with David Aune that 'most of the nature miracles are "creations out of whole cloth by the early church"' (Crossan 1991:320). However, he added that two processes are at work in the miracles of the Beelzebul controversy, bread and fish, walking on water, and fishing for humans. Of this group of miracles, he stated:

> I am concerned with two processes at work within that corpus, one moving from event to process and the other in the opposite direction from process by event. By *event* I mean the actual and historical cure of an afflicted individual at a moment in time. By *process* I mean some wider socioreligious phenomenon that is symbolized in and by such an individual happening. But just as event can give rise to process so process can give rise to event…. The basic symbolic interaction postulated by Mary Douglas's body-society parallelism means that social symbolism is always latent in bodily miracle and that bodily miracle always has social signification.
>
> (Crossan 1991:320; emphasis in original)

Another redefinition of miracles is his view that 'the "nature" miracles of Jesus are actually creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus' resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme "nature" miracle'. He emphasised that 'that *is* the resurrection, the continuing presence in a continuing community of the past Jesus in a radically new and transcendental mode of present and future existence. But how to *express* that phenomenon' is his question (Crossan 1991:404; emphasis in original).

Another of his symbolic understandings comes with the example of the two stories of the centurion's servant and the Syrophoenician woman's daughter who were cured at a distance by Jesus – sick and near death, and of demon possession (Lk 7:1-10; Mk 7:24-30). They were the only two miracles preformed for Gentiles and were at a distance. Crossan states of these, 'It is quite likely, it seems to me, that those cases are not at all a movement from event to process but actually from process to event. Early Christian communities symbolically retrojected their own activities back into the life of Jesus' (Crossan 1991:328).

He admitted, 'I presume that Jesus, who did not and could not cure that disease or any other one, healed the poor man's illness by refusing to accept the disease's ritual uncleanness and social ostracization' (Crossan 1994a:82).

There is another understanding of his view of the supernatural: 'I myself, for example, do not believe that there are personal supernatural spirits who invade our bodies from outside and, for either good or evil, replace or jostle for place with our own personality. But the vast, vast majority of the world's people have always so believed' (Crossan 1994a:85). To claim a miracle, he asserted, was 'to make an interpretation of faith, not just a statement of fact' (Crossan 1998a:304).

His response to the raising of Lazarus from the dead was, 'I do not think that anyone, anywhere, at any time, including Jesus, brings dead people back to life. (I am not, of course, talking about near-death experiences or about resuscitating apparent corpses. Death means you don't come back. If you come back, it was not death. Death, like pregnancy, is either/or, not more or less)' (Crossan & Watts 1996:98).

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[94] 'Sufferers from *bindele*, which is the Luvale word for "European", are believed to be possessed by the spirit of an [sic] European' (Barrie Reynolds, in Crossan 1991:315). The Lunda-Luvale tribes were in what was formerly Northern Rhodesia.

Crossan's view was 'that the healings or exorcisms of Jesus are miracles does not mean for me that only Jesus could do such things but that in such events I see God at work in Jesus' (Crossan 1998a:304). Thus, there were no supernatural healings or exorcisms within history, but they were metaphorical manifestations of God's being. His words are, 'I see that same God at work – in the healing and in the eating as nonviolent resistance to systematic evil' (Crossan 1998a:304).

Presuppositional operators for this redefinition of miracles topic include:

- **Presuppositions stated**, 'it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way' by performing supernatural miracles; 'I presume that Jesus, who did not and could not cure that disease or any other one, healed the poor man's illness by refusing to accept the disease's ritual uncleanness and social ostracization'; 'I myself, for example, do not believe that there are personal supernatural spirits who invade our bodies from outside and, for either good or evil, replace or jostle for place with our own personality', and ''I do not think that anyone, anywhere, at any time, including Jesus, brings dead people back to life';
- **Factives**, 'the supernatural … always operates', 'miracles are acts of faith', 'the nature miracles are', and 'are actually creedal statements';
- **Quantifiers**, 'vast, vast majority of the world's people', 'two processes at work' and 'the supreme "nature" miracle';
- **Names**, Emmaus, Jerusalem, Gerasene, Legion, Roman Palestine, European Rhodesia, Syrophoenician, and Gentiles;
- **Intonation**, 'supernatural … natural … permanently present', 'miracles are acts of faith'; 'miracles … clearly symbolic', 'ordinary people … official followers', 'without Jesus nothing, with Jesus everything'; 'metaphorical story (a parable) … factually', 'nature miracles are authority parables', 'Jesus' power over nature … disciples' authority in the Church'; 'miracles are not changes in the physical world so much as changes in the social world'; 'nature miracles … apostles' spiritual power over the community', 'kingdom and cure', 'cure ... social function'; 'tentative suggestion…. Did Jesus sometimes, or always, heal while he himself was in a state of trance?'; 'there is not much evidence for Jesus as an entranced healer'; 'specific leaders … leadership groups', 'dramatizations of power and visualizations of authority', 'leadership group to general community', 'being cured, but the symbolism', 'Jewish context … Gentile context', 'bindele', 'process … event', 'actual and historical cure … wider socioreligious[95] phenomenon that is symbolized', 'bodily miracle … social signification', 'nature miracles … creedal statements', Jesus 'resurrection, the continuing presence in a continuing community', 'present and future existence', 'past … present … future', 'resurrectional victory over death', 'early Christian communities
- symbolically retrojected their own activities back'; and 'the healing and in the eating as
- nonviolent resistance to systematic evil';
- **Projection**, 'Yes, but not as periodic intrusions'; 'I have very definite thoughts about'; 'the supernatural or divine is not something that periodically or

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[95] 'Socioreligious' was the spelling Crossan used, rather than socio-religious.

temporarily breaks'; 'supernatural is more like the permanently hidden but perpetually beating heart of the natural'; 'it is a belief that the supernatural never forces faith'; 'those miracles are not for ordinary people but for the official followers'; 'the so-called *nature* miracles are not', 'none of those plurally attested miracles makes a connection'; 'must, therefore, be taken very seriously'; I would argue exactly the opposite process'; 'he thereby obtains a miracle'; 'I would argue'; '*Legion*, I think'; 'nature miracles are creations … by the early church'; and 'death means you don't come back. If you come back, it was not death';
- **Cancellability**, 'That is not naturalism'.

Thus, presuppositional aspects include:
- God does not perform supernatural miracles.
- Jesus' healing of illness was a symbolic example of refusing to accept ritual uncleanness and social ostracism.
- There are no personal, supernatural spirits who invade people from the outside.
- Nobody, including Jesus, brings people back to life.
- Miracles are acts of faith, creedal statements.
- Nature miracles were created by the early church.
- Healing was symbolic of nonviolent resistance to systematic evil.
- If his rejection of an interventionist God is not support for naturalism, what does the interpretation of symbolism indicate about his theistic worldview?

(a) Presupposition number 1: Miracles are not supernatural interventions

There were no New Testament miracles by God's supernatural interventions in the natural world, but they were symbolic, creedal statements of benefit for Christians and the church. This is not a perspective of naturalism in Crossan's view.

3.2.1.1.2 Miracles and the biblical text

He admits to a particular textual understanding with miracles, claiming that 'there is something very strange about the miracles of Jesus, not about their facticity but about their attestation'. Some of this relates to the understanding that 'we have no textual Gospel of miracles similar to that textual Gospel of sayings', which 'might almost' cause one to 'conclude that miracles come into the tradition later rather than earlier, as creative confirmation rather than as original data' (Crossan 1991:310). He rejects this view, preferring the 'better explanation' that 'miracles were, at a very early stage, being washed out of the tradition and were being reinterpreted' (Crossan 1991:310).[96] He further explains that we need 'much more evidence to postulate a Gospel of miracles similar to the already established Gospels of sayings. Maybe … it was there very early and erased very fast' (Crossan 1991:313).

His 'sources of the gospels' are based on Koester (1982:2.48), in which Koester makes separate items for collections of sayings, collections of miracle stories, and a passion narrative. The claim of collections of miracles stories 'is much harder to substantiate. We have no textual Gospel of miracles similar to that textual Gospel of sayings' and 'while we have as high as sixfold independent attestation in the primary stratum of the sayings, we never get higher than twofold for that of the miracles' (Crossan 1991:310).

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[96] Crossan (1991:310) here is following Hull. John Hull (1974) is the only scholar by that name in his bibliography (Crossan 1991:474).

Presuppositional operators are embedded in:

- **Quantifiers**, ‘better explanation’, ‘sixfold independent attestation’, and ‘twofold for that of the miracles’;
- **Names**, Koester;
- **Intonation**, ‘there is something very strange about the miracles of Jesus’; ‘no textual Gospel of miracles similar to that textual Gospel of sayings’, ‘creative confirmation rather than as original data’, ‘not about their facticity but about their attestation’, ‘washed out of the tradition’, and ‘being very carefully interpreted’;
- **Projection**, ‘miracles were, at a very early stage, being washed out of the tradition and were being reinterpreted’, and ‘is much harder to substantiate’.

Aspects of his presuppositions, based on these triggers, are:

- There is no Gospel of miracles in the sources that is similar to the Gospel of sayings.
- Miracles were from an early stage of the tradition, were washed out, and returned.[97]

(a) Presupposition number 2: Miracles, based on FC and RC, were in and out of the Gospel tradition

Another dimension to Crossan’s view of the nature of God and the universe will be analysed in this Chapter, §3.3.2.6.2, presupposition number 11, dealing with the supernatural and resurrection.

Before moving to an examination of the presuppositions associated with Crossan’s understanding of the resurrection, an important emphasis is made by him in relation to the passion tradition that has ramifications for the resurrection tradition.

3.2.2 Read the text to get the correct story

Crossan’s complaint about the film, *The Passion of the Christ*, was that it developed the incorrect story of Jesus and that ‘anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film should first read the text and get the story right’ as this film portrayed Barabbas as ‘the loutish buffoon’, instead of ‘simply the Jewish version of the Scottish anti-imperialist *Braveheart* or the American anti-imperialist *The Patriot*’ (Crossan 2007:138; emphasis in original).

If the dramatisation of the death of Jesus in this film is not based on the correct text of Scripture, then content has been inserted. In hermeneutics, this is called eisegesis, which is ‘the substitution of the authority of the interpreter for the authority of the original writer’ (Mickelsen 1963:158), or ‘reading their ideas into the Bible’ as opposed to ‘*exegesis*, the deriving of ideas *from* the Bible’ (Lewis & Demarest 1987:30; emphasis in original). Could this emphasis have application to Crossan himself and his presuppositions informing the resurrection tradition? This will be pursued in Chapter 4.

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[97] A presupposition could be: ‘There is no certainty in identifying a textual “Gospel of miracles” in sources for the Gospels’. This will not be pursued in this project.

3.3 J D CROSSAN AND THE RESURRECTION TRADITION: I FORMULATE IT AS I SEE IT

What would cause Crossan to separate truth from factuality (Borg & Crossan 2006:193), associate history with myth and fiction (Crossan 1994a:160), to regard the resurrection of Jesus as a symbol (Crossan & Watts 1996:157-158), metaphor (Crossan & Watts 1996:153), apparition (Crossan 1995:208) and a parable (Borg & Crossan 2006:193)? Why is Jesus' resurrection considered to be not unique (Borg & Crossan 2006:191-192), nor literal, historical or bodily (Borg & Crossan 2006:218-219, n. 18; Crossan 2007:186-187), but associated with Jesus' continuing presence, experience and empowerment with his followers (Crossan & Watts 1996:153; Crossan 1995:216)?

He did not hesitate to state how he arrived at such conclusions regarding Jesus' resurrection:

3.3.1 I formulate it as I see it

Crossan's epigraph for his section on 'the bodily resurrection of Jesus' was by Marianne Sawicki (1994:180, 275, in Crossan 1998a:xxvii). His assessment of Sawicki's two statements about Christ's resurrection was that 'one suggests that a limed pit was the most likely fate of Jesus' crucified body' and 'the other insists that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is an absolute for Christian faith'. Crossan's comment was that 'I agree with her that Joseph of Arimathea is most likely a fervent hope for the best rather than a historical description of what happened. But I also agree with her on that second statement. I am not totally sure I understand all she implies by it however' and then he added his approach to Jesus' resurrection: 'I formulate it here as I see it' (Crossan 1998a:xxx; emphasis in original).

This harmonises with his practice regarding the use of revelation and reason in assessing data concerning the historical Jesus, 'Although in theory revelation is superior to reason, in practice reason is usually the final judge' (Crossan 1995:214). So his approach to evaluate the resurrection tradition of Jesus is: 'I formulate it … as I see it'.

What, then, are the presuppositions which influence the content of his resurrection tradition in his publications and the formulation of how he sees the resurrection, based on biblical and other data?

Presuppositional triggers include:

- **Aspectual verbs**, 'I agree with her [Marianne Sawicki – SDG] that Joseph of Arimathea is most likely a fervent hope for the best rather than a historical description of what happened'; 'I also agree with her [Marianne Sawicki – SDG] on that second statement [that the bodily resurrection is absolute for Christian faith – SDG]';
- **Names**, Marianne Sawicki, Joseph of Arimathea;
- **Intonation**, 'I am not totally sure I understand all she implies by it however [bodily resurrection is absolute for the Christian faith – SDG]'.
- **Projection**, 'I formulate it here as I see it'.

Presuppositional projections that emerge from these triggers include:

- Joseph of Arimathea was an indicator of Jewish hope and not a historically factual person.

- Even though Crossan is unsure of Sawicki's meaning in the statement that the bodily resurrection is an absolute for the Christian faith, he still supports her statement.
- Crossan's interpretation of Jesus' resurrection is based on his own formulation from an examination of the data.

3.3.1.1 Presupposition number 3: For resurrection data, formulate it as you see it

To interpret resurrection data, use one's own reasoned formulations.

Is Crossan formulating his understanding of Jesus' resurrection based on how he formulates it through reasoning about it, or are there other factors influencing these formulations? This study is designed to investigate the possibility of other factors that may lead to his conclusions about the resurrection accounts.

3.3.2 Hermeneutics of Jesus' resurrection

In his discussion of 'Paul and the resurrection', Crossan affirmed that in that discussion, 'the term "resurrection" always means "bodily resurrection"' (Crossan 2007:183). Then he explained that 'until the very end of the Old Testament, there was no belief in an afterlife among those who created the majesty of the Law, the challenge of the prophets, the splendour of the Psalms, and the wisdom of the sages'. Beyond no belief in such, 'they never discussed any types or possibilities of afterlife, so we must infer (and it can only be an inference) that they considered an afterlife just one more pagan usurpation of rights and privileges that belonged exclusively to God. It was, in other words, an act of faith not to believe in life after death'. So, 'after death, all individuals, good and bad alike, went down to Sheol, which was, quite simply, the Grave writ large, the End with emphasis. It was neither hell nor heaven; it was simply never-no-more' (Crossan 2007:183-184; emphasis in original). He gave examples of Sheol/Pit (Ps 16:10), Sheol/Death (2 Sm 22:6), Sheol/Dust (Job 17:16), and of there being no afterlife (Ps 6:5) (Crossan 2007:184).

However, in this same publication he maintained that 'those who proclaimed Jesus's resurrection …*proclaimed that the general bodily resurrection had already begun with Jesus's bodily resurrection*'. But in Christ's resurrection, it 'meant that Jesus's resurrection was not just an individual privilege but a communal process – and a communal process for past, present, and future, with Jesus's resurrection at the heart of that process' (Crossan 2007:186-187; emphasis in original). But he was adamant about what this did not mean: 'It was not as if there is a start (the Christ resurrection), a yawning gap, and then an end (the general resurrection – like two bookends but with no books in between. We Christians are the books in between' (Crossan 2007:187; emphasis in original).

But there were added dimensions to his hermeneutics of resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was not a literal, historical, bodily resurrection but can be interpreted as symbol, metaphor, and apparition and was not unique. Also, truth and factuality are not needed for veracity of Christ's resurrection (see below).

What are the presuppositional triggers in these statements?

- **Factives**, 'the term "resurrection" always means "bodily resurrection"'; 'it was, in other words, an act of faith *not* to believe in life after death'; 'after death, all individuals, good and bad alike, went down to Sheol, which was, quite simply, the Grave writ large, the End with emphasis. It was neither hell nor heaven; it was simply never-no-more'; Christ's resurrection 'meant that Jesus's resurrection was not just an individual privilege but a communal process – and a communal process for past, present, and future, with Jesus's resurrection at the heart of that process'; 'it was not as if there is a start (the Christ resurrection), a yawning gap, and then an end (the general resurrection – like two bookends but with no books in between. We Christians *are* the books in between';

- **Aspectual verbs**, '*the general bodily resurrection had already begun with Jesus's bodily resurrection*'; 'it was not as if there is a start (the Christ resurrection), a yawning gap, and then an end (the general resurrection)';
- **Temporal clauses**, 'until the very end of the Old Testament, there was no belief in an afterlife';
- **Intonation**, 'until the very end of the Old Testament, there was no belief in an afterlife'; 'they never discussed any types or possibilities of afterlife, so we must infer' that it was 'one more pagan usurpation of rights and privileges'; 'meant that Jesus's resurrection was not just an individual privilege but a communal process'; 'those who proclaimed Jesus's resurrection …*proclaimed that the general bodily resurrection had already begun with Jesus's bodily resurrection*';

These triggers suggest these presuppositional projections:

- The term resurrection always meant bodily resurrection.
- In the Old Testament, it was an act of faith to believe in life after death.
- Most of the Old Testament (except for its end) taught that at death a person went to the grave and there was no further existence.
- The teaching of life after death in the latter Old Testament was based on pagan practices.
- Jesus' resurrection was not just for an individual but meant a communal process for past, present and future.
- There is no gap between Jesus' resurrection and the general resurrection. The general bodily resurrection began with Jesus' resurrection.

3.3.2.1 Presupposition number 4: Resurrection as communal process

While the term resurrection always meant a bodily resurrection, Jesus resurrection was not an individual event but was a communal process involving past, present and future. There was no gap between Jesus' resurrection and the general resurrection. The general resurrection began with Jesus' resurrection.[98]

3.3.2.2 Resurrection and a literal reading of the text

Regarding the 'difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories', Borg and Crossan stated that one of them was 'that it requires a "supernatural interventionist" understanding of the way God relates to the world'. They explained further what this would mean: 'Minimally, it requires that we think of the stones being rolled away by God or an angel (and in either case, by supernatural agency), and that we think of God transforming the corpse of Jesus so that it was no longer in the tomb'. Then they ask these questions: 'Does God ever act this way? Is this an illuminating way to think of the way God acts in the world' (Borg & Crossan 2006:218-219, n. 18)? The answer for them was, 'No', as seen in §3.2 above, in examining Crossan's anti-supernaturalism.

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[98] Another presupposition is indicated by these triggers that relates to life after death in the Old Testament. This will not be pursued here.

In the case of Borg, he argued that supernaturalistic intervention of God is problematic because ‘the notion of supernatural intervention tends to privilege Christianity’ (Borg 1998b:127) and this cannot be accepted by a pluralist like Borg (1997a:VIII), who added: ‘I simply do not believe that God is known primarily or only in our tradition’ (Borg 1998b:128).

Stanton (1979:62) noted that ‘scholars rarely criticise the work of colleagues and friends as rigorously as other work’. This is especially noticeable with Crossan’s rejection of the supernatural with Jesus’ miracles. He stated that ‘the “nature” miracles of Jesus are actually creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus’ resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme “nature” miracle’ (Crossan 1991:404). Ben Meyer (2002:60, 63)[99] maintained that ‘the resurrection [of Jesus – SDG] is the key to all Christian witness to Jesus’ and ‘the synoptic tradition was born of resurrection faith’. What is the nature of this resurrection? The ‘total formula affirms, from the confession of 1 Corinthians 15:3-5’, that ‘he really died and he really rose’ and ‘the heart of the confession’ is that ‘Christ died for our sins, as scripture prophetically attests he would, and God raised him on the third day, as scripture prophetically attests he would’ (Meyer 2002:62). This is in conflict with Crossan’s views on the resurrection and will be pursued in Chapter 4.

- **Factives**, there are ‘difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories’;
- **Intonation**, ‘Does God ever act this way [supernatural intervention – SDG]? Is this an illuminating way to think of the way God acts in the world’;
- **Projection**, one of the difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter narratives was ‘that it requires a “supernatural interventionist” understanding of the way God relates to the world’; ‘minimally, it requires that we think of the stones being rolled away by God or an angel (and in either case, by supernatural agency), and that we think of God transforming the corpse of Jesus so that it was no longer in the tomb’; ‘the “nature” miracles of Jesus are actually creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus’ resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme “nature” miracle’.

These triggers lead to these presuppositional indicators:
- Difficulties are associated with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories.
- The literal-factual reading of the passion-resurrection narratives requires the God who acts through supernatural intervention, which Crossan does not accept.
- Jesus’ nature miracles, which include the resurrection, are creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority. Jesus’ resurrection, victory over death, is the supreme nature miracle.

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[99] This is a reprint with a new introduction by N T Wright of an original 1979 publication by Meyer.

3.3.2.2.1 Presupposition number 5: Problems with literal-factual reading of the Easter stories

A literal-factual reading of the passion-resurrection narratives requires belief in the God who acts through supernatural intervention[100] to perform nature miracles. The resurrection is the supreme nature miracle but its meaning is in the form of a creedal statement that promotes ecclesiastical authority.

3.3.2.3 Hard and soft forms

Borg and Crossan asked: ‘So Easter is utterly central. But what was it? What are the Easter stories about? On one level, the answer is obvious: God raised Jesus. Yes. And what does this mean? Is it about the most spectacular miracle there’s ever been? Is it about the promise of an afterlife? Is it about God proving that Jesus was indeed his Son?’ They continued their questions as to whether these are historical reports of history remembered. ‘Or do they use the language of parable and metaphor to express truths that are much more than factual? Or some combination of the two?’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:190). The tone of their views was here presented in questions.

Their interpretation was that ‘we bring this preunderstanding of what Easter is about to the gospel stories’. They raised the issue of two opposing views: ‘This widespread preunderstanding emphasizes the historical factuality of the stories, in harder or softer forms. The hard form, affirmed by Christians committed to biblical inerrancy, sees every detail as factually, literally, and infallibly true’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:190-191).[101]

What about the other view? ‘Many other Christians affirm a softer form. Aware of differences in the stories, they do not insist on the factual exactitude of every detail. They know that witnesses to an event can differ on details (think of diverging testimonies about an auto accident), but still be reliable witnesses to the basic factuality of the event (the accident really happened)’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:191).

They obviously prefer the softer form of interpretation[102] and add, ‘So the softer form does not worry about whether there was one angel (Mark and Matthew) or two (Luke) at the tomb, or about how to combine the stories’. However, ‘the softer form does affirm the historical factuality of “the basics”: the tomb really was empty; this was because God transformed the corpse of Jesus (and not, for example, because somebody stole the body or because they went to the wrong tomb); and Jesus really did appear to his followers after his death in a form that could be seen, heard and touched'[103] (Borg & Crossan 2006:191).

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[100] It is not surprising that Crossan would oppose the God who acts through supernatural intervention. See §3.2.1.1.3 above and Crossan’s support for ‘the anti-supernatural God’ and presuppositions numbers 9-13 that deal with this topic.

[101] The endnote at this point was: ‘We note in passing that there is no intrinsic connection between “infallibility” and “inerrancy” and reading the Bible literally and factually. There is no reason why God could not speak infallibly in the language of poetry and parable, song and symbol, metaphor and myth. But in the modern period, “biblical infallibility” and literal-factual interpretation generally accompany each other’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:218, n. 14).

[102] Elsewhere, Crossan wrote that ‘if Mark himself created this story about the women at the tomb, he created one with obvious difficulties built into it’ (Crossan 1995:181). He reiterated concerning Christ’s resurrection, ‘The stories in the Gospels, as I’ve argued, are primarily interested in who’s in charge and had an apparition…. With regard to the empty tomb, honestly I would say, plus or minus, it’s not worth it. I don’t mind. Historically, I’m not sure about it because I think Mark created it, but it’s not something I would argue. I concede it’ (in Stewart 2006:33). This harmonises with his view of supernatural resurrection, when discussing Lazarus’s resurrection that ‘I do not think that anyone, anywhere, at any time brings dead people back to life’ (Crossan 1994a:95).

A further explanation of Jesus' resurrection was that 'when Paul argued in 1 Corinthians 15, "If Jesus is not raised, there's no general resurrection; and if there's no general resurrection, Jesus is not raised," that is the same as saying, "Jesus is the firstfruits of them that sleep." In plain language, the general resurrection has begun with Jesus. Now that's a metaphor' (Crossan in Copan 1998:46).

Presuppositional triggers suggested by these data include:

- **Factives**, 'so Easter is utterly central'; 'on one level, the answer is obvious: God raised Jesus. Yes'; 'this widespread preunderstanding emphasizes the historical factuality of the stories, in harder or softer forms'; 'the hard form, affirmed by Christians committed to biblical inerrancy, sees every detail as factually, literally, and infallibly true'; 'many other Christians affirm a softer form. Aware of differences in the stories, they do not insist on the factual exactitude of every detail. They know that witnesses to an event can differ on details … but still be reliable witnesses to the basic factuality of the event'; 'so the softer form does not worry about whether there was one angel (Mark and Matthew) or two (Luke) at the tomb, or about how to combine the stories'; 'the softer form does affirm the historical factuality of "the basics": the tomb really was empty; this was because God transformed the corpse of Jesus … and Jesus really did appear to his followers after his death in a form that could be seen, heard and touched'; 'there is no intrinsic connection between "infallibility" and "inerrancy" and reading the Bible literally and factually. There is no reason why God could not speak infallibly in the language of poetry and parable, song and symbol, metaphor and myth';
- **Aspectual verbs**, 'the general resurrection has begun with Jesus. Now that's a metaphor';
- **Quantifiers**, 'Jesus is the firstfruits of them that sleep';
- **Names**, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Son of God;
- **Intonation**, 'So Easter is utterly central'; he indicated intonation by a series of questions: 'what does this mean [God raising Jesus – SDG]? Is it about the most spectacular miracle there's ever been? Is it about the promise of an afterlife? Is it about God proving that Jesus was indeed his Son?'; 'or do they use the language of parable and metaphor to express truths that are much more than factual? Or some combination of the two?'; 'if Mark himself created this story about the women at the tomb, he created one with obvious difficulties built into it'; 'in the modern period, "biblical infallibility" and literal-factual interpretation generally accompany each other'; 'a number of additional emphases usually go with an emphasis upon the historical factuality of the Easter stories (in harder or softer form). First, Easter is utterly unique; this is the one and only time that something like this has happened'; and 'second, its spectacular uniqueness demonstrates that Jesus really is the Son of God and that Christianity is true. Finally, Easter is commonly connected to

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[103] The endnote here was: 'A number of additional emphases usually go with an emphasis upon the historical factuality of the Easter stories (in harder or softer form). First, Easter is utterly unique; this is the one and only time that something like this has happened. Second, its spectacular uniqueness demonstrates that Jesus really is the Son of God and that Christianity is true. Finally, Easter is commonly connected to our hope for an afterlife: at Easter, God demonstrated that death is not the end' (Borg & Crossan 2006:218, n. 15).

our hope for an afterlife: at Easter, God demonstrated that death is not the end'; and 'in plain language';
- **Projection**, 'we bring this preunderstanding of what Easter is about to the gospel stories'; 'the stories in the Gospels, as I've argued, are primarily interested in who's in charge and had an apparition'; 'with regard to the empty tomb, honestly I would say, plus or minus, it's not worth it. I don't mind'; 'historically, I'm not sure about it [empty tomb – SDG] because I think Mark created it, but it's not something I would argue. I concede it'; and Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 was that 'if Jesus is not raised, there's no general resurrection; and if there's no general resurrection, Jesus is not raised'; and 'that is the same as saying, "Jesus is the firstfruits of them that sleep"';

Projected presuppositions from these triggers include:
- Even though the Easter event is central, pre-understanding of the Easter message influences the meaning of the Gospel stories.
- The hard form of pre-understanding is promoted by supporters of inerrancy who endorse the view that every detail of the resurrection account is factually, literally, and infallibly true. They confirm that the unique resurrection of Jesus endorse his being the Son of God.
- The soft form of pre-understanding recognises the differences in the resurrection stories and does not insist on exact factuality for details as witnesses of an event differ in statements of the particulars.
- The softer form affirms the historical factuality of the basics of the empty tomb, God's transformation of Jesus' corpse, and that Jesus appeared to his followers after his resurrection in a form that could be seen, heard and touched.
- The meaning of Jesus' resurrection was not about the most spectacular miracle or about life after death; it was not about God proving that Jesus was the son of God, but parable and metaphor were used to express truths beyond the factual. However, factuality, parable and metaphor could be combined.
- If Mark created the women at the tomb, he created difficulties.
- Infallibility/inerrancy does not require a literal, factual reading of the Bible. God can speak infallibly through the language of poetry, parable, song, symbol, metaphor and myth.
- The metaphorical general resurrection began with Jesus' resurrection.

3.3.2.3.1 Presupposition number 6: Resurrection as parable and metaphor[104]

The meaning of the resurrection was that it was not a miracle about life after death or proving Jesus was the Son of God, but it was a parable and metaphor.

Crossan's interpretation that Mark created the empty tomb story deals with FC and RC which are not pursued in this study.

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[104] Two further presuppositions are suggested by these triggers: (1) The meaning of hard and soft forms, and (2) Inerrancy, power and parable. These will not be pursued here.

3.3.2.4 Truth and factuality

Borg and Crossan cite 1 Corinthians 15:4, 'If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain', to demonstrate another perspective on Jesus' resurrection. Concerning this verse, the comment was, 'We agree with this statement, even as we do not think that it intrinsically points to the historical factuality of an empty tomb'.[105] What, then, is their interpretation?

'We are convinced that an emphasis on the historical factuality of the Easter stories, as if they were reporting events that could have been photographed, gets in the way of understanding them'. How is this so? 'On the one hand, it is a stumbling block for people who have difficulty believing that these stories are factual. If these think that believing these stories to be historically factual is essential to being Christian, they think they can't be Christian'.[106] They explained further that 'the issue is not simply whether "things like this" ever happen. Rather, the issue is generated by the stories themselves: their differences are difficult to reconcile, and their language often seems to be other than the language of historical reporting'. What's the problem with factual reading of Jesus' resurrection accounts? 'Focusing on the factuality of these stories often misses their more-than-factual meanings. When treated as if they are primarily about an utterly unique spectacular event, we often do not get beyond the question, "Did they happen or not?" to the question, "What do they mean?"'(Borg & Crossan 2006:191-192).

How do truth and factuality relate to the resurrection? Borg and Crossan's statement was that 'one should not think of history as "true" and parable as "fiction"'. However, elsewhere, Crossan wrote that 'parables about Jesus' involved 'fictional events about factual characters' and the 'Emmaus road story was meant as parable and not history'. (Crossan 2012:4-5; emphasis in original). Borg and Crossan claim that truth associated with factuality is based on thinking from the Enlightenment's Western culture and 'both biblical literalists and people who reject the Bible completely do this: the former insist that the truth of the Bible depends on its literal factuality, and the latter see that the Bible cannot be literally and factually true and therefore don't think it is true at all' (Borg & Crossan 2006:194).

How is this applied to the Easter stories in the Bible? 'Parable, independently of historical factuality, can be profoundly true. Indeed, it may be that the most important truths can be expressed only in parable. In any case, we are convinced that asking about the parabolic meaning of biblical stories, including the Easter stories, is always the most important question'. There is a problem with the alternative as 'fixating on "whether it happened this way" almost always leads one astray'. When 'we turn to the stories of Easter in the New Testament, beginning with Mark, we shall highlight their meaning as parable, as truth-filled stories, without any intrinsic denial of their factuality. We are convinced that the truth claims of these stories matter most' (Borg & Crossan 2006:194).

In opposing N T Wright's arguments in support of the 'the historical discovery of Jesus' empty tomb accompanied by the historical experience of Jesus' bodily presence', Crossan offered his dissenting explanation that 'I do not for here and now debate the historicity of either Jesus' burial or the empty tomb's discovery. Instead, for here and now (dato non concesso[107], to be sure) *I take the Gospel stories of the empty tomb's discovery and of all those risen apparitions as historically factual in their entirety*' (Crossan in Stewart 2006:176; emphasis in original).

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[105] The endnote here was, 'Paul's point is that if God has not said "yes" to Jesus, if God has not vindicated Jesus, then our faith is in vain. But, as we shall see, Paul does not emphasize an empty tomb. Rather, he grounds his confidence in Jesus's resurrection in the appearances of Jesus to his followers and ultimately to Paul himself, which Paul understands as vision' (Borg & Crossan 2006:218, n. 16).

[106] The endnote here was, 'We note in passing that probably more people have left the church because of biblical literalism than for any other reasons' (Borg & Crossan 2006:218, n. 17).

Presuppositional triggers included in these data include:

- **Factives**, 'it [factuality of the Easter stories – SDG] is a stumbling block for people who have difficulty believing that these stories are factual. If these think that believing these stories to be historically factual is essential to being Christian, they think they can't be Christian';
- **Intonation**, 'focusing on the factuality of these stories often misses their more-than-factual meanings. When treated as if they are primarily about an utterly unique spectacular event, we often do not get beyond the question, "Did they happen or not?" to the question, "What do they mean?"'; and 'fixating on "whether it happened this way" almost always leads one astray';
- **Projection**, 'we agree with this statement [1 Cor 15:4 – SDG], even as we do not think that it intrinsically points to the historical factuality of an empty tomb'; 'we are convinced that an emphasis on the historical factuality of the Easter stories, as if they were reporting events that could have been photographed, gets in the way of understanding them'; 'the issue is not simply whether "things like this" ever happen. Rather, the issue is generated by the stories themselves: their differences are difficult to reconcile, and their language often seems to be other than the language of historical reporting'; 'one should not think of history as "true" and parable as "fiction"'; 'both biblical literalists and people who reject the Bible completely do this [associate truth with factuality in Enlightenment thinking]: the former insist that the truth of the Bible depends on its literal factuality, and the latter see that the Bible cannot be literally and factually true and therefore don't think it is true at all'; 'parable, independently of historical factuality, can be profoundly true. Indeed, it may be that the most important truths can be expressed only in parable'; 'we are convinced that asking about the parabolic meaning of biblical stories, including the Easter stories, is always the most important question'; when 'we turn to the stories of Easter in the New Testament, beginning with Mark, we shall highlight their meaning as parable, as truth-filled stories, without any intrinsic denial of their factuality. We are convinced that the truth claims of these stories matter most'; and 'I do not for here and now debate the historicity of either Jesus' burial or the empty tomb's discovery. Instead, for here and now (*dato non concesso*, to be sure) *I take the Gospel stories of the empty tomb's discovery and of all those risen apparitions as historically factual in their entirety*'.

These are some of the presuppositional projections, based on those triggers:

- Believing the Easter stories to be historically factual is a stumbling block for some people seeking to become Christian.
- Focussing on the factuality of the Easter stories, can cause people to miss the meaning of the stories and may lead them astray.
- 1 Corinthians 15:4 states, 'and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures' (NRSV), but it does not point to the historical fact of an empty tomb.

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[107] It means, 'Data not granted'.

- Seeing the Easter stories as historical facts, as though they could have been photographed, is an impediment to understanding them.
- There is difficulty in reconciling the differences among the resurrection stories in the four Gospel accounts.
- The language of the resurrection accounts in the Gospels seems to be other than historical reporting.
- It is wrong to think of history as true and parable as fiction.
- Parable, even though independent of historical factuality, can be profoundly true.
- It is possible that the most profound truths can be expressed in parable.
- The most important question to ask about biblical stories, including the resurrection narratives, is, 'What are their parabolic meanings?'
- Biblical literalists and those who reject the Bible both focus on the factuality of the resurrection stories.
- In the New Testament Easter stories, the truth-filled meaning in parables, does not deny factuality.
- The Gospel stories of the discovery of Jesus' empty tomb involve apparitions, but these are historically factual in their entirety.

3.3.2.4.1 Presupposition number 7: Factuality and the empty tomb

The empty tomb of Jesus was not a historical fact but involved apparitions that were historically factual in their entirety.

3.3.2.5 History, myth and fiction

Does Crossan regard Jesus' empty tomb as reliable history? He asked, 'Is the story of the empty tomb historical? No ... I doubt there was any tomb for Jesus in the first place. I don't think any of Jesus' followers even knew where he was buried – if he was buried at all'. Instead of stating some more objective data, he moved to this explanation, that 'the gospel writers don't come close to agreeing with each other on what they report' so this is his assessment: 'My conviction is that motives other than just history writing are clearly at work here. By the way, Paul is the earliest writer we have on resurrection – his letters are much earlier than the gospels – and he nowhere shows awareness of having heard an empty tomb story' (Crossan & Watts 1996:154).

He uses the language of Easter stories to describe the passion-resurrection events. What happened by Easter Sunday? 'On Easter Sunday evening Jesus himself had appeared to his closest followers and all was well once again. Friday was hard, Saturday was long, but by Sunday all was resolved. Is this fact or fiction, history or mythology? Do fiction and mythology crowd closely around the end of the story just as they did around its beginning? And if there is fiction or mythology, on what is it based?' (Crossan 1994a:160)

He argued that

> Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical…. We can still glimpse what happened before, behind, and despite those fictional overlays precisely by imagining what they were created to hide. What happened on Easter Sunday? Is that the story of one day? Or of several years? Is that the story of *all* Christians gathered together as a single group in Jerusalem? Or is that the story of but one group among several, maybe of one group who claimed to be the whole?
>
> (Crossan 1994a:160; emphasis in original)

His answers were that 'first of all, *resurrection* is but one way, not the only way, of expressing Christian faith. Second, *apparition* – which involves trance, that altered state of consciousness … is but one way, not the only way, of expressing Christian experience. Third, Christian faith experiences the *continuation* of divine empowerment through Jesus, but that continuation began only after his death and burial' (Crossan 1994a:160-161).

His added emphasis was that 'it is precisely that continued experience of the Kingdom of God as strengthened rather than weakened by Jesus' death that is Christian or Easter faith. And that was not the work of one afternoon. Or one year. Since the Easter story at the end is, like the Nativity story at the beginning, so engraved on your imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994a:161; emphasis in original).

His conclusion was that he could harmonise the resurrection accounts and that fiction was involved. He asked, 'With the Easter stories, are we standing on the solid rock of historical fact?' His answer was, 'I raise these questions also because the New Testament record forces me to raise them. Matthew, Mark, and John tell the Easter story quite differently – so differently, in fact, that we simply cannot harmonize their versions' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).

So how does he deal with this alleged conflict? He was convinced that he had 'to ask questions of intention and meaning' rather than seek harmonisation of the Gospel resurrection accounts (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).

The presuppositional triggers that emerge include:

- **Factives**, 'Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical'; 'first of all, *resurrection* is but one way, not the only way, of expressing Christian faith. Second, *apparition* – which involves trance, that altered state of consciousness … is but one way, not the only way, of expressing Christian experience. Third, Christian faith experiences the continuation of divine empowerment through Jesus, but that *continuation* began only after his death and burial'; 'it is precisely that *continued* experience of the Kingdom of God as strengthened rather than weakened by Jesus' death that is Christian or Easter faith. And that was not the work of one afternoon. Or one year'; and 'since the Easter story at the end is, like the Nativity story at the beginning, so engraved on your imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology';
- **Intonation**: Again he used questions to give focus, 'What happened on Easter Sunday? Is that the story of one day? Or of several years? Is that the story of all Christians gathered together as a single group in Jerusalem? Or is that the story of but one group among several, maybe of one group who claimed to be the whole?'; and 'with the Easter stories, are we standing on the solid rock of historical fact?';
- **Projection**, he asked, 'Is the story of the empty tomb historical? No ... I doubt there was any tomb for Jesus in the first place'; 'I don't think any of Jesus' followers even knew where he was buried – if he was buried at all. And the gospel writers don't come close to agreeing with each other on what they report'; 'my conviction is that motives other than just history writing are clearly at work here. By the way, Paul is the earliest writer we have on resurrection – his letters are much earlier than the gospels – and he nowhere shows awareness of having heard an empty tomb story'; Crossan presents his projections in the form of questions: 'On Easter Sunday evening Jesus himself had appeared to his closest followers and all was well once again. Friday was hard, Saturday was long, but by Sunday all was resolved. Is this fact or fiction,

> history or mythology? Do fiction and mythology crowd closely around the end of the story just as they did around its beginning? And if there is fiction or mythology, on what is it based?'; 'we can still glimpse what happened before, behind, and despite those fictional overlays [of Jesus' burial and resurrection] precisely by imagining what they were created to hide'; 'I raise these questions [about the historicity of the resurrection stories – SDG] also because the New Testament record forces me to raise them. Matthew, Mark, and John tell the Easter story quite differently – so differently, in fact, that we simply cannot harmonize their versions'; and he had 'to ask questions of intention and meaning' rather than seek harmonisation of the Gospel resurrection accounts.

What presuppositional projections are found in those triggers?

- Jesus' burial by friends was unhistorical and fictional.
- Resurrection is only one way of expressing Christian faith and experience. Another way is through apparition, which includes trance and an altered state of consciousness.
- Christian faith includes the continuation of divine empowerment, but this could only happen after Jesus' death and burial. This is the continued experience of the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus' death and resurrection were not the work of one afternoon or of one year.
- The Easter story, like that of the Nativity, is engraved in the Christian imagination as factual history when it should be fictional mythology.
- Fiction and mythology crowd around the end of Jesus' life as they did at the beginning (Nativity).
- What happened on Easter Sunday is not dealing with factual history and is not the story of one day or several years, but could be the story of one group representing the whole.
- The Easter stories are not built on the foundation of historical fact.
- There is doubt that there was an empty tomb in which to place Jesus.
- It is doubtful that Jesus' followers knew where he was buried.
- The Gospel writers cannot agree with each other on what they report about Jesus' burial.
- The motive for the writing of the Easter stories was not to deliver history.
- Paul, the earliest writer on the resurrection, nowhere showed an awareness of an empty tomb story.
- There were fictional overlays in writing Jesus' burial and resurrection and they were created to hide information.
- The Easter story in the four Gospels cannot be harmonised.
- It is more important to ask questions about intention and meaning of the Easter accounts than to seek harmonisation.

3.3.2.5.1 Presupposition number 8: Resurrection and divine empowerment[108]

Jesus' resurrection meant the continuation of divine empowerment – Jesus' continuing experience with believers – which is the experience of the Kingdom of God.

3.3.2.5.2 Presupposition number 9: Empty tomb, fact and myth

The empty tomb was not historical fact. It was doubtful that there was an empty tomb and that Jesus' followers knew where he was buried. Fiction and mythology crowd the end of Jesus' life (Easter stories) as they did at the beginning (Nativity).

3.3.2.6 Not literal, historical or bodily resurrection

What are the problems with accepting a literal, factual, historical and bodily resurrection of Jesus? Borg and Crossan (2006:218-219, n. 18) stated that 'there are at least two additional difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories'. They are:

Firstly, 'it requires a "supernatural interventionist" understanding of the way God relates to the world. Minimally, it requires that we think of the stones being rolled away by God or an angel (and in either case, by supernatural agency), and that we think of God transforming the corpse of Jesus so that it was no longer in the tomb. But does God ever act this way? Is this an illuminating way to think of the way God acts in the world?' Also,

Secondly, 'a literal-factual reading of these texts most commonly emphasizes that Easter is utterly unique, that God has not done this kind of thing anywhere or anytime else, and thus it privileges Christianity as the only true or "full" revelation of God, the "only way"'.

This confirms evidence of Crossan's anti-supernaturalism and a rejection of the exclusivist understanding of Jesus' sacrifice (see §3.2 above).

Crossan used a number of ways to deconstruct the bodily resurrection of Christ. He stated, 'Maybe resurrection is simply a word-picture of Jesus' continuing presence among his followers'. Then he appealed to the *Gospel of Thomas* which has the view that Jesus 'is called simply the "Living Jesus." His followers experience him as the Wisdom of God on earth'. The missionaries sent out by Jesus understood 'that somehow Jesus was still with them. So they struggled to find a way to express that powerful and empowering presence of Jesus. That way was the Easter story' (Crossan & Watts 1996:156; emphasis in original).

There is a postmodern understanding in some of his understanding of the resurrection of Jesus. In a letter to him, Crossan was asked, 'You talk about Easter as not one day, but a period of months or even years. What do you mean by that?' His response included reference to the Emmaus Road story in Luke 24: 'Think about it not as a single day that you could have caught on your camcorder if you had been there, but as a pictorial summary of the whole rethinking struggle'. Then he noted that 'they report the strange tales of women who had found his tomb empty…. If you ask me whether it's historical in the sense of being a straightforward account of what happened to two people on Easter Sunday, I say no. But it is certainly historical in the sense of describing a process over time that happened in the Christian community'. The further explanation was, 'You might put it this way: The Emmaus story isn't a fact, but it is true. It's a symbolic picture of Christian faith deepening over time. Easter was much, much more than the events of a single day' (Crossan & Watts 1996:157-158). Elsewhere his similar emphasis on the Emmaus story was that 'what we have here is not an event from Easter Sunday but a process that happened over many years. The presence and empowerment of Jesus remain in the community' (Crossan 1994a:172).

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[108] Further presuppositions from these triggers would relate to a postmodern understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus, a comparison of the passion-resurrection story with the nativity, the apostle Paul's view of the empty tomb, and a harmonisation of the Easter story.

There are significant questions to ask of Crossan's version of Jesus' passion-resurrection accounts and why he prefers certain elements to the exclusion of others. Does he have a theological aversion to the supernatural, interventionist Lord God and to some aspects of Jesus' blood sacrifice? His rejection of the doctrine of Jesus' substitutionary atonement (Crossan 2007:140) and bodily resurrection (Crossan 1991:394, 404; 1994a:160-166; 1998a:xxvii-xxxi, 548-550; Borg & Crossan 2006:190-216) are suggestive of such.

Presuppositional triggers that are presented include:

- **Quantifiers**, 'there are at least two additional difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories';
- **Intonation**, 'maybe resurrection is simply a word-picture of Jesus' continuing presence among his followers'; in the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus 'is called simply the "Living Jesus." His followers experience him as the Wisdom of God on earth'; Jesus' missionaries understood 'that somehow Jesus was still with them. So they struggled to find a way to express that powerful and empowering presence of Jesus. That way was the Easter story'; 'you might put it this way: The Emmaus story isn't a fact, but it is true. It's a symbolic picture of Christian faith deepening over time. Easter was much, much more than the events of a single day'; and 'what we have here [in the Emmaus story – SDG] is not an event from Easter Sunday but a process that happened over many years. The presence and empowerment of Jesus remain in the community';
- **Projection**, a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories 'requires a "supernatural interventionist" understanding of the way God relates to the world. Minimally, it requires that we think of the stones being rolled away by God or an angel (and in either case, by supernatural agency), and that we think of God transforming the corpse of Jesus so that it was no longer in the tomb. But does God ever act this way?', 'a literal-factual reading of these texts most commonly emphasizes that Easter is utterly unique, that God has not done this kind of thing anywhere or anytime else, and thus it privileges Christianity as the only true or "full" revelation of God, the "only way"'; of the Emmaus story in Luke 24, his advice was, 'Think about it not as a single day that you could have caught on your camcorder if you had been there, but as a pictorial summary of the whole rethinking struggle'; 'they report the strange tales of women who had found his tomb empty…. If you ask me whether it's historical in the sense of being a straightforward account of what happened to two people on Easter Sunday, I say no. But it is *certainly* historical in the sense of describing a *process over time* that happened in the Christian community'; and 'what we have here is not an event from Easter Sunday but a process that happened over many years. The presence and empowerment of Jesus remain in the community';

These triggers project these presuppositional understandings:

- There are difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories.

- Perhaps resurrection is a word-picture of Jesus' continuing presence. This harmonises with the *Gospel of Thomas* naming Jesus, 'the Living Jesus' and Jesus' followers experiencing him as the Wisdom of God.
- The Easter story was a way for Jesus' followers to express the powerful and empowering presence of Jesus.
- The Emmaus story is not factually true but is a picture of the deepening Christian faith over a period of time.
- The Emmaus story is not an event that only happened on Easter Sunday but was a process involving the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the Christian community that happened over many years.
- A literal-factual reading of the Easter stories requires that God be a supernatural interventionist being. But that is not the way he acts in the world.
- A literal-factual understanding of the resurrection requires that the Easter events are unique and it privileges Christianity, making it the only full revelation of God who is the only way.
- The women finding the empty tomb on resurrection morning is not a straight-forward historical account, but is a process that happened over many years involving the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the community.

The resurrection as Jesus' continuing experience and divine empowerment is covered in §3.3.2.5.1 above as presupposition number 8.

3.3.2.6.1 Presupposition number 10: Meaning of the Emmaus story

The Emmaus story, although not a factually true event that happened on Easter Sunday, was a process that involved the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the Christian community over many years.

3.3.2.6.2 Presupposition number 11: Supernatural intervention and resurrection

A literal-factual reading of the Easter stories, including the resurrection, requires there to be a supernatural intervention, but that is not the way Crossan sees God acting in the world.

3.3.2.6.3 Presupposition number 12: Easter events and uniqueness

A literal-factual interpretation of the Easter events causes them to be understood as unique, privileges Christianity, and makes it the only full revelation of God who is the only way.

3.3.2.6.4 Presupposition number 13: Women, the tomb, and postmodernism

It is not a straight-forward historical account that records the women who found the tomb empty on resurrection morning. It was a process that happened over many years, involving the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the community of faith.

3.3.2.7 Apparitions, visions and trance

How does Crossan explain the events of the first Easter (πάσχα)? 'The risen apparitions in the gospels have nothing whatsoever to do with ecstatic experiences or entranced revelations' as found in the world's religions, even though there may have been many of them in earliest Christianity – outside of Christ's resurrection (Crossan 1995:208).

Instead, 'Easter faith is no more or less a mystery than any other faith, but it did not start on Easter Sunday' but was well underway by Jesus' followers 'in Lower Galilee long before his death'. In fact, 'it is absolutely insulting to those first Christians to imagine either that faith started on the Easter Sunday through apparition, or that, having been temporarily lost, it was restored by trance and ecstasy that Sunday'. There are some additional emphases: 'An empty tomb or a risen body susceptible to food and touch were dramatic ways of expressing that faith. Trances or ecstasies were dramatic ways of experiencing that faith. Risen appearances in the last chapters of the gospels, were dramatic ways of organizing and managing their faith' (Crossan 1995:209-210).

However, 'Christian faith itself was the experience of Jesus' continued empowering presence…. It was the continued presence of absolutely the same Jesus in an absolutely different mode of existence' (Crossan 1995:210). Is this a presupposition of an existential Jesus who is experienced by Christians before or after the passion-resurrection of Jesus? In his explanation, he emphasised that 'I do not find anything historical in the finding of the empty tomb, which was *most likely* created by Mark himself' (Crossan 1995:209; emphasis added)

How does the closing chapter of Mark's Gospel fit into Crossan's understanding of Jesus' resurrection? He gives Mark's

> *closing negative example*. The text of 16:1-8 is a very, very strange way for Mark to end his story. Everywhere else – from 1 Corinthians 15 to John 20-21 – the resurrection involves visions of the risen Jesus. And, indeed, such visions were later appended in what we call Mark 16:9-20. But Mark himself has only an empty tomb and an angelic explanation that "Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified … has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him" (16:6).

(Crossan 2012:171-172; emphasis in original)

Speaking of Jesus' ascension according to John 20:17, Crossan's assessment was: 'The risen apparitions that count are *not before, but after* the ascension of Jesus into heaven. When Jesus appears in 20:19 and again in 20:24, he has ascended and is *appearing* from heaven above and not from an empty tomb below'. He contended that 'that is John's ultimate challenge to the synoptic apparition tradition, and it leads directly into … the so-called *return* of Jesus…. The counterchallenge of John to the synoptics is that the return of Jesus has already happened. Jesus is already back – in the Holy Spirit' (Crossan 2012:237, emphasis in original).

What about the Pauline accent on Jesus' resurrection? 'My point is not that Paul was wrong but that his emphasis on *resurrection* was but one way of expressing early Christian faith and should not be taken as normative for all others'. He asked readers to 'consider another section in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, and focus especially on *apparition* to see, once again, how Paul's own experience and expression have been taken as normative for all others rather than as one among many'. In this passage he highlighted that 'he *appeared* to Cephas [Simon Peter]', according to verse 5 and 'then he *appeared* to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time' [v 6 – SDG]; 'then he *appeared* to James, then to all the apostles' [v 7 – SDG]; 'last of all, as to one untimely born, he *appeared* also to me' [v 8 – SDG] (Crossan 1994a:165-166; emphasis in original). His comment about his text was: 'What I emphasize from that text, and throughout the rest of this chapter, is its profoundly political implications. It is not primarily interested in trance, ecstasy, apparition, or revelation, but in authority, power, leadership and priority' (Crossan 1994a:166).

That leadership included Paul, Cephas, certain Christian groups, the Twelve Apostles as a New Testament microcosm to compare with the Twelve Patriarchs who represented the Old Testament. However, he claimed that 'the thrust of that description [1 Corinthians 15:1-11 – SDG] is not just its emphasis on the risen apparitions of Jesus but its insistence that Paul himself is an apostle – that is, one specifically called and designated by God and Jesus to take a leadership role in the early church' (Crossan 1994a:166; emphasis in original). As for Paul, Crossan stated that 'he always uses that same expression, *appeared to* or *was revealed to* (the latter is a literal and better translation of the Greek expression *ōphthē*) in all instances. There can be no doubt that Paul's own experience involved trance – an altered state of consciousness' (Crossan 1994a:167; emphasis in original).

What about the significance for Paul in his emphases in1 Corinthians 15:5-8? Crossan's evaluation was that this passage 'provides reason to think of the Easter appearance stories in the gospels as visionary in nature. Some Christians are uncomfortable with this thought, as if these were "only" visions. A reason for this notion is that we in modern Western culture tend not to think very highly of visions'. Why would this be? 'We typically see them as hallucinations, as mental disturbances that have nothing to do with the way things are, as far less important than "real" seeing'. In addition, 'not all visions are hallucinations'. Then he explained that 'a story in which Jesus invites his followers to touch him or is seen to eat does not intrinsically point away from a vision. People who have had a vision report that something important and meaningful, often life-changing, has happened to them – they would never consider trivializing it as "*only a vision"' (Borg & Crossan 2006:207; emphasis in original).

These presuppositional triggers can be identified from this information:

- **Factives**, 'it is absolutely insulting to those first Christians to imagine either that faith started on the Easter Sunday through apparition, or that, having been temporarily lost, it was restored by trance and ecstasy that Sunday'; 'an empty tomb or a risen body susceptible to food and touch were dramatic ways of expressing that faith. Trances or ecstasies were dramatic ways of experiencing that faith. Risen appearances in the last chapters of the gospels, were dramatic ways of organizing and managing their faith'; 'Christian faith itself was the experience of Jesus' continued empowering presence…. It was the continued presence of absolutely the same Jesus in an absolutely different mode of existence'; as for Paul 'he always uses that same expression, *appeared to* or was *revealed to* (the latter is a literal and better translation of the Greek expression *ōphthē*) in all instances'; and 'there can be no doubt that Paul's own experience involved trance – an altered state of consciousness';
- **Names**, Paul, Cephas, and the Twelve Apostles;
- **Intonation**, 'the risen apparitions that count are *not before, but after* the ascension of Jesus into heaven. When Jesus appears in 20:19 and again in 20:24, he has ascended and is *appearing* from heaven above and not from an empty tomb below'; 'that is John's ultimate challenge to the synoptic apparition tradition [appearing to the disciples behind closed doors in John 20:19, 24 – SDG], and it leads directly into … the so-called *return* of Jesus'; 'consider another section in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, and focus especially on *apparition to see, once again*, how Paul's own experience and expression

have been taken as normative for all others rather than as one among many'; 'what I emphasize from that text [1 Cor 15:1-11 – SDG], and throughout the rest of this chapter, is its profoundly political implications. It is not primarily interested in trance, ecstasy, apparition, or revelation, but in authority, power, leadership and priority'; 'the thrust of that description [1 Corinthians 15:1-11 – SDG] is not just its emphasis on the risen *apparitions* of Jesus but its insistence that Paul himself is an apostle – that is, one specifically called and designated by God and Jesus to take a leadership role in the early church'; of 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, Crossan's evaluation was that this passage 'provides reason to think of the Easter appearance stories in the gospels as visionary in nature. Some Christians are uncomfortable with this thought, as if these were "only" visions'. A reason for this notion is that we in modern Western culture tend not to think very highly of visions'; 'we typically see them [visions – SDG] as hallucinations, as mental disturbances that have nothing to do with the way things are, as far less important than "real" seeing'. In addition, 'not all visions are hallucinations'; 'a story in which Jesus invites his followers to touch him or is seen to eat does not intrinsically point away from a vision. People who have had a vision report that something important and meaningful, often life-changing, has happened to them – they would never consider trivializing it as "*only* a vision"'; and 'the counterchallenge of John to the synoptics is that the return of Jesus has already happened. Jesus is already back – in the Holy Spirit'

- **Projection**, 'the risen apparitions in the gospels have nothing whatsoever to do with ecstatic experiences or entranced revelations' as found in the world's religions; 'Easter faith is no more or less a mystery than any other faith, but it did not start on Easter Sunday' but was well underway by Jesus' followers 'in Lower Galilee long before his death'; 'I do not find anything historical in the finding of the empty tomb, which was most *likely created* by Mark himself'; 'the text of [Mark – SDG] 16:1-8 is a very, very strange way for Mark to end his story. Everywhere else – from 1 Corinthians 15 to John 20-21 – the resurrection involves visions of the risen Jesus. And, indeed, such visions were later appended in what we call Mark 16:9-20'; 'Mark himself has only an empty tomb and an angelic explanation that "Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified … has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him"'; and 'my point is not that Paul was wrong but that his emphasis on *resurrection* was but one way of expressing early Christian faith and should not be taken as normative for all others';

Presuppositional projections include:

- It would have been insulting to the first Christians to state that their faith commenced on Easter Sunday through an apparition or may have been restored through trance or ecstasy.
- To speak of an empty tomb or a risen body susceptible to food and touch was a dramatic way to express faith.
- Trances or ecstasies were dramatic ways of experiencing faith for the first Christians.
- Risen appearances after Jesus' resurrection, expressed in the last chapters of the gospels, were dramatic ways of organising and managing their faith.
- Christian faith was the experience of Jesus' continued empowering presence, through the same Jesus but in a different mode of existence.

- When Paul referred to the risen Christ he always used the same expression, *appeared to* or *was revealed to*.
- Paul's own experience involved trance, which was an altered state of consciousness.
- The risen apparitions that are significant are those that are *not before, but after* the ascension of Jesus into heaven. When Jesus appeared, according to John 20:19, 24, it was the ascended Jesus who appeared from heaven and not the Jesus who are resurrected from an empty tomb below.
- John's ultimate challenge to the synoptic tradition was the apparition tradition where he appeared to the disciples behind closed doors, as recorded in John 20:19, 24, which led directly into Crossan's statement on 'the so-called *return* of Jesus' which has already happened in the Holy Spirit.
- There is no actual second return of Jesus.
- In 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, the emphasis is not primarily on trance, ecstasy, apparition, or revelation, but on authority, power, leadership and priority in the early church, including the involvement of Paul himself as an apostle.
- The 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 passage provides reason to think of the Easter appearance stories in the Gospels as visionary in nature.
- Some Christians are uncomfortable with describing the appearance stories as visions because of modern Western culture's association of visions with hallucinations or mental disturbances.
- The resurrection appearances involving touch, seeing and eating do not negate a visionary interpretation but point to an emphasis on meaningful, life-changing experiences.
- To explain as a vision is not to trivialise that description.
- Risen apparitions in the Gospels are not associated with ecstatic experiences or entranced revelations as in other world religions.
- Easter faith is a mystery but it did not start on Easter Sunday, but was experienced by Jesus' followers in Lower Galilee long before his death.
- There is nothing historical in the finding of Jesus' empty tomb and it was most likely created by Mark himself.
- Mark 16:1-8 is a strange way to end a Gospel as other New Testament resurrection accounts include visions of the risen Jesus. Such visions were later appended in Mark 16:9-20.
- Paul's emphasis on resurrection was only one way of expressing early Christian faith. It should not be treated as normative for all other expressions of the Christian faith.

3.3.2.7.1 Presupposition number 14: Jesus' resurrection appearances[109]

Jesus' resurrection appearances, expressed in the last chapters of the Gospels, involved apparitions, trances and ecstasies that were dramatic ways of experiencing the empowering faith of Jesus for the first Christians. He was the same Jesus but in a different mode of existence.

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[109] Other presuppositions emerging from these triggers include aspects of Paul's understanding of Jesus' resurrection, apparitions and Jesus' ascension, John's Gospel and the apparition tradition, the relation of the resurrection to the Parousia, and Christian faith and its association with resurrection Sunday.

3.3.2.8 Parable

There are other possible interpretations of Jesus' resurrection. Crossan contended that there was a '*second positive example*. Mark pairs the unnamed anointing woman with the unnamed confessing centurion as positive models of belief', the latter being in Mark 15:37-39, about which Crossan remarks, 'That is, for Mark, a fully Christian confession'. What about for Luke? 'As Luke retells that Markan incident, he finds such an immediate conversion unlikely. So, instead, he simply says, "When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, 'Certainly this man was innocent'" (Lk 23:47). 'But Mark, turning history (the execution of Jesus) into parable (the conversion of a centurion) knows exactly what he is doing. Once again, the unnamed one believes where the named ones fail' [Mk 15:37-39 – SDG]' (Crossan 2012:171; emphasis in original).

Is Crossan rejecting a historical interpretation for a parabolic view? Did Mark turn history into parable or was that related to Crossan's hermeneutic?

How does he deal with the three women at the tomb on resurrection morning? 'The three women are given a message for "his disciples and Peter," a command to leave Jerusalem and "see" Jesus in Galilee (Mk 16:7). But … that message is never delivered, because the women "went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they did nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8)'. So what is Mark's view? 'Mark thinks that the Twelve stayed in Jerusalem after the death and resurrection of Jesus – against that undelivered angelic directive'. Then Crossan observed, 'Compare that unnamed woman of [Mark – SDG] 14:3-9 with the three named women of 16:1-8. I am speaking – I repeat – within the viewpoint of Mark's parable…. They expected to find and anoint the dead body of Jesus. They did not – from Mark's viewpoint – believe in what Jesus had said, and yet they had followed and assisted him from Galilee to Jerusalem'. Crossan's assessment was that 'in all of that – from Mark 10 through Mark 16 – the named ones fail where the unnamed ones succeed…. The issue is not gender, but name. Mark's parabolic challenge *to* and *within* Christianity, is an exaltation of leaders who liberate over leaders who dominate, a transcendence of charismatic over institutional leadership, and a hymn for nameless over the named' (Crossan 2012:172, emphasis in original).

What are the benefits of regarding the passion-resurrection accounts as parable? 'Seeing the Easter stories as parable does not involve a denial of their factuality. It's quite happy leaving the question open. What it does insist upon is that *the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*, to say something that sounds almost redundant'. He provided this illustration: 'an empty tomb without meaning ascribed to it is simply an odd, even if exceptional, event…. Seeing the Easter stories as parable, as parabolic narratives, affirms, "Believe whatever you want about whether the stories happened this way – now let's talk about what they mean"'. He wanted to be non-partisan in his view: 'If you believe the tomb was empty, fine; now, what does this story mean? If you believe that Jesus's appearances could have been videotaped, fine; now, what do these stories mean? And if you're not sure about that, or even if you are quite sure it *didn't* happen this way, fine; now, what do these stories mean?' (Borg & Crossan 2006:193; emphasis in original).

In dealing with 'what Mark's story [of Easter Sunday and the resurrection – SDG] means as a parable … this question does not require a denial of the story's factuality. It simply sets the factual issue aside. As a parable of the resurrection, the story of the empty bomb is powerfully evocative' with this interpretation:

- Jesus was sealed in a tomb, but the tomb could not hold him; the stone has been rolled away.
- Jesus is not to be found in the land of the dead: "He is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him." Luke's comment on Mark's story underlines this meaning: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (24:5).
- Jesus has been raised. And as the angelic messenger tells the women this, he explicitly mentions the crucifixion. Jesus "who was crucified" by the authorities "has been raised" by God. The meaning is that God has said "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the powers who killed him. God has vindicated Jesus.
- His followers are promised: "You will see him."'

(Borg & Crossan 2006:197)

Therefore, their judgment was that 'together, the appearance stories in the gospels [after Jesus' resurrection – SDG] make explicit what is promised in Mark: "You will see him." They underline the parabolic meaning of Mark's story of the empty tomb' (Borg & Crossan 2006:206). When the Easter Sunday story is seen as parable, he states that 'the obvious insight is that parables can be true – truthful and truth-filled – independently of their factuality. Because of the importance of this insight, we state it again in only slightly different language: *the truth of a parable – of a parabolic narrative – is not dependent on its factuality*' (Borg & Crossan 2006:193; emphasis in original).

Is there one Gospel story that helpfully summarises a parabolic picture of the resurrection? 'If we are to use but one story to make the case that Easter stories are parabolic narrative, this is the one [the Emmaus road in Luke 24:13-53 – SDG]. It is difficult to imagine that this story is speaking about events that could have been videotaped. Moreover, the story is marvellously suggestive'. The suggestions come when 'the risen Jesus opens up the meaning of scripture. The risen Jesus is known in the sharing of bread. The risen Jesus journeys with us, whether we know it or not. There are moments in which we do come to know him and recognize him'. And this story 'is the metaphoric condensation of several years of early Christian thought into one parabolic afternoon. Whether the story happened or not, Emmaus always happens. Emmaus happens again and again – this is its truth as parabolic narrative' (Borg & Crossan 2006:200-201). This emphasis has become a theme elsewhere in Crossan (1991:xiii; 1994a:197; 1998:xi; 2012:5; in Copan 1998:153; in Stewart 2006:173).

What are the presuppositional triggers in Crossan's understanding of the resurrection as parable?

- **Factives**, 'Mark pairs the unnamed anointing woman with the unnamed
- confessing centurion as positive models of belief' (Mk 15:37-39); 'that is, for Mark, a fully Christian confession'; 'in all of that – from Mark 10 through Mark 16 – the named ones fail where the unnamed ones succeed…. The issue is not gender, but name. Mark's parabolic challenge to and *within* Christianity, is an exaltation of leaders who liberate over leaders who dominate, a transcendence of charismatic over institutional leadership, and a hymn for nameless over the named'; 'Jesus was sealed in a tomb, but the tomb could not hold him; the stone has been rolled away'; 'Jesus is not to be found in the land of the dead'; Jesus "who was crucified" by the authorities "has been raised" by God. The meaning is that God has said "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the powers who killed him. God has vindicated Jesus'; 'His followers are

promised: "You will see him"'; 'the risen Jesus opens up the meaning of scripture. The risen Jesus is known in the sharing of bread. The risen Jesus journeys with us, whether we know it or not. There are moments in which we do come to know him and recognize him'; and this Emmaus story 'is the metaphoric condensation of several years of early Christian thought into one parabolic afternoon. Whether the story happened or not, Emmaus always happens. Emmaus happens again and again – this is its truth as parabolic narrative';

- **Intonation**, 'seeing the Easter stories as parable does not involve a denial of
- their factuality. It's quite happy leaving the question open. What it does insist upon is that *the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*, to say something that sounds almost redundant'; 'what Mark's story [of Easter Sunday and the resurrection – SDG] means as a parable … this question does not require a denial of the story's factuality. It simply sets the factual issue aside. As a parable of the resurrection, the story of the empty bomb is powerfully evocative'; and 'if we are to use but one story to make the case that Easter stories are parabolic narrative, this is the one [the Emmaus road in Luke 24:13-53 – SDG]. It is difficult to imagine that this story is speaking about events that could have been videotaped. Moreover, the story is marvellously suggestive';
- **Projection**, 'as Luke retells that Markan incident [Mk 15:37-39 – SDG], he finds such an
- immediate conversion unlikely. So, instead, he simply says, "When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent" (Lk 23:47)'; 'but Mark, turning history (the execution of Jesus) into parable (the conversion of a centurion) knows exactly what he is doing. Once again, the unnamed one believes where the named ones fail'; 'The three women are given a message for "his disciples and Peter," a command to leave Jerusalem and "see" Jesus in Galilee (Mk 16:7). But … that message is never delivered, because the women "went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they did nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8)'; 'Mark thinks that the Twelve stayed in Jerusalem after the death and resurrection of Jesus – against that undelivered angelic directive'; 'Compare that unnamed woman of [Mark – SDG] 14:3-9 with the three named women of 16:1-8. I am speaking – I repeat – within the viewpoint of Mark's parable…. They expected to find and anoint the dead body of Jesus. They did not – from Mark's viewpoint – believe in what Jesus had said, and yet they had followed and assisted him from Galilee to Jerusalem'; 'an empty tomb without meaning ascribed to it is simply an odd, even if exceptional, event…. Seeing the Easter stories as parable, as parabolic narratives, affirms, "Believe whatever you want about whether the stories happened this way – now let's talk about what they mean"'; 'if you believe the tomb was empty, fine; now, what does this story mean? If you believe that Jesus's appearances could have been videotaped, fine; now, what do these stories mean? And if you're not sure about that, or even if you are quite sure it didn't happen this way, fine; now, what do these stories mean?'; 'together, the appearance stories in the gospels [after Jesus' resurrection – SDG] make explicit what is promised in Mark: "You will see him." They underline the parabolic meaning of Mark's story of the empty tomb'; and 'the obvious insight is that parables can be true – truthful and truth-

filled – independently of their factuality. Because of the importance of this insight, we state it again in only slightly different language: *the truth of a parable – of a parabolic narrative – is not dependent on its factuality*';

These presuppositional projections emerge from the above triggers:

- Mark's pairing of the unknown anointing woman with the unnamed confessing centurion (Mk 15:37-39) is for Mark a fully Christian confession.
- Mark's parabolic challenge to and within Christianity was to exalt leaders who liberate in preference to dominant, institutional leadership. It was initiated in a hymn for the nameless rather than the named.
- The meaning of Jesus' empty tomb (the tomb could not hold him) was that God had affirmed Jesus in opposition to the powers who killed him.
- The risen Jesus journeys with Christians.
- The Emmaus story was the postmodern, metaphoric condensation of several years of early Christian thought and it does not matter whether it happened historically because Emmaus happens repeatedly as a parable.
- The Easter stories, when seen as parable, do not deny their factuality.
- The importance of Easter stories lies in their meanings, not their factuality.
- The Emmaus story is the one story to highlight the Easter stories as parabolic narrative. It is not about historical events that could be videotaped.
- Mark knew what he was doing when he turned history (the execution of Jesus) into parable (the conversion of a centurion).
- It doesn't matter what a person believes about Jesus' tomb, whether it was empty or not. The crucial issue is: what do the empty tomb and resurrection appearances mean? This is affirmed when the Easter stories are accepted as parabolic narrative.
- The truth of a parable or parabolic narrative is independent of its factuality.

3.3.2.8.1 Presupposition number 15: Meaning of the empty tomb

The meaning of Jesus' empty tomb was that God affirmed Jesus in opposition to the powers that killed him. It does not matter what a person believes about whether the tomb was empty or not. The important issue is the meaning of the parabolic narrative of the Easter stories. The truth of a parable is independent of its factuality.

For the presupposition relating to Jesus' resurrection interpreted as parable, see §3.3.2.3.1 above, presupposition number 10. Presupposition number 14 relates to the meaning of the Emmaus Road story in §3.3.2.6.1 above.

3.3.2.9 Jesus' resurrection was not unique

Crossan stated that he began his book (Crossan 1998a:xxi), with 'a presupposition. It is not a religious or a theological presupposition but an anthropological and an historical one'. He stated that his presupposition (also stated as 'a problem') was that 'it is not enough to say that the vision that a dead man birthed Christianity' because in the first century and every century since then, that 'is not special enough of itself to explain anything'. Instead, 'Why was this man's resurrection, as distinct from any and all other ones, understood as such a beginning? From that problem as presupposition I draw this hypothesis: the birth of Christianity is the interaction between the historical Jesus and his first companions and the continuation of that relationship despite his execution' (Crossan 1998a:xxi). He affirmed that this book was an attempted 'historical reconstruction of that interaction' with a focus 'on birth not growth, on those years before and especially after Jesus' crucifixion' (Crossan 1998a:xxi). He denied that his was a 'religious or a theological presupposition', but could this be pointing to a cancellability trigger when he admitted a theological denial as he does not believe in the supernatural bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but calls it an 'apparition'. His direct statements about Paul's teaching of Christ's resurrection were that 'in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul begins by enumerating all the apparitions of the risen Jesus…. The Corinthians knew all about visions and apparitions and would not dream of denying their validity' (Crossan 1998a:xxviii).

In this context he gave his perspective,

> I formulate it here as I see it. The earthly Jesus was not just a thinker with ideas but a rebel with a cause…. Bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of its tomb. And neither is bodily resurrection just another term for Christian faith itself. Bodily resurrection means that the embodied life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continued, as it always had, to form communities of like lives.
>
> (Crossan 1998a: xxx-xxxi).

A question was asked of Crossan relating to the idea of resurrection being 'a central New Testament claim'. His response was: 'I'm saying that resurrection is only one of several ways that Christians could think about their experience of "Jesus-with-us"'. His emphasis was that in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul who wrote about 20-40 years before the Gospels were written and was 'defending the idea of bodily resurrection. But here's a very interesting twist: He never argues that resurrection was a special miracle only for Jesus. Just the opposite: Jesus' resurrection is for him one instance of a *general* resurrection' (Crossan & Watts 1996:159; emphasis in original).

He explained that 'during the winter of 53 or 54 C.E. – that is, from twenty to forty years before the New Testament gospels gave us their last chapters – Paul was writing to the church he had founded at Corinth and defending the possibility and actuality of bodily resurrection. As you read 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 watch carefully the logic of his argument, and pay special attention to the verses I have italicized'. Crossan had italicized verses 13 and 16. Verse 13 reads: '*If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised*' and verse 16, '*If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised*' (Crossan 1994a:163-164; emphasis in original). His interpretation was: 'Paul never argues that Jesus' resurrection was a special privilege afforded only to him…. Why, as my italics emphasize, is Jesus' resurrection actually dependent on the general resurrection' (Crossan 1994a:164)? His reply was: 'It has often been said that Paul believed the end of the world was at hand. It is more accurate to say that he believed it *had already begun*, for that is his logic in the preceding passage. As a Pharisee he believed in the general resurrection at the end of time. But Jesus, he claims, has already risen as the start of the general resurrection. Notice his metaphor. Jesus is the "first fruits" – that is to say, the beginning of the harvest, the start of the general resurrection'. Therefore, Crossan made this emphasis, 'That is why he can argue in either direction: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; or, no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection. They stand or fall together, and Paul presumes that only the mercy of God delays the final consummation, the ending of what has been started. The *Titanic* has, as it were, already hit the iceberg, and Paul's mission is to waken the cabins as far and as wide as possible – while God gives time'. Since Paul had such a theological vision, 'resurrection is the only possible way to articulate the presence of

Jesus for Paul, but it is also inextricably linked to the *imminent* general resurrection at the end of the world. But if the end is not imminent, is resurrection still the best way to put it? Is *first fruits* a credible metaphor if the harvest is long delayed' (Crossan 1994a:164-165; emphasis in original)?

So, said Crossan, for Paul the language of

> bodily resurrection is the only way that Jesus' continued presence can be expressed. But I repeat my question: Was that the only way other individuals and groups in earliest Christianity expressed their continuing and unbroken faith in Jesus? The question is not what it is that Paul means, because that is surely clear enough. The question is whether he speaks for all Christians then and thereafter. Is resurrection, so understood, the only way or just one of the ways to express faith in the continuing power and presence of Jesus in the world?
>
> (Crossan 1994a:165)

The presuppositional triggers identified in the data on the non-unique nature of Jesus' resurrection are:

- **Stated presupposition**, in his major publication on the birth of Christianity (Crossan 1998a), he stated that he did not begin with 'a religious or a theological presupposition but an anthropological and an historical one'. He also stated this as 'a problem'. The presupposition was that 'it is not enough to say that the vision that a dead man birthed Christianity'. Why? That is because in the first century and every century since then, that 'is not special enough of itself to explain anything'. Instead, 'Why was this man's resurrection, as distinct from any and all other ones, understood as such a beginning? From that problem as presupposition I draw this hypothesis: the birth of Christianity is the interaction between the historical Jesus and his first companions and the continuation of that relationship despite his execution'. Crossan (1998a) was an attempted 'historical reconstruction of that interaction' with a focus 'on birth not growth, on those years before and especially after Jesus' crucifixion';
- **Intonation**, for Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, 'bodily resurrection is the only way that Jesus' continued presence can be expressed'; and in 1 Corinthians 15, 'The question is not what it is that Paul means, because that is surely clear enough. The question is whether he speaks for all Christians then and thereafter. Is resurrection, so understood, the only way or just one of the ways to express faith in the continuing power and presence of Jesus in the world?'
- **Projection**, 'I formulate it here as I see it. The earthly Jesus was not just a thinker with ideas but a rebel with a cause'; 'bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of its tomb. And neither is bodily resurrection just another term for Christian faith itself'; 'bodily resurrection means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continued, as it always had, to form communities of like lives'; 'I'm saying that resurrection is only one of several ways that Christians could think about their experience of "Jesus-with-us"'; in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul 'never argues that resurrection was a special miracle only for Jesus. Just the opposite: Jesus' resurrection is for him one instance of a *general* resurrection'; in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, 'Paul never argues that Jesus' resurrection was a special privilege afforded only to him…. Why … is Jesus'

resurrection actually dependent on the general resurrection?'; 'it has often been said that Paul believed the end of the world was at hand. It is more accurate to say that he believed it *had already begun*, for that is his logic in the preceding passage' (1 Cor 15:12-20); 'notice his metaphor. Jesus is the "first fruits" – that is to say, the beginning of the harvest, the start of the general resurrection'. Therefore, Crossan placed this emphasis, 'That is why he can argue in either direction: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; or, no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection. They stand or fall together, and Paul presumes that only the mercy of God delays the final consummation, the ending of what has been started'; and 'resurrection is the only possible way to articulate the presence of Jesus for Paul, but it is also inextricably linked to the *imminent* general resurrection at the end of the world. But if the end is not imminent, is resurrection still the best way to put it? Is first fruits a credible metaphor if the harvest is long delayed';

- **Cancellability**, He denied that his was a 'religious or a theological presupposition' (Crossan 1998a), but could this be pointing to a cancellability trigger when he admitted a theological denial as he does not believe in the supernatural bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but calls it an 'apparition'. His direct statements about Paul's teaching of Christ's resurrection were that 'in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul begins by enumerating all the apparitions of the risen Jesus…. The Corinthians knew all about visions and apparitions and would not dream of denying their validity';

Presuppositional projections from these triggers include:

- His stated presupposition for the birth of Christianity was not theological or religious, but anthropological and historical. Is this accurate?
- The vision of a dead man birthing Christianity is not unique when compared with the first and other centuries.
- The birth of Christianity was caused by the interaction between the historical Jesus and his first companions and the continuation of that relationship despite his execution.
- For Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, bodily resurrection is the only way that Jesus' continued presence can be expressed.
- Resurrection is not the only way to express faith in the continuing power and presence of Jesus in the world.
- Crossan formulates the resurrection stories as he sees them, based on his human reason.
- Bodily resurrection does not refer to a resuscitated body coming out of its tomb and neither is it just another term for Christian faith itself.
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced by believers in this present world and to form communities of believers with similar goals.
- Resurrection is only one of several ways that Christians could think about their experience of Jesus-with-us.
- Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, never argues that resurrection was a special miracle only for Jesus, but was the opposite: Jesus' resurrection was for Paul one instance of a general resurrection.
- While Jesus' resurrection is the first-fruits, if there is no resurrection of Jesus there is no general resurrection. Or, if there is no general resurrection, there is no resurrection of Jesus. They stand or fall together.

- Based on 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Paul believed that the end of the world had already begun.

See §3.3.2.6.3 and presupposition number 12 for Jesus' death and resurrection not being regarded by Crossan as unique events.

3.3.2.9.1 Presupposition number 16: No resuscitated body[110]

Jesus' bodily resurrection does not refer to a resuscitated body or to Christian faith itself, but that the embodied life and death of Jesus continues to be experienced by contemporary believers as they form communities with similar goals. Resurrection is only one way for Christians to think of experiencing Jesus-with-us.

3.3.2.10 Place the emphasis on meaning

As indicated above, Borg and Crossan are more interested in focussing on the meaning of the resurrection events than their factuality. Their claim was that 'if they are primarily about an utterly unique spectacular event, we often do not get beyond the question, "Did they happen or not?" to the question, "What do they mean"' (Borg & Crossan 2006:192)? Crossan was convinced that 'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the Easter story quite differently – so differently, in fact, that we simply cannot harmonize their versions. So we have to ask questions of intention and meaning' rather than seek harmonisation of the Gospel resurrection accounts (Crossan & Watts 1996:153). Borg and Crossan's claim was that 'seeing the Easter stories as parable does not involve a denial of their factuality. It's quite happy leaving the question open. What it does insist upon is *that the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*' (Borg & Crossan 2006:193; emphasis in original).

Presuppositional triggers include:

- **Intonation**, 'what it does insist upon [resurrection accounts as parable – SDG] is that *the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*'.
- **Projection**, 'if they are primarily about an utterly unique spectacular event, we often do not get beyond the question, "Did they happen or not?" to the question, "What do they mean"'; and since it is not possible to harmonise the resurrection in the four Gospel accounts, 'we have to ask questions of intention and meaning';

Suggested presuppositional understandings include:

- The importance of the resurrection stories rests in their meanings and not in their factuality.
- The core understandings of Jesus' resurrection relate to questions of intention and meaning.

What kinds of meanings does Crossan find in Jesus' resurrection?

3.3.2.10.1 The general resurrection has begun

He linked Jesus' resurrection with the general resurrection, writing that, 'those who proclaimed Jesus's resurrection were not simply proclaiming his *exaltation* to the right hand of God. That would have been a stunning enough climax to Jesus's destiny as Messiah, Son of God, and Lord, based, for example on Psalm 110'. However, the climax was even better, 'Going much further than that, however, *they proclaimed that the general bodily resurrection had already begun with Jesus's bodily resurrection*, and that of course was why "resurrection" was the only proper and adequate word for what had happened to Jesus'. This meaning was 'not assumption, nor exaltation, but precisely resurrection That meant that Jesus's resurrection was not just an individual privilege but a communal process – and a communal process from past, present, and future, with Jesus's resurrection as the heart of that process' (Crossan 2007:186-187; emphasis in original). In similar fashion, 'the general bodily resurrection was not a future and instantaneous flash of divine time, but an event with a past beginning, a present continuation, and a future consummation in human time. Of course, they thought that future conclusion was still rather imminent' and that 'the present was an in-between period in which Christian believers were called to a resurrected life with, in, and through the resurrected Jesus. It was not as if there is a start (the Christ resurrection), a yawning gap, and then an end (the general resurrection) – like two bookends but with no books in between. We Christians *are* the books in between' (Crossan 2007:187)

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[110] These triggers also suggest a presupposition relating to Crossan's view of Jesus' continuing presence, based on 1 Corinthians 15, that is not investigated here.

Crossan considered that 'there is one final and even more basic question whose answer may serve as a summary not only of 1 Corinthians 15, but of Paul's transmutation of both general Jewish apocalyptic eschatology and specific Pharisaic resurrection theology'. That question was, 'Why did Paul not agree with his "wise" Corinthian converts by accepting Platonic theology and insisting that Christ's soul, as purer even than Socrates's, resided now with God in a state of such eternal holiness that it judged positively or negatively all other souls before or after it'? This Platonic questioning continued: 'Plato, after all, had insisted (against Homer's Hades) that the soul's immortality was necessary for divine justice, so that virtuous souls could be rewarded and evil souls punished after this life. Why not, at least, leave two options for Christian faith: The resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul'? Crossan and Reed's answer was that 'quite simply, *the general resurrection was, first of all, about the justice of God amid the goodness of creation here below upon a transformed earth, and, second, within that, it was about the martyrs who had died for justice and from injustice with their bodies tortured, brutalized, and murdered*'. So, instead of resurrection being only 'about us and survival', it was 'about God and this earth. It was not about the heavenly evacuation, but the earthly transfiguration of this bodily world. The soul's immortality, even with all due post-mortem sanctions, did not restore a world disfigured by human evil, injustice, and violence. For the Jewish and Pharisaic Paul, divine justice was necessarily about transfigured bodies upon a transfigured earth' (Crossan & Reed 2004:344-345; emphasis in original).

Triggers include:

- **Factives**, 'quite simply, *the general resurrection was, first of all, about the justice of God amid the goodness of creation here below upon a transformed earth, and, second, within that, it was about the martyrs who had died for justice and from injustice with their bodies tortured, brutalized, and murdered*'; and the resurrection was 'about God and this earth. It was not about the heavenly evacuation, but the earthly transfiguration of this bodily world';
- **Aspectual verbs**, 'Plato, after all, had insisted (against Homer's Hades) that the soul's immortality was necessary for divine justice, so that virtuous souls could be rewarded and evil souls punished after this life. Why not, at least, leave two options for Christian faith: The resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul?'; 'the soul's immortality, even with all due post-mortem

sanctions, did not restore a world disfigured by human evil, injustice, and violence'; and 'for the Jewish and Pharisaic Paul, divine justice was necessarily about transfigured bodies upon a transfigured earth';

- **Quantifiers**, 'there is one final and even more basic question'; 'like two bookends but with no books in between. We Christians are the books in between';
- **Names**, Paul, Plato, and Homer;
- **Intonation**, 'that would have been a stunning enough climax to Jesus's destiny'; 'there is one final and even more basic question whose answer may serve as a summary not only of 1 Corinthians 15, but of Paul's transmutation of both general Jewish apocalyptic eschatology and specific Pharisaic resurrection theology'; '*first of all, about the justice of God amid the goodness of creation here below upon a transformed earth'; and 'second, within that, it was about the martyrs who had died for justice and from injustice with their bodies tortured, brutalized, and murdered*';
- **Projection**, 'those who proclaimed Jesus's resurrection were not simply proclaiming his exaltation to the right hand of God. That would have been a stunning enough climax to Jesus's destiny as Messiah, Son of God, and Lord, based, for example on Psalm 110'; 'going much further than that, however, *they proclaimed that the general bodily resurrection had already begun with Jesus's bodily resurrection*, and that of course was why "resurrection" was the only proper and adequate word for what had happened to Jesus'; 'not assumption, nor exaltation, but precisely resurrection'; 'that meant that Jesus's resurrection was not just an individual privilege but a communal process – and a communal process from past, present, and future, with Jesus's resurrection as the heart of that process'; 'the general bodily resurrection was not a future and instantaneous flash of divine time, but an event with a past beginning, a present continuation, and a future consummation in human time. Of course, they thought that future conclusion was still rather imminent'; 'the present was an in-between period in which Christian believers were called to a resurrected life with, in, and through the resurrected Jesus. It was not as if there is a start (the Christ resurrection), a yawning gap, and then an end (the general resurrection) – like two bookends but with no books in between. We Christians are the books in between'; and 'why did Paul not agree with his "wise" Corinthian converts by accepting Platonic theology and insisting that Christ's soul, as purer even than Socrates's, resided now with God in a state of such eternal holiness that it judged positively or negatively all other souls before or after it'.

Presuppositional understandings arising from these triggers embrace:

- The general resurrection was about God's justice and the goodness of creation on a transformed earth, but it also is about the martyrs who died for justice.
- The resurrection is about transfigured bodies on a transfigured earth and not about a heavenly evacuation.
- The resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul belong to Platonic theology and Paul did not follow this perspective.
- The immortality of the soul will not restore a world disfigured by evil.

- Those who proclaimed Jesus' resurrection were not promoting only his exaltation, but that the general resurrection had begun with Jesus' resurrection.
- Resurrection, as interpreted by Crossan, was the only proper word for Jesus' resurrection.
- Jesus' resurrection was not just an individual, unique privilege for one person but was a communal process – from past, present, and future – with Jesus' resurrection at the heart of that process in human time.
- The general bodily resurrection is not a future, divine event.
- The resurrection does not involve a start (Jesus' resurrection), a long gap, and then an end with the general resurrection. Instead, Christians are involved in the continuing process of the resurrection.

(a) Presupposition number 17: Resurrection stories and meanings[111]

The importance of the resurrection stories lies, not in their factuality, but in their meaning and intention.

The presupposition of Jesus' continued presence of empowerment with his followers, as the meaning of his resurrection, is covered in §3.3.2.5.1 above as presupposition number 8.

3.3.2.11 Resurrection and authority

Borg and Crossan had a further metaphorical understanding of Christ's resurrection when they stated that there was another 'affirmation of the Easter stories in an equally concise phrase: *God has vindicated Jesus*. God has said "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the powers who executed him. Easter is not about an afterlife or about happy endings. Easter is God's "yes" to Jesus *against* the powers who killed him'. Further, 'Easter affirms that the domination systems of this world are not of God and that they do not have the final word' (Borg & Crossan 2006:205-206; emphasis in original).

They used the language of a prototype to describe another metaphor for the resurrection: 'Easter completes the archetypal pattern at the center of the Christian life: death and resurrection, crucifixion and vindication. Both parts of the pattern are essential: death *and* resurrection, crucifixion and vindication'. But they reject the other interpretation with this kind of language: 'Without an emphasis on Easter as God's decisive reversal of the authorities' verdict on Jesus, the cross is simply pain, agony, and horror. It leads to a horrific theology: God's judgment means that we all deserve to suffer like this, but Jesus died in our place. God can spare us because Jesus is the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins'. So, 'without God's reversal at Easter, Good Friday also leads to a cynical politics. This is the way the world is, the powers are and always will be in control, and those who think it can be otherwise are utopian dreamers'. The wrong interpretation is that 'Christianity is about the next world, not this one, and this one belongs to the wealthy and powerful, world without end' (Borg & Crossan 2006:209; emphasis in original).

Where does their understanding of the meaning of the passion-resurrection lead? The significance is that 'Easter as the reversal of Good Friday means God's vindication of Jesus's passion for the kingdom of God, for God's justice, and God's

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[111] From these triggers presuppositions also emerge relating to the meaning of the general resurrection – including its future perspective – and the apostle Paul's alleged promotion of a Platonic view of the resurrection body and the immortality of the soul. This will not be investigated in this project.

"no" to the powers who killed him, powers still very much active in our world. Easter is about God even as it is about Jesus. Easter discloses the character of God. Easter means God's Great Cleanup of the world has begun – but it will not happen without us' (Borg & Crossan 2006:210). They continued:

> All of this is what Easter, the ultimate climax of Holy Week, is about. Good Friday, the penultimate climax, discloses how powerful the forces arrayed against the kingdom of God are. Easter affirms, "Jesus is Lord" – the powers of this world are not. Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter are about the conflict between the radicality of God and the normalcy of domination systems.
>
> (Borg & Crossan 2006:215)

There were political dimensions that Crossan associated with the resurrection and authority. His exposition was precipitated by a letter he received that asked, 'What about all the stories of the risen Jesus appearing to people?' His response was: 'Let me tell you what I've concluded…. We usually regard those stories of post-Easter appearances by Jesus as visions of some sort. I think they're nothing of the kind. They have no marks that you would expect – no blinding lights, no heavenly voices, nobody knocked to the ground. Neither does Jesus bring back from "the other side" some new revelation, as you might expect'. So what, then, are the appearance stories? His rejoinder was that 'what really matters is *who Jesus appears to*. That is, these stories are dramatizations with a political purpose. And that purpose is to tell us who's in charge, now that Jesus is no longer personally present'. He regarded 'the clearest example' as being in John 20 (the race by two disciples to the empty tomb) and the Mary Magdalene situation in Matthew 28:8-10. 'In John she fails to recognize Jesus when he appears to her, and three times gives the wrong interpretation of the empty tomb: "They have taken away my Lord"'. His interpretation was that 'stories like that tell us absolutely nothing of historical value about the origins of Christian faith. But they tell us a great deal about the origins of Christian authority. They are competing pictures about who has priority and power in the early Christian community…. They really have nothing to do with appearances on Easter Sunday. They are dramatizations about where power and authority rest in the early Church' (Crossan & Watts 1996:162-163; emphasis in original).

Crossan's summary was: 'In a nutshell, these are my conclusions…. Stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church…. Resurrection is one – but only one – of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).

Presuppositional triggers embedded in these data include:

- **Factives**, 'Easter is not about an afterlife or about happy endings. Easter is God's "yes" to Jesus *against* the powers who killed him'; 'Easter affirms that the domination systems of this world are not of God and that they do not have the final word'; 'all of this is what Easter, the ultimate climax of Holy Week, is about. Good Friday, the penultimate climax, discloses how powerful the forces arrayed against the kingdom of God are. Easter affirms, "Jesus is Lord" – the powers of this world are not. Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter are about the conflict between the radicality of God and the normalcy of domination systems';

- **Aspectual verbs**, 'Easter completes the archetypal pattern at the center of the Christian life: death and resurrection, crucifixion *and* vindication. Both parts of the pattern are essential: death and resurrection, crucifixion and vindication'; 'in John [chapter 20 – SDG] she [Mary Magdalene – SDG] fails to recognize Jesus when he appears to her, and three times gives the wrong interpretation of the empty tomb: "They have taken away my Lord"';
- **Intonation**, an 'affirmation of the Easter stories in an equally concise phrase: *God has vindicated Jesus*. God has said "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the powers who executed him'; 'without an emphasis on Easter as God's decisive reversal of the authorities' verdict on Jesus, the cross is simply pain, agony, and horror. It leads to a horrific theology: God's judgment means that we all deserve to suffer like this, but Jesus died in our place. God can spare us because Jesus is the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins'; 'what really matters is *who Jesus appears to*. That is, these stories are dramatizations with a political purpose. And that purpose is to tell us who's in charge, now that Jesus is no longer personally present';
- **Projection**, 'without God's reversal at Easter, Good Friday also leads to a cynical politics. This is the way the world is, the powers are and always will be in control, and those who think it can be otherwise are utopian dreamers'; the wrong and 'hard form' interpretation was that 'Christianity is about the next world, not this one, and this one belongs to the wealthy and powerful, world without end'; 'Easter as the reversal of Good Friday means God's vindication of Jesus's passion for the kingdom of God, for God's justice, and God's "no" to the powers who killed him, powers still very much active in our world'; 'Easter is about God even as it is about Jesus. Easter discloses the character of God. Easter means God's Great Cleanup of the world has begun – but it will not happen without us'; 'let me tell you what I've concluded…. We usually regard those stories of post-Easter appearances by Jesus as visions of some sort. I think they're nothing of the kind. They have no marks that you would expect – no blinding lights, no heavenly voices, nobody knocked to the ground. Neither does Jesus bring back from "the other side" some new revelation, as you might expect'; 'stories like that [Mary Magdalene – SDG] tell us absolutely nothing of historical value about the origins of Christian faith. But they tell us a great deal about the origins of Christian *authority*. They are competing pictures about who has priority and power in the early Christian community…. They really have nothing to do with appearances on Easter Sunday. They are dramatizations about where power and authority rest in the early Church'; 'stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church'; and 'resurrection is one – but only one – of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends';

Presuppositional understandings that surface from these triggers include:

- Easter does not involve life after death.
- Easter affirms Jesus against the systems of the world that are dominant.
- Easter affirms Jesus is Lord and not the powers of this world.
- Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter deal with the conflict between God and the systems of the world that is dominant.

- The archetypal centre of the Christian life involves death and resurrection, crucifixion and vindication.
- In John 20, Mary Magdalene does not recognise the Lord and gives the wrong interpretation three times.
- Without Easter's meaning of God's reversal of the authorities' verdict on Jesus, the cross is horrific theology – the path of pain, agony, horror and substitutionary sacrifice for sin.
- The appearance stories of Jesus are political dramatisations that demonstrate who is in charge when Jesus is no longer present.
- The hard form of Jesus' resurrection (Christianity is about the next world) leads to cynical politics.
- Easter means God's great clean-up of the world has begun with a vindication of God's justice in His kingdom.
- The post-Easter appearances of Jesus (like that to Mary Magdalene) are not visions but tell of the origins of Christian authority – dramatisations of power and authority in the early Church. They are literary fiction and highlight the struggles over leadership priority and power in that Church.
- Resurrection is only one of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends.

3.3.2.11.1 Presupposition number 18: Jesus' appearances and authority[112]

Jesus' post-Easter appearances are not visions but are literary fiction that tell of the struggles over power and authority in the early church.

3.3.2.12 Personal and political transformations

There were transformations that took place in association with Christ's resurrection and they had personal and political dimensions. Borg and Crossan explained: 'The archetypal pattern produced by Good Friday and Easter is both personal and political. As the climax of Holy Week and the story of Jesus, Good Friday and Easter address the fundamental human question, What ails us? Most of us feel the force of this question – something is not right'. They asked, 'So what ails us? Very compactly, egoism and injustice. And the two go together. We need personal transformation and political transformation…. Good Friday and Easter, death and resurrection together, are a central image in the New Testament for the path to a transformed self'. What does this pathway entail? 'The path involves dying to an old way of being and being reborn into a new way of being. Good Friday and Easter are about this path, the path of dying and rising, of being born again' (Borg & Crossan 2006:210).

How do these transformations work? 'The personal and political meanings of Holy Week are captured in two nearly identical questions…. Do you accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?... The virtually identical but seldom asked question is: Do you accept Jesus as your political Lord and Savior?' They explain their understanding of the meaning of these transformations: 'The gospel of Jesus, the good news of Jesus, which is the gospel of the kingdom of God, involves both questions. The gospel *about* Jesus, the good news *about* Jesus, which is the gospel of the Lordship of Christ, involves both questions' (Borg & Crossan 2006:215-216; emphasis in original).

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[112] Other presuppositions relating to these triggers include Easter and life after death, the horrific meaning of Easter, and Jesus' appearance stories and politics, that will not be investigated in this study.

They see alternate ways of traversing the Holy Week terrain: ‘Holy Week and the journey of Lent are about an alternative procession and an alternative journey. The alternative procession is what we see on Palm Sunday, an anti-imperial and nonviolent procession. Now as then, that procession leads to a capital city, an imperial center, and a place of collaboration between religion and violence’. But what about the present voyage? ‘Now as then, the alternative journey is the path of personal transformation that leads to journeying with the risen Jesus, just as it did for his followers on the road to Emmaus. Holy Week as the annual remembrance of Jesus’s last week presents us with the always relevant questions: Which journey are we on? Which procession are we in’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:216)?

Crossan and Reed referred to Romans 4-6, where they understood Paul’s view of the passion-resurrection was that ‘it was not simply death and resurrection. It was execution by *Rome* and therefore resurrection against Rome. It is there, maybe more than Paul or Christianity wants to consider, that participation will be fully accomplished’. By contrast, they saw that ‘the advantage of using “death” rather than execution or crucifixion is that he [Paul – SDG] can then contrast not crucifixion and resurrection but *death* and *life*, thereby emphasizing present Christian resurrection life. Paul can then contrast death versus life repeatedly in Romans 4-6 (read 4:17; 5:10, 17, 20, 21; 6:4, 8, 11, 13)’ (Crossan & Reed 2004:384-385; emphasis in original).

These presuppositional triggers are identified:

- **Names**, Paul;
- **Intonation**, ‘the archetypal pattern produced by Good Friday and Easter is both personal and political’; ‘as the climax of Holy Week and the story of Jesus, Good Friday and Easter address the fundamental human question, What ails us? Most of us feel the force of this question – something is not right’; ‘so what ails us? Very compactly, egoism and injustice. And the two go together. We need personal transformation and political transformation’; ‘Good Friday and Easter, death and resurrection together, are a central image in the New Testament for the path to a transformed self’; ‘the path involves dying to an old way of being and being reborn into a new way of being. Good Friday and Easter are about this path, the path of dying and rising, of being born again’; ‘the personal and political meanings of Holy Week are captured in two nearly identical questions…. Do you accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?... The virtually identical but seldom asked question is: Do you accept Jesus as your political Lord and Savior?’; ‘the gospel of Jesus, the good news of Jesus, which is the gospel of the kingdom of God, involves both questions. The gospel *about* Jesus, the good news *about* Jesus, which is the gospel of the Lordship of Christ, involves both questions’; Paul’s perspective on the passion-resurrection story, according to Romans 4-6, was that ‘it was not simply death and resurrection. It was execution by *Rome* and therefore resurrection against Rome. It is there, maybe more than Paul or Christianity wants to consider, that participation will be fully accomplished’; and ‘the advantage of using “death” rather than execution or crucifixion is that he [Paul – SDG] can then contrast not crucifixion and resurrection but *death* and *life*, thereby emphasizing present Christian resurrection life. Paul can then contrast death versus life repeatedly in Romans 4-6 (read 4:17; 5:10, 17, 20, 21; 6:4, 8, 11, 13)’;
- **Projection**, ‘Holy Week and the journey of Lent are about an alternative procession and an alternative journey. The alternative procession is what we

> see on Palm Sunday, an anti-imperial and nonviolent procession. Now as then, that procession leads to a capital city, an imperial center, and a place of collaboration between religion and violence'; 'now as then, the alternative journey is the path of personal transformation that leads to journeying with the risen Jesus, just as it did for his followers on the road to Emmaus. Holy Week as the annual remembrance of Jesus's last week presents us with the always relevant questions: Which journey are we on? Which procession are we in';

Presuppositional indicators from these triggers are:

- The original pattern of Good Friday and Easter Sunday had personal and political meaning.
- Good Friday and Easter Sunday address the question of what troubles human beings: egoism and injustice.
- Human beings need personal and political transformation, through death and resurrection – dying to an old way of being and being reborn into a new way of being.
- The Gospel of Jesus (the kingdom of God) is about accepting Jesus as one's personal and political Lord and Saviour.
- Paul's perspective on the passion-resurrection in Romans 4-6 was not simply death and resurrection but execution by Rome and resurrection against Rome.
- By using death rather than crucifixion or execution in Romans 4-6, Paul could contrast *death* and *life*, thus emphasising present resurrection life.
- Holy Week was an alternate procession to the Palm Sunday's anti-imperial procession to the capital city, Jerusalem, where there was collaboration between religion and violence.
- For Jesus' followers, the alternate journey – the path of personal transformation – journeys with the risen Jesus as with Jesus' followers on the road to Emmaus.
- The Holy Week remembrance presents Jesus' followers with the questions: Which journey are you on? And which procession are you in?

3.3.2.12.1 Presupposition number 19: Easter stories and transformation[113]

Good Friday and Easter Sunday had personal and political meaning through the meaning of death and resurrection – dying to an old way of being and being reborn to a new way of being.

3.3.2.13 Jesus as exclusivist and non-pluralist

Elsewhere, Borg had identified himself as a pluralist and not an exclusivist in relation to Christ and salvation. He wrote that 'I am a Christian of nonliteralistic and nonexclusivistic kind' and that his Christian theology was 'within the framework of religious pluralism and the cross-cultural study of religion' (Borg 1997a:VIII).

Therefore, in a joint publication with Crossan it was not surprising to find this emphasis: 'The path of transformation' includes what Paul experienced and affirmed in Galatians 2:19-20; Romans 6:1-11; and 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 'the "way" at the center of John's gospel' in John 3:1-10, being born again; of the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying (John 12:24), and of 'this way as "the only way" (14:6) in a verse that has unfortunately often become a triumphalist claim justifying Christian exclusivism'.

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[113] Other presuppositions from these triggers are associated with Jesus as personal and political Lord and Saviour, Paul's case in Romans 4-6, and a possible alternate journey for Holy Week.

They explained that 'within John's incarnational theology, the death and resurrection of Jesus incarnates the way of transformation. This is what it means to say, "Jesus is the only way." The path we see in him – dying and rising – is the path of personal transformation'. However, they presented this challenge: 'So there is powerful personal meaning to Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter. We are invited into the journey that leads through death to resurrection and rebirth. But when only the personal meaning is emphasized, we betray the passion for which Jesus was willing to risk his life. That passion was the kingdom of God, and it led him to Jerusalem as the place of confrontation with the domination system of his time, execution, and vindication'. This led them to this interpretation: 'The political meaning of Good Friday and Easter sees the human problem as injustice, and the solution as God's justice' (Borg & Crossan 2006:211).

Presuppositional triggers that surface include:

- **Intonation**, 'this way as "the only way" (John 14:6) in a verse that has unfortunately often become a triumphalist claim justifying Christian exclusivism'; 'within John's incarnational theology, the death and resurrection of Jesus incarnates the way of transformation. This is what it means to say, "Jesus is the only way." The path we see in him – dying and rising – is the path of personal transformation'; and 'the political meaning of Good Friday and Easter sees the human problem as injustice, and the solution as God's justice';
- **Projection**, 'the path of transformation' includes what Paul experienced and affirmed in Galatians 2:19-20; Romans 6:1-11; and 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 'the "way" at the center of John's gospel' in John 3:1-10, being born again; of the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying (John 12:24), and of 'this way as "the only way" (14:6)'; 'so there is powerful personal meaning to Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter. We are invited into the journey that leads through death to resurrection and rebirth. But when only the personal meaning is emphasized, we betray the passion for which Jesus was willing to risk his life. That passion was the kingdom of God, and it led him to Jerusalem as the place of confrontation with the domination system of his time, execution, and vindication'.

What are the presuppositional indicators that are identified by these triggers?

- Jesus as the only way (Jn 14:6) has become a claim of Christian triumphalism and exclusivism for some Christians.
- The incarnational theology of John's Gospel – death and resurrection – incarnates the way of personal transformation, which is the meaning of 'Jesus is the only way'.
- The path of transformation is emphasised in various passages of Scripture (Gal 2:19-20; Rm 6:1-11; 2 Cor 5:17; Jn 3:1-10; 12:24; 14:6).
- The political meaning of Good Friday and Easter Sunday identifies the problem as injustice and God's solution of justice.
- The powerful personal meaning of Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter involves the journey from death to resurrection through rebirth.

- With emphasis only on personal meaning, Jesus' passion – the kingdom of God – is betrayed when it involved confrontation with the system of domination at the time of Jesus execution and vindication.

3.3.2.13.1 Presupposition number 20: Jesus as the only way[114]

Jesus as the only way (Jn 14:6) is a claim of Christian triumphalism and exclusivism when the meaning of 'Jesus is the only way' is John's incarnational theology for the way of personal transformation. Jesus as the only way is a claim in support of Jesus, the exclusivist and non-pluralist.

3.3.3 Appearance stories

Since the biblical record does not indicate any actual witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, how does Crossan deal with the appearances of Jesus to people after his resurrection?

Using Paul as their model, Crossan and Reed claimed that Paul used three arguments for resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:3-11.

'The first argument is to repeat the basic tradition about the death and resurrection of Jesus, emphasizing especially that, after his death and burial, he "was seen" by many people including himself (15:3-11)'. Their judgment was that 'that, of course, would not have actually helped him with those wise Corinthians' as 'they would probably have replied that, in their past Greco-Roman tradition, individuals had often come back from the dead to visit the living' (Crossan & Reed 2004:344).

Crossan and Reed's claim was that 'the second argument closes down the avenue of misunderstanding. There is, insists Paul, only one meaning for the term *resurrection*, namely, the *general bodily resurrection* at the end of this evil aeon when God raises all the dead for judgment in prelude to transforming this earth into eschatological perfection and utopian peace'. This will transform, rather than destroy, the world by perfecting creation – not taking earth to heaven but heaven to earth where there will be 'a great scene of public justice'. However, 'Paul adds in the stunningly original adaptation, the totally original variation, the utterly creative revision that Christian Judaism had already made to that Pharisaic theology. That general bodily resurrection *has already begun* with the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore that start and finish, that beginning and ending, stand or fall together [as per 1 Cor 15:12-13, 15b-16 – SDG]'. For Crossan and Reed, 'the argument is very clear: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection', using the metaphor of harvest of 1 Corinthians 15:20. 'Jesus's resurrection is to the general resurrection as first fruits are to the rest of the harvest. There is no possibility of Christ's resurrection as a special unique, peculiar privilege accorded to him alone' (Crossan & Reed 2004:342, 343; emphasis in original).

'The third argument goes to the heart of the debate with those wise Corinthians' according to 1 Corinthians 15:35. They invite the reader to 'hear again the voice of Platonic tradition in the background. The soul is in the body (*sōma*) as in a tomb (*sēma*) for the *Cratylus* (400c) or as an oyster in its shell for the *Phaedrus* (250c)[115]' (Crossan & Reed 2004:343). They maintained that 'Paul's answer holds alike to continuity and discontinuity', continuity as in 1 Corinthians 15:36 and discontinuity in 1 Corinthians 15:44. The latter verse reads, 'It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body'. Crossan and

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[114] Another presupposition based on these triggers relates to political and personal meaning.
[115] Here, Crossan & Reed cite Plato's *Laws* 12.959b (Crossan & Reed 2004:343).

Reed stated that 'that is probably a bad translation'. A better one would be: '"It is sown a soul-body, it is raised a Spirit-body." For Paul, a "spiritual body" is not just a square circle, but the normal human body transformed by the Spirit of God. Read it, in other words, as a "Spiritual body," a body transfigured by divine empowerment' (Crossan & Reed 2004:343; emphasis in original).

However, the appearances of Jesus to people after his resurrection have other dynamics that do not accommodate historical appearances. Crossan and Watts believed that the resurrection '"appearance" stories aren't the historical record of one day – Easter Sunday'. They stated that what he was arguing was that 'those stories in the last chapters of the gospels are not and were not intended to describe vision'. So what is left historically? 'Easter is not about the start of a new faith but the continuation of an old one. Despite his crucifixion, Jesus was for his followers alive, present, and empowering them to do the work of the Kingdom still…. and continued to experience his presence in that vision and program. That, for me, is Easter' (Crossan & Watts 1996:164-165).

There's a further dimension to the appearance stories of Jesus to his followers: 'These stories are the product of the experience and reflection of Jesus's followers in the days, months, years, and decades after his death. Strikingly, none is found in more than one gospel – striking because in the pre-Easter part of the gospels, the same story is often found in two or more gospels' (Borg & Crossan 2006:198).

How can people's seeing and touching Jesus after the resurrection be accommodated in Crossan's framework? They explained that Luke's second appearance story of Cleopas and an unnamed companion (Lk 24:36-49), 'in contrasting juxtaposition to the Emmaus story, emphasizes the "physicality" of the risen Jesus. Jesus invites them to touch him: "Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and blood as you see that I have." He also shows them the wounds in his hands and feet. Then he eats a piece of broiled fish. The point is that this is not just another ghost story. This is more than a ghost story' (Borg & Crossan 2006:201). At this point they explained no further what they meant by its being 'more than a ghost story'. However, since Mark is regarded as the earliest Gospel on which other New Testament Gospels are dependent, Crossan's interpretation of the empty tomb and the women was: 'The women's discovery of the empty tomb was created by Mark to avoid a risen apparition to the disciples, and the women's vision of the risen Jesus was created by Matthew to prepare for a risen apparition to the disciples. There is no evidence of historical tradition about those two details prior to Mark in the 70s' (Crossan 1998a:561).

However, Borg and Crossan provide a further explanation. 'Together, the appearance stories in the gospels make explicit what is promised in Mark: "You will see him." They underline the parabolic meaning of Mark's story of the empty tomb: Jesus is not among the dead, but among the living. Indeed, this is one of the central affirmations of Easter: Jesus lives. He is a figure of the present, not simply of the past'. So what is the understanding of this affirmation? 'It is not simply a statement about a brief series of experiences that occurred two thousand years ago for a period of forty days between resurrection and ascension. Luke, in his second volume, Acts, is the only New Testament author to suggest this, and it has become part of the Christian liturgical year'. However, they add that 'it is clear that Luke is not writing about "calendar time": he has Jesus ascend twice, once on Easter day and again forty days later' (Borg & Crossan 2006:204-205). In addition, 'the truth of the affirmation "Jesus lives" is grounded in the experience of Christians throughout the centuries. Not all Christians have had such an experience. It is not essential' (Borg & Crossan 2006:205).

These appearance stories are called ‘apparition stories’ by Crossan. He reached this explanation by firstly stating that ‘I consider that … the story of the empty-tomb discovery was created by Mark precisely to avoid any apparitions to the (by him) discredited outer Twelve or the inner Three or, especially, Peter himself’. Then he stated that ‘the apparition stories now present in our gospels are about authority rather than apparition or, better, about authority by apparition. But, of course, both those conclusions point to original risen apparitions as taken absolutely for granted and I fully accept them as historical events even though details are now lost on us forever’ (Crossan in Stewart 2006:177). It is important to note that his interpretation of the resurrection appearances was that they were ‘apparition stories’ but he fully accepted them ‘as historical events’.

Triggers include:

- **Factives**, ‘the first argument is to repeat the basic tradition about the death and resurrection of Jesus, emphasizing especially that, after his death and burial, he “was seen” by many people including himself’; ‘the second argument closes down the avenue of misunderstanding’; ‘the third argument goes to the heart of the debate with those wise Corinthians’; ‘these [appearance – SDG] stories are the product of the experience and reflection of Jesus's followers in the days, months, years, and decades after his death. Strikingly, none is found in more than one gospel – striking because in the pre-Easter part of the gospels, the same story is often found in two or more gospels'; and ‘it [Mark’s parabolic meaning of the empty tomb – SDG] is not simply a statement about a brief series of experiences that occurred two thousand years ago for a period of forty days between resurrection and ascension. Luke, in his second volume, Acts, is the only New Testament author to suggest this, and it has become part of the Christian liturgical year’;
- **Aspectual verbs**, ‘the women’s discovery of the empty tomb was created by Mark to avoid a risen apparition to the disciples, and the women’s vision of the risen Jesus was created by Matthew to prepare for a risen apparition to the disciples. There is no evidence of historical tradition about those two details prior to Mark in the 70s’; ‘together, the appearance stories in the gospels make explicit what is promised in Mark: “You will see him.” They underline the parabolic meaning of Mark’s story of the empty tomb: Jesus is not among the dead, but among the living. Indeed, this is one of the central affirmations of Easter: Jesus lives. He is a figure of the present, not simply of the past’;
- **Quantifiers**, Paul used three arguments in 1 Corinthians 15:3-11 for Jesus’ death and resurrection: ‘Paul’s first argument is to repeat…. The second argument closes down…. The third argument goes to the heart of the debate’;
- **Names**, wise Corinthians, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Cleopas, unnamed companion, Pharisaic, Platonic, outer Twelve, inner Three, and Peter;
- **Intonation**, ‘Paul adds in the stunningly original adaptation, the totally original variation, the utterly creative revision that Christian Judaism had already made to that Pharisaic theology’; ‘the argument is very clear: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection’; ‘Jesus’s resurrection is to the general resurrection as first fruits are to the rest of the harvest. There is no possibility of Christ’s resurrection as a special unique, peculiar privilege accorded to him alone’; the story of Cleopas and an unnamed companion (Lk 24:36-49), ‘in contrasting juxtaposition to the Emmaus story, emphasizes the “physicality” of the risen

Jesus. Jesus invites them to touch him: "Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and blood as you see that I have." He also shows them the wounds in his hands and feet. Then he eats a piece of broiled fish. The point is that this is not just another ghost story. This is more than a ghost story'; and 'it is clear that Luke [in Acts – SDG] is not writing about "calendar time": he has Jesus ascend twice, once on Easter day and again forty days later';

- **Projection**, 'that [Paul's first argument that after his death and burial – SDG], he [Jesus – SDG] "was seen" by many people including himself, of course, would not have actually helped him with those wise Corinthians' as 'they would probably have replied that, in their past Greco-Roman tradition, individuals had often come back from the dead to visit the living'; in the second argument, there is, 'insists Paul, only one meaning for the term *resurrection*, namely, the general *bodily resurrection* at the end of this evil aeon when God raises all the dead for judgment in prelude to transforming this earth into eschatological perfection and utopian peace…. 'Paul adds in the stunningly original adaptation, the totally original variation, the utterly creative revision that Christian Judaism had already made to that Pharisaic theology. That general bodily resurrection *has already begun* with the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore that start and finish, that beginning and ending, stand or fall together; 'the third argument goes to the heart of the debate with those wise Corinthians' according to 1 Corinthians 15:35. They invite the reader to 'hear again the voice of Platonic tradition in the background. The soul is in the body (*sōma*) as in a tomb (*sēma*) for the *Cratylus* (400c) or as an oyster in its shell for the Phaedrus (250c)'; 'Paul's answer holds alike to continuity and discontinuity', continuity as in 1 Corinthians 15:36 and discontinuity in 1 Corinthians 15:44; 1 Corinthians 15:44 states, 'It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body'…. that is probably a bad translation'. A better one would be: '"It is sown a soul-body, it is raised a Spirit-body." For Paul, a "spiritual body" is not just a square circle, but the normal human body transformed by the Spirit of God. Read it, in other words, as a "Spiritual body," a body transfigured by divine empowerment'; '"appearance" stories aren't the historical record of one day – Easter Sunday'; 'those stories in the last chapters of the gospels are not and were not intended to describe vision'; 'Easter is not about the start of a new faith but the continuation of an old one. Despite his crucifixion, Jesus was for his followers alive, present, and empowering them to do the work of the Kingdom still…. and continued to experience his presence in that vision and program. That, for me, is Easter'; 'the truth of the affirmation "Jesus lives" is grounded in the experience of Christians throughout the centuries. Not all Christians have had such an experience. It is not essential'; 'I consider that … the story of the empty-tomb discovery was created by Mark precisely to avoid any apparitions to the (by him) discredited outer Twelve or the inner Three or, especially, Peter himself'; and 'the apparition stories now present in our gospels are about authority rather than apparition or, better, about authority by apparition. But, of course, both those conclusions point to original risen apparitions as taken absolutely for granted and I fully accept them as historical events even though details are now lost on us forever';

Presuppositional pointers from these triggers include:

- The basic tradition of Jesus' resurrection appearances where Jesus 'was seen' is rejected.
- The view that Paul had only one meaning for the term resurrection – general bodily resurrection at the end of this evil age – when God raises all the dead for judgment in prelude to transforming this earth is rejected.
- The original and adapted version of Jesus resurrection by Paul was that the general bodily resurrection had already begun – the beginning and end stand and fall together.
- The appearance stories were the reflection of Jesus' followers in the time following his death and none of these stories is found in more than one Gospel.
- Mark's Gospel gives a parabolic meaning of the empty tomb and he created the women's discovery of the empty tomb to prepare the disciples for Jesus' risen apparition to them.
- If there is no resurrection of Jesus, there is no general resurrection, and vice versa. The resurrection of Jesus is the first fruits and his resurrection is not uniquely privileged to him alone.
- While the story of Cleopas and the unnamed companion emphasised the physicality of the risen Jesus through the invitation to touch him and see that he is not a ghost and to show them the wounds in his hands and feet, it was more than a ghost story. Luke was not writing this according to calendar time.
- The Corinthians would not have been helped by Paul's statement that after the resurrection, Jesus was seen by many people. This was because of the Graeco-Roman tradition of individuals having returned from the dead to visit the living.
- For Paul, the spiritual body was not like a square circle but was the normal body transformed by the Spirit of God.
- Jesus' appearance stories in the last chapters of the Gospels were not the historical record of a day – Easter Sunday – nor of a vision, but involved the continuing, empowering experience of Jesus in Christians throughout the centuries.
- The appearance, apparition stories in the Gospels were about authority, but the original, risen apparitions are accepted as historical events.

For an examination of the data for the general resurrection and presuppositions associated with it see above, §3.3.2.5.1 and presupposition number 8, §3.3.2.10.1(a) and presupposition number 21. For the empty tomb as metaphor and parable see §3.3.2.3.1, presupposition number 6 and §3.3.2.8.1, presupposition number 15.

For the appearance stories of Easter Sunday meaning more than a day, see §3.3.5 below and presupposition number 23. The apparition, appearance stories and the meaning of authority are covered in §3.3.2.11 above and presupposition number 18.

3.3.3.1 Presupposition number 21: Appearances and followers' reflections[116]

The appearance stories, none of which appears in more than one Gospel, are reflections by Jesus' followers after his death.

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[116] The triggers suggest other presuppositions regarding Cleopas and the unnamed companion, and the apostle's Paul's view of resurrection as being unhelpful in understanding the meaning of resurrection.

3.3.4 Resurrection and the Cross Gospel

Crossan placed so much emphasis on the role of the Cross Gospel from the *Gospel of Peter* as the foundation of the passion accounts in the New Testament that he stated that ‘the signal achievement of the Cross Gospel to move from the *prophetic passion* to the *narrative passion*’ was ‘to create from discrete prophetic allusions and composite prophetic fulfillments a coherent and sequential story’. How does this prominence influence the resurrection accounts in the Gospels? He promotes the view that ‘the first writer to use and develop the Cross Gospel composition was, in my judgment on the extant texts, the evangelist Mark himself. I see no convincing evidence that Mark has any other basis for his passion narrative than that source and his own theological creativity’. How does that apply to the resurrection? Mark ‘made three profound changes’ to the Cross Gospel. ‘The first and most basic one was to change the overarching model from *innocence rescued to martyrdom vindicated*. No salvific miracle *here below* would save Jesus before, during, or after death. Only at the parousia would the resurrectional victory become visible, according to Mark 13:26 and 14:62’. Therefore, ‘Mark had … to negate completely both the visible resurrection and the subsequent Roman confession from the Cross Gospel. He did it by retrojecting both back into preceding sections of his Gospel’. These were in Mark 9:2-8 and Mark 15:39 (Crossan 1991:389; emphasis in original).

Presuppositional triggers include:

- **Names**, Mark;
- **Intonation**, ‘the signal achievement of the Cross Gospel to move from the *prophetic passion* to the *narrative passion*’ was ‘to create from discrete prophetic allusions and composite prophetic fulfillments a coherent and sequential story’; Mark ‘made three profound changes’ to the Cross Gospel; and ‘the first and most basic one [Mark’s change to the Cross Gospel – SDG] was to change the overarching model from *innocence rescued to martyrdom vindicated*’;
- **Projection**, ‘the first writer to use and develop the Cross Gospel composition was, in my judgment on the extant texts, the evangelist Mark himself. I see no convincing evidence that Mark has any other basis for his passion narrative than that source and his own theological creativity’; ‘no salvific miracle here below would save Jesus before, during, or after death. Only at the parousia would the resurrectional victory become visible, according to Mark 13:26 and 14:62’; and ‘Mark had … to negate completely both the visible resurrection and the subsequent Roman confession from the Cross Gospel. He did it by retrojecting into preceding sections of his Gospel’;

Suggested presuppositional understandings from these triggers include:

- The first New Testament Gospel writer to use the Cross Gospel in his passion-resurrection narrative was Mark.
- The Cross Gospel moved the passion story from prophetic to narrative passion.
- The passion accounts were created from prophetic allusions.
- Mark changed the overarching passion model from innocence rescued to martyrdom vindicated.
- There was no salvation miracle that would save Jesus before, during or after his death.

- Mark negated the visible resurrection and Roman confession from the Cross Gospel by retrojecting other sections from his Gospel.

3.3.4.1 Presupposition number 22: Resurrection and the Cross Gospel

Mark was the first Gospel writer to use the Cross Gospel for his passion-resurrection narrative but he negated the visible resurrection and the Roman confession through retrojection into other sections of his Gospel.

3.3.5 The resurrection and deconstruction

He put it this way in explaining what he considers is a core understanding – the meaning of the resurrection: ‘The resurrection of Jesus means for me that the human empowerment that some people experienced in Lower Galilee at the start of the first century in and through Jesus is now available to any person in any place at any time who finds God in and through that same Jesus’. He drew a parallel between the resurrection stories about Jesus and another famous parable told by Jesus: ‘Empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables expressing that faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story. They are, for me, parables of resurrection not the resurrection itself. Resurrection as the continuing experience of God’s presence in and through Jesus is the heart of Christian faith’ (Crossan 1995:216).

He was specific in labelling his kind of interpretation of the historical Jesus:

> Christianity is historical reconstruction interpreted as divine manifestation. It is not (*in a postmodern world*) that we find once and for all who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction, a reconstruction that will be and must be in some creative interaction with its own particular needs, visions, and programs…. It is that Jesus reconstructed in the dialogues, debates, controversies, and conclusions of contemporary scholarship that challenges faith to see and say how that is for now the Christ, the Lord, the Son of God…. The gospels are, for me, even more normative as process than as product…. You cannot believe in a fact, only in an interpretation.
>
> (Crossan 1995:217; emphasis added)

His methodology of postmodern deconstruction outlines his strategy. He does not prefer to speak of the search or quest for the historical Jesus or Christian origins. Rather, ‘I speak instead of *reconstruction*, and that is something that is done over and over again in different times and different places, by different groups and different communities, and by every generation again and again and again’. Concerning this method, he stated, ‘I insist that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present’. He declared that this is his ‘method, method, and, once again, method. It will not guarantee us the truth because nothing can do that. But method, as self-conscious and self-critical as we can make it, is our only discipline. It cannot take us out of our present skins and bodies, minds and hearts, societies and cultures. But it is our one best hope of honesty. It is the due process of history’ (Crossan 1999:5; emphasis in original). So in the methodology of postmodern deconstruction that must be repeated in every generation, does he have another subjective criterion for discerning the authenticity of Gospel content?

Is this reasoned deconstruction of the past through creative interaction associated with deconstructed, but idiosyncratic interpretation, or is it driven by another agenda? The following are but a few examples of how the deconstructionist methodology works for Crossan in relation to the resurrection accounts:

(1) 'Within three days [after Jesus was officially tortured and legally executed by Roman imperial power – SDG], however, his tomb was found empty and he appeared to his former companions as risen from the dead. Those resurrectional visions explain the miracle of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman empire' (Crossan 1999:6). Is the resurrection of Jesus as vision to be regarded as his idiosyncratic understanding or can this be justified by exegetical, contextual and historical interpretations?

(2) He wrote of Jesus' 'resurrectional visions…. I use vision and apparition interchangeably, and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' (Crossan 1999:6).[117]

(3) 'Mark created the empty tomb story just as he created the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane…. The empty tomb story is neither an early historical event nor a late legendary narrative but a deliberate Markan creation…. Mark created the empty tomb narrative to replace any risen apparition story as the conclusion of the gospel' (Crossan 1999:11-12, 16). There is a similar statement in Crossan (1998a:558-559).

(4) There are 'two very early Christians who believed absolutely in the resurrection of Jesus', but for one (Paul's received tradition in 1 Corinthians 15) 'risen apparitions were … fully emphasized'. The second, where 'risen apparitions were … completely avoided', is 'Mark 15-16 which, in my view, created both the honorable burial and empty tomb precisely to avoid such resurrectional visions' (Crossan 1999:26).

(5) 'There are not two Jesuses, one pre-Easter and another post-Easter, one earthly and another heavenly, one with a physical and another with a spiritual body. There is only one Jesus, the *historical* Jesus who incarnated, for believers, the Jewish God of justice in a community of such life back then and continued to do so ever afterwards' (Crossan 1999:45; emphasis in original).

In a presentation at the Westar Institute's Jesus Seminar in October 1999, Crossan's 'main proposal was that, since the Age of Enlightenment had been replaced by the Age of Entertainment, the future clash would not be between science and religion but between both of them and fantasy'. He said, 'What I am trying to imagine is what Christianity must do clearly and honestly to distinguish itself from fantasy. If it does not do that, it will certainly survive but as an important and even lucrative sub-division of world-wide entertainment and global illusion' (Crossan 2007:197), but then he assessed in 2007 that 'in 1999[118] I never imagined, even as prophetic nightmare, the speed with which faith-based thinking would morph into fantasy-based dreaming to infiltrate medicine, education, domestic program, foreign policy, and even news reporting' (Crossan 2007:197).

When Crossan conducted a seminar in Portland, Oregon, at Marcus Borg's church, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, a person who purchased one of his books said to him, 'My pastor told me not to come here tonight because you are even to the left of Borg'. Crossan's response was, 'Give your pastor my best regards … and tell him that is the good news. The bad news is that both Borg and Crossan are to the right of Jesus. And worse still, if he will recall Psalm 110, Jesus is to the right of God' (Crossan 2000:204). These are the last words of his autobiography.

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[117] Here he referred to 'works such as those by Ioan Lewis, Erika Bourguignon, Felicitas Goodman, or Raymond Prince' (Crossan 1999:6, n. 5).

[118] What is the significance of 1999? He stated that 'in late October 1999, I discussed "A Future for Christian Faith?" at the Westar Institute's Jesus Seminar in Santa Rosa, California, and it was published the following year in a book entitled, like the conference itself, *The Once and Future Jesus*' (Crossan 2007:197).

So, the historical reconstruction of the historical Jesus which he used to interpret the divine manifestation was designed to satisfy the requirements of a postmodern world.

Triggers identified in his conclusions include:

- **Factives**, 'Christianity is historical reconstruction interpreted as divine manifestation. It is not (*in a postmodern world*) that we find once and for all who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction, a reconstruction that will be and must be in some creative interaction with its own particular needs, visions, and programs'; 'it is that Jesus reconstructed in the dialogues, debates, controversies, and conclusions of contemporary scholarship that challenges faith to see and say how that is for now the Christ, the Lord, the Son of God'; 'I speak instead of reconstruction, and that is something that is done over and over again in different times and different places, by different groups and different communities, and by every generation again and again and again'; 'Mark created the empty tomb story just as he created the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane…. The empty tomb story is neither an early historical event nor a late legendary narrative but a deliberate Markan creation…. Mark created the empty tomb narrative to replace any risen apparition story as the conclusion of the gospel'; 'there are not two Jesuses, one pre-Easter and another post-Easter, one earthly and another heavenly, one with a physical and another with a spiritual body. There is only one Jesus, the historical Jesus who incarnated, for believers, the Jewish God of justice in a community of such life back then and continued to do so ever afterwards'; and 'give your pastor my best regards … and tell him that is the good news [that Crossan is to the left of Borg – SDG] . The bad news is that both Borg and Crossan are to the right of Jesus. And worse still, if he will recall Psalm 110, Jesus is to the right of God';
- **Aspectual verbs**, 'I insist that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present';
- **Intonation**, 'method, method, and, once again, method. It will not guarantee us the truth because nothing can do that. But method, as self-conscious and self-critical as we can make it, is our only discipline. It cannot take us out of our present skins and bodies, minds and hearts, societies and cultures. But it is our one best hope of honesty. It is the due process of history'; 'what I am trying to imagine is what Christianity must do clearly and honestly to distinguish itself from fantasy. If it does not do that, it will certainly survive but as an important and even lucrative sub-division of world-wide entertainment and global illusion'; and 'in 1999 I never imagined, even as prophetic nightmare, the speed with which faith-based thinking would morph into fantasy-based dreaming to infiltrate medicine, education, domestic program, foreign policy, and even news reporting';
- **Projection**, 'the resurrection of Jesus means for me that the human empowerment that some people experienced in Lower Galilee at the start of the first century in and through Jesus is now available to any person in any place at any time who finds God in and through that same Jesus'; 'empty

> tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables expressing that faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story. They are, for me, parables of resurrection not the resurrection itself. Resurrection as the continuing experience of God's presence in and through Jesus is the heart of Christian faith'; 'the gospels are, for me, even more normative as process than as product…. You cannot believe in a fact, only in an interpretation'; 'those resurrectional visions explain the miracle of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman empire'; Jesus' 'resurrectional visions…. I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably, and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion'; 'two very early Christians who believed absolutely in the resurrection of Jesus', but for one (Paul's received tradition in 1 Corinthians 15) 'risen apparitions were … fully emphasized'. The second, where 'risen apparitions were … completely avoided', is 'Mark 15-16 which, in my view, created both the honourable burial and empty tomb precisely to avoid such resurrectional visions'; and 'since the Age of Enlightenment had been replaced by the Age of Entertainment, the future clash would not be between science and religion but between both of them and fantasy';

Presuppositional indicators from these triggers include:

- The divine manifestation of Christianity is a historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world.
- The postmodern historical Jesus is not found once and for all from the first century (way back then), but has to be reinterpreted (redone) in each generation and century.
- The reconstructed, postmodern Jesus is redone in creative interaction with particular needs, visions, programmes, debates and controversies – including conclusions from contemporary scholarship.
- Jesus-reconstruction, like all other reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present.
- Jesus' resurrection means Jesus human empowerment experienced by any person throughout Christian history and today.
- Mark deliberately created the empty tomb story that is not a historical event or legendary narrative.
- The empty tomb and appearance stories are valid parabolic expressions of faith.
- The Gospels are not a normative product, but a process that involves, not belief in facts, but only in interpretations.
- Self-conscious and self-critical use of method will not guarantee truth or take us out of ourselves or our cultures. However, it is the one best hope of honesty in the due process of history.
- Christianity must distinguish itself from fantasy.
- Jesus' resurrection is described as a vision or an apparition (terms used interchangeably) within the framework of psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion. It is not unique to Christianity.

Presuppositional indicators pointing to the resurrection as divine empowerment of human beings are covered by §3.3.2.5.1, presupposition number 8. The empty tomb and resurrection appearances as parable are in §3.3.2.3.1, presupposition number 6, and §3.3.2.7.1, presupposition number 14.

3.3.5.1 Presupposition number 23: Deconstruction and postmodernism

Historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world, is how to present the divine manifestation of Christianity. It is not done, once for all, but has to be redone for the different needs to be reinterpreted in each generation, based on the issues of that era.

3.3.6 Crossan's conclusions

An inductive methodology is used, following the Beaver and Geurts (2011) model, for identification of presuppositions in Crossan's publications. Crossan claimed no spurious objectivity for his method but he acknowledged the support of those who represent his intellectual debts.

Crossan's literary problems with the Gospels were acknowledged along with his controversial use of the Cross Gospel as the original source of the passion-resurrection story that was adopted and adapted by the canonical Gospel writers.

Several presuppositions were examined concerning Crossan's disbelief in the supernatural. He does not regard miracles as supernatural interventions in the world.

His interpretation of Jesus' resurrection is based on his own formulation from the data and does not use a literal-factual reading of the text. His resurrectional conclusions were: (1) There was no literal, historical or supernatural bodily resurrection of Jesus; (2) The appearances of Jesus after his resurrection were apparitions, visions or trance; (3) The writings about Jesus' resurrection were not factual history but were literary fiction, metaphor and parable, some of it being created by the Gospel authors – there was no resuscitated body; (4) The passion-resurrection events were not unique to grant a special privilege to Christianity; (5) In the description of Jesus' resurrection, metaphors were used to express Jesus' continuing presence of empowerment for the first Christians; (6) The primary emphasis is to assign meaning to Jesus' resurrection – the general resurrection had begun. It does not deal with the afterlife, but Jesus' post-Easter appearances were literary fiction to tell of the struggles over power and authority in the early church. It deals with personal and political transformations that are not exclusivist, but are pluralist in application; (7) The appearance stories after the resurrection are reflections of Jesus' followers after his death; and (8) Historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world, is how to present the divine manifestation of Christianity, including the resurrection. It is not done, once for all, but has to be redone for the different needs to be reinterpreted in each generation, based on the issues of that era.

In Chapter 4, the twenty-three presuppositions will be stated as hypotheses to be tested for verification or falsification, however only three hypotheses will be tested: (1) Hypothesis 9: The factuality of the resurrection stories of Jesus is not supported; (2) Hypothesis 10: The divine manifestation for Christianity is interpreted by reconstruction for a postmodern world; and (3) Hypothesis 12: It does not matter what a person believes whether the tomb of Jesus was empty or not. The importance is the meaning of the empty tomb.

Chapter 4

The validity of presuppositions

4.1 TESTING THE VALIDITY OF CROSSAN'S PROMINENT PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR HIS TEACHING ON JESUS' RESURRECTION TRADITION

John Hick wrote that 'the beginning of wisdom is to become aware of our own presuppositions as options that can be examined and questioned' (Hick 1999:1). The focus of this testing will be on Crossan's twenty-seven presuppositions identified in Chapter 3, based on §3.3, J D Crossan and the resurrection tradition: I formulate it as I see it. The methodology pursued will be that stated in Chapter 1 and §3.1 of the development of hypotheses, based on the presuppositions to be tested for verification or falsification. These hypotheses are as follows:

4.1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

These will be categorised under the subject headings of: (1) Jesus' resurrection, which will include (a) Hermeneutics of resurrection, (b) The empty tomb, (c) Jesus' resurrection appearances, and (3) Resurrection and extra-canonical material.

4.1.1.1 Hermeneutics of Jesus' resurrection

4.1.1.1.1 Hypothesis 1: The factuality of the New Testament Gospels' resurrection stories of Jesus is not supported.[119] Emphasis is given to their meaning and intention

This comes from presupposition number 21, 'The importance of the resurrection stories lies, not in their factuality, but in their meaning and intention'.[120]

4.1.1.1.2 Hypothesis 2: The term resurrection always meant a bodily resurrection; Jesus' resurrection was not an individual event but a communal process involving the past, present and future. The general resurrection began with Jesus' resurrection

Development of this hypothesis is from presupposition number 8, 'While the term resurrection always meant a bodily resurrection, Jesus resurrection was not an individual event but was a communal process involving past, present and future. There was no gap between Jesus' resurrection and the general resurrection. The general resurrection began with Jesus' resurrection'.[121]

4.1.1.1.3 Hypothesis 3: The literal-factual reading of the passion-resurrection narratives is rejected as it requires supernatural intervention.[122] The resurrection is the supreme nature miracle which has the creedal meaning that promotes ecclesiastical authority

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[119] This is based on Crossan's statements that Jesus' body was not resuscitated and that the empty tomb was not a historical fact. The Emmaus story was not factually true and Jesus' other post-resurrection appearances were not factual but were reflections of his followers, according to Crossan. These will be examined below.

[120] See presupposition number 17 in §3.3.2.10.1(a).

[121] See presupposition number 4 in §3.3.2.1.

[122] See §3.2 above, which exposes Crossan's opposition to the supernatural, including miracles.

This arises from presupposition number 9, 'A literal-factual reading of the passion-resurrection narratives requires belief in the God who acts through supernatural intervention to perform nature miracles. The resurrection is the supreme nature miracle but its meaning is in the form of a creedal statement that promotes ecclesiastical authority'.[123]

4.1.1.1.4 Hypothesis 4: Jesus' resurrection had the meaning that Jesus' divine empowerment was a continuing experience in believers, the experience of the Kingdom of God

The hypothesis is based on presupposition number 12, 'Jesus' resurrection meant the continuation of divine empowerment – Jesus' continuing experience with believers – which is the experience of the Kingdom of God'.[124]

4.1.1.1.5 Hypothesis 5: Jesus' resurrection was not a miracle about life after death and proving that Jesus was the Son of God but its meaning was that of parable and metaphor

This arises from presupposition number 10, 'The meaning of the resurrection was that it was not a miracle about life after death or proving Jesus was the Son of God, but it was a parable and metaphor'.[125]

4.1.1.1.6 Hypothesis 6: The literal-factual interpretation of the Easter events is rejected because it uniquely privileges Christianity as the only full revelation of God who is the only way to follow

This hypothesis had its origin in presupposition number 16, 'A literal-factual interpretation of the Easter events causes them to be understood as unique, privileges Christianity, and makes it the only full revelation of God who is the only way'.[126]

4.1.1.1.7 Hypothesis 7: Jesus' resurrection did not refer to a resuscitated body or to the Christian faith, but to the life and death of Jesus experienced by contemporary believers in communities. Resurrection is only one way of Christians experiencing Jesus with them

The origin of the hypothesis is in presupposition number 20, 'Jesus' bodily resurrection does not refer to a resuscitated body or to Christian faith itself, but that the embodied life and death of Jesus continues to be experienced by contemporary believers as they form communities with similar goals. Resurrection is only one way for Christians to think of experiencing Jesus-with-us'.[127]

4.1.1.1.8 Hypothesis 8: Good Friday (Jesus' death) and Easter Sunday (Jesus' resurrection) had personal and political meaning of dying to an old way of life and being reborn to a new way of life

This was created from presupposition number 23, 'Good Friday and Easter Sunday had personal and political meaning through the meaning of death and resurrection – dying to an old way of being and being reborn to a new way of being'.[128]

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[123] See presupposition number 5 in §3.3.2.2.1.
[124] See presupposition number 8 in §3.3.2.5.1.
[125] See presupposition number 6 in §3.3.2.3.1.
[126] See presupposition number 12 in §3.3.2.6.3.
[127] See presupposition number 16 in §3.3.2.9.1.
[128] See presupposition number19 in §3.3.2.12.1.

4.1.1.1.9 Hypothesis 9: The divine manifestation for Christianity is interpreted by reconstruction for a postmodern world. It is not done once for all but is reinterpreted for each generation's issues

The hypothesis is based on presupposition number 27, 'Historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world, is how to present the divine manifestation of Christianity. It is not done, once for all, but has to be redone for the different needs to be reinterpreted in each generation, based on the issues of that era'.[129]

4.1.1.2 The empty tomb

4.1.1.2.1 Hypothesis 10: Jesus' empty tomb was not an historical fact, but Jesus' appearances were apparitions that were entirely historically factual

This has arisen from presupposition number 11, 'The empty tomb of Jesus was not a historical fact but involved apparitions that were historically factual in their entirety'.[130]

4.1.1.2.2 Hypothesis 11: It is doubtful that there was an empty tomb of Jesus and his followers knew where the tomb was located. However, fiction and mythology were involved at the end of Jesus' life as at the beginning[131]

This is developed from presupposition number 13, 'The empty tomb was not a historical fact. It was doubtful that there was an empty tomb and that Jesus' followers knew where he was buried. Fiction and mythology crowd the end of Jesus' life (Easter stories) as they did at the beginning (Nativity)'.[132]

4.1.1.2.3 Hypothesis 12: It does not matter what a person believes whether the tomb of Jesus was empty or not. The importance is the meaning of the empty tomb that affirmed Jesus' opposition to the powers that killed him. It is a parabolic narrative whose truth is independent of its factuality

The hypothesis is based on presupposition number 19, 'The meaning of Jesus' empty tomb was that God affirmed Jesus in opposition to the powers that killed him. It does not matter what a person believes about whether the tomb was empty or not. The important issue is the meaning of the parabolic narrative of the Easter stories. The truth of a parable is independent of its factuality'.[133]

4.1.1.2.4 Hypothesis 13: The narrative of the women who found the tomb empty on resurrection morning is not a straight-forward historical account but was a process of the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the community of faith that happened over many years

The origin of this hypothesis is in presupposition number 17, 'It is not a straight-forward historical account that records the women who found the tomb empty on resurrection morning. It was a process that happened over many years, involving the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the community of faith'.[134]

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[129] See presupposition number 23 in §3.3.5.1.
[130] See presupposition number 7 in §3.3.2.4.1.
[131] The denial of the empty tomb as an historical fact is assessed in hypothesis 12.
[132] See presupposition number 9 in §3.3.2.5.2.
[133] See presupposition number 15 in §3.3.2.8.1.
[134] See presupposition number 13 in §3.3.2.6.4.

4.1.1.3 Jesus' resurrection appearances

4.1.1.3.1 Hypothesis 14: Jesus' resurrection appearances involved apparitions, trances and ecstasies that were dramatic ways of Jesus empowering faith in the first Christians. He was the same Jesus, but in a different mode of existence[135]

This comes from presupposition number 18, 'Jesus' resurrection appearances, expressed in the last chapters of the Gospels, involved apparitions, trances and ecstasies that were dramatic ways of experiencing the empowering faith of Jesus for the first Christians. He was the same Jesus but in a different mode of existence'.[136]

4.1.1.3.2 Hypothesis 15: The story on the road to Emmaus on Easter Sunday was not factually true but involved Jesus' presence and empowerment in the Christian community over many years

The hypothesis arises from presupposition number 14, 'The Emmaus story, although not a factually true event that happened on Easter Sunday, was a process that involved the presence and empowerment of Jesus in the Christian community over many years'.[137]

4.1.1.3.3 Hypothesis 16: The post-Easter appearances of Jesus' were not visions but were created as literary fiction to convey the struggles of power and authority in the early church

This is developed from presupposition number 22, 'Jesus' post-Easter appearances are not visions but are literary fiction that tell of the struggles over power and authority in the early church'.[138]

4.1.1.3.4 Hypothesis 17: Jesus' appearance stories, which appear in no more than one Gospel are not factual but are reflections from Jesus' followers after his death

Presupposition number 25 provided the basis for this hypothesis, 'The appearance stories, none of which appears in more than one Gospel, are reflections by Jesus' followers after his death'.[139]

4.1.1.4 Resurrection and extra-canonical material

4.1.1.4.1 Hypothesis 18: The Gospel of Mark was the first New Testament writer to use the material on the passion-resurrection narrative from the Cross Gospel (in GPet), changing it from prophetic to narrative passion. Mark negated the visible resurrection and the Roman confession by retrojecting it into other sections of his Gospel

The origin of this hypothesis is in presupposition number 26, 'Mark was the first Gospel writer to use the Cross Gospel for his passion-resurrection narrative, moving it from prophetic to narrative passion. Mark negated Jesus' visible resurrection and the Roman confession through retrojection into other sections of his Gospel'.[140]

Each hypothesis will be examined according to the model proposed by Lewis and Demarest (1987:25) in §1.5. The topic has been defined through identification of presuppositions that have been converted into hypotheses to be tested for confirmation or falsification. To ascertain the viability of the hypotheses, there will be, (1) Surveys of influential alternate answers in the church; (2) An examination of the relevant biblical data in their chronological development; and (3) A formulation of a comprehensive conclusion, defending it against competing alternatives.[141]

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[135] This has a parallel with hypothesis 9.
[136] See presupposition number 14 in §3.3.2.7.1.
[137] See presupposition number 10 in §3.3.2.6.1.
[138] See presupposition number 18 in §3.3.2.11.1.
[139] See on presupposition number 21 in §3.3.3.1
[140] See presupposition number 22 in §3.3.4.1.

However, there are some abduction[142] dynamics that have emerged in analysis of this data that infer some other hypotheses. An example is Crossan's postmodern 'working definition of history' where he stated that '*history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). However, when he stated historical information himself, he did not consistently apply this definition. He mixed a traditional understanding of history with his postmodern approach (see examples in the abduction of §4.2.1.2). Another example is Crossan's hermeneutical choice not to pursue the ordinary or normal meaning of a statement of a biblical text (Lewis & Demarest 1987:29-31) on many occasions and to use his reconstructed (others call it deconstructed) understanding of that text. This will be investigated when the relevant hypotheses are assessed.

These interrelated criteria of truth will be used: logical non-contradiction and empirical adequacy. The only hypotheses accepted are those that are found to be non-contradictory, supported by adequate evidence, and affirmable without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25).

Because of space limitations in this project, the testing of hypotheses will be limited to Hypotheses 9, 10, and 12 because these address three practical dimensions to Crossan's approach to the resurrection: (a) He rejects the resurrection accounts as historical (hypothesis 10); (b) A replacement for the historical is his hermeneutic of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism (hypothesis 9); and (c) An example of postmodern, reconstructive application is his nonchalant attitude towards the empty tomb with a focus, instead, on the meaning of the resurrection (hypothesis 12).

4.2 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 10: THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE NOT HISTORICAL[143]

There are issues raised in Crossan's scholarship that indicate that he does not support the New Testament narratives on Christ's resurrection as recording the resurrection as an historical event.

This hypothesis pursues some of these issues and is based on two presuppositions: (1) Presupposition number 1, §3.2.1.1.1 (a) which exposes the view that miracles are not supernatural interventions, nor attributed to naturalism, but are symbolic, creedal statements to benefit Christians and the church; and (2) Presupposition number 17, §3.3.2.10.1 (a) which places the focus not on the factuality of the resurrection stories but on their meaning and intention. Crossan also stated that Jesus' body was not resuscitated and that the empty tomb was not a historical fact. For him, the Emmaus story was not factually true and Jesus' other post-resurrection appearances were reflections of the beliefs of his followers.

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[141] Lewis and Demarest outline the process as: 'The Problem; Historical Hypothesis; Biblical Teaching; Systematic Formulation; Apologetic Interaction; and Relevance for Life and Ministry' (1987:26). All but relevance for life and ministry will be pursued in this project.

[142] See §1.6.1 and §2.6 for a brief discussion of the abduction process.

[143] This is a scaled back statement of Hypothesis 10 in §4.1.1.2.1 to facilitate its testing. In addition, the post-resurrection apparitional appearances (Crossan's language) are examined in §4.4.8.2.

4.2.1 Crossan's specifics that challenge the New Testament resurrection narratives as history

These particulars are summarised according to five main topics:

- What is the nature of history?
- Hermeneutics of reconstruction;
- The non-supernatural God and Jesus' resurrection;
- The nature of Jesus' resurrection; and
- Post resurrection events.

4.2.1.1 The nature of history

What is the nature of history and how is historiography determined? The definition of historiography that is used for this project is that of Robert Kraft, professor of religious studies focusing on the history and philosophy of religion (Christian origins). History is 'the study of how those who attempted to record information about the past went about their tasks' (Kraft 2007).

One of the issues pursued in this analysis of Crossan's approach to history is: Since it is granted that interpretation is needed in an association with the bare facts of history, where do interpretation and deconstruction part ways?

4.2.1.1.1 Historians and core elements of their historiography

The isolation of Crossan's presuppositions regarding the historical or non-historical nature of Christ's resurrection is based on his data in §3.3.2.5 (history, myth and fiction). How do other historians, secular and Christian, define the nature of history and historiography, and how do they compare with Crossan's understanding of historiography?

(a) Herodotus of Halicarnassus (*ca* 484 – 425 BC)[144]

Ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, known by some as the father of history began his only historical work, written on the conflict between Greeks and Persians, in 430-424 BC, The history of Herodotus (Herodotus 1890), with his understanding of history: 'This is the showing forth of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, to the end that neither the deeds of men may be forgotten by lapse of time, nor the works great and marvellous, which have been produced some by Hellenes and some by Barbarians, may lose their renown; and especially that the causes may be remembered for which these waged war with one another' (Herodotus 1890:Bk 1 Clio). 'Inquiry' is the Greek ἱστορία, which passed through Latin and acquired the modern meaning of 'history'. A more recent translation of the beginning of Herodotus' first book is 'These are the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, which he publishes' (Herodotus 1994-2009: Bk 1 Clio).

Herodotus was in the tradition of Greek historian, Hecataeus, and according to historian, Raymond Kierstead, sought 'to separate fact from myth, to query his sources, to get the story right. In so doing, Herodotus established what would be the fundamental framework and subject matter of this new form of inquiry. History would deal with near-contemporary and contemporary events' (Kierstead 2011).

Kierstead's assessment was that 'the great originality of Herodotus was most certainly not his empirical method, but rather … his attempt, once he got his selected facts in order, to interpret and explain the human past' (Kierstead 2011).

Herodotus's understanding of the historical method was formative and developing; it was not as required by the objective ancient historian of today. He included facts of the past, assessed in his political milieu, but it was filtered through his worldview, thus excluding elements that were not in conformity with that perspective on historiography.

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[144] The lifespan dates for Herodotus are from Herodotus (1890).

(b) Flavius Josephus (*ca* AD 37-101)[145]

While Josephus' inclusion of evidence for Jesus is mentioned here, the main purpose for discussing this leading Jewish historian is to inquire into his method of historiography. He began *The Jewish Antiquities* with his understanding of history and the purpose for its writing. He gave four reasons for writing history; the two which apply to his writings are by historians who are

> of necessity and by force, driven to write history, because they are concerned in the facts, and so cannot excuse themselves from committing them to writing, for the advantage of posterity…. For since I was myself interested in that war which we Jews had with the Romans, and knew myself its particular actions, and what conclusion it had, I was forced to give the history of it, because I saw that others perverted the truth of those actions in their writings. Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks[146] worthy of their study; for it will contain all our antiquities, and the constitution of our government, as interpreted out of the Hebrew Scriptures.

(Josephus n db:1-2)

Therefore, Josephus identified two primary emphases in his writings: (1) A concern for the facts of history, and (2) interpretation of the facts. For him, this related to his Hebrew worldview as informed by the Old Testament Scriptures.

Where did Jesus fit into his studies of the time? In *Antiquities*, he wrote:

> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. *He was [the] Christ*. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross,[147] those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; *for he appeared to them alive again the third day*;[148] as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand *other wonderful things* concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day

(Josephus n db:18.3.3; emphasis added)

These added emphases in Josephus are considered 'the most doubtful words' by Schaff who noted that 'this testimony is first quoted by Eusebius, twice, without a misgiving … and was considered genuine down to the 16th century, but has been disputed ever since' (Schaff 1882:84). There are three excerpts from Eusebius' works that refer to parts of this reference by Josephus – Eusebius (1843:5.44; 1890a:1.11; and 2007:3.5).

Schaff concluded that 'it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Josephus must have taken some notice of the greatest event in Jewish history (as he certainly did of John the Baptist and of James), but that his statement – whether non-committal or hostile – was skillfully enlarged or altered by a Christian hand, and thereby deprived of its historical value' (Schaff 1882:85).

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[145] Lifespan dates are from Hoeber (1910). Schaff dates his death to 'after A.D. 103' (Schaff 1882:58).
[146] Here the endnote was, 'That is, all the Gentiles, both Greeks and Romans'.
[147] Here the footnote was 'A.D. 33, April 3'.
[148] Here the footnote stated, 'April 5'.

Josephus was concerned to put the facts of history into writing for the benefit of the public and to correct those who had 'perverted the truth' of historical claims in their writings. For him, the facts of history were interpreted through the worldview of the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, Josephus' historiography included facts and interpretations based on those facts.

(c) Tacitus, also known as Publius Cornelius Tacitus, or Gaius Cornelius (*ca* 56-120)[149]

He was regarded by some as 'Roman orator and public official, probably the greatest historian and one of the greatest prose stylists who wrote in the Latin language' (Encyclopaedia Britannica. S v Tacitus). In writing his history, 'Tacitus joined the line of succession of those who described and interpreted their own period, and he took up the story from the political situation that followed Nero's death to the close of the Flavian dynasty' (The VRoma Project n d).

What did his historical method incorporate? One assessment was that he wrote 'a brilliant as well as systematic account of the critical Flavian period in Roman history, especially where Tacitus wrote with firsthand knowledge of provincial conditions in the West and of Domitian's last years in Rome' (The VRoma Project n d).

One of the early secular references to Christ is from Tacitus's writings:

> Consequently, to get rid of the report [of arson of Rome's great fire in AD 64 – SDG], Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.
>
> (Tacitus 1864-1877:15.44)

One of the most significant problems that historians face is the incompleteness of the evidence and this is exemplified with Tacitus, *The Annals*, where 'books 7-10 (covering the principate of Caligula) and books 17-18 (narrating Nero's fall) are missing. Claudius's history of the principate of Augustus has not survived' (Barnett 2005:11).

When comparing Tacitus with other historians, it is significant to note that he recorded facts about historical personages, events and milieu within the interpretive framework sympathetic towards the rule of the Roman Empire. Description of facts and interpretation, based on those facts, were part of his historiography.

(d) Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (*ca* AD 69-after 122)[150]

Of one of his writings, it was reported that 'De vita Caesarum, which treats Julius Caesar and the emperors up to Domitian, is largely responsible for that vivid picture of Roman society and its leaders, morally and politically decadent, that dominated historical thought until modified in modern times by the discovery of nonliterary evidence. The biographies are organized not chronologically but by topics' (Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2014 S v Suetonius).

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[149] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Tacitus). Others have slight variations of his lifespan, including: about AD 56-117 (Tacitus 1864-1877), and AD 55-117 (Cairns 1981:45).

[150] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Suetonius).

Suetonius's mention of Jesus is contentious among historians. It is recorded that he wrote in his life of Claudius, 'Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus[151] he expelled them from Rome' (Suetonius 1914a:25.4). This expulsion from Rome is also mentioned in the New Testament at Acts 18:2 and Wright noted that, even though this is controversial, 'the episode took place in about 49 AD' (Wright 1992:355).

During the reign of Nero, Suetonius reported, 'Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition' (Suetonius 1914b:16.2). Wright's comment was that 'Suetonius is no more reliable than a tabloid newspaper. Mere proximity to the event is not enough' (Wright 1992:16).

Suetonius wrote during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117-138) and although, 'racy and unreliable though he often is', these extracts about Chrestus 'are normally regarded as referring to actual events…. It has often been pointed out that the difference in pronunciation between Chrestus and Christus would be minimal in this period' (Wright 1992:355).[152]

These citations by Suetonius are contentious among historians because (1) Suetonius is not always reliable as an historian; (2) the statement, 'he expelled them from Rome' is 'very vague' and he may be confusing what he heard about Christ at that time with what happened in the time of Claudius (Foakes-Jackson 1924:48, n. 3); (3) 'Chrestus was not Jesus the Messiah but a pretender whose name has not survived' (Judge and Thomas, in Barnett 1999:45[153]); and (4) the Christian interpretation of Chrestus arose from the fifth century historian Orosius, and Chrestus is an independent person (Slingerland).[154] Barnett contends that 'most scholars believe' that when Suetonius wrote of 'Chrestus', he was referring to Jesus 'Christus' and there were Christians in Rome by AD 49 (Barnett 2003:21).

It is evident that Suetonius, 'Roman biographer and antiquarian' (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014. S v Suetonius), endorsed a historiography that included information about people and events from the Roman Empire's past. His premise led to the action of treating history as dealing with historical facts, even though he was incorrect with some details.

(e) Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea (*ca* 265-339)[155]

Cairns noted that Eusebius' greatest work, *Ecclesiastical history* (Eusebius Pamphilus 1890a), surveyed church history from apostolic times until 324. Scholars regret the lack of careful documentation of his sources, which is a modern phenomenon (Cairns 1981:143). Schaff's assessment was that 'whatever may be said of the defects of Eusebius as an historical critic and writer, his learning and industry are unquestionable, and his Church History and Chronicle will always remain an invaluable collection of information not attainable in any other ancient author' (Schaff 1889a:9).

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[151] The endnote at this point stated, 'Another form of Christus; see Tert. *Apol.* 3 (at the end). It is uncertain whether Suetonius is guilty of an error in chronology or is referring to some Jew of that name. The former seems probable because of the absence of quodam. Tac. *Ann.* 15.44, uses the correct form, Christus, and states that He was executed in the reign of Tiberius' (Suetonius 1914: n. 75).

[152] Wright's footnote at this point was, 'It is quite possibly alluded to, or at least presupposed, in Rom. As well: see several articles in Donfried 1991 [1977], and Wright 1992a' (Wright 1992: 355, n. 49).

[153] This should be note 8 but as a typographical error it is unnumbered.

[154] Points (3) and (4) are from Barnett (1999:45, n. 8).

[155] Lifespan dates are from Cairns (1981:143). Schaff indicated that his death was in 340 (Schaff 1889a:8).

What were some of Eusebius' own statements concerning his approach to historiography? At the beginning of his seminal and foundational document on ecclesiastical history, he stated that his purpose was

> to write an account of the successions of the holy apostles, as well as of the times which have elapsed from the days of our Saviour to our own; and to relate the many important events which are said to have occurred in the history of the Church.... It is my purpose also to give the names and number and times of those who through love of innovation have run into the greatest errors, and, proclaiming themselves discoverers of knowledge falsely so-called have like fierce wolves unmercifully devastated the flock of Christ. It is my intention, moreover, to recount the misfortunes which immediately came upon the whole Jewish nation in consequence of their plots against our Saviour, and to record the ways and the times in which the divine word has been attacked by the Gentiles…. and to describe the character of those who at various periods have contended for it in the face of blood and of tortures, as well as the confessions which have been made in our own days, and finally the gracious and kindly succor which our Saviour has afforded them all. Since I propose to write of all these things I shall commence my work with the beginning of the dispensation of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> (Eusebius 1890a:1.1.1-3)

Eusebius wrote of the martyrs and the sustenance they received in their suffering, explaining that it was beyond his power 'to produce a perfect and complete history' and he was attempting to traverse 'a lonely and untrodden path'. He called upon the Lord God to guide and provide power for the task as he was 'unable to find even the bare footsteps of those who have traveled the way before me, except in brief fragments, in which some in one way, others in another, have transmitted to us particular accounts of the times in which they lived'. He regarded these 'voices' from the past were 'like torches … admonishing us where to walk and how to direct the course of our work steadily and safely'. He regarded his work to be 'of especial importance because I know of no ecclesiastical writer who has devoted himself to this subject; and I hope that it will appear most useful to those who are fond of historical research (Eusebius 1890a:1.81.4-7).

Letters were available to him of church leader of whom he wrote: 'The great bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, shall again assist us by his own words (eyewitness testimony); relating the several affairs of his time in the epistles which he has left'. These included the death of emperor Decius, slain with his children; the succession of emperor Gallus who became prosperous and persecuted 'holy men who were interceding with God for his peace and welfare'. Origen's death, aged sixty-nine, occurred at this time, I will begin with them'. Here he stated that when emperor (Eusebius 1890a:7.1)

Eusebius wrote of (1) hear-say evidence with his report that 'after the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh' (Eusebius 1890a:3.11.1). Further, (2) 'There is nothing like hearing the historian himself, who writes as follows: "Certain of these heretics brought accusation against Symeon, the son of Clopas, on the ground that he was a descendant of David and a Christian; and thus he suffered martyrdom, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, while Trajan was emperor and Atticus governor"' (Eusebius 1890a:3.32.3), and (3) extant documents. Of the reign of Roman Emperor Gallienus, Eusebius wrote: 'And there is extant another epistle of his [Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth[156] – SDG] addressed to the Nicomedians [in Bithynia – SDG], in which he attacks the heresy of Marcion, and stands fast by the canon of the truth' (Eusebius 1890a:4.23.4).

J B Lightfoot observed an aspect of Eusebius' historiography: '"There is nothing like hearing the actual words" of the writer, he says again and again (i. 23, iii. 32, vii. 23; cf. iv. 23), when introducing a quotation' (Lightfoot 1911:325). Lightfoot noted that 'almost every page witnesses to the zeal with which he collected testimonies from writers who lived at the time of the events which he describes' (Lightfoot 1911:324).

Eusebius himself gives further demonstration of historical method:

- 'We can best learn from the words of that historian who, in the seventeenth book of his Antiquities of the Jews, writes as follows concerning his end' (Eusebius 1890a:1.8.5).
- 'But as regards the persecution which prevailed so fiercely in his reign [Valerian – SDG], and the sufferings which Dionysius with others endured on account of piety toward the God of the universe, his own words shall show, which he wrote in answer to Germanus, a contemporary bishop who was endeavoring to slander him. His statement is as follows….' (Eusebius 1890a:7.11.1).
- 'But listen to the very words which were spoken on both sides, as they were recorded: Dionysius, Faustus, Maximus, Marcellus, and Chæremon being arraigned, Æmilianus the prefect said' (Eusebius 1890a:7.11.6).

There were interpretations and examples of supernatural intervention from within a Judeo-Christian worldview:

- 'His position was far from easy before. His brilliant parts naturally aroused the jealousy and suspicions of the emperors' (Eusebius 1890a:6.12.1.1.1).
- 'And when a certain brother among the presbyters restrained me, fearing that I should be carried away with the filth of their wickedness (for it would defile my soul) – in which also, as I perceived, he spoke the truth – a vision sent from God came and strengthened me. And the word which came to me commanded me, saying distinctly, 'Read everything which thou canst take in hand, for thou art able to correct and prove all; and this has been to thee from the beginning the cause of thy faith.' I received the vision as agreeing with the apostolic word, which says to them that are stronger, 'Be skillful money-changers' (Eusebius 1890a:7.7.2-3)
- 'And according to what was foretold in the Psalms [Psalm 89:39-45 – SDG][157]: "He has made void the covenant of his servant, and profaned his sanctuary to the earth – in the destruction of the churches – and has thrown down all his strongholds, and has made his fortresses cowardice"' (Eusebius 1890a:1.8.9).

In his life of Emperor Constantine, Eusebius exemplified his approach to historiography when he wrote:

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[156] Schaff's dating of his bishopric, probably as successor of Primus, was 'in the third quarter of the second century, until about A.D. 170' (Schaff 1889a:463).

[157] These verses were suggested in the translation.

> The Emperor Flavius Valerius Constantinus, surnamed the Great, born February 27, 272 or 274, at Naïssus, was son of Constantius Chlorus, afterwards Emperor, and Helena his wife. He was brought up at Drepanum, his mother's home, where he remained until his father became Cæsar (a.d. 292 acc. to Clinton) and divorced Helena (Anon. Vales. p. 471). He was then sent to the court of Diocletian, nominally to be educated (Praxagoras, in Müller, *Fragm.* 4 (1868); Zonar. 13. 1, &c.), but really as hostage, and remained with Diocletian, or Galerius, until the year 306. During this time he took part in various campaigns, including the famous Egyptian expedition of Diocletian in 296 (Euseb. *V. C.* 1. 19; Anon. Metroph., Theoph. p. 10). Shortly after joining the emperor he contracted (296 or 297) his alliance with Minervina, by whom he had a son, Crispus. He was at Nicomedia when Diocletian's palace was struck by lightning (Const. *Orat.* 35), and was present at the abdication of Diocletian and Maximinus in 305 (Lact. *De M. P.* c. 18 sq.). This last event proved a crisis for Constantine. He had grown to be a man of fine physique (Lact. c. 18; Euseb. *V. C.* 1. 19), of proved courage and military skill (cf. remarks on physical characteristics under *Character*), and a general favorite (Lact. l.c.). He had already "long before" (Lact. c. 18) been created Tribune of the first order. It was both natural and fitting that at this time he should become Cæsar in the place of his father, who became Augustus.
>
> (Eusebius n db:1.1.1)

In his statement about the life of the Emperor Constantine (Eusebius n db:1.1.1), Eusebius provided an application of his approach to historiography (articulated above in Eusebius 1890a:1.81.4-7), which leads to a statement of the core elements of Eusebius' historiography. He provided accounts of people and places from the past, important events in the life of the church in each generation from the time of Christ to his own era. This included the recording in his writing of those who were proclaimers of the divine Word, both orally and in writing, as well as those who were committing the greatest errors. He obtained his information from the fragments provided by others. His specific language was that his intention was to record certain events which he chose as highlights. However, he engaged in interpretation of events, people and their character. He stated that he used 'historical narrative' to 'preserve the memory' of not all, but the most renowned successions of the Saviour's apostles in the most noted churches. He wanted his writing to be of interest to those pursuing 'historical research' with the proviso that his was not a perfect record (Eusebius 1890d: 1.1.5-6).

The core of his historiography involved recording events from the past and providing some interpretations of those events.

(f) **Arnold Joseph Toynbee** (1889-1975)[158]

Distinguished British historian, Arnold Toynbee, who wrote a twelve-volume series on the rise and fall of civilisations (the last being completed in 1961), had this view of history: 'The intelligible unit of historical study is neither a nation state nor (at the other end of the scale) mankind as a whole but a certain grouping of humanity which we have called a society. We have discovered five such societies in existence today, together with sundry fossilized evidences of societies dead and gone' (Toynbee 1974:11).[159]

The nature of Toynbee's approach to historiography is noted with this kind of statement, 'This method of interpreting historical facts [certain groupings of humanity, societies – SDG] may, perhaps, be made clearer by a concrete example which may be taken from the history of the city states of Ancient Greece during the first four centuries falling between 725 and 325 B. C.' (Toynbee 1974:3).

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[158] Lifespan dates are from the *New World Encyclopedia* (2011. S v Arnold Joseph Toynbee).

[159] The original was published in 1946.

Toynbee demonstrated his approach to history where historical English study for him involved the investigation of five groupings (Western Christendom, Orthodox Christian Society, Islamic Society, Hindu Society, and Far-Eastern Society) which were international societies (Toynbee1974:8). Like historians before him, he took the historical facts and sought to interpret them on the bases of societies.

(g) **Sir Geoffrey Elton** (1921-1994)[160]

German-born, British Tudor historian of Cambridge University, Geoffrey Elton, provided this definition: 'History deals in events, not states; it investigates things that happen and not things that are…. History treats fundamentally of the transformation of things (people, institutions, ideas, and so on) from one state into another, and the event is its concern as well as its instrument'. This led him to 'rephrase the earlier definition of history' (as above). 'It is concerned with all those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left present deposit; and It deals with them from the point of view of happening, change and the particular' (Elton 1967:10-12)

Elton was so opposed to the postmodern approach to history that he wrote, 'We are fighting for the lives of innocent young people beset by devilish tempters who claim to offer higher forms of thought and deeper truths and insights – the intellectual equivalent of crack, in fact. Any acceptance of these theories – even the most gentle or modest bow in their direction – can prove fatal' (Elton 1991:41).

Barnett observed that not everyone shares Elton's view of history, in particular 'those who apply social science to historical studies', when they place emphases on 'what was, on the way things were, rather than on particular events and why they occurred'. Thus, social scientists inquire into known groups of the time such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes with attempts made to understand Jesus in the light of these groups. 'The methodology seeks to be "holistic", that is, to paint a bigger canvas than the extant historical texts' (Barnett 1997:19).

Elton's definition of history differs markedly from that of Crossan. For Elton, history involves the study of recoverable, present evidence from the past involving human sayings, thoughts and deeds that have left a deposit. He opposed any postmodern approach to history that offers higher forms of thought and deeper insights. Going in this direction can prove fatal, wrote Elton, as it seeks to move beyond the extant historical texts (Elton 1991:41).

(h) **Philip Schaff** (1819-1893)[161]

The first duty of the historian, according to eminent church historian Schaff, is one that comprehends all others and that includes fidelity and justice. He must reproduce the history itself, making it live again in his presentation. His highest and only aim should be, like a witness, to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and, like a judge, to do full justice to every person and event which comes under his view'. In addition, to be a faithful historian, 'he needs a threefold qualification – scientific, artistic, and religious'. A primary responsibility is to 'master the sources', but in such an examination, the historian 'must thoroughly and impartially examine their genuineness and integrity, and the credibility and capacity of the witnesses. Thus only can he duly separate fact from fiction, truth from error' (Schaff 1882:29).

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[160] Lifespan dates for Geoffrey Elton are from Sybil Jack (1995:1).
[161] Lifespan dates are from Latourette (1975b:1268).

Schaff's work as a church historian meant examining the 'first works on church history' which he regarded to be the 'canonical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the inspired biographical memoirs of Jesus Christ, who is the anthropic head of the Church universal'. Then came Luke's Acts of the Apostles which described the planting of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome among both Jews and Gentiles. Then Schaff mentioned the post-apostolic works on church history, particularly referring to Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (Schaff 1882:34). Schaff noted that 'the Epistles of the New Testament are without a parallel in ancient literature, and yield in importance only to the Gospels, which stand higher, as Christ himself rises above the apostles' (Schaff 1882:618).

Schaff emphasised the two sides of history, the divine and the human, with God's revelation being in time and space with 'the successive unfolding of a plan of infinite wisdom, justice, and mercy, looking to his glory and the eternal happiness of mankind'. So, for human beings, 'history is the biography of the human race, and the gradual development, both normal and abnormal, of all its physical, intellectual, and moral forces to the final consummation at the general judgment, with its eternal rewards and punishments'. Schaff's interpretation is that 'the idea of universal history presupposes the Christian idea of the unity of God, and the unity and common destiny of men, and was unknown to ancient Greece and Rome'. Therefore, his Christian interpretation is that 'a view of history which overlooks or undervalues the divine factor starts from deism and consistently runs into atheism; while the opposite view, which overlooks the free agency of man and his moral responsibility and guilt, is essentially fatalistic and pantheistic' (Schaff 1882:13).

The primary principles that drove Schaff's historical method were his examination of the content of the sources and his Christian interpretation, based on the unity of God and the history of the church beginning with the content in the four Gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles. This unity and destiny of human beings was not known in ancient Greece and Rome (Schaff 1882:29, 618).

(i) Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968)[162]

Distinguished church historian at Yale University Divinity School, Latourette stated in a 1948 address to the American Historical Association, the aspects of a Christian historiography which included

> the Christian understanding of history [that – SDG] regards history and time as surrounded by eternity. Christianity centers upon historical events and views God as acting in history. Yet it holds that the human drama is not completed in time, and that one must go beyond the events with which the historian deals and even beyond what is still to occur in time in order completely to see God's dealings with man. Of necessity and by its very nature history deals with time. Christianity centers upon events in time and also transcends them.
>
> (Latourette 2001)

While Latourette did not provide a concise definition of his historical method, he admitted to the historian's impatience with a Christian perspective on history because 'some of the key Christian convictions about history are not and cannot be subject to the tests which the historian is able to apply'. Examples he gave were the historian's inability to prove or disprove God's creating human beings in God's own image and that it is impossible to 'reach beyond time and verify the Christian conviction concerning the goal of history. God cannot be fully known within history'. If it were possible to verify God historically, God would cease to be what the Christian faith believes God to be (Latourette 2001).[163]

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[162] Lifespan dates are from Walls (2001).

So, for Latourette, the historian of Christian history is confined to the difficulties associated with methods that 'must deal with records. Through whatever channels are open to him he must attempt to determine what actually happened'. There is the additional problem that 'the records which are accessible to the historian are usually very faulty' and 'in appraising them and in arranging and interpreting events the historian relies on his reason'. When interpreting and arranging these events, the historian cannot be emancipated from subjectivity, so he or she 'seeks through reason to reduce the subjective element to a minimum', but the historian knows the limitations of reason and 'suspects that the subjective element can never be completely eliminated'. Because the historian is personally part of history, he/she 'cannot fully stand apart from it or view it with undiluted objectivity'. It must be remembered that 'the historian is dealing with visible events, but there are also invisible forces which he cannot measure. If he is not to do violence to history the historian can never abstract fact from value' (Latourette 2001).

How did the early Christians view history? He noted that 'the Christian view of human history differed radically from that of the Graeco-Roman world' in its 'contrast between fate and destiny'. The Greeks and Romans followed a cyclical view of 'history as endlessly repeating itself in a series of cycles' and 'blind fate determined it'. The prominent contrast with the Graeco-Roman perspective was that human history was under God's sovereign control from creation to the climax of history. While 'Christians differed as to when the climax to history would arrive and to its precise nature', they understood it was near according to Paul who affirmed that 'the day was at hand' (Latourette 1975a:241-242).

From these writings of Latourette it can be ascertained that his historical method included dealing with the events of the historical records of what actually happened, but these records are incomplete and usually faulty. Reason is use d to interpret these records, but the historian has diluted objectivity because of the person's own subjectivity. Fact cannot be extracted from value; that is the nature of historical investigation. The Christian view of history differed from the cyclical, fateful understanding of the Graeco-Romans and followed the Jewish perspective of knowing that God would bring history to a climax.

(j) **Helmut Koester** (b 1926)[164]

Emeritus Harvard research professor of divinity and of ecclesiastical history, Helmut Koester, promoted the view that 'the earliest gospel traditions and gospel writings contain the seeds of … later heresy as well as later orthodoxy'. This was based on his dissertation on the 'synoptic tradition in the apostolic fathers' (Koester 1990:xxix).

He reached the interpreted conclusion that 'the description of history and development of gospel literature in the earliest period of Christianity' meant that epithets such as '"heretical" and "orthodox" are meaningless' (Koester 1990:xxx). In an earlier article on the 'apocryphal and canonical gospels', Koester's assessment was that ‘the terms “apocryphal” and “canonical” reflect a traditional usage which implies deep-seated prejudices and has had far-reaching consequences’ as a standard dictionary indicates that apocryphal is associated with the meanings of non-canonical, inauthentic, spurious and is synonymous with fictitious (Koester 1980a:105).

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[163] This is Latourette's 'presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Washington on December 29, 1948 (Latourette 2001).

[164] Koester's year of birth is from Wood (2006:2).

He wanted to demonstrate that four apocryphal Gospels belonged in the early stage of development of Gospel literature. These are the *Gospel of Thomas*, an unknown Gospel of papyrus *Egerton 2*, *Dialogue of the Saviour*, and the *Gospel of Peter*. Koester concluded that

> all I want to do here is to draw attention to five of these apocryphal gospels and to suggest that they are perhaps at least as old and as valuable as the canonical gospels as sources for the earliest developments of the traditions about Jesus. They are significant witnesses for the formation of the gospel literature in its formative stages. The term apocryphal with all its negative connotations should not prejudice us any longer.
>
> (Koester 1980a:130)

His approach to an examination of ‘the story of the Johannine Gospel’ and conclusions regarding the Johannine composition are in Koester (1990:244-271).[165]

By way of introduction, Koester gave a brief statement of his approach to historiography: ‘Only dogmatic prejudice can assert that the canonical writings have an exclusive claim to apostolic origin and thus to historical priority. Whether my own reconstruction of the development of this literature is plausible, should be argued on historical and source-critical grounds’ (Koester 1990:xxx).

By claiming that the designation of ‘heretical’ and ‘orthodox’ was meaningless, Koester engaged in making a judgement about the nature of the New Testament and extra-canonical Gospels. He said he was arguing on historical and source-critical grounds. He was engaged in an examination of the historical evidence, based on the nature and quality of those manuscripts, assessed by source-critical methodology.

(k) **Martin Hengel** (1926-2009)[166]

Former professor of New Testament and early Judaism at the University of Tübingen, Germany (1972-1992), Hengel was acknowledged as ‘a distinguished and outstanding New Testament and ancient Judaism scholar’ (Deines n d).

Hengel wrote of ‘the riddle’ and ‘the offence’ of the New Testament corpus of Gospels in the message of salvation through Jesus Christ that is ‘narrated in stories with a historical sequence’. He noted that the Gospels and the Acts narrate ‘history/stories’. His position was that primitive Christianity had no knowledge of the distinction between ‘dogmatics’ and ‘church history’, or even between ‘faith’ and ‘facts of history’ and that these dichotomies in New Testament studies have ‘done badly by this distinction’. For Hengel, the Gospels which narrate ‘history’ in ‘consecutive “stories” or summaries’ mainly are about Jesus’ words – with speeches punctuated (Hengel 2000:2, 5, 8-9). He attributed to F C Baur and D F Strauss and others of the nineteenth century a ‘radical historical criticism of the Gospel of John’ which concluded that ‘myth’ was contained in the Gospels generally and this was a catalyst that ‘changed research into the Gospels over the next 160 years (Hengel

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[165] See Koester (1990:270) for ‘a principle of organization for the farewell discourses which have been inserted into this source [Semeia – SDG] (chapters 13-17)’.

[166] Lifespan dates are from Deines (n d).

2000:9). However, Hengel's research has led him to admit that 'the text of the Gospels is the best transmitted in the whole of antiquity…. No ancient text is as well attested as the Gospels' (2000:28, 31).

While acknowledging the historical veracity of the four Gospels and the integrity of their textual transmission, Hengel was prepared to engage in interpretation, particularly as related to literary criticism. His acknowledgement was that the Q document is 'a questionable hypothesis' which 'cannot really be reconstructed' and that 'the modern hypotheses about Q are largely built on sand', are exaggerated with possibilities and 'are often based on the fashionable wish to have an "unkerygmatic" Jesus and wisdom teacher who moralizes in his social thought, a figure who would fit better into our time' (Hengel 2000:68-69). To challenge a modern trend, Hengel's understanding or interpretation was that 'nothing has led research into the Gospels so astray as the romantic superstition involving anonymous theologically creative community collectives, which are supposed to have drafted whole writings' (Hengel 2000:81).

From this brief assessment, three aspects have become evident: Firstly, the Gospels are narrated as history that can be investigated. Secondly, the veracity of the textual tradition for the Gospels provides a document that is the best attested in historical antiquity. Thirdly, what other scholars are doing with the content of the Gospels needs to be critically evaluated to arrive at a reasoned conclusion.

(l) **Richard Reinhold Niebuhr** (b 1926)[167]

Niebuhr, emeritus professor of divinity, Harvard Divinity School, was the son of H Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962)[168] and wrote on Jesus' resurrection and a study in historical method (R R Niebuhr 1957). He admitted that with the rise of historical criticism an increasing number of biblical scholars have removed the resurrection of Jesus from its central position to the periphery of Christian teaching 'because the primitive resurrection faith conflicts disastrously with modern canons of historicity' (Niebuhr 1957:1). That was not his view as the thesis of his publication was that 'all conceptions of history and of historical reason that do not begin with the resurrection can neither gain from nor contribute to the resurrection faith any significant light'; so he argued that 'history is its own interpreter, and that the resurrection event [of Jesus – SDG], as it is reflected in the New Testament, epitomizes the historical event itself while the resurrection tradition illuminates the nature of historical thought' (Niebuhr 1957:3-4).

His understanding can be encapsulated in these formulations:

- There is no need to seek 'any final victory of enlightened historical reason over the traditional interpretation of the New Testament' as 'history speaks with both the voice of faithful memory and the voice of curious reason' (Niebuhr 1957:4-5).
- In spite of the various challenges to interpretations of the resurrection by David Strauss, Wilhelm Herrmann, Albert Schweitzer and Adolf von Harnack, Niebuhr's view was that it was a paradox to excise 'the resurrection tradition from the fabric of gospel history' as that would lead to 'the disintegration of the

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[167] This researcher received a personal email from Ms Darlene-Marie Slagle, administrative manager, office of academic affairs. Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Ave, Andover Hall 303, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA, on 4 June 2013 to confirm that Dr Niebuhr is still alive and 'his retirement took place in May of 1999. Thus, he would have been appointed as an emeritus professor beginning with the AY1999-2000. He was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 9, 1926'.

[168] These lifespan dates for H Richard Niebuhr are from Levellers (2009).

entire historical sequence of the New Testament' (Niebuhr 1957:14). Therefore, he articulated this understanding:

- Those who want 'to abandon the realm of ordinary history, when they come to speak about the resurrection of Jesus, hoping thereby to escape the embarrassment posed by our popular ideas of historical causality, they must also abandon these narratives of recognition, for non-historical revelation can make no use of historical signs'. In other words, 'no meaning can be attached to the event if that to which the witnesses respond is not the historically recognizable Jesus' (Niebuhr 1957:174).
- Therefore, common sense argues that the meaning of the resurrection faith is undoubtedly prompted by Jesus' bodily resurrection's appearances where Jesus was 'independently and tangibly present to the disciples'. Without this tangible, bodily presence, 'the resurrection is meaningless' (Niebuhr 1957:174).
- How does the resurrection as miracle harmonise with an historical understanding? Niebuhr regarded it as 'a mistake in one sense … to treat the resurrection as a miracle, or as a problem deserving to be discussed in terms of miracle in general'. This is because it 'implies that the resurrection belongs to a class of phenomena defined by its negative relationship to Nature. But the resurrection of Christ does not violate Nature but only death…. If anyone judges it to be a superfluous miracle, he is also forced to judge the whole history as superfluous' (Niebuhr 1957:177-178).

The New Testament Gospels, including Jesus' resurrection, record events that are of the kind of all historical events and the resurrection, as a miracle, does not exclude it from historical investigation. On these events are built an understanding of their meaning.

(m) Burton L Mack (no birth date found)
Professor emeritus, Claremont School of Theology (CGU Bulletin 2014), and associate scholar at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity at Claremont (Mack 1995: rear cover), Mack wrote of the nature of his scholarship as being 'a biblical scholar and historian of religion who has been engaged in the academic study of religion and culture for thirty years' (Mack 1995:4).

In assessing who wrote the New Testament and the nature of these writings, Mack brought these presuppositions to the task:

- Mack has presumed that, say, each Gospel is written for a particular group of Christians and is influenced by the milieu of that community. He further explained that 'in good Greek fashion, the Jesus people of Mark's community imagined Jesus as the champion of their own school tradition, and they pitted Jesus against the Pharisees by telling *chreiai*' [that is, useful anecdotes – SDG]; Mack 1995:5-6, 57; emphasis in original). This is not derived from the text but is one of his presuppositions of FC where the focus goes beyond the text to the communities involved in transmitting the tradition. Mack acknowledged the postmodern influence, 'The final question will be whether, given our moment in a postmodern world, we can continue our acrobatics on the Bible's high wire without losing our balance' (Mack 1995:16).
- The New Testament texts, emerging from Christian congregations, moved to a 'centrist' position against gnostic forms of Christianity in the second to fourth centuries, but there was no centrist position when they were first written.

Instead, the earliest collections of teachings and stories from Q, *Gospel of Thomas*, 'and the little sets of anecdotes and miracle stories from the pre-Markan tradition bear the marks of literary creativity, though none was signed by an author'. According to Mack, a centrist Christian 'charter was created for the fourth-century church by means of literary fictions, to create the impression of a monolinear history of the church. It is neither an authentic account of Christian beginnings nor an accurate rehearsal of the history of the empire church. Historians of religion would call it myth' (Mack 1995:7-9).

- Nothing much can be said about the historical Jesus because 'the first followers of Jesus were not interested in preserving accurate memories of the historical person'. Mack's perspective is that 'we now know that Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, 'in the early second century … and he had his reasons for wanting to imagine things that way' (Mack 1995:46, 45). The Gospel of Mark's ideas of the crucifixion-resurrection came 'from the Christ myth, but this interest in the Christ myth was limited to the martyrology at its core' (Mack 1995:156).
- 'The postmodern view of our multicultural world is difficult to reject. It is no longer possible to think that only one worldview [that of Christianity – SDG] must be right…. These features of the worldview assumed and projected by the biblical epic are no longer helpful as ideals in our multicultural world' (Mack 1995:306).
- Mack is convinced the New Testament writings 'were not written by eyewitnesses of an overpowering divine appearance in the midst of human history' but 'are the record of three hundred years of intellectual labor in the interest of a thoroughly human construction'. When the Jewish scriptures are included, 'the Christian Bible turns out to be a masterpiece of invention' (Mack 1995:308). His succinct statement was: 'The narrative gospels can no longer be viewed as the trustworthy accounts of unique and stupendous historical events at the foundation of the Christian faith. The gospels must now be seen as the result of early Christian mythmaking' (Mack 1993:10).[169]

For Mack, the New Testament Gospels do not provide reliable accounts of what happened. FC principles are a foundation in forming the Gospels as creative, fictional memoirs, following the epic tradition, and emerging from the Christian communities associated with each Gospel to form the Christian myth. The first followers of Jesus were not interested in preserving accurate historical facts (memoirs) about a person. Instead, the writings were not the product of eyewitnesses but were an energetic invention of mythmaking. This interpretation can accommodate a postmodern, multicultural, contemporary worldview.

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[169] The question emerges for this researcher: If the New Testament writings are the product of creative, inventive, fictional mythmaking, did the Jesus of history exist for Mack? Mack wrote elsewhere that New Testament mythology familiar to Christians was developed in groups in northern Syria and Asia Minor. For them, 'Jesus' death was first interpreted as a martyrdom and then embellished as a miraculous event of crucifixion and resurrection. This myth drew on Hellenistic mythologies that told about the destiny of a divine being (or son of God)'. Congregations quickly became a cult of the resurrected or transformed Jesus who was now known as the Christ, the Lord, or the Son of God'. This myth 'eventually made the narrative gospels possible' and these Gospels also are 'the products of mythic imagination' (Mack 1993:2, 250). For Mack, 'myths project an imaginary world in which people see themselves reflected at a distance' and they do this 'by a marvellous use of metaphor, dislocation, and visual transformation', but he admits that 'Matthew actually buried Q in the fiction of Jesus as a Jewish sage' (Mack 1993:208-209, 185). So the fictitious sage, Jesus, is the product of Jesus' myth-making and he is not a person of history.

(n) Edwin Judge (b 1928)[170]
Emeritus professor of history and director of the ancient history documentary research centre at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, Judge's perspective was that 'an ancient historian has no problem seeing the phenomenon of Jesus as an historical one. His many surprising aspects only help anchor him in history'. He discounted 'myth or legend' as a means of explanation because they 'would have created a more predictable figure. The writings that sprang up about Jesus also reveal to us a movement of thought and an experience of life so unusual that something much more substantial than the imagination is needed to explain it' (Judge 1994:iii).

Judge's understanding of the nature of history was clarified in his interview with Mark Hutchinson (1991). He regarded one's encounter with a person in the past to be 'not in any way different from one's encounter with anyone now' as the principle he pursued in his teaching of history was that in human studies, all we do is make 'contact with each other…. While history deals in facts, the contact is real human contact, and even though the other person is not present here with us, we are having the same quality of personal contact that we have with a person who is actually sitting in the room with us'. He regarded this as personal contact because he reacts to him, likes or dislikes him, thinks well or poorly of him and 'above all, I evaluate him. Now, it is this evaluatory function of history which seems to me absolutely vital to it, and I say vital because it is a living human encounter that we are engaged in, just like any ordinary living human encounter. It is a vital encounter of living people. And the dead are no less living for these purposes in my view' (Hutchinson 1991:31, 32).

How does Judge, the ancient historian, relate this perspective to Christ and the Gospels? 'Above all there is the fact that those who transmit the information to us – the gospel writers and so on – are loading it with a powerful interpretation of the significance of the figure they transmit, an interpretation so powerful that it makes overwhelming demands upon our response. It demands commitment or rejection of His way of Life, to the meaning of His life, to the destiny that He foresaw, or announced, and so on'. He sees the knowledge of Christ through his Gospel as historical knowledge 'in exactly the same way that my knowledge of Caesar is historical knowledge' (Hutchinson 1991:32). Barnett is in agreement: 'The same investigative methodology ought to be applied to Jesus and the rise of early Christianity as to Alexander the Great and the eastward spread of Hellenism' (Barnett 1999:22).

Therefore, it is not surprising that Judge's view of history places emphasis on 'the centrality of personal judgement and response in history' to the objective data. This applies as much to historical knowledge of Caesar as to Christ (Hutchinson 1991:33).

Judge's view was that historians are negligent when they fail to engage in interpretation of historical data and this is a failure for which the public holds them accountable (Hutchinson 1991:34).

The phenomena of Jesus are grounded in history, not myth or legend. It is historical knowledge like that of knowledge of Caesar. One's encounter with a person from the past is similar to a contemporary encounter. History deals with facts, but there is an evaluative function that is vital for human understanding or misunderstanding.

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[170] Judge's date of birth is from the Australian Institute of Archaeology (2012).

(o) **Paul W Barnett** (born 1935)[171]

Barnett is a New Testament scholar, ancient historian and visiting fellow in history at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Edwin Judge designated Barnett as 'an experienced historian, trained in a hard school' and is one with 'a keen eye for bare facts' (Judge 1979:iii).

Before an examination of Barnett's understanding of the nature of history, Keith Mason QC's[172] evaluation of Barnett's approach to testing evidence was that of a lawyer. Mason noted that 'the processes Barnett adopts [in Barnett 1994 – SDG] are very similar to a lawyer: the presentation and testing of evidence; the search for corroboration from external sources; the comparison of overlapping accounts to see if they can be substantially reconciled without such identity of form and substance as to show contrived collaboration; and the search for that "ring of truth" that comes from loose ends and rough edges'. Mason added that the testing of the credibility of witnesses involves these questions: 'Did the witnesses have sufficient opportunity to observe? Do their actions conform to their words? Is there independent support for their account, and how weighty is it? What motive did they have to lie or to tell the truth' (Mason 1994:v)?

Barnett's understanding was that 'the practice of history is concerned with events and people and with change from one state to another. History is not concerned with "things that are". All primary sources must be surveyed, classified and evaluated' with a distinction made between 'self-consciously written history and information which may be inferred incidentally, gratuitously'. He placed the Gospels and Acts in the former category while the New Testament letters are in the latter, inferential classification (Barnett 1997:163).

In determining whether the study of Jesus is an historical inquiry, Barnett stated that when the Bible declared that 'the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us' (Jn 1:14), the Bible was asserting 'that the One who was responsible for the creation of the universe and of time himself came into that universe at a particular time' and that in the person of 'Jesus of Nazareth God entered human history, leaving his footprints for us to discover'. This means that 'inquiry into Jesus … is *historical* inquiry' and inquiry into Jesus' claims are like questions about John F Kennedy – it 'begins by reflecting on historical information' – and requires inquiry like that 'for any other person or event within history: by an examination of the evidence for and about Jesus in the period in which he lived' (Barnett 1994:2; emphasis in original). The fundamental of understanding that Christianity is based on 'historical reality' – historical facts – is so important that 'to disprove these facts would be to destroy the essential character of Christianity' (Barnett 1994:7). In a later publication, he noted the importance of 'assessing secure transmission of the primary sources' as the beginning place for historical inquiry, whether for emperor Tiberius or Jesus of Nazareth. He is surprised that 'few who write about the historical Jesus address this vital question'. An answer to his question is vital: 'How can we conduct Jesus research unless we know that the texts on which we rely are close to or identical with what was originally written' (Barnett 2009:8)?

Is there any other component that Barnett includes in his examination of the historical facts about Jesus? Following Elton's understanding of history, Barnett places two emphases in historical investigation: History 'deals with phenomena, and, where possible, seeks to explain them' (Barnett 1997:18). An example of interpretation is his primary concern with finding the relationship between post-resurrection Christianity and the pre-resurrection Jesus. 'How could the biographies [the four Gospels – SDG] written after the resurrection convey a true historical account of the preresurrection man now being *worshiped*?' (Barnett 2009:2; emphasis in original)

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[171] Barnett's year of birth is from the Yearbook of the diocese of Sydney (2012:274). Barnett confirmed in a personal email that his date of birth was 23 September 1935 (received 31 May 2013).

[172] A QC is a Queen's Counsel barrister. At the time of writing this foreword, Keith Mason was Solicitor General for the state of New South Wales, Australia (Mason 1994:iv).

(p) N T Wright (born 1948)[173]

In his comprehensive scholarship on the resurrection of the son of God, Wright admitted to 'the far harder issue: in reaching historical conclusions about what happened at Easter'. In noting this tough subject, he warned: 'We cannot avoid the question of the historian's own worldview and theology. Here, once again, not to do so is usually tacitly to decide in favour of a particular worldview, often that of post-Enlightenment scepticism' (Wright 2003:6).

How does Wright approach the historical data relating to the resurrection of Jesus? He admitted that he was one of the 'dissenting voices' which challenged the 'dominant paradigm' which sees the resurrection, in a Jewish context, of meaning 'a variety of different things'. This opposing paradigm accepts that Paul and the earliest Christians did not believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection but in his exaltation/ascension/glorification; the Gospel's resurrection stories were late inventions to reinforce their belief and the 'seeings' of Jesus after the resurrection were to be understood according to 'Paul's conversion experience' (Wright 2003:7). These are the views that Wright challenges.

Against the 'dominant paradigm', he stated that 'there are excellent, well-founded and secure historical arguments against each of these positions' regarding Jesus' resurrection, Christianity and history (Wright 2003:7). He admitted that in writing 'about the historical beginnings of Christianity', the question of God cannot be ignored. While scholars 'for over two hundred years have laboured to keep history and theology, or history and faith, at arm's length from one another', with Christian origins and the resurrection especially treated as such, 'they are inevitably intertwined. Not to recognize this, in fact, is often to decide tacitly in favour of a particular type of theology, perhaps a form of Deism' (Wright 2003:5).

He explained that, 'without historical enquiry there is no check on Christianity's propensity to remake Jesus, never mind the Christian god, in its own image', but 'the sharp distinction between the "supernatural" and the "rational" *is itself a product of Enlightenment thinking*'. No matter how one approaches the New Testament, 'this text matters' (Wright 1992:10; emphasis in original).

Wright examines this '*historical* set of questions':

- Who was Jesus and was he responsible for the beginning of Christianity?
- Was Paul the real founder of Christianity and did he corrupt the original message or was he an authentic interpreter of Jesus?
- 'Why are the gospels what they are? Where do they stand in relation to Jesus and Paul? (Wright 1992:11).

He warned that 'while history and theology work at their stormy relationship', the 'great divide' between them is not necessary, automatic and is 'highly misleading'. For Wright, 'studying the history of early Christianity is impossible without a clear grasp of early Christian beliefs' (Wright 1992:13).

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[173] Date of birth is from Wright (n d).

In his scholarship on Christian origins, Wright integrates 'three tasks often thought to be disparate'. In the study of Jesus, his perspective is that 'the study of Jesus is first and foremost a matter of history', but needs the 'careful ancillary use of literary study of the texts and theological study of implications' (Wright 1992:14).

Wright offers this warning if these tasks are not integrated:

> There is always a danger, particularly in postmodernism, that literary study will get on by itself, without impinging on, or being affected by, either of the others. The more we move towards a climate in which "my reading of the text" is what matters, the less pressure there will be either to anchor the text in its own historical context or to integrate a wider "message" of the text with other messages, producing an overall theological statement or synthesis.
>
> (Wright 1992:13)

(q) A summary of the above historians' elements of historiography

The historians investigated provided a consensus where two elements are involved at the core of historiography for Jesus and his resurrection:

(1) Examine the historical facts that have been left, that are recoverable. These facts for Jesus are anchored in historical knowledge in the same way they would be for any person in history, whether that person be Caesar or Alexander the Great.

(2) The historian reacts to the persons and events in these extant historical documents as one would to any contemporary person or thing with which one has contact. There will be personal evaluation by the historian, positive and negative, that will be expressed in interpretation, based on the extant facts that remain.

A third emerged for some of them: These interpretations were assessed according to the worldview of the historian, but were based on the extant facts. No assessment could be 'purely objective' as that is an impossibility for a person wanting to live a holistic existence.

4.2.1.1.2 Crossan's view of historiography

As stated in §3.3.5, Crossan was specific in labelling his approach to history and hermeneutics of the historical Jesus:

> Christianity is *historical reconstruction* interpreted as divine manifestation. It is not (*in a postmodern world*) that we find *once and for all* who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction, a reconstruction that will be and must be in some creative interaction with its own particular needs, visions, and programs…. The historical Jesus (fact) is the manifestation of God for us here and now (interpretation). *You cannot believe in a fact, only in an interpretation*.
>
> (Crossan 1995:217; emphasis added)

His position is unadorned: 'This is my working definition of history: *History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*…. History as argued public reconstruction is necessary to reconstruct our past in order to project *our* future' (Crossan 1998a:20; emphasis in original). This is a question begging view of historiography, especially in light of the consensus of historians examined above. Crossan's statement points to a worldview of postmodern deconstruction that places another perspective on the historical data that so skews the data to accommodate Crossan's reader-response philosophy.

He wrote that 'by *historical study* I mean an analysis whose theories and methods, evidence and arguments, results and conclusions are open, in principle and practice, to any human observer, any disciplined investigator, any self-conscious and self-critical student…. The historical Jesus is always an interpretive construct of its own time and place but open to all of that time and place' (Crossan 1994a:199; emphasis in original). He was pointed in his challenge that historians should say, 'This, in my best professional reconstruction, is what happened; that did not' (Crossan 1995:37).[174]

4.2.1.2 Abduction: Crossan and the philosophical crusher

As indicated in §2.6, methodological abduction refers to a procedure that is central to the scientific process of an 'inferential step from some initial puzzling fact to some theoretical hypothesis which can explain it' (Svennevig n d:1). The 'initial puzzling fact' that was observed by this researcher is related to what Ben Meyer (1991) called 'the philosophical crusher' as it applied to Crossan's definition of history and its application to his historical understanding and examples.

What is a 'philosophical crusher'? Ben Meyer (1991) learned it forty years before this publication from Alex Tourigny, his teacher in philosophical psychology, whose 'version of the crusher was a deadly "reduction to first principles"' (Meyer 1991). Meyer expounded one example of a philosophical crusher as referring to 'the reduction of implicit to explicit self-contradiction' (Meyer 1991). The nature of this 'reduction' is that it 'takes place by making explicit, not the content of an affirmation, but the performance of affirming (or denying)'. The 'self-contradiction' of this crusher is that 'the actuality of performance belies the all-comprehensive explanation' (Meyer 1991).

This can be synthesised to demonstrate that practitioners are inconsistent in their applications of their own theories of knowing in appropriating them to their own works, or scholars can be shown to be contradictory in not practising in their publications what they preach in their own theories (Meyer 1991)!

As for Crossan, does the philosophical crusher expose the practice of his theories of (1) the nature of history, and (2) postmodern hermeneutics, and find them wanting? Is there self-contradiction in how he applies these theories in his own writings? T W Manson wrote, 'It may be said of all the theological schools of thought: By their lives of Jesus ye shall know them' (Manson 1944:92). Crossan objected to this perspective, '"You are not reconstructing history," I am told.... "You are only seeing your face at the bottom of a deep well." It is usually a cheap crack, not so much in theory as in practice' (Crossan 2000:150). He called it 'an oft-repeated and rather cheap gibe that historical Jesus researchers are simply looking down a deep well and seeing their own reflections from below' (Crossan 1999:2). Is it a genuine challenge that Crossan is reconstructing history and hermeneutics according to his own definitions and then inconsistently applying such definitions in his own works? Does the philosophical crusher expose his approach to history?

4.2.1.2.1 The definition of history

As indicated, Crossan's 'working definition of history is that '*history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public*

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[174] For an assessment of postmodern reconstruction/deconstruction, see §4.3 below.

discourse.... History as argued public construction is possible because it is necessary. We reconstruct our past to project our future. And it is, unfortunately, *not* possible *not* to do it' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original; also1998a:20).

What does he mean when he speaks of history involving the reconstruction of the past 'interactively'? He explained that 'I will call it *interactivism* or *historical dialectic*. The past and the present must interact with one another, each changing and challenging the other. The ideal is an absolutely fair and equal reaction between one another' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). Later in this article he explained how this applied to Jesus' resurrection:

> It is the same Jesus, the one and only historical Jesus of the late 20s [of the first century – SDG] in his Jewish homeland, but now untrammeled by time and place, language and proximity. It is the one and only Jesus absolutely the same, absolutely different. He is trammeled, of course, then, now, and always, by faith. Bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of its tomb. And neither is it just another word for Christian faith itself. Bodily resurrection means that the embodied life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continues, as it always has, to form communities of like lives.
>
> (Crossan 1999:46)

Robert Stewart made the critical and seminal assessment that 'Crossan's commitment to understanding history, like texts, as polyvalent leads him to stress that the historical Jesus must be meaningful for today. The result is that for Crossan historical truth is fluid and relative in nature. This leads him to reject authoritative interpretations of who Jesus as the word of God is and what it means to be one of his disciples' (Stewart 2008:126; emphasis added).[175]

4.2.1.2.2 Method and truth

What is the meaning of truth in assessing Crossan's philosophical crusher? Here 'truth' is used as Meyer (1991) explained: It is a 'bleak spectacle of theories shattering on the rock of fact, the fact in question is special. It has to do with how the human subject functions. What if we were to come into possession of truth on fundamental aspects of human functioning?' He explained that such would be a 'powerful instrument for discriminating, methodically and productively, among a vast range of significant truths and errors'. His statement was: 'The test of the answer is the field of human performance. Once the pattern of human operations has been brought to light in radically unrevisable fashion, new possibilities heave into view: in particular, the new possibility of systematically confronting theories of knowing with facts of knowing'.

Here the truth of Crossan's theoretical system of historiography – a theory of postmodern reconstruction – is tested by Crossan's practice in determining the facts of his knowing. What's the truth about Crossan's system of knowing history and its implementation in the practice of history in his publications? Is he a consistent reconstructionist in his applications?

In his postmodern reconstruction of history in his writings, particularly those since he articulated his reconstructionist definition of history in Crossan (1998a:20; 1999:3), there is evidence that demonstrates there is a contradiction in the application of his own definition of history as reconstructed interactivism.

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[175] See §4.2.1.1.1 above for how other historians define history.

As early as the epilogue of Crossan (1991), he was articulating his postmodern, reconstructive approach to history with his statement that his book ‘challenges the reader on the level of formal method, material investment, and historical interpretation. It presumes that there will always be divergent historical Jesuses, that there will always be divergent Christs built upon them, but above all, it argues that the structure of a Christianity will always be: *this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*’ (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original).

His 1991 view of reconstruction is also found and applied in the abridged version (Crossan1994a:XIV). One application of his postmodern reconstructive methodology is in his three understandings of Jesus’ resurrection: (1) It is one way, but not the only way of expressing Christian faith; (2) It is ‘*apparition* – which involves trance, that altered state of consciousness; and (3) ‘Christian faith experiences the *continuation* of divine empowerment through Jesus, but that continuation began only after his death and burial’ (Crossan 1994a:160-161; emphasis in original). An examination of Crossan’s use of the philosophical crusher can be incorporated for all publications from and including 1991.

Note Crossan’s claim that ‘in quoting *secondary* literature I spend no time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are. Those who are cited represent my intellectual debts’ (Crossan 1991:xxxiv; emphasis in original). However, within seven pages of making that statement, Crossan violated his own claim by criticising John Davis for Davis’s castigating his anthropological peer, Julian Pitt-Rivers (Crossan 1991:7).

What are some examples of Crossan’s methodology being exposed by the philosophical crusher by which there are contradictions between his stated postmodern, reconstructive definition of history and his practice of historical statement and authentication? He does this in two ways: Firstly, through his acceptance of the narratives of other authors without a postmodern, reconstructive interpretation and, secondly, through acceptance of traditional historiography.

An examination of his practice reveals an inconsistent application of his stated historical method. He advocates postmodern reconstruction but in many examples (see evidence below) he used traditional historiography throughout his publications.

The following abduction analysis will provide limited samples from Crossan’s major publications, beginning in 1991, as a comprehensive examination of examples is beyond the scope of this project. This researcher has identified at least five-hundred examples in his Crossan’s publications of the use of the philosophical crusher. In what follows, this evidence will be in abbreviated form.

4.2.1.2.3 Crossan’s self-contradiction: Acceptance of traditional history

It is observed from details in §3.3.5 and §4.2.1.1.1 above that Crossan’s reconstruction is in contrast to the dominant view of secular and sacred historians who regard the study of history as involving an examination of recorded facts (oral and written) from the past and an interpretation – based on those facts – but the facts cannot be discounted through a postmodern reconstruction. Samples of abduction from Crossan deal with the topics of:

- His acceptance of the results of traditional historiography, without reconstruction;
  And
- His acceptance of the narrative of other authors, without reconstruction.

(a) His autobiographical details

Throughout his autobiographical publication (Crossan 2000), he provided personal details of his life from the past that affirm the traditional model of history with his writing of his life in his home country of Ireland and then in the United States.

He wrote of being ten years of age in 1944, going to boarding school, years in primary school in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and becoming a Roman Catholic priest and monk in Ireland (Crossan 2000:1, 3). He noted, ‘I have never been unwillingly hungry in all my life. I was five when the Second World War broke out in Europe, but politically neutral and minimally rationed Ireland had enough food so that hunger was not a wartime reality’ (1998a:421).

He was one of a dozen scholars in the spring of 1998 who appeared on the American public television program, ‘From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians’ His father died at age sixty-seven when Crossan was thirty-seven. From 1965 to 1967 he was engaged in ‘postdoctoral specialization at the French Biblical and Archeological School in Jerusalem’, a school that ‘was founded in 1890 by Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange’ (Crossan 2000:3, 31, 65).

He requested a dispensation from the priesthood to become married to Margaret in a Catholic Church in 1969, was contracted as an associate professor and went on to become a full professor in biblical studies and comparative religion for twenty-six years at DePaul University, a Roman Catholic institution in Chicago, until his retirement in 1995 (Crossan 2000:90, 95, 106; Crossan & Watts 1996:xiv, 179). Margaret’s heart attack and death occurred in 1983. He married Sarah, an older student, in 1986, moving to Florida in 1995 (Crossan 2000:121-123, 127, 178-179, 181).

He wrote of many interviews in newspapers and magazines as well as on radio and television regarding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (Crossan 1995:189). He participated in the Jesus Seminar in the 1980s (Crossan 2000:173-174).

In all of these autobiographical historical examples from his life, he used a traditional model of historical understanding and not according to a postmodern, reconstructive, interactive perspective. He presented them as fixed events and happenings from his past and they have remained unchanged as historical events.

In the midst of his recording personal, traditional, historical events from his life, he mentioned a cover story about him in the magazine section of the Chicago Tribune, Sunday, July 17, 1994, in which the writer summarised Crossan as saying that ‘Jesus was a mortal man in the fullest sense of the term. He was conceived and born in the conventional way (no Virgin Birth), did not perform miracles (no Lazarus, no loaves and fishes, no lepers), did not undergo resurrection (no Easter) and after his execution, was probably eaten by wild dogs (no joke)’ (Crossan 2000:133).

Crossan’s response to this content was, ‘No mistake in that, but no sense of parable either’. In the interview with the journalist for the story he conveyed that it was not enough to say that ‘a story is not history’ as one also had to ask ‘if it was intended as fact or fiction and, if as fiction, what its purpose was’. His viewpoint was that one needed to ask if the ‘nonhistorical, that is, the fictional story was intended as pedagogical challenge’ (Crossan 2000:133). Since he regarded the virgin birth, miracles, the body of Jesus being eaten by wild dogs and no resuscitation at Easter as being parables, what does he mean by parable? His definition was that a parable is ‘a fictional story with a theological punch, a made-up tale that kicked you in the rear when you weren’t looking’ (Crossan 2000:133). By 2012, he had widened his understanding of parable to include these two dimensions: The parables *by* Jesus invented both characters and stories about them – for example, the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son – but ‘parables *about* Jesus presumed historical characters –

for example, John and Jesus, Annas and Caiaphas, Antipas and Pilate – but invented stories about what they said and did'. His idiosyncratic new understanding of parable was that he understood each of the four Gospels was 'a book-length *megaparable* about the life, death, and resurrection of the historical character Jesus of Nazareth' (Crossan 2012:5, 6; emphasis in original). 'Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, was high priest from 18 to 36 CE, eighteen years in a century when four years was about average' (Borg & Crossan 2006:41). Later in this assessment it will be investigated whether Crossan's interpretation of the meaning of 'parable' is fundamentally different from or in contrast to that defined in the Gospels.

Questions emerge for this researcher: If events from the past in Crossan's personal life are taken literally in a traditional, historical understanding and are not given a postmodern, interactive reconstruction or presented as parables, why cannot the events of Jesus' life from the past not be taken literally in a traditional, historical understanding? Why must the Gospels be mega-parables of Jesus' life?

(b) Traditional historical examples

In these listed examples, Crossan agreed with, endorsed and/or used traditional historical examples. These include:

(i) The Church Fathers

He wrote of the martyrdom of St. Cyprian, no early Christian Roman writings with a knowledge of Mark, Justin Martyr writing his *The first apology* in mid second-century, and of Celsus's anti-Christian attacks (Crossan 1991:69 1995:17; 1999:30).

(ii) Contemporary examples

There was anti-Semitism that led to the death of six million Jews on Hitler's list but only twelve hundred on Schindler's list and Archbishop Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, was murdered in 1980 (Crossan 1995:IX, 35; Crossan & Watts 1996:173, 175). He stated that his first visit to the Oberammergau Passion Play was in 1960, which was the version Hitler saw before his 1930 election. He went to the healing shrines at Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, Epidaurus in Greece and Pergamum in Turkey, and 'at both the Catholic and pagan shrines the miracles were remarkably the same'. Dresden was bombed by British and American planes in February 1945 (Crossan 2007:2, 74, 129; Crossan in Copan 1998:45).

(iii) Crucifixion and cultural issues

He wrote of the June 1968 finding of 'the only skeleton of a crucified person ever uncovered' in a Jerusalem tomb and dating to the first century (Crossan & Watts 1996:124; also in Crossan 1994a:124).

Mortality rates in pre-industrial society were that about 60% of live births were dead by age sixteen, and 90% by age forty-six. He wrote of the Jewish revolt against Rome 'of 66 to 73 C.E.' (Crossan 1991:4, 210; 1995:52).

(iv) Extra-canonical material

He wrote of the *Gospel of Thomas* that was found at Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt, in 1945 and of papyri found in the excavated rubbish dumps of ancient Oxyrhynchus, the modern El Bahnasa (Crossan 1994a:XI, 63; 1995:26; 1998a:124). The ancient city of Panopolis, modern Akhimim, on Nile River, Egypt was excavated in 1886-87 by a French archeological mission that found in the cemetery of Panopolis a small papyrus of fragmentary texts, one presumed to be the a fragment of the long-lost *Gospel of Peter*, dating from the seventh to ninth centuries (Crossan 1995:23).

(v) The first century AD

Crossan wrote that ‘Pontius Pilate governed for ten years from 26 to 36 C.E., and Joseph Caiaphas remained as High Priest from 18 to 36 C.E.’ (Crossan 1994a:136). He identified a peasant Jesus, not the Son of God, who ‘was the son of Ananias, and the year was 62 C.E., under Albinus, Roman governor between then and 64 C.E.’ (Crossan 1995:56). He wrote of ‘unarmed Jews gathered before the governor Petronius’ of Syria who planned to place a statue of the emperor Caligula in Jerusalem’s Temple (Crossan 1998a:284-285; 1995:92).

(vi) Historians and historicity

Does Crossan want to present a traditional understanding of history or that of reconstructive interactivism? In his writings, he has produced an amalgam that mixes both these perspectives, even though his favoured definition of history is postmodern reconstruction. Lack of consistency is being uncovered in this abduction.

In seeking to provide a refutation of a decree from Emperor Augustus, based on Luke 2:1, Crossan stated that ‘there was no such worldwide census under Octavius Augustus’ (Crossan 1994a:20). He wrote of historical events surrounding Octavius, soon to become Augustus, and his military defeats (Crossan & Reed 2001:21, 25, 231). ‘Augustus expanded Rome’s territorial control eastward to Armenia’ (Crossan & Reed 2004:84).

Crossan wrote of Uragit, immediately north of Israel-to-be in the fourteenth century BCE (Crossan 1998a:185). He stated that the Shepherd of Hermas is ‘dated from Rome around the year 100’. A copy of ‘the Didache was hidden in a manuscript codex, along with six other early Christian texts’ in an ancient library in a Jerusalem monastery and ‘the scribe who copied those seven texts signed the last leaf as “Leon, notary and sinner,” and dated that completion to June 11, 1056’ (Crossan 1998a:363, 364, 394). He wrote of the Babylonian Empire destroying Jerusalem and its Temple in 587 BCE (Crossan 1998a:439). Beginning in 1977, archaeologist Bargil Pixner supervised excavations at what he called the Gate of the Essenes in the Protestant Cemetery, southern slope of Mount Zion (Crossan 1998a:455). Crossan wrote of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, who ‘lived between 263 and 339 and saw Christianity pass from persecuted cult to imperial religion’ (Crossan 1998a:467).

There is a plethora of information provided as traditional historiography in the two co-authored books by Crossan and archaeologist, Jonathan L Reed (Crossan & Reed 2001; 2004). These demonstrate the self-contradiction and incoherence in comparing Crossan’s stated theory of historiography and his practice of it in his writings. A couple of examples suffice: ‘In 1962 Italian archaeologists, clearing sand and overgrowth from the ruined theater at Caesarea Maritima, longtime seat of Roman power on the eastern Mediterranean shore, uncovered an inscription bearing the name of Pontius Pilate’. It was ‘reused from the ruined theater’s renovation in the fourth century’ and was a ‘Latin inscription’ and ‘settled scholarly quibbles over Pilate’s exact title and ruling authority by naming him a prefect rather than an inferior procurator, but was more celebrated as the first physical witness to such a prominent New Testament figure’ (Crossan & Reed 2001:2). There was an archaeologically ‘spectacular discovery’ at Pompeii in 1909 when ‘Italian archaeologists uncovered perhaps the world’s most famous frescoes in a house outside the city that they later called the Villa of the Mysteries’ (Crossan & Reed 2004:312).

Crossan’s view was that he clarified ‘the situation on historical origin’ of the ‘general bodily resurrection’ and he ‘presumes, summarizes, and reorganizes earlier responses to Tom’s book [Wright 2003 – SDG] … at the Annual Meetings of the

Evangelical Philosophical Society, Atlanta, Saturday, November 11, 2003, and the Evangelical Theological Society, San Antonio, TX, Friday, November 19, 2004' (Wright & Crossan 2006:174, 216 n. 4). Crossan wrote of 'Greece, having invented democratic rule' and 'Rome, having invented republican rule' (Crossan 2007:7). He took a traditional historical line that St Augustine's Confessions were written in 397-398 and 'Jesus lived, most likely, from about 4 BCE to about 30 CE' (Crossan 2012:62, 128).

(vii) Historical Jesus' studies

Crossan wrote of the problem of reconstruction becoming obvious when Robert Funk of the Westar Institute convened the Jesus Seminar to try to establish some scholarly consensus on the historical Jesus, scholars meeting twice a year for five years at seminaries or universities, working on an inventory of what they considered was originally from Jesus (Funk 1991:424; also Crossan & Watts 1996:xv).

Crossan stated that there is a similar story to Jesus' virginal conception in Suetonius, the Roman historian 'who tells us that the night Augustus (the emperor at the time of Jesus' birth) was conceived, his mother Atia was in the temple of Apollo, and Apollo impregnated her so that Atia bore a divine child. "Augustus is the Son of God and divine," says the pagan Roman. "Jesus is Son of God and divine," the Christian believes' (Crossan, in Copan 1998:38). Crossan stated that 'before Jesus was born, Caesar Augustus was proclaimed as Divine, Son of God, God, and God from God, as Lord, Redeemer, Liberator, and Savior of the world. Those claims of Roman imperial theology were found everywhere through texts, images, inscriptions, and structures' (Wright & Crossan 2006:182).

In discussing bodily-resurrection faith, Crossan noted he was already thinking along similar lines to N T Wright on general bodily resurrection within Jewish tradition when he spoke on 'The resurrection of Jesus in its Jewish context,' to the annual meeting of the New Testament Society of South Africa at Potchefstroom, South Africa, on Tuesday, April 9, 2002 (Wright & Crossan 2006:216, n. 3).

(viii) Ireland, Judaism and religious movements

Crossan wrote of NASA's weather satellites finding a clear day over Ireland (Crossan 2007:40) and of different historical eras, he articulated details of martyrs at the time of the Maccabean revolt and persecution, the Bar-Kochba revolt, the Celts, and 'the problem of martyrdom during the Seleucid persecution in the 160s B.C.E.' (Wright & Crossan 2006:25, 41, 175). As for the Jewish people, they gained their independence from the Hellenistic empire of Antiochus Epiphanes around 164 BCE (Borg & Crossan 2006:12).

Diogenes of Sinope (400-320 BC), born on the southern coast of the Black Sea, founded the Greek philosophical movement of Cynicism (Crossan 1994a:114; 1998a:333-335). The Essenes arose in the first half of the second century BCE and their Qumran library is that of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Crossan 1998a:459; 1994a:180).

(ix) The Roman Empire

Crossan wrote of the assassination of Julius Caesar on March 15, 44 BCE, recorded details of Augustus becoming emperor, the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 CE, and all of Palestine reunited under direct Roman administration (Crossan 1991:34, 57, 178) (Crossan 1991:34; 1995:3; 1998a:xv; 1999:27).

In Judea, 'the war had not yet started there, and when Gallus [governor of the Roman province of Syria – SDG], marching southward in the fall of 66 C.E., sent forces into Galilee, only one battle against "rebels and brigands" is recorded … according to [Josephus' – SDG] Jewish War 2.511-513' (Crossan 1991:193; 1994a:137-144, 180; Borg & Crossan 2006:15). The dates for Octavius were all well known (Crossan 1994a:26). Julius Caesar's nineteen-year-old 'adopted son and legal heir, deified Caesar in January of 42, defeated Antony and Cleopatra in September of 31, and was declared Augustus in January of 27 B.C.E.' (Crossan 1998a:xv; 1998a:413-414). Crossan provides other historical details for Octavian (Crossan 2007:10, 147), Julius Caesar, and Augustus (Crossan 2012:7, 158).

He mentions these historical personages, Herod the Great's three sons who assumed 'different portions of their father's domains after his death in 4 B.C.E'; Cato as one of Rome's official censors; in 184 BCE, Lucius Quinctius Flaminius expelled from the senate, the orator Cicero who died in 43 BCE; the historian Livy, who died in 17 CE; 'the aristocratic Roman historian Tacitus' wrote 'a biography of his father-in-law, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, governor of Britain between 77 and 84 C.E.' (Crossan 1994a:33, 36, 39). There is more on Herod the Great: 'In the 1960s, the famous Israeli archaeologist and statesman Yigael Yadin excavated Herod the Great's palace on Masada's northern edge' (Crossan & Reed 2001:104; see also Borg & Crossan 2006:13-14).

A traditional approach to history continues: The Roman poet, 'Juvenal, who lived around 60 to127 C.E., was banished from Rome by the emperor Domitian' (Crossan 1994a:97). The Syrian governor, Publius Quinctilius Varus, needed three legions as well as auxiliary troops to quell revolts after Herod the Great's death in 4 BCE (Crossan 1994a:125). This traditional historiography included a statement that on 28 October 312 CE the Roman emperor Constantine, following his victory at Rome's Milvian Bridge, converted to Christianity (Crossan 1994a:201).

(x) Secular evidence

Crossan uses the traditional historical method in citing Publius Cornelius Tacitus – senator, consul, provincial governor, orator, and historian – whom he claimed was prudent and always the aristocrat He wrote in the early years of the second century C.E.' and one should 'read Tacitus for history as aristocratic politics, dynastic intrigues, and imperial wars. Do not read him for anything about socioeconomic realities, about the lower classes…. His dislike for Judaism was matched, of course, by that for Christianity. He called it "a class of men, loathed for their vices"' (Crossan 1991:91; 1995:15).

Crossan wrote of the first incident of Archelaus (son of Herod the Great) at Passover in 4 BCE. There was a second incident at Passover in 44 CE; Ventidius Cumanus was governor between 48 and 52 CE. He stated that Christianity was possibly in Rome by the late 40s and certainly by the mid-50s. This 'possibility stems from the emperor Claudius's decree expelling Jews from Rome in 49 because of disturbances "at the instigation of Chrestus =Christus? = Jesus?]," as Suetonius recorded in *The Lives of the Caesars: The Deified Claudius* 25.4' (Crossan 1995:54-55; 1998a:416; emphasis in original).

The above examples are statements of Crossan's inconsistency over which model of historiography he wants to pursue. He states that his view of history is that of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism but these examples demonstrate that he is caught out by the philosophical crusher by using a traditional historical method.

(c) The narratives of other authors as traditional history

The following samples are from Crossan's use of other authors where he reads the material as narrative and accepts their information as traditional history, whether recent or distant, and not that of reconstructive interactivism, metaphorically or in some other semiotic form. They are organised according to broad subject areas.

(i) The Church Fathers

Crossan, citing de Ste. Croix, described the term *patrocinium*,[176] used by the late fourth century, was 'applied to the activity of the apostles and martyrs on behalf of the faithful'. It was found in the writings of St. Ambrose, Prudentius, St. Augustine, St. Paulinus of Nola, and others. Crossan's claim is that 'the martyrs are the most powerful of *patroni*'. Also, there is a description of the death of Judas in two texts outside the New Testament by Papias of Hierapolis from the mid-second century (Crossan 1991:69; emphasis in original; 1995:74).

(ii) Contemporary examples

'The Easter issues of *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, April 8, 1996, all had cover stories on the historical Jesus' (Crossan 1998a:39; 1999:46). He wrote of Margaret Alexiou's classical study of the Greek ritual lament and Bruce Metzger's reports for the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Crossan 1998a:530; 1999:14). 'In a paper presented to the 1995 spring meeting of the Jesus Seminar, Stacy Davids summarized recent psychiatric literature on grief and bereavement' (Crossan 1999:31). Again, he regarded this as narrative history that did not need a reconstructionist application

Jonathan Schell wrote about Gandhi's goals of 'ending untouchability, cleaning latrines, improving the diet of Indian villagers, improving the lot of Indian women, making peace between Muslims and Hindus – through all of which he believed he would find God'. Crossan and Reed's comment was that 'that is why Gandhi was assassinated not by a British imperialist, but by a Hindu fundamentalist' (Crossan & Reed 2004:410; Crossan 2007:192).

'I had read and been persuaded by Mann's fourfold analysis of social and imperial power before the terrorist attacks against our country on September 11, 2001, but that day confirmed it for me' (Crossan 2007:13).

There was no postmodern, reconstructive, interactive methodology in 'the most obscenely egregious[177] invocation of God as Divine Punisher' that occurred in his conversation on the Christian Broadcasting Network's Show The 700 Club between Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson immediately after 9/11. Crossan wrote of John F. Harris who reported in the Washington Post, September 14, 2001, where he cited 'Falwell's claim that the 9/11 tragedy was simply God's punishment on America' for the actions of pagans, abortionists, feminists, gays and lesbians who have 'tried to secularize America – I point the finger in their face and say, "You helped this happen"' (Crossan 2007:71).

Another recent historical example was Mel Gibson's movie, *The passion of the Christ*, that made the death of Jesus 'big news' in the United States and elsewhere. There were cover stories in national news magazines, features on prime-time television shows, and major stories in newspapers across the country, dealing with this movie (Borg & Crossan 2006:VII; Crossan 2007:130). Crossan wrote of Paul Boyer citing Hal Lindsey's claim that 'when he spoke at the American Air War College "virtually the entire school turned out, including many officers accompanied by their wives, and that, at the Pentagon, 'hundreds … jam[med] the room" with more crowding outside' (Crossan 2007:199).

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[176] Patrocinium means 'protection, defence patronage, legal defence' (Latin dictionary 2008. S v patrocinium).

[177] 'Egregious' means 'remarkably or extraordinarily bad; flagrant' (The Macquarie Dictionary 1997. S v egregious).

A citation of Augustine of Hippo 'was magnificently misquoted by Desmond Tutu of Cape Town in 1999: "St Augustine says, God, without us, will not: as we, without God, cannot"' (Crossan 2012:135).

(iii) Crucifixion and other means of death

'We know from Josephus that thousands of Jewish victims were crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem in the first common era century This includes two thousand by Varus in 4 BCE., according to Joseph Antiquities 2.75 to five-hundred or more a day by Titus in 70 CE according to Jewish War 5.450 but 'only one crucified skeleton has so far been found in that area for that or any other period' (Crossan 1991:391). He continued with traditional historiography: 'The Jewish historian Josephus and the pagan historian Tacitus both agree that Jesus was executed by order of the Roman governor of Judea' (Crossan & Watts 1996:122).

In June 1968, four tombs were excavated at Giv'at ha-Mivtar in northern Jerusalem. Three tombs held fifteen ossuaries containing the bones of thirty-five different individuals…. Professor Haas of the Hebrew University / Hadassah Medical School's Department of Anatomy has observed that "evidence of death by violence was found in five cases' (Crossan 1998a:544). The crucified skeleton of Jesus' contemporary Jehochanan from this tomb 'still bears an iron nail about four and a half inches long in his right heel bone but he was honorably interred in ossuary and tomb' (Crossan 1999:17; 1994a:124). Crossan accepted the narrative giving a traditional understanding of history provided by Martin Hengel, who stated that 'crucifixion was aggravated further by the fact that quite often its victims were never buried. It was a stereotyped picture that the crucified victim served as food for wild beasts and birds of prey. In this way his humiliation was made complete. What it meant for a man in antiquity to be refused burial, and the dishonour which went with it, can hardly be appreciated by modern man' (Hengel 1977:87-88, in Crossan 1994a:124; 1999:17; Crossan 1995:162). Hengel's further language was that in crucifixion, the body was 'fastened [and] nailed … [as] evil food for birds of prey and grim pickings for dogs' and was used to 'feed the crows on the cross' and was 'hung … alive for the wild beasts and birds of prey' (Hengel 1977:9, 58, 76, in Crossan 1994a:127). What was Crossan's application of this research by Hengel to Jesus' crucifixion? There was no reconstructive interactivism here.

> In normal circumstances the soldiers guarded the body until death and thereafter it was left for carrion crow, scavenger dog, or other wild beasts to finish the brutal job…. His body [was –SDG] left on the cross or in a shallow grave barely covered with dirt and stones, the dogs were waiting…. What happened after the death and burial of Jesus is told in the last chapters of the four New Testament gospels…. Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical. He was buried, if buried at all, by his enemies and the necessarily shallow grave would have been easy prey for scavenging animals.
>
> (Crossan 1994a:153, 154, 160)

How does this compare with the account in the Gospels? It will be shown in the following assessment that this kind of information is in contrast to that gleaned through an inductive study of Christ's death and burial in the biblical material.

‘The Judeo-Roman history of crucifixion can be summarized over four stages. The first stage is biblical crucifixion – the traditional Jewish method, which is quite different from the later Roman system. Jewish crucifixion was *dead* crucifixion. An executed and already-dead criminal was hung upon a cross…. The second stage is Roman crucifixion. Contrary to the biblical tradition, this was live crucifixion…. The third state is Hasmonean crucifixion. The biblical and Roman traditions were clearly contradictory…. The fourth stage is Essene crucifixion’ (Crossan 1998a:541-542; emphasis in original). Note his language: ‘The Judeo-Christian *history* of crucifixion’ (emphasis added).

‘Josephus mentions three major incidents of corporate crucifixion in the decades before and after Jesus. The Roman governor Varus crucified “about two thousand” in 4 B.C.E…. The Roman procurator Florus crucified “about three thousand six hundred” in 66 C.E…. The Roman general Titus crucified “five hundred or sometimes more … daily” in 70 C.E…. Yet only a single crucified skeleton has been found so far from that terrible first century in the Jewish homeland’ (Crossan 1998a:543).

‘Jesus’ contemporary Philo, the Jewish philosopher from Alexandria in Egypt, observed in his Flaccus 83 that decent governors sometimes had crucified criminals “taken down and given up to their relations, in order to receive the honours of sepulture” at the time of the emperor’s birthday since “the sacred character of the festival ought to be guarded”‘ (Crossan 1999:17).

In the Mishnah, a Jewish code from around 200 BCE and in it, Sanhedrin 6:5-6 notes that ‘“they used not” to bury executed criminals in their ancestral tombs but kept two burial places in readiness, one for those “beheaded and strangled,” the other for those “stoned or burnt”’ (Crossan 1999:20).

The above statements from Crossan indicate he is using the traditional historical method and not postmodern, reconstructive interpretations of historiography.

(iv) Cultural issues

‘Agrarian societies have, according to Lenski’s view, nine classes but with an abysmal gulf separating the five upper from the four lower ones’. Crossan found David Gilmore’s anthropological studies to include an ‘extremely useful 1982 survey of Mediterranean anthropology’ (Crossan 1991:45, 66).

He reads Lenski and Wolf in a straight-forward historical narrative manner (Crossan 1991:126). He cited information on illiteracy, observing that ‘peasants, almost by definition, are illiterate. William Harris estimated that “the likely overall illiteracy level of the Roman Empire under the principate is almost certain to have been above 90%”’. As for other countries in the world, he used statistics from Meir Bara-Ilnan who noted ‘data for illiteracy gathered from different societies in the first half of the 20th century’, including Turkey, Egypt, South Africa, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia. He asked, rhetorically, but in agreement with Harris, ‘Can’t a tentative conclusion be drawn that in ancient “traditional” societies the rate of literacy was less than 10%?’ (Crossan 1998a:234)

(v) The first century AD

Crossan wrote of Koester’s older and later works (1982, 1990) in which he presumed a single written source behind the three independent passion accounts in Mark, John and the *Gospel of Peter*. While he didn’t use the terminology of ‘written source’ in 1990, he presumed it. Koester stated that ‘Crossan’s reconstruction of one single source for all passion narratives seems justified. However, it is doubtful whether this account was as comprehensive and as fixed a literary document as Crossan assumes"' (in Crossan 1998a:563). This is not Crossan's reconstructive understanding of Koester, but reading his material as a recent historical narrative.

Crossan wrote of the biographies of Jesus' contemporary, the Roman governor, Tiberius, and of Josephus, a priestly Jewish historian, who published his twenty-volume Jewish Antiquities, a history of his people, around 93 or 94 C.E.' Josephus 'died probably around the end of the first century. So, at least for the First Roman-Jewish War, he was a participant and eyewitness on both the Jewish and Roman sides. Josephan accuracy, however, cannot always be taken for granted' (Crossan 1998a:99; 1994a:11, 30, 40).

Josephus records these historical details that are not reconstructed by Crossan: the execution of James (Antiquities 20.197-203), the high priest Ananus the Younger, James, the brother of Jesus and certain others (Crossan 1994a:134); in 38, Agrippa returned from Rome to the Jewish homeland (Crossan 1998a:507); 'Herod the Great died in 4 B.C.E., Caesar Augustus in 14 C.E., and Jesus was crucified around 30 C.E.'; 'Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea and later biographer of Constantine, describes the work carried out under imperial Constantinian decree: "as layer after layer of the subsoil came into view, the venerable and most holy memorial of the Savior's resurrection, beyond all our hopes came into view"' (Crossan & Reed 2001:248).

(vi) Historians and historicity

Crossan's epigraph cited Edward Gibbon (1837) on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, one of the duties of the historian to discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, and the reasons for the successful spread of Christianity in the Roman world (Gibbon in Crossan 1998a:1). Crossan took a couple elements 'as probably historical' for James, the Lord's brother. These were his asceticism and he was possibly a Nazarite (a Nazarite vow is a voluntary dedication to the Lord according to Numbers 6:1-21). He referred to James death by execution, based on Eusebius's citing from the lost Outlines of Clement of Alexandria – AD 150-215 (Crossan 1998a:468). Note his language: 'I take one element as probably historical' (emphasis added), where 'historical' refers to traditional history and not postmodern reconstruction.

Crossan (1998a:553) cited Gerald O'Collins and Daniel Kendall (O'Collins & Kendall 1994:235-241) who quoted Rudolf Bultmann, and Joseph Fitzmyer. Crossan's perspective on O'Collins, Kendall, Bultmann and Fitzmyer was from reading these authors as narrative, traditional history, and without interpreting them as postmodern reconstruction, including Fitzmyer's support for the historicity of Joseph of Arimathea (Crossan 1999:18-19). Crossan accepts 'Tobit, a fourth or third-century B.C.E. novel' and not as reconstructive interactivism (Crossan 1999:20).

Crossan referred to Sebastian Junger's non-fiction book, The Perfect Storm, as a 'powerful elegy' that was 'deservedly high on the New York Times bestseller list. In that publication, Junger 'centers on the Andrea Gail, a 72-foot steel swordfisher out of Gloucester which disappeared with all hands off Sable Island east of Nova Scotia, October 28, 1991, in waves 100 feet high' (Crossan 1999:32). He accepts these facts as traditional history and then added: 'Dale Murphy, who disappeared on the Andrea Gail, left a three-year-old son, Dale, an ex-wife, Debra, and a mother behind him. His son "wakes up screaming in the middle of the night" because "Daddy's in the room"' (Crossan 1999:32).

What is Crossan's application? He does not refer to the traditional history of the disappearance of Andrea Gail, a swordfisher boat. He immediately applies the dreams and visions: 'Remember the statement about Christianity's birth that I suggested …: it is the resurrectional apparition of a dead man that explains the power of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman Empire' (Crossan 1999:32). Why this selection of vision, dream and application to Jesus' resurrection as apparition rather than a bodily, historical resurrection? As seen below, there are other factors (a priori premises, imposed personal interpretation, and/or speculation and idiosyncratic judgment) that seem to be influencing his choice of a view that is in contrast to the resurrection as happening in traditional history.

(vii) Historical Jesus' studies

While Crossan disagrees with some of Schweitzer's emphases, he accepts the plain reading of Schweitzer's text where 'Albert Schweitzer insisted that John and Jesus were both apocalyptic preachers, each attempting in his own way to force the advent of the avenging God' (Crossan 1994a:51). Crossan endorsed the plain meaning of the last words of Schweitzer (1936:401): [178]

> He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.
>
> (Schweitzer, in Crossan 1994a:53)

Crossan noted that Schweitzer divided historical Jesus' researchers 'into haters and lovers' and the haters included Hermann Reimarus (1694-1768) and David Strauss (1808-1874' (Crossan 1998a:23; emphasis in original).

(viii) Ireland, Judaism and life after death

In his history class in Ireland, courses on Greek and Roman classics, with texts chosen by British education, he I learned from Caesar's Gallic Wars to admire the syntax and ignore the slaughter – even of our ancient Celtic ancestors (Crossan 1995:213). He wrote of Charles Morris's recent summary description of Ireland's Great Famine (1845-1849).[179] Estimates are that 2.5-3 million Irish were in a state of semi-starvation before the Great Famine. He also made statements about Ireland, a legally constituted part of Great Britain in the early nineteenth century and the British commissions assigned to solve the terrorism and violent resistance (Crossan 1998a:156, 168).

He relies on Geza Vermes research to promote a strong case for a 'holy man' or Hasid tradition within charismatic Judaism that was a Galilean tradition stemming from Elijah and Elisha, Honi and Hanina, and also Jesus of Nazareth, which he considers to be 'a profoundly correct framework for discussion' (Vermes 1981:58-82; Crossan 1991:156-157). Josephus mentions the Essenes fourteen times in his three writings, describes Roman general, Titus's, troop dispositions around Jerusalem (AD 70), and explains the city's fortifications' (Crossan 1998a:449). By the first century AD, ancient traditional Judaism was under pressures from Roman commercial exploitation (the age of Augustus), Greek cultural domination since the age of

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[178] In Crossan's edition of Schweitzer it was p. 403.
[179] These dates are from the *New World Encyclopedia* (2011. S v Irish potato famine).

Alexander the Great, and modernisation from Hellenisation and Greek internationalism (Crossan 1999:33).

A common understanding of life-after-death in the Greco-Roman world (not dismissed by pagans or Jews) was that the dead could return and interact with the living (Crossan 1999:28).

In these examples, Crossan was not advocating a reconstructionist historiography.

(ix) The New Testament Gospels

Crossan affirms disagreement rather than agreement among the four Gospel records, noting that there were pagan opponents such as Celsus by the middle of the second century and Christian apologists, like Justin, Tatian, and Marcion were aware of those discrepancies even if only between Matthew and Luke (Crossan 1991:xxx). Ramsay MacMullen's research noted social pedigree would easily be known in the Greco-Roman world and Jesus, a 'carpenter', indicated lower-class status (Crossan 1994:24).

Crossan cited an epigraph from N T Wright (1996:170) in which Crossan indicated that 'Wright does not accept the existence of what other scholars call the *Q Gospel* as the best explanation for the twin but divergent versions of the three "units" … found in Matthew 22:1-10 = Luke 14:16-24 (the parable of the great supper), Matthew 25:14-30 = Luke 19:12-27 (the parable of the talents/pounds), and Matthew 5:3-4, 6, 11-12 = Luke 6:20b-26 (the beatitudes)' (Crossan 1998a:103-104). Wright has clearly stated that Crossan's statement that 'Wright does not accept the existence of … the *Q Gospel*' is false. However, Wright does have some doubts about certain dimensions of Q. He stated that 'if this Q-and-*Thomas* hypothesis creates so many difficulties, **does this mean that we should abandon the Q hypothesis altogether? By no means**' (Wright 1992:435, 438, 441, 442; bold emphasis added). Crossan cited Ronald Piper's 1989 publication and its 'very persuasive analysis of smaller sayings-clusters in the earlier, sapiential, or Q^1 layer of the *Q Gospel*' and he concluded 'quite correctly, that "*these are not haphazard collections of aphoristic sayings; they display a design and argument unique in the synoptic tradition*"' (Crossan 1998a:392; emphasis in original). The important emphasis for this abduction is that Crossan did not interpret Wright or Piper as a postmodern reconstructionist, but as recent historical, narrative writers.

(x) Roman Empire

Crossan used a traditional historical method in his analysis of Roman governor, Gaius (Caligula), who reigned 39-41 CE, and the infamous story of Caligula's statue as told twice by Josephus. Crossan mentions Philo, an Alexandrian Jewish philosopher from Alexandria (20 BCE – 45 CE) and Emperor Felix (52-60 CE) (Crossan 1995:50; 1994a:41; 1995:45)

There is further use of the traditional historical model and not reconstruction with statements concerning Herod the Great's Temple being burned and dismantled, although Tacitus records that 'even some battle-hardened officers were reluctant to carry out Titus's demolition order' (Crossan & Reed 2001:186). Crossan made statements concerning Octavian before he became Augustus, two thousand years ago, who said, '"Aphrodisias is the one city from all of Asia I have selected to be my own," and the citizens carved that accolade on the archive wall of their theater' (Crossan & Reed 2004:14). Crossan cited Koester who claimed Julius Caesar and Jesus of Nazareth had two things in common – both were murdered and both received divine worship after their deaths (Crossan 1998a:413).

(xi) Secular evidence

Pagan philosopher, Celsus, ‘writing in the last quarter of the second century’ declared that Judaism and paganism covered-up the ‘bastardy’ as the real reason behind the virginal conception and divine generation for Jesus.The illegitimate father, he claimed, was a Roman soldier named Panthera (Crossan 1994a:18).

Crossan refers to the pagan Roman witness, Cornelius Tacitus (Annals 15.44) who referred to a rumour blaming the dynasty’s last emperor, Nero, for the disastrous fire that swept Rome in 64 CE. Nero scotched the rumour by blaming Christians whose founder, Christus, ‘had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus’ (Tacitus in Crossan 1994a:162). In his 1995 publication, Crossan summarised that Jesus’ execution under Pontius Pilate was ‘as sure as anything historical can ever be. For, if no follower of Jesus had written anything for one hundred years after his crucifixion, we would still know about him from two authors not among his supporters’. They are Josephus and Tacitus. Thus, there are ‘not just Christian witnesses but one major Jewish [Josephus – SDG] and one major pagan [Tacitus – SDG] historian who both agree on three points concerning Jesus’. Those points are: ‘There was a *movement*, there was an *execution* because of that movement, but, despite that execution, there was a *continuation* of the movement’ (Crossan 1995:5; emphasis in original). Note especially how Crossan used this language: Jesus’ death under Pontius Pilate ‘is as sure as *anything historical* can be’ (emphasis added). Crossan is referring to anything traditionally historical and not anything reconstructed interactively for a postmodern world.

An examination of this abduction data reveals that Crossan has committed the philosophical crusher. The coherence of his methodology has floundered with explicit self-contradiction in his demonstration of historicity in his writings being a contrast to his stated theory of reconstruction of interactivity. The rock of fact – his use of some traditional historiography – reveals the crusher of self-contradiction in the inconsistent application of his own theory of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism.

4.2.1.2.4 Crossan’s self-contradiction: First read the text

Crossan objected to the way Barabbas was portrayed in a prominent film, stating that Barabbas ‘by the way, was not the loutish buffoon portrayed in *The passion of the Christ* but simply the Jewish version of the Scottish anti-imperialist *Braveheart* or the American anti-imperialist *The Patriot*. Anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film **should first read the text and get the story right**’ (Crossan 2007:138; bold emphasis added).

In an earlier publication he wrote that ‘no amount of anthropological modeling can obscure the fact that any study of the historical Jesus stands or falls on **how one handles the literary level of the text itself**’, and he stated that even with his triadic emphases on three levels – anthropological, historical, and literary – he accepted the ‘necessity’ of ‘**focusing directly on the textual level**’ (Crossan 1991:xxix; emphasis added). However, what does he mean by ‘historical’? Is it traditional history or postmodern history?

His protest was raised briefly in §3.2.2 where it was asked whether Crossan’s objection to the theology of substitutionary atonement in Mel Gibson’s film, *The Passion of the Christ* ‘in two hours of unspeakable suffering as Jesus bears punishment for all the sins against God since the dawn of creation’ (Crossan 2007:138) was a violation of one of the fundamentals of hermeneutics. Is Crossan contravening one of the fundamental understandings of ‘responsible interpretation’?

Lewis and Demarest state one of these fundamentals is that ‘the meaning of a biblical statement is the ordinary, or normal, meaning of the statement (usually literal with some figures of speech) in terms of its context and the author’s purpose’. A second fundamental is that ‘the meaning of a biblical statement fits the historical and cultural setting of the writer and the first readers’ (Lewis & Demarest 1987:30).

These two fundamentals of hermeneutics not only apply to the biblical material but also to the reading of any material, whether poetry, fiction or narrative. It applies to the ordinary or normal reading of this researcher’s local newspaper, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, with the story of 19 August 2013, ‘Brisbane Broncos fullback Josh Hoffman turns down straight swap with Bulldogs for Ben Barba’ (Badel 2013).

It applies to reading of the Bible, poetry, listening to the content of the radio and television news or reading of historians such as Josephus, Tacitus, Eusebius, Toynbee, Hengel, Judge, Barnett, Wright and Crossan. A news item of 19 August 2013 dealt with a rugby league issue that ‘Brisbane fullback Josh Hoffman is a surprise candidate for the Broncos five-eighth role after rejecting a straight-swap proposal to replace Ben Barba at Canterbury next season’ (Badel 2013). The plain meaning of the text was that Josh Hoffman, a player with the Brisbane Broncos, would not do a swap with Ben Barba, a Canterbury (Sydney) Bulldogs’ player, who wants to leave the club at this time of the 2013 season to play the five-eighth position in another team. That’s the plain meaning of the text which is obtained from the online newspaper text and is what one should understand when told to ‘first read the text and get the story right**’** (Crossan’s language in 2007:138). The principle that applies to the story line of Mel Gibson’s movie, applies to the reading and hearing of all literature and other media: The first thing one should do is to read the text and listen to the content to get the meaning of what is stated.

This fundamental of hermeneutics applies to the reading of all of Crossan’s publications to obtain Crossan’s intended plain meaning of words and semantics. The following is a deliberate lengthy citation to demonstrate how Crossan wants readers to understand the regular meaning of words and concepts:

> In discussing the crucifixion, I argued that the story of Jesus’ burial by his friends was totally unhistorical. If he was buried at all, he was buried not by his friends but by his enemies. And not in a tomb hewed out of stone, but in a shallow grave that would have made his body easy prey for scavenging animals. Those are grim conclusions, but I cannot escape them…. In a nutshell, these are my conclusions: First, the Easter story is not about events of a single day, but reflects the struggle of Jesus’ followers over a period of months and years to make sense of both his death and their continuing experience of empowerment by him. Second, stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not really about “visions” at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church. Third, resurrection is one – but only one – of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus’ continuing presence with his followers and friends…. Is the story of the empty tomb historical? No, I’ve already explained why I doubt there was any tomb for Jesus in the first place. I don’t think any of Jesus’ followers even knew where he was buried – if he was buried at all. And the gospel writers don’t come close to agreeing with each other on what they report. So my conviction is that motives other than just history writing are clearly at work here…. Paul is the earliest writer we have on resurrection … and he nowhere shows awareness of having heard an empty tomb story.
>
> (Crossan & Watts 1996:152-154)

This statement by Crossan and Watts makes no sense without a common knowledge of terminology and biblical concepts. Here he contradicts his definition of history as reconstructive interactivism by asking if the empty tomb was 'historical', by which he understood that 'I doubt there was any tomb for Jesus in the first place'. This is the traditional understanding of history and not that of postmodernism. He repeats such a view with this statement: 'Jesus' burial by his friends was totally unhistorical', by which he referred to the tomb hewn out of stone and the alleged shallow grave where the body was a prey for scavenging dogs.

He needs his readers to understand what 'the Easter story' meant (resurrection of Jesus) and then reverts to a postmodern interpretation that repudiates the understanding he gave of the empty tomb by making Easter mean that 'it is not about events of a single day, but reflects the struggle of Jesus' followers' and 'their continuing experience of empowerment by him'. Thus in the space of three pages in this publication he has committed the philosophical crusher with his self-contradiction regarding the nature of history.

Also, from this Crossan and Watts' statement, the normal, plain meaning of these words and phrases need to be understood. In this case, the nature of the crucifixion of Jesus is described. It is not as stated in Martin Hengel's exposition of crucifixion in the first century (Hengel 1977).

As to his statement that 'Paul is the earliest writer we have on resurrection … and he nowhere shows awareness of having heard an empty tomb story', Crossan has to refute the perspective of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:12-21 statements that are here highlighted:

> [12] Now if **Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead**, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, **then not even Christ has been raised**. [14] And **if Christ has not been raised**, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because **we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised**. [16] For **if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised**. [17] And **if Christ has not been raised**, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. [20] But **in fact Christ has been raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by **a man has come also the resurrection of the dead** (emphasis added).

The issues of the nature of Jesus' resurrection, the post-resurrection events, the apostle Paul and the empty tomb of Jesus (especially the 1 Cor 15 emphasis), and the meaning and intention of Jesus' resurrection will be addressed below in §4.4.

Crossan is to be commended for his advocacy of the position that one 'should first read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138). It is fundamental to understanding any written material. It also is as essential for reading Crossan's own publications and Gospel materials, as it is for the understanding the content of the film, *The passion of the Christ*, for which he is offered the challenge, 'Read the text'.

(a) Samples of Jesus' burial and resurrection

These following statements by Crossan concerning the passion-resurrection are indicators of the philosophical crusher. His view is that one should read the text (in this case the New Testament Gospels) to get the correct story. What does Crossan state about Jesus' burial and resurrection in comparison with the Gospel accounts? These are samples and not comprehensive examples from Crossan's writings:

‘The story of Jesus’ burial by his friends was totally unhistorical. If he was buried at all, he was buried not by his friends but by his enemies’. Jesus ‘was buried not in a tomb hewed out of stone, but in a shallow grave that would have made his body easy prey for scavenging animals’ (Crossan & Watts 1996:152-153). By contrast, when the biblical text is read, it states that Joseph of Arimathea ‘who was also a disciple of Jesus’ asked Pilate for the body of Jesus ‘and Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock’ (Mt 27:57-59). Thus, Crossan committed another philosophical crusher by not following his own exhortation to Mel Gibson, that one ‘should first read the text and get the story right’.

As for the existence of Joseph of Arimathea and Jesus’ tomb, Crossan stated that ‘Joseph of Arimathea *could* have buried Jesus, perhaps out of personal piety or communal duty’, but Crossan is persuaded, based on several points that he argues, that ‘Mark *created* that burial by Joseph of Arimathea in 15:42-47. It contains no pre-Markan tradition’. Even further, ‘Mark created the empty-tomb story just as he created the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane’ (Crossan 1998a:555, 557; emphasis in original; 1999:12). Of Jesus’ burial, Crossan wrote that ‘this deliberate, almost desperate, but terribly understandable defensiveness about the nonburial of Jesus [by Joseph of Arimathea – SDG] comes to a magnificent climax in John 19:38-42’ (Crossan 1994a:157). He then cites this passage from John in full, in which it is stated that Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus who asked Pilate to permit him to take the body of Jesus, permission which Pilate granted. Because ‘there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid’, Joseph, accompanied by Nicodemus, ‘came and removed his body…. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there’ (in Crossan 1994a:157-158).

The contradiction in this kind of statement is that Crossan has stated that this is ‘the nonburial of Jesus’ by Joseph of Arimathea, but then he immediately cites the passage from John 19:42 where it is stated that ‘the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there’ (quoting from the NRSV). He cannot have it both ways. Was there a non-burial of Jesus? Was he laid in the tomb or, was Joseph of Arimathea part of the FC creation? He used his FC understanding which is not critiqued in this project, but treated as having, in the words of John Nolland, (1) an appreciative dimension in its ‘stimulating an imaginative engagement with dimensions of the life of the early church in a period largely otherwise inaccessible to us’, and (2) a negative component that is quite ‘speculative’ (Nolland 2005:233).

Crossan moved beyond FC to declare that the tomb of Jesus was unhistorical. He was responding to some of Raymond Brown’s (1994) material: ‘Brown comments that “there is nothing implausible in John’s scenario that there was a garden in the area north of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified, and that he was buried in a tomb in that garden” (1270). That is absolutely correct: nothing implausible. *Nothing historical either*’ (Crossan 1995:176; emphasis added). Here again Crossan is using historical in the traditional sense and not according to his later postmodern, reconstructed interactive definition (1998a:20).

(b) Enter reconstruction

Crossan’s view is that ‘the Easter story is not about events of a single day, but reflects the struggle of Jesus’ followers over a period of months and years to make sense of both his death and their continuing experience of empowerment by him’ (Crossan & Watts 1996:153). To the contrary, the Easter story of the death of Jesus

Christ, according to Matthew 27:45-46, 50, happened this way: ‘Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”[180] that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”.... And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit’. What are the time factors here? Robertson explained the meaning of, ‘from the sixth hour’ (Mt 27:45):

> Curiously enough McNeile takes this to mean the trial before Pilate (John 18:14). But clearly John uses Roman time when the trial occurred before Pilate. The crucifixion began at the third hour (Mark 15:25) Jewish time or nine A.M. The darkness began at noon, the sixth hour Jewish time and lasted till 3 P.M. Roman time, the ninth hour Jewish time (Mark 15:33 = Matt. 27:45 = Luke 23:44). The dense darkness for three hours could not be an eclipse of the sun and Luke (23:45) does not so say, only “the sun’s light failing.” Darkness sometimes precedes earthquakes and one came at this time or dense masses of clouds may have obscured the sun’s light.
>
> (Robertson 1930a:233-234)

On which day was Jesus crucified? Mark 15:42-43 states that ‘And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus’ (see also Mt 27:57; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:42). Mark’s explanation is that Jesus’ death was the day of Preparation, which is the day before the Sabbath, the Sabbath beginning at sunset Friday. So Jesus was crucified on the Friday. Robertson explained, based on Matthew 27:57, that the Preparation (*paraskeuē*) ‘is the name in modern Greek today for Friday. ‘The Jews were anxious that these bodies should be taken down before the sabbath began at 6 P.M.’ (Robertson 1930a:237-138).

On which day was Jesus’ resurrection? Mark 16:1-6 states that it happened ‘when the Sabbath was past’ and it was ‘very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen’ when Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, ‘brought spices so that they might go and anoint him [the buried Jesus – SDG]. They did not find the body of Jesus but ‘they saw that the stone had been rolled back’ and in the tomb they saw a young man sitting, dressed in white, who told them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him’ (Mk 16:6). The time factor is that Jesus was crucified and buried by sunset on the Friday and he had risen from the dead by sunrise Sunday. This is in accordance with Jesus’ prophecy, ‘For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth’ (Mt 12:40), and ‘as they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed’ (Mt 17:22-23). According to Matthew 16:21, Jesus began to show his disciples that he would go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed and on the third day be raised.

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[180] Robertson explained the divergence in MSS evidence: ‘Matthew first transliterates the Aramaic, according to the Vatican manuscript (B), the words used by Jesus: *Elōi, elōi, lema sabachthanei*; some of the MSS give the transliteration of these words from Psa. 22:1 in the Hebrew (*Eli, Eli, lama Zaphthanei*)’ (Robertson 1930a:234).

Robertson's comment on Matthew 12:40 was that '"Three days and three nights" may simply mean three days in popular speech. Jesus rose "on the third day" (Matt. 16:21), not "on the fourth day." It is just a fuller form for "after three days"' (Robertson 1930a:98).

Therefore the text of Scripture provides opposing evidence to that of Crossan's reconstruction. Jesus' resurrection happened three days after his crucifixion, according to Jewish reckoning, and the Easter story was not about a single day or the struggle of Jesus' followers for their continuing experience and empowerment over months and years as in Crossan and Watts (1996:153). It was about an historical event that happened that can be verified by deduction from the evidence in Scripture. The historicity or otherwise of the empty tomb will be examined in §4.4.

'Stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153). This position emerges from Crossan's commitment to FC and RC and their explanation of how the Gospel accounts were written or compiled. In Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, the Scriptures record that 'Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him' (Mt 28:9); Jesus spoke with them (Mt 28:10; Jn 20:15-19) and told Mary Magdalene, 'Do not cling to me' (Jn 20:17). Further discussion is in §4.4.

(c) Barabbas as Mark's creation

One of Crossan's classic reconstructions is what he does with the release of Barabbas from prison (Mk 15:6-15): 'I judge that narrative to be absolutely unhistorical, a creation most likely of Mark himself' (Crossan 1994a:141). Note his use of 'unhistorical' with a traditional understanding of history and not his commitment to a definition of history as reconstructed interactivism. His interpretation is that Mark's narrative about Barabbas was 'a symbolic dramatization of Jerusalem's face, *as he saw it*'. Authorial creations, he claimed, are not primarily for literary embellishment but are for '*symbolic dramatization*, as here … or *prophetic fulfillment*, as with the Triumphal Entrance, or both, as with the infancy stories' (Crossan 1994a:141-143; emphasis in original). Elsewhere, he asked whether the use of names such as Barabbas (Mk 15:7), Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus (Mk 15:21) and Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:43) would 'preclude fictional creation, not only of those names but of the actions and events associated with them'. His working hypothesis was that Barabbas, Simon, and Joseph are 'all so Markan…. He himself created both names and events' (Crossan 1995:177).

This creative explanation by Crossan casts doubts on the historicity of a person associated with Jesus' passion. John Meier's assessment was that 'if the Barabbas incident, historical or not, was in an early form of the Passion Narrative, then that form of the Passion Narrative would naturally give the impression that the Barabbas incident took place on the morning of the fourteenth of Nissan, when there was still time for Barabbas to take part in the Passover meal, and not on the morning of the fifteenth of Nisan, when the meal was already over'. Therefore, he understood that 'the presence of the Barabbas incident is some early form of the Passion Narrative' agrees, implicitly, with the John (18:38-40) and not the Synoptic (Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:18-25), chronology' (Meier 1991:400).

Leon Morris, after examining the Barabbas' evidence in the four Gospels concluded that while 'the custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover is not attested elsewhere' he found 'nothing inherently unlikely about it'. His conclusion was that

Barabbas seemed to be a member of the local resistance movement who would be a hero to many Jews because of his opposition to the Romans (Morris 1971:772-774).

(d) Parables

The claim was that parables *about* Jesus presumed historical characters and invented stories about John and Jesus, Annas and Caiaphas, Antipas and Pilate, and the incident on the road to Emmaus. If that was not provocative enough, he widened his 'case to think of each entire gospel version as a book-length *megaparable* about the life, death and resurrection of the historical character Jesus of Nazareth' (Crossan 2012:5-6; emphasis in original).

His understanding of parables is that they are 'invented stories' and 'parables *about* Jesus' that involved '*fictional* events about *factual* characters' and this extended to 'each entire gospel version' where the life, death and resurrection of the historical Jesus of Nazareth was 'a book-length *megaparable*' (Crossan 2012:5-6; emphasis in original). Thus, Crossan has made up his own version of the meaning of parable. He stated:

> Parable = Metaphoricity + Narrativity
>
> (Crossan 2012:8)

He tried to base his understanding of parable (which he extends to each entire New Testament Gospel) on its etymology: 'Metaphor means "carrying something over" from one thing to another and thereby "seeing something as another" or "speaking of something as another"…. A metaphor is "seeing as" or "speaking as" and we have, of course, no problem with recognizing *small* metaphors…. It is the *big* ones that are as dangerous as they are inevitable. When a metaphor gets big, it is called "tradition"; when it gets bigger, it is called "reality"; when it gets biggest of all, it is called "evolution" or even "god"' (Crossan 2012:8; emphasis in original).

Thus, Crossan's postmodernism has run amok with his redefining parable and metaphor according to his idiosyncratic understanding. Crossan has the power of a producer – that's what he seems to be trying to achieve with his redefinition of parables. Here, 'producer' is used as synonymous with creator, innovator, originator and inventor. Therefore, in light of his view of parables as 'invented stories' about 'presumed historical characters', the conclusion must be that the entire Gospels are mega-parables containing invented stories about presumed historical characters. Thus, there is no reliable historical record of what is recorded in the Gospels.

Jesus made it specific when he was using parables in the New Testament (see Mt 13:3, 10, 34-35, 53; 21:45; 22:1; Mk 3:23; 4:2, 11, 13, 33; 12:1; Lk 8:10). He left no doubt that this was a parable as the text labelled his stories as parables. Based on the Greek New Testament, Arndt and Gingrich define παραβολη (parable) as meaning 'type, figure', indicating 'a symbol (pointing) to the present age'. In the synoptics, 'the word denotes a characteristic form of the teaching of Jesus' that was 'a short discourse that makes a comparison; it expresses a (single) complete thought. The evangelists considered that it needed interpretation because it presented teaching in obscure fashion' (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:617). This last sentence is a bowing of the head to FC as the intimation here is that the evangelists created the 'needed interpretation' because of what they considered was 'teaching in obscure fashion'. That is not what the texts state, but it is a presupposition of FC.

Friedrich Hauck's word study explained that in the New Testament, parable is used forty-eight times in the Synoptic Gospels and twice in Hebrews. The Synoptic use 'corresponds fully to the broad use' in the Old Testament and Rabbinic literature.

In the Synoptics παραβολη means 'a short saying which is combined with a comparison or figure of speech' and is 'a proverbial saying'. He explained that the New Testament parable means more than a 'mere metaphor' such as 'leaven of the Pharisees' (Mt 16:6)) or simile, 'clever as serpents' (Mt 10:16). Instead, 'it is an independent similitude in which an evident or accepted truth from a known field (nature, human life) is designated to establish or illustrate a new truth in the preaching of Jesus (kingdom of God, God's nature and action, piety)'. Formally one might be able to differentiate, firstly, 'true parables, which are distinguished from figures of speech and similes only by the more extended development of the image, and which may sometimes grow out of metaphors (Mt. 18:12-14; 24:43 f.), sometimes out of similes (Mt. 13:31f., 33, 44, 45 f.)'. The 'obvious truth … of the parable constitutes its power to convince' (Hauck 1967:752).

Secondly, 'parables may consist of a story, often with subsidiary details, to which the comparative material is adapted. The story is in the past tense, Mk. 4:3-9; Mt. 21:39; 22:2; 25:1', but the distinction between these two elements 'is fluid, but the characteristic narrative form is plain to see' (see Mk 4:3-9; Lk 11:5-8; 13:6-9; 18:1-8). Thirdly, they are 'illustrative stories in which the idea is presented without figurative garb. Lk. alone offers this type of parable in the 4 passages 10:30-37; 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 18:9-14'. Hauck noted that Jesus took his parabolic material 'partly from nature (Mk. 4:26-29; 13:28 f.; Lk. 12:54-56 etc.) and partly from the manifold relationships of human life as He knew them from His Palestinian background (householder, servant, money-lender, merchant, friend, widow, shepherd, housewife, judge, bridegroom, house-building etc.). In part He uses regular occurrences (leaven, grain of mustard-seed), in part typical incidents (quarrelling, children, sower), in part exceptional situations (the workers in the vineyard, Mt. 20:1-16; Hauck 1967:752).

A biblical example of the meaning of parable, in contrast to that by Crossan, could be summarised as:

> Parable = extended metaphor (contemporary symbol from known field) → application to God's truth or Christian living (to teach as one theme/truth)

Such an example was in the parable of the sower where the extended metaphor was the contemporary symbol in a field that was well known in the first century – a sower sowing seed in the field (Mt 13:1-9) with the application to the seed of Jesus' word – the message – and how it is received by various people (Mt 13:18-23).

This explanation of παραβολη, based on New Testament Greek usage, demonstrates how Crossan has placed his own, innovative meaning on parable and made it to apply to the New Testament, even to designating entire Gospels as mega-parables. Thus, Crossan has imposed a meaning on parable that is not exegetically based on the New Testament's original language. This makes it impossible to compare Crossan's view with a biblical understanding of parable.

Crossan's stated accusation against Mel Gibson's movie and the promotion of substitutionary atonement was that he 'should first read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138). When this principle is applied to Crossan and a sample of examples related to Christ's resurrection, Crossan's own philosophy of textual fidelity is found wanting.

In his writings, does Crossan reveal any data that could explain how or why he has perpetrated these anomalies of self-contradiction? Three possibilities emerge, the first two being closely connected. They are:

- *A priori* premises or assumptions;

- The imposition of personal interpretations on the data; and
- Speculation and opinion.

Here data are gathered to support these possible explanations:

4.2.1.2.5 *A priori* assumptions

What is an *a priori* assumption? The definition adopted here is that of Bruce Russell who stated, 'Knowledge is generally thought to require justified true belief, even if justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge as Edmund Gettier famously argued' in 1967. Russell's understanding was that '*a priori* knowledge is knowledge that rests on *a priori* justification. *A priori* justification is a type of epistemic justification that is, in some sense, independent of experience…. Besides being fallible, it seems that *a priori* justification is defeasible, that is, all-things-considered *a priori* justification can be defeated by further evidence' (Russell 2014).

What are some of Crossan's *a priori* premises that he brings to the study of the historical Jesus and especially to his interpretation of Jesus' resurrection that can be defeated by further knowledge?

(a) Postmodernism: The object and subject will challenge and change the other

In the context of discussing archaeology, Crossan quoted British archaeologists, Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley, who have led a new postmodern movement, 'post-processual archaeology' (Crossan 1998a:212). They stated that 'archaeology, as cultural practice, is always a politics, a morality' and 'is nothing if not critique' (Shanks & Tilley in Crossan 1998a:211).

Shanks and Tilley stated that in the seven years before this publication, for the first time archaeologists were faced with different theoretical perspectives on the past for their discipline. Their claim was that there was a gap to be filled of 'the perceived fundamental isolation of past from the present' and that this was 'to reinscribe the past into the present, to realize their interaction'. This impetus had come almost entirely from outside the discipline through debates in social theory. Archaeology is being taken 'into the realm of structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism and deconstruction'. In their conclusion, they stated: 'We might also make reference to the idea of an avant-garde, or the debate over socialist realism, or the emergence of a so-called post-modernist culture' (Shanks & Tilley 1988:vii, 99, 208).

Therefore, Crossan has called on these two postmodern scholars advocating post-processual archaeology to bolster his *a priori* commitment to postmodern epistemology for the historical Jesus. Crossan admitted that this understanding of archeology was identical to his understanding of history that '*history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*' (Crossan 1998a:20). He admitted that both disciplines are attempting 'to wrestle closely and honestly with *postmodernism's correct assertion that the object known is changed by the subject knowing it*' and this meant charting a course between objectivism and subjectivism, historicism and relativism, positivism and narcissism. His answer was 'that the present must reconstruct the past in openly admitted interaction so that each will challenge and change the other' (Crossan 1998a:211-212; emphasis added).

Crossan cited philosopher Marianne Sawicki's (Westar Institute 2013c) definition that 'post-processualists assert that historical agency and self-interested strategy are the key terms in archeological understanding' and that reconstruction of the past is a component of the social construction of the present'. Crossan acknowledged one of Sawicki's conclusions: 'Post-structuralism does not offer an internally coherent theory and does not seem able on its own to escape a debilitating relativism'. Crossan's response was: 'That is, of course, the moral black hole threatening all of postmodernism' (Crossan 1998a:212-213).

This is one of Crossan's major problems with his postmodern definition of history. It cannot escape from 'debilitating relativism' and thus proves to be 'the moral black hole' of his personal philosophy of postmodernism. Could Jesus' resurrection being described as an apparition be associated with Crossan's promotion of 'debilitating relativism' in relation to Christ's resurrection? However, while admitting that he is not a field archaeologist, he stated that his present disagreements with such archaeologists 'are with their social conclusions, which seem to contradict general anthropological ones and which would therefore need specific arguments and proofs to substantiate them' (Crossan 1998a:214). However, how does Crossan's interactive reconstruction of postmodernism avoid Sawicki's assessment of 'subjective factors' associated with 'debilitating relativism' with postmodernism? Why should archaeologists be restricted to using Crossan's view of anthropology when relativism is one philosophy driving the content of postmodernism?

Crossan further illustrated his postmodern interpretation when he asked his readers: 'Locate yourself on the first Holy Saturday, *a day that is going to last about, say, five or ten years*…. You search for texts that show death not as end but as beginning, not as divine judgment but as divine plan, not as ultimate defeat but as postponed victory for Jesus. You are, therefore, especially looking for texts with a certain duality, a certain hint of two stages, two moments, two phases, or two levels' (Crossan 1994a:146; emphasis in original). Note his imposition of 'two stages, two moments, two phases, or two levels' on the text. Instead of allowing the text to interpret itself through plain understanding of the text, he encourages the reader to especially go 'looking for texts with a certain duality'. In this manner he is asking for a postmodernist hermeneutic to be read into the text. This is eisegesis rather than exegesis.

There is further postmodern, reconstructed interactivism with his view that 'the last chapters of the New Testament gospels' are not 'entranced revelations' but are 'quite deliberate political dramatizations of the priority of one *specific leader* over another, of this *leadership group* over that *general community*. Those stories are not primarily interested in trance and apparition but in power and authority' (Crossan 1994a:169; emphasis in original).

Again, his unusual postmodern interpretation of Matthew 27:19 was that 'Pilate's wife had troubled dreams the previous night. That never happened, of course, but it was true nonetheless. It was a most propitious time for the Roman Empire to start having nightmares' (Crossan 1991:394). Something did not happen factually but it was true, nevertheless, because of his postmodern reconstruction (seen as a metaphor) of its referring to the nightmares happening in the Roman Empire. This is relativism in action.

Crossan's statement that 'postmodernism's correct assertion' of the object known being changed by the subject knowing it (Crossan 1998a:211), is the *a priori* affirmation that Crossan maintains but he commits a philosophical crusher when he attempts to comprehensively adopt his postmodern meaning of history in his own publications (see §4.2.1.2.3(a), (b), (c) above).

(b) A postmodern working definition of history

As already indicated in §4.2.1.2.1, Crossan's definition of history is articulated with postmodern epistemology, '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*. There are times we can get only alternative perspectives on the same event. (There are *always* alternative perspectives, even when we do not hear them.) But history as argued public reconstruction is necessary to reconstruct *our* past in order to project *our* future' (Crossan 1998a:20; emphasis in original). He affirmed that 'any reconstruction of the past is interactive with the present. Our own personal and individual, social and cultural positions in terms of race, color, creed, gender, class, and everything else as well, are at play in such reconstruction' (Crossan 1998a:213). This is an *a priori* assumption by Crossan.

Crossan draws four corollaries from this definition of history, the last of which 'concerns method. I insist that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present. But what keeps the dialectic of us and them as even and honest as possible? Method, method, and, once again, method. It will not guarantee the truth because nothing can do that. But method, as self-conscious and self-critical as we can make it, is our only discipline'. He claimed that 'it is our one best hope for honesty' as 'it is the due process of history' which cannot take a person out of their present bodies, minds, hearts, societies and cultures (Crossan 1999:5).

Crossan's postmodern, interactive reconstruction of the evidence from the past, to deal with the present and the future in Jesus-reconstruction, is his method. He claimed that methodologies, 'will not guarantee the truth because nothing can do that' (Crossan 1999:5).

Does he want his readers to accept this as a truthful statement by Crossan about his own method of research and writing that research? Crossan is stating that no method will guarantee the truth, but surely he wants the readers of this statement of his methodology of Jesus' reconstruction to be taken seriously as a truthful assessment about what he means by postmodern, interactive reconstruction?

This is another example of a philosophical crusher in Crossan's works. He could not be consistent. He wanted to deny truth as emanating from methodology, but surely he also wants his writing to be read so that what he says is a truthful representation of his own method. Or does he want this researcher to place his own meaning from the present onto Crossan's statements? What is the meaning of 'h*istory is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public* discourse' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original) when it is given a postmodern contemporary perspective by this researcher?

Borg and Crossan give an example of how their understanding of reconstruction applies to the biblical texts articulating the Last Supper. In the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper (Mt 26:27-28; Lk 22:20; Mk 14:22-24) and in Paul's version (1 Cor 11:24-25), 'the different versions indicate a degree of fluidity in how the Last Supper was remembered and celebrated' (Borg & Crossan 2006:117-120).

They stated that 'the Last Supper is about bread for the world, God's justice against human injustice, a New Passover from bondage to liberation, and participation in the path that leads through death to new life' (Crossan & Borg 2006:120). This is imposing a postmodern, subjective interpretation on the text, a hermeneutic that does not arise from an inductive analysis of the biblical texts.

Crossan explained that 'Christianity is historical reconstruction interpreted as divine manifestation. It is not (in a postmodern world) that we find once and for all who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction, a reconstruction that will be and must be in some creative interaction with its own particular needs, visions, and programs'. He explained further that this 'historical reconstruction, in principle, is available to any researcher' who wants to undertake the task within 'disciplined constraints'. Within the 'dialogues, debates, controversies and conclusions of contemporary scholarship' there are challenges to 'faith to see and say how that is for now the Christ, the Lord, the Son of God' (Crossan 1995:217).

If it is concluded by this researcher that Crossan's meaning is that something from the past is reconstructed (or deconstructed) by a present contemporary meaning placed on it, there should be no complaint about this researcher's postmodern interactive meaning of a Beatles' song, based on an interpretation of Crossan's data. Take the rock song, 'Help!', written on April 11, 1965 by John Lennon and Paul McCartney and recorded in Abbey Road EMI studios, London, on April 13, 1965 by the Beatles (Rybaczewski n d). The lyrics of the song begin with these words:

> Help, I need somebody
> Help, not just anybody
> Help, you know I need someone
> Help!
>
> When I was younger, so much younger than today
> I never needed anybody's help in any way
> But now these days are gone I'm not so self-assured
> Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the doors
>
> Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
> And I do appreciate you being 'round
> Help me get my feet back on the ground
> Won't you please, please help me?...
>
> **Songwriters**
> Lennon, John / McCartney, Paul
>
> (Metrolyrics 2013)

The song, written nearly fifty years ago, as understood by this researcher's adoption of a relativistic, postmodern philosophy for illustrative purposes, is a cry for help to alleviate the existential crisis associated with the researcher's depression following open-heart, valve replacement surgery. The words of 'Help!' in the 1965 milieu have the contemporary understanding of a call of exasperation for spiritual help from the depressive illness of the writer's present predicament. Being recorded at an 'Abbey' studio has an extra special meaning of the need for spiritual intervention leading to physical, mental and spiritual healing for this contemporary sufferer with major 'help' from a church's ministry to the patient.

Surely, using Crossan's methodology, there should be no objection to such an idiosyncratic interpretation, based on a postmodern reconstructed interactivism. Therefore, this writer's interpretation of the song, 'Help!', is not unlike Crossan's hermeneutics on Jesus' resurrection as apparition, and the appearance stories having the meaning of authority, which are covered in §3.3.2.11.1 above and under presupposition number 18. However, the truth is that this writer invented what he wanted it to mean. It did not relate to the narrative meaning of the song's text. This researcher created the idiosyncratic meaning he wanted it to have. This postmodern, reconstructive, interactive understanding of the Beatles song, 'Help!' was a fictive invention that is, nonetheless, valid when using Crossan's interactive methodology.

Would Crossan place this interpretation – to use his words – in the category of a 'lethal deceit that too often renders savage the heart of Christianity' where Christians argue that they have facts, not interpretation and that the Christians 'have history not myth, that *we* have truth and *you* have lies. That will not work any longer' (Crossan 1995:217-218). Why not? It is this student's postmodern reconstruction and it is designed to 'work' for this student. Who is Crossan to say that 'that will not work any longer'?

Thus, Crossan's postmodern reconstruction of the definition of history becomes farcical when it can be made to mean so many interpretations by various people throughout history. It causes any writing, whether of history by Josephus, Tacitus, the author of Luke-Acts, or down to the local newspaper's reporting, to lose sense of factual meaning. It is a failure as an interpretative method of history.

(c) Self-contradiction and lack of systematic consistency

In the above exposition of Crossan's self-contradictions, he has demonstrated a lack of systematic consistency in the foundation of historical investigation. This has been exposed in the abduction (see §4.2.1.2).

In the same document in which Crossan affirmed his postmodern definition of history, how did he approach other evidence from history? He wrote that 'Roman crucifixion normally involved leaving the condemned person on the cross for carrion birds and prowling dogs to consume' and he called upon Martin Hengel's evidence:

> Crucifixion was aggravated further by the fact that quite often its victims were never buried. It was a stereotyped picture that the crucified victim served as food for wild beasts and birds of prey. In this way his humiliation was made complete. What it meant for a man in iniquity to be refused burial, and the dishonour which went with it, can hardly be appreciated by modern man.
>
> (Hengel 1977:87-88, in Crossan 1999:17)

Crossan's comment was that 'crucifixion was not just about physical pain or social shame. It was, like condemnation to the arena beasts or the grilled fire, an attempt to annihilate the individual as fully and completely as possible'. Then he adds that 'we know from both textual and archaeological sources that exceptions to that ultimate fate were possible'. He proceeds to give historical examples, including Philo from Alexandria, Egypt, Jesus' contemporary Jehochanan, and Paul on Jesus' burial tradition. The horrific alternative of 'the body abandoned on the cross is the body dumped in a limed pit', as described by Sawicki (1994:180, 257, in Crossan 1999:17-18).

What is unmistakable in Crossan's citing this historical evidence is that he is not following his own theory that '*history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public* discourse*'* (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). A page after this definition, he discussed 'the difference between history and story', explaining that 'both contemporary North American culture and current scholarly exegetical discussion often speak too easily about story without distinguishing between historical narrative and fictional narrative'. After giving 'a particularly horrible example' of a woman who recovered memories of satanic ritual abuse by her parents in therapy, he commented that 'it is worst of all, for herself, for her family, for her society, if her therapist finds the distinction between fact and fiction, fantasy and history, of no importance whatsoever'. In that context he wrote that 'history matters. And history is possible because its absence is intolerable. History is not the same as story. *Even if all history is story, not all story is history*' (Crossan 1999:4-5; emphasis added). However, to which meanings of 'history' and 'historical narrative' is he referring? Is it a traditional understanding or his postmodern reconstruction?

In the very article in which he declared this definition of history, he violated his own theory of the nature of history. In these examples, he has often pursued a definition of history that is similar to that of Tudor historian, Sir Geoffrey Elton (1921-1994), who stated that 'history deals with events, not states; it investigates things that happen and not things that are'. Elton's definition of history included 'the transformation of things (people, institutions, ideas and so on) from one state into another' as well as 'those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left a present deposit; and it deals with them from the point of view of happening, change and the particular' (Elton 1967:10-11, 12).

Elton also wrote of the historian's case:

> Just because historical matter is in the past, is gone, irrecoverable and unrepeatable, its objective reality is guaranteed: it is beyond being altered for any purpose whatsoever. Let it be noted that what is in question here is the subject matter of history, the events of the past, not the evidence they have left behind or the product of the historian's labours. However biased, prejudiced, incomplete and inadequate that product may be, it embodies an account of events that happened quite independent of the existence of him who now looks at them.
>
> (Elton 1967:52-53)

This definition also is consonant with that given by historian, Paul Barnett, who stated that 'history is not concerned with things that *are* so much as with things that *happen* and with the new directions that occur as a consequence. Understood this way, history deals with phenomena and, where possible, seeks an explanation for these phenomena' (Barnett 1999:14; emphasis in original).

Therefore, Crossan has committed the philosophical crusher in his 'reduction of implicit to explicit self-contradiction' in his definition and practice of history (Meyer 1991).

As indicated in §1.1.7.3.1, the inter-related criteria used here to test the validity or otherwise of all hypotheses are that only those will be accepted which are, (1) non-contradictory, (2) supported by adequate evidence, and (3) are affirmable without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25). In Crossan's self-contradictions, he has violated one of these fundamentals, which Edward Carnell framed in terms of the criterion of 'systematic consistency'. By 'consistency' as a test of truth he referred to the law of contradiction which means that A is not non-A at the same time and in the same respect. This is based on Aristotle's sharpening of Plato's statement. Aristotle (1994-2009:4.3) stated that the law of contradiction meant that 'the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect' (in Carnell 1948:57). Carnell's assessment was that 'without consistency in our meaning, we cannot tell the lunatic from the expert. The former is known by his frequent violation of the law of contradiction' (Carnell 1948:57).

'Consistency is our surest test for the absence of truth. It is the test of consistency that the jury applies to the evidence during the trial. It is consistency that we apply in daily contact one with the other' (Carnell 1948:57). However, there is a qualification: 'Sheer consistency in the use of our terms, however, is not proof that we have truth. It only means that where we are not consistent, there we are involved in error' as it deals with formal truth, exemplified in mathematics and logic (Carnell 1948:58-59).

According to Carnell, systematic consistency also includes

> material truth, the truth which we seek in Christianity, [which – SDG] pertains always to the totality of what is real. The real is whatever is, that is, whatever may be brought into our experience.... Systematic consistency is the combination of formal and material truth. It is a *consistency* because it is based upon a rigid application of the law of contradiction, and it is *systematic* consistency because the data which are formed into this consistent system are taken from the totality of our experience, within and without.
>
> (Carnell 1948:59; emphasis in original)

Carnell explicates systematic consistency as having negative and positive dimensions, the negative being that it does not violate the law of contradiction and affirmatively that it includes the facts of experience (Carnell 1948:60-61).

Carnell noted that 'the rock-bottom fact upon which Christianity rests is the Person, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1948:114) and then he calls upon Gresham Machen for support of Christianity as a historical religion, 'The great weapon with which the disciples of Jesus set out to conquer the world was not a mere comprehension of eternal principles; it was an historical message, an account of something that had recently happened, it was the message, "He is risen"' (Machen 1923:28-29). When determining whether Jesus did or did not rise from the grave,

> by no presently known manipulation of symbols can one demonstrate either that Christ did rise from the grave or that He did not. Systematic consistency is our only means for proving or disproving either theory of the resurrection. We must set up that hypothesis which is based upon a careful sifting and screening of the relevant data. When one shows that Julius Caesar was born 100 B. C., he does not take down a volume of higher calculus and pore over it; he goes to the painful work of evaluating the actual evidence of what happened in history. A coherent hypothesis, let us recall, is one which can smoothly lead us into the totality of our experience inside and outside.
>
> (Carnell 1948:114)

Geisler rightly affirms systematic consistency as a test for truth *within* a worldview system but rejects it 'as a test *between* worldviews'. This is primarily because 'more than one system might be equally systematically consistent and that the facts within a system are given meaning by that system' (Geisler 1976:145; emphasis in original). However, since the Christian worldview examined in this project is exploring Jesus' resurrection as an important dimension of the Christian worldview, it is appropriate that systematic consistency be used as one test of truth *within* this worldview.

Crossan has demonstrated through his self-contradictions in the philosophical crusher (see §4.2.1.2 and especially §4.2.1.2.3 (a), (b), (c) above) that he has violated a fundamental of historical investigation – systematic consistency within his own worldview.

(d) Anti-supernaturalism

It is expected that Crossan would have major difficulties in accepting Jesus' supernatural resurrection because of his *a priori* commitment against supernatural interventions within history and the present world. He stated, 'It's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way [by performing supernatural miracles – SDG]' (Crossan, in Copan 1998:61). In the context of Jesus bringing Lazarus back to life, Crossan stated, 'I do not think that anyone, anywhere, at any time brings dead people back to life' (Crossan 1994a:95).

In analysing Jesus' walking on water record in the Gospel, Crossan wrote that 'the "nature" miracles of Jesus are actually credal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus' resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme "nature" miracle' (Crossan 1991:404).

This is exposed in §3.2.1.1.1 (a) and presupposition number 1 where this fundamental *a priori* premise of Crossan is stated by him: 'I believe that miracles are not changes in the physical world so much as changes in the social world' (Crossan & Watts 1996:88). Also, 'the so-called *nature miracles* … are not about Jesus' physical power over the world but about the apostles' spiritual power over the community' (Crossan 1994a:170; emphasis in original).

This decided antagonism towards the supernatural is evident in his following of Geza Vermes 'strong case for a "holy man" or *hasid* tradition within "charismatic Judaism"' in which Crossan wrote of the traditions involving Elijah and Elisha, Honi and Hanina: 'We are dealing with a type of wonder worker who operates with certain and secure divine authority not mediated through or dependent on the normal forms, rituals, and institutions through which that divine power usually operates'. He expressed concern that 'the evidence concerning Honi and Hanina is very doubtful' and 'once the healings, multiplications, and even miraculous trivializations of Elijah and Elisha stories were made part of the Great Tradition, it would be much more difficult to erase magic completely from the Little Tradition'. For Crossan, 'I presume, therefore, that Jewish magic and miracle working were widespread on the popular and oral levels among the lower classes' (Crossan 1991:156-157).

(e) Scholarly presuppositions regarding canonical independence

He is overt in his statement: 'I accept, as scholarly presuppositions, both the canonical independence of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the written existence of the *Q Gospel*. If those positions are basically invalid – if the *Q Gospel* does not exist or the *Gospel of Thomas* is canonically dependent – then so is this section [a comparison of two early Gospels – SDG] completely invalid' (Crossan 1998a:239; emphasis in original).

This canonical independence also extends to the *Gospel of Peter* which, Crossan claimed, 'is exactly the story needed to explain how Jesus died and why his tomb needed guarding…. There may be, I repeat, another and now completely lost first part of that consecutive and independent source in *Gospel of Peter* 8:28-11:49, but the most economical solution is that it is *Gospel of Peter* 1:1-6:22)' (Crossan 1998a:492). He names the proposed source in the *Gospel of Peter* as the Cross Gospel. However those who are his 'intellectual debt' in the Jesus Seminar voted on the statement, 'The earliest written version of the passion story is found in the *Gospel of Peter*', and 74% disagreed, while 60% agreed that 'the earliest written version of the passion story is found in the Gospel of Mark' (Jesus Seminar 1998:227).

(f) Triadic methodology and reconstruction

Crossan claimed that his 1991 publication 'had to raise most seriously the problem of methodology and then follow most stringently whatever theoretical model was chosen'. His method was triadic, involving the interplay of 'cross-cultural and cross-temporal social *anthropology*', 'Hellenistic or Greco-Roman *history*, and 'the *literature* of specific sayings and doings, stories and anecdotes, confessions and interpretations concerning Jesus'. His statement was that 'all three levels, anthropological, historical, and literary, must cooperate fully and equally for an effective synthesis…. Weakness in any element imperils the integrity and validity of the others' (Crossan 1991:xxviii-xxix; emphasis in original). The data from §4.2.1.2.3 (a), (b), and (c) above demonstrate a substantial literary weakness in the implementation of his postmodern, reconstructionist, interactivism of history. He has not been able to consistently apply this model to his own work and this compromised the integrity of his reconstruction.

He 'presumes that there will always be divergent historical Jesuses, that there will always be divergent Christs built upon them, but above all, it argues that the structure of a Christianity will always be: *this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*' (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original). The evolution of his view of history was reiterated with this definition: '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*' (Crossan 1998a:20; emphasis in original). This definition is at the beginning of a massive inventory of over 650 pages of historical data and analysis on 'the birth of Christianity' (Crossan 1998a).The data above have demonstrated that Crossan finds it impossible to fulfill his postmodern, reconstructed interactive view of history in a systematically consistent manner.

For Crossan, 'the Gospels are neither histories nor biographies, even within the ancient tolerances for those genres. They are what they were eventually called, Gospels or good newses, and thereby comes a double warning. "Good" is always such within some individual's or community's opinion or interpretation. And "news" is not a word we usually pluralize again as "newses"' (Crossan 1991:xxx). If they are not histories, why has Crossan spent so much time, energy and publications in analysing the data from these non-histories? Why has he defined history as '*the past reconstructed interactively by the present*' if there was no intent to examine history (traditional history) associated with the life of Jesus, and reconstruct it?

(g) Plural attestation jettisoned when another agenda promoted

Crossan stated that he completely avoids 'any unit found only in single attestation within the first stratum', but 'plural attestation in the first stratum pushes the trajectory back as far as it can go with at least formal objectivity' (1991:xxxii-xxxiii). However, there is an example where, in order to support his FC *a priori* presumption, he will reject plural attestation as he did with '*The Lord's Prayer*', '*Two as One*', and '*Supper and Eucharist*' cases 'that, although they are plurally attested in the first stratum and although they summarize principles or practices, themes or emphases, of the historical Jesus, stem not from him but from the liturgical creativity of the early communities' (Crossan 1991:360; emphasis in original). Therefore, an *a priori* commitment to an FC principle (creativity of the Christian community) takes precedent over plural attestation. An application of the creative Christian community principle is Mark's solution in the passion account: 'It is impossible *in my mind* to overestimate the creativity of Mark' in the twin trials in which Mark creates 'consummate theological fictions' and 'Mark's solution is to create the Barabbas incident in 15:6-15. I do not believe for a second that it actually happened' (Crossan 1991:390; emphasis added).

(h) Commitment to FC principles

His *a priori* assumption was that 'the Jesus tradition … contains three major layers' and these are: (1) Retention, 'recording the essential core of words and deeds, events and happenings'; (2) Development, which applies 'such data to new situations, novel problems, and unforeseen circumstances', and (3) Creation which is 'not only composing new sayings and new stories, but, above all, composing larger complexes that changed their contents by that very process' (Crossan 1991:xxxi). He supported Koester's summary of this FC view concerning Gospel composition: 'Everybody could and did rewrite, edit, revise, and combine, however he saw fit' but Crossan, in talking of 'original, developmental, and compositional layers, or of retention, development and creation', rejected any presumption that these were referring to illicit or inauthentic layers or that he was using pejorative language (Koester 1983:7, in Crossan 1991:xxi).

(i) Citing secondary literature

Another *a priori* premise was that 'in quoting *secondary* literature I spend no time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are. Those who are cited represent my intellectual debt' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). As indicated already, he violated this within seven pages with his taking John Davis to task for castigating an anthropological peer, Julian Pitt-Rivers (Crossan 1991:7). If he cites primarily those who represent his intellectual debt, how does this deal with the objections to his views that come from those outside of his circle of 'intellectual', scholarly colleagues? This seems to be a myopic scholarly viewpoint. In later publications he does interact with the works of N T Wright whose views on Christ's resurrection are markedly different from his own (see Crossan 1998a:44, 49, 95-99, 104, 258; Wright & Crossan 2006).

He especially took to task British novelist, playwright, and Christian apologist, Dorothy Sayers, over statements concerning her acceptance of differences in Gospel 'parables and sayings' as being associated with their being 'repeated over and over again' and not evidence of 'any inaccuracy and contradiction'. His claim was that the 'two processes – source-criticism and redaction-criticism – were the twin sides of the same coin. They stood or fell together; they confirmed or disconfirmed one another'. His view was that 'the basic validity of that double process is the major presupposition' in his section on 'gospels and sources'. He concluded that 'if it is wrong, any historical reconstruction of Jesus and his followers built upon it is methodologically invalid. Ditto, of course, for any alternative hypothesis'. He puts down Sayers' view with this sarcasm: 'It is the scholarly conclusions [sic – SDG] of *tradition-criticism*, hard won by gospel scholarship over the last two hundred years (but also confirmed by my own personal study), that separates me from the simplicity of common sense that here, as elsewhere, can become *un*common *non*sense' (Crossan 1998a:91, 93; emphasis in original). This is hardly a demonstration of his personal humility in addressing another's scholarship with which he differs.

He responded to some of the content of Luke Timothy Johnson's book, *The real Jesus* (Johnson 1996a) 'as a Christian to a fellow Christian'. His critique of Johnson was that Johnson, in opposing Crossan's methodology, 'negates the possibility not only of historical Jesus reconstruction but, in effect, of all past and even present history' (Crossan 1998a:30-31).

Therefore his assertion, 'I spend no time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are', was not practised consistently and coherently with this critique of Johnson and Sayers. In this publication, Crossan cited other scholars with whom he disagreed, including N T Wright and Raymond Brown (Crossan 1998a:103-120).

There is not systematic consistency by Crossan in applying his stated premise with regard to his use of secondary literature and not challenging scholars about whether their conclusions are wrong.

(j) Metaphorical interpretation

There are numerous assumed metaphorical interpretations throughout Crossan's publications. This is a rather typical example where he was in dialogue with N T Wright on the nature of Jesus' resurrection in an appendix that was titled, 'Bodily-resurrection faith'. Here he stated that throughout Wright's book (Wright 2003), Wright argued, according to Crossan, 'clearly that the only sufficient and necessary *historical* explanation for Christian Judaism's stunning mutation of Pharisaic Judaism's resurrection is twofold': (1) 'The *historical* discovery of Jesus' empty tomb', and (2) 'The *historical* experience of Jesus' bodily presence' [he cited Wright (2003:8, 10 or 696, 706 – SDG] (in Stewart 2006:176; emphasis in original).

Crossan's dissenting explanation was: 'I do not for here and now debate the historicity of either Jesus' burial or the empty tomb's discovery. Instead, for here and now (*dato non concesso*,[181] to be sure) *I take the Gospel stories of the empty tomb's discovery and of all those risen apparitions as historically factual in their entirety*' (in Stewart 2006:176; emphasis in original). Wright's perspective is bodily resurrection of Jesus as historically factual, but Crossan's *a priori* understanding of 'historically factual' in relation to Jesus' resurrection is that they were historically 'risen apparitions' and not historically bodily appearances after Jesus' resurrection.

Crossan's description of Christ's resurrection being an 'apparition' began appearing in some of his early publications without exposition of his position, an example being Crossan (1985), in which he had a chapter which examined resurrection and confession from the *Gospel of Peter* (Crossan 1985:165). A section of this Gospel had a designated heading, disciples and apparition (Crossan 1985:165) in which, without justification for his use of the designation, he labelled Jesus' resurrection as an 'apparition'. Concerning the resurrection in Christian tradition, he wrote of the four intra-canonical Gospels agreeing on the sequence and detail of the passion narrative, 'but they disagree almost totally on the place and time, the setting and content of Jesus' apparition to the apostles to give them their missionary mandate for the world' (Crossan 1985:179). Here again the resurrection 'apparition' is assumed *a priori*.

This kind of *a priori* assumption continued in Crossan (1988a:20) with the *Gospel of Peter*, disciples and apparition, and argument for a redactor creating a scene preparation in (GPet 7:26-27) to facilitate the later insertion of Jesus' apparition to the twelve (GPet 14:60; Crossan 1988a:291).

He wrote 'that no distinction is made in the *Cross Gospel'* (the earliest alleged stage[182] of GPet) between the phenomena of resurrection and ascension' (Crossan 1988a:347) and he wrote 'of epiphany and apparition' without an apologetic for his declaration that the resurrection of Jesus was an apparition and not a bodily resurrection, except to say that his 'proposal builds on those earlier studies, but is much more precise in its explanation' (Crossan 1988a:348, 350).

Thus, Crossan is making the resurrection an epiphany, an apparition. However, it is his *a priori* requirement for the integration of the texts of the intracanonical

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[181] The meaning of *dato non concesso* is 'conceding (for the sake of argument)' (Meltzer 2010:105). It is assumed that this is a position adopted only for pursuit of an argument and is not the actual position of the debater or scholar making the concession.

[182] Crossan provided his analysis of the 'three distinguishable strata' in the *Gospel of Peter* in Crossan (1998a:409-413).

Gospels and the *Gospel of Peter* to make them assimilate ‘resurrection and transfiguration’ (Crossan 1988a:359) to arrive at Crossan’s assumed understanding that Jesus’ resurrection was an apparition and not a bodily resurrection.

This leads to his pointed diagnosis: ‘It is the resurrectional apparition of a dead man that explains the power of Christianity’s birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman empire’ (Crossan 1999:32). For Crossan, it was historical apparition and not bodily resurrection that birthed Christianity and led to its spread. More recently Crossan (in Stewart 2006), admitted that the story of the discovery of Jesus’ empty tomb ‘was created by Mark precisely to avoid any apparitions to the (by him)[183] discredited outer Twelve or inner Three or, especially, Peter himself’. In addition, ‘the apparition stories present in our gospels are about authority rather than apparition, or, better, about authority by apparition. But, of course, both those conclusions point to original risen apparitions as taken absolutely for granted and I fully accept them as historical events even though details are now lost to us forever’ (Crossan in Stewart 2006:177).

4.2.1.2.6 Imposition of personal interpretation on the data

Again, these will be samples and not comprehensive examples of this suggested reason for the self-contradiction in some of Crossan’s data. The indication by this title is that there are examples where a unique interpretation seems to be forced on the data. These include the following:

(a) Sacrophilia and not sacrophobia

He proposed two categories, which he acknowledged were ‘deliberately provocative’ for the spirit and flesh dimensions in Jesus’ person. One he called a ‘monism of enfleshed spirit *sacrophilia*’ and the other ‘dualism of flesh against spirit *sacrophobia*, from the Greek roots for “flesh” (*sarx*), “love” (*philia*), and “fear” (*phobos*)’. His position was ‘monistic rather than dualistic’ and he concludes that ‘we are spiritual flesh or fleshly spirit and we flee that amalgam at our peril’ (Crossan 1999:39). How does this monism apply to Jesus? ‘We might think to ourselves: of course Jesus was human. The question is: was he divine? They had the opposite problem. If they believed Jesus was divine, the question became: how could he be human? How could his body be real rather than apparitional and illusional? Was it not just a seem-to-be body?’

Crossan applied this view to Jesus’ resurrection: ‘There was no point in responding that people saw, heard, or even touched his body’ and this is what is said to have occurred in the post-resurrection appearances (Crossan 1999:40). Therefore, this Crossan perspective directly opposes any view that would support Jesus’ bodily resurrection and post-resurrection appearances in the flesh.

He adopted a view that he said was ‘brilliantly explored by Gregory Riley. Jesus could be explained not as *god* or *spirit* but as *hero*, as the offspring of a divine and human conjunction, himself therefore half-human and half-divine but really and truly each half’ (Crossan 1999:40; emphasis in original). The Riley view, supported by Crossan, was that with this view of the half-human, half-divine Jesus, he could ‘ascend after a real and true death and take his place among the heavenly immortals. But if one ever wished to move beyond Jesus as hero to Jesus as spirit or Jesus as god, the unreality of his flesh and the apparitional illusion of his body would have seemed inevitable concomitants in the ancient world’. So Crossan supported the view of Christianity as ‘sacrophilic and/or incarnational as distinct from sacrophobic and/or docetic Christianity’ (Crossan 1999:40-41).

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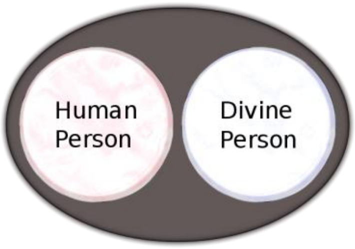
[183] The parenthesis was in the original.

It is difficult to know exactly what Crossan is teaching in his view of the divine-human Jesus with his support for ‘monism of enfleshed spirit’. It seems to be a version of Nestorianism where, according to Grudem, there are ‘two separate persons in Christ, a human person and a divine person, a teaching that is distinct from the biblical view that sees Jesus as one person’ (Grudem 1994:555). This was not accepted as orthodox Christianity as Scripture does not teach that ‘Christ was two distinct persons. Nowhere in Scripture do we have an indication that the human nature of Christ, for example, is an independent person, deciding to do something contrary to the divine nature of Christ’ (Grudem 1994:555).

Crossan’s sacrophilic view of Jesus as enfleshed spirit is a heterodox interpretation that he has imposed on the biblical material and in so doing has created his own way of defining the divine-human Jesus and reconstructing the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to mean other than that there were those who actually ‘saw, heard, or even touched his body’ (see Mt 28:1-20; Lk 24:1-49; Jn 20:1-21:19; Acts 1:1-5). Grudem diagrammed Nestorianism and its view of Christ as containing two persons (Grudem 1994:555).[184]



There is controversy as to whether Nestorius believed the view that has been attributed to him. Harold O J Brown, an evangelical, maintained that ‘Nestorius’ incarnate person was a single person, not two as his critics thought, but he could not convince others that it was so. Consequently he has gone down in history as a great heretic although what he actually believed was reaffirmed at Chalcedon. The Council of 451 really was far more compatible with the formulations of Nestorius the heretic than with those of Cyril, the doctor of the church’ (Brown 1984:176). What makes Crossan difficult to categorise is his imprecision in articulating the person(s) and nature of Christ by his accepting Jesus as half-God, half-man. This does seem to place him into what has become known as the Nestorian camp. Or could it be a Crossanian unique heterodox designation of sacrophilic enfleshed spirit that is meant to be nebulous? Werner Kelber, in dialogue with Crossan and Luke Johnson, responded to this researcher’s concern with Crossan’s lack of exactitude in defining the relationship of God and human being in Jesus: ‘Crossan’s thesis is not without irony because it decries the anthropological binary divide of soul versus body only to reinvoke a historical binary divide between sacrophobic versus a sacrophilic typology. Why reimagine Christianity in the traditional metaphors of truth versus falsehood? More *finely tuned responses to the concreteness of multiple distinctions are required*’ (Kelber 1999:98; emphasis added). Kelber then observed Crossan’s theological justification as an historical Jesus’ quester: ‘The reasons he advances for his work cause one to wonder why his *re*construction of the historical Jesus is associated with a serious *mis*judgment of the tradition' (Kelber 1999:102; emphasis in original).

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[184] The following graphic was obtained from Wikimedia Commons (2009).

The orthodox understanding of the two natures of Christ in the one person, known as the 'hypostatic or personal union', is defined by Lewis and Demarest: 'In the personal (hypostatic) union are the *two distinct natures* [deity and humanity – SDG]. The two sets of attributes are neither mixed nor confounded. No attribute of the one nature is transferred to the other. Neither is a third hybrid produced. What unites the two natures is that both may be predicated of the one actual person. The two natures exist not merely in a functional harmony, nor are they in a nonmetaphysical way merely communicated to each other' (Lewis & Demarest 1990:343). They explain further that it is not a union between deity and the human as nominalists maintain. 'It was not a merely relational union like the oneness of mind among friends'. Instead, 'the most coherent proposal suggests a personal union of the divine and human natures in one *hypostasia*. Both natures are predicated of the one person. Some of his attributes are divine and some of them are human. Hence we speak of the *hypostatic or personal union* of the two distinct natures'. So, from conception and birth, Jesus possessed two natures, 'The second person of the Trinity condescended to partake in or share our humanity' (Lewis & Demarest 1990:343; see Lk 1:43; Jn 1:1, 14; Ac 13:35-37; Phil 2:5-11; Col 2:9; Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 4:1-3; emphasis in original).

A foretaste is seen in Ignatius of Antioch, Syria (*ca* first-second century) in his letter to the Ephesians, with a glimpse, of the Lord Jesus' hypostatic or personal union: 'God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life' (Ignatius 1885d:19). Another was in Irenaeus' work, *Against heresies*, in which he stated, 'He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared "No man knows the Father", but one and the same,... while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God' (Irenaeus 1885:4.6.7).

(b) Intersection of three independent vectors

If one wanted to move 'behind the screen of credal interpretation' to 'give an accurate but impartial account of the historical Jesus as distinct from the confessional Christ', what would one do? Crossan considers that that is what is pursued through an 'academic or scholarly study of the historical Jesus'. He understands that that is what it does when it is not 'a disguise for doing theology and calling it history', not 'doing autobiography and calling it biography', and 'not doing Christian apologetics and calling it academic scholarship'. He maintained that results and conclusions 'are only as good as the theory and method on which they are based' (Crossan 1994a:XI; also 1991:xxviii).

So what is his methodological approach to in his academic and scholarly study of the historical Jesus? He stated that he located the historical Jesus where three independent vectors intersect. These vectors are cross-cultural anthropology, Graeco-Roman and especially Jewish history, and the literary or textual vector (Crossan 1994a:XI-XII).

This is here considered to be an imposition of a chosen, *a priori* methodology on the biblical data. Why does he not pursue only an inductive study of what the text says, in light of historical and cultural context, and interpret the Scriptures as he would in reading literature from scholarly sources and the local newspaper or viewing the evening television news? Why does he not use the standard methods of hermeneutics by accepting the plain meaning of the text with its metaphors, symbols and other inductive characteristics? Instead, he imposes two other vectors of understanding on the text, the literary text being only one vector.

(c) The supernatural as process

While he rejects any concept of supernatural intervention (see §4.2.1.2.5 (d) above), he understood Lazarus' being raised from the dead was 'as process incarnated in event and not the reverse'. According to Crossan's understanding of John 11:21-27, the movement from process to event was that 'the process of general resurrection is incarnated in the event of Lazarus's resuscitation'. He imagined that for the peasants of lower Galilee, they would have been thinking of their present earthly existence and not a heavenly future. Therefore, 'life out of death is how they would have understood the Kingdom of God, in which they began to take back control over their own bodies, their own hopes, and their own destinies' (Crossan 1994a:95). This metaphorical interpretation of the supernatural event, the supernatural being denied by Crossan, is an example of how he interpreted another supernatural event – the resurrection of Jesus.

The title of Crossan's chapter is, 'How many years was Easter Sunday?' (Crossan 1994a:159). Here he was precise about how his metaphorical, postmodern hermeneutic applied to Jesus' resurrection: 'What we have here [Lk 24:13-46] is not an event from Easter Sunday but a process that happened over many years. The presence and empowerment of Jesus remain in the community as it studies the scriptures "about" him and shares a meal of bread and fish together. This is not trance but exegesis, not ecstasy but eucharist' (Crossan 1994a:172).

This aspect will be analysed in §4.4 on the nature of Jesus' resurrection.

(d) FC and the denial of aspects of the passion-resurrection accounts

See the data in §3.3.4 (presupposition number 22) and §4.1.1.3.3 (Hypothesis 16) above.

(e) Prophecy historicised rather than history remembered

This will not be a significant emphasis pursued in this project, but it is given prominence in Crossan's publications where he states that many of the passion-resurrection details do not come from history but from a prophetic understanding of the Old Testament read back into the New Testament texts. The following provides samples of his statements:
'The details [of Jesus' passion –SDG] in our gospels are, in any case, *prophecy historicized* and not *history memorized* (Crossan 1994a:152; emphasis in original); 'the passion narratives are prophecy historicized rather than history remembered'; 'by "prophecy historicized" I mean that no such historical three-hour-long midnight at noon accompanied the death of Jesus, but that learned Christians searching their Scriptures found this ancient description of future divine punishment, maybe facilitated by its mention of "an only son" in the second-to-last line, and so created that fictional story about darkness at noon to assert that Jesus died in fulfillment of prophecy' (Crossan 1995:119, 4), and Luke's Gospel 'is interested in portraying Jesus in close interaction with major events of "Roman history," interest, that is, in the historicization of prophecy, or rephrasing prophetic allusion as "historical" narrative…. Hide the prophecy, tell the narrative, and invent the history'. The model used to organise 'all those discrete prophetic applications to a full passion narrative' was what he called, '*innocence rescued*' and 'that process not only "historicized" the prophetic passion, it allowed the "historicization" of *passion and resurrection* so that resurrection, which was of course taken for granted in earlier dyadic *passion and*

parousia prophecies, could now become part of the story and receive full focus in its own right' (Crossan 1991:372, 385; emphasis in original).

He wrote of the 'validity of the hypothesis that the passion narratives are prophecy historicized rather than history remembered' (1995:119) and his conclusion about the execution of Jesus was:

> I cannot find any detailed historical information about the crucifixion of Jesus. Every item we looked at was prophecy historicized rather than history recalled. There was one glaring exception. The one time the *narrative passion* broke away from its base in the *prophetic passion*, that is, from the single, composite trial in Psalm 2, was to assert Jewish responsibility and Roman innocence. But those motifs were neither prophecy nor history but Christian propaganda, a daring act of public relations faith in the destiny of Christianity not within Judaism but within the Roman Empire. In a way, that *was* history, not past history but future history.
>
> (Crossan 1995:159; emphasis in original)

It is again noticed that he used the term 'history' in a contradictory way by using its traditional sense and not according to his own definition of history being reconstructed interactivism.

Barnett's review of Crossan (1998a) highlighted Crossan's failure 'to observe one of the basic principles of historiography, namely to use the earliest and best sources and to exercise critical caution with historically remote texts'. Therefore, Barnett finds it puzzling that Crossan speaks of 'dark decades … cloaked in silence' in the years after the execution of Jesus, but Crossan's biblical indexes do not include a single reference to the book of Acts (Barnett 2005:211, 213).

Craig Evans has two main criticisms of Crossan's favouring the *Gospel of Peter* as containing the earliest passion-resurrection account and that the New Testament Gospels were generated by Christians who found that information in the Old Testament. They are:

(1) Crossan's 'contention that Old Testament prophecy is what underlies the Gospels' passion story is not persuasive. It is gratuitous to assert that Jesus' friends and followers did not know and did not find out what happened. It is much more probable that they did find out what happened, even if only in bits and pieces, and then did their best to show that what happened was "according to the scriptures"' (Evans 1996:161).

(2) The *Gospel of Peter* is a late writing with a mixture of details from the four canonical Gospels and that of 'pious Christian imagination (complete with a talking cross and two angels whose heads reach the heavens) and not-so-pious Christian criticism of the Jewish people'. The *Gospel of Peter* comes with historical inaccuracies that even Crossan acknowledges and it 'strikes most scholars as far removed from the authentic Jesus tradition and its setting in first-century Jewish Palestine' (Evans 1996:161-162).

Evans explains in more detail why these two criticisms of Crossan's promotion of 'prophecy historicized' make his view problematic.

Instead of Crossan's contrast between history remembered and prophecy historicised, Mark Goodacre gave an alternate perspective, borrowing Judith Newman's[185] (1999) understanding of 'scripturalization' and applied it to Mark's passion narrative. He sees many echoes of biblical themes and allusions to scriptural precedent that he considers 'can be explained on the basis of intimate interaction between the tradition and the Scriptural reflection. The traditions generated Scriptural reflection, which in turn influenced the way the traditions were recast'. How did 'scripturalization' take place? His claim is that there exists both internal and external evidence to suggest that it happened during worship and this could have been the context for the development of Mark's passion narrative. First Corinthians 11 and the Eucharist provide an example external to the Gospels where liturgy provides a context for the earliest known version of the retelling of the passion story. Goodacre claims one advantage to his claim was that there might be 'footprints' of the liturgy in Mark's passion narrative and that 'it provides us with a plausible context for the creation of the first Passion Narrative, with its marked scripturalizing tendency, and so – ultimately – it sheds light on the genesis of the Gospels themselves' (Goodacre 2006:40, 42-43, 45). At least Goodacre is providing a suggestion for the how-to of obtaining Mark's passion narrative and is not redefining or destroying any concept of Mark's Gospel containing a historical narrative, as with Crossan.

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[185] Newman borrowed the term from her teacher, James L Kugel where he used the term in perceiving the Psalms as Scripture (Goodacre 2006:40-41, n. 21).

(f) There is more!

One can find a diverse array of examples of Crossan's imposition of his own interpretation on the biblical data. These are, briefly, some further samples.

'I understand the virginal conception of Jesus to be a confessional statement about Jesus' status and not a biological statement about Mary's body. It is later faith in Jesus as an adult retrojected mythologically onto Jesus as an infant'. This leads to two understandings for Crossan: ''Four unnamed brothers, and at least two unnamed sisters are Jesus' natural siblings' and Jesus 'is not necessarily the firstborn child of Joseph and Mary' (Crossan 1994a:23).

Regarding Josephus as a witness to Jesus, Crossan's position was that 'the problem is that Josephus's account is too good to be true, too confessional to be impartial, too Christian to be Jewish. There are sentences in it that could hardly have been written by a Jewish writer, sentences that assert Christian beliefs, sentences that could have been written only by a Christian believer. Remember that Josephus's works were preserved and copied by Christian rather than Jewish editors' and the Josephus' text regarding Jesus is in Josephus (n db:18:63). Yet, of Josephus, Crossan wrote that 'a prudently neutral Jewish historian reported, at the end of the first century' about Pilate (Crossan 1994a:197). Which is it – 'too good to be true' or that of 'a prudently neutral Jewish historian'? Those two designations create a paradox.

Crossan reported that 'an arrogant Roman historian [Tacitus – SDG] reported, at the start of the second century' about Christus, founder of the name [of Christian], his death penalty during the reign of Tiberius, sentenced by the procurator, Pontius Pilate, and the 'pernicious superstition' of Christians broke out in a number of places (Crossan 1994a:197).

4.2.1.2.7 Speculation and opinion

These are pointed samples of some of his statements of how he speculates, presumes, and gives opinions, beginning with his 1988 publication (bold emphases are added):

- '**I consider** that those closest to Jesus had fled his Crucifixion and had no idea how or where he was buried' (Crossan 1988a:248).
- Regarding the mount of Transfiguration, '**I presume** that it was Mark himself who first transformed those "two men" [from GPet 9:36 – SDG] into Moses

and Elijah for his newly created Transfiguration narrative' (Crossan 1988a:350).

- 'Matthew is, **in my view**, conflating two sources in his account of the angel and guards in 28:2-4, that of the "two men" from the *Cross Gospel* and that of the "young man" from Mark 16:1-8' (Crossan 1988a:352).
- 'Matthew, **in my opinion**, knows both the Transfiguration story from Mark 9:2-7 and the Epiphanic Resurrection story from *Gospel of Peter* 9:35-10:42)' (Crossan 1988a:358).
- 'While **I am more certain** of the cross as symbol of the common Passion of Israel and Jesus, **I think it might be just possible** that the author visualizes them following Jesus in a great cruciform procession. **Maybe**' (Crossan 1988a:387).
- 'Notice, however, that **I determine that sequence** [in the Honi and Hanina traditions – SDG] along a documentary trajectory but by successive stages along a rabbinization trajectory' (Crossan 1991:149).
- 'Those mothers **might be** simply Josephus' own invention intended to heighten the human theater of the trial' (Crossan 1991:175).
- 'That is **an unfortunate scholarly construct** based on **Josephan disinformation** [according to Crossan] (Crossan 1991:218).
- '**I prefer to think**, however, that within 197 *Herod Beheads John* [2/2] the detailed narrative of Mark 6:14-29 is his own creation' (Crossan 1991:232).
- '**I presume** that, to make sense of "coming up out of the water," some account of John's baptism must have preceded that section, but **the power of its mythological presentation** would have negated any problems about superiority or inferiority' (Crossan 1991:233).
- '**It is quite likely, it seems to me**, that those cases are not at all a movement from event to process but actually from process to event. Early Christian communities symbolically **retrojected their own activities back into** the life of Jesus' (Crossan 1991:328).

Further examples of speculation and opinion are in Crossan (1994a:24, 94-95, 99, 152; 1995:71, 73, 78, 81, 132, 177, 188, 220; Crossan & Watts 1996:40; 1998a:521, 524, 532; Borg & Crossan 2006:213; and in conversation with Wright (in Stewart 2006:33).

4.2.1.2.8 Why the resurrection narratives are not historical for Crossan

The primary reason found in this assessment for why the resurrection narratives cannot be affirmed as historical for Crossan is because historical, in the traditional sense, has been redefined by him to mean a postmodern, reconstructed interactivism that is not harmonious with the elements of historiography affirmed by historians, Christian and non-Christian, throughout human history.

This is confounded by Crossan's (1) self-contradiction in not being consistent in his application of his own definition of history; (2) imposed *a priori* premises on some of the data; (3) not inductively accepting the plain meaning of the text; and (4) imposition of his opinionated reason on some of the biblical texts associated with the historical Jesus and Jesus' resurrection.

Richard R Niebuhr, although addressing metaphysical issues of a previous generation, has exposed one of Crossan's major difficulties with the biblical resurrection narratives and his postmodern *a priori* approach:

> When history is dissolved by meta-history, the questions of the historians have been begged, not answered. The fallacy of the metaphysical approach … is that it forgets that we do not have the option of thinking either historically or metaphysically. We have only the option to think historically about historical events, or historically about the metaphysical implications of such events…. Neither the *a priori* metaphysical approach nor the historical critical method as hitherto encountered has shown itself adequate to the peculiar problems raised by the necessity of interpreting the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> (Niebuhr 1957:22, 23)

By application, when Crossan defines history as postmodern, reconstructed, interactivism and then concludes accordingly (on many occasions), he commits the logical fallacy of begging the question. He does not answer the historical issue: Was Jesus resurrection a historical resurrection in the traditional sense? Instead, he provides his postmodern views of history (but not consistently).

Question begging is an argument that professor of philosophy, Michael LaBossiere, explained 'as a fallacy in which the premises include the claim that the conclusion is true or (directly or indirectly) assume that the conclusion is true…. This sort of "reasoning" is fallacious because simply assuming that the conclusion is true (directly or indirectly) in the premises does not constitute evidence for that conclusion' (LaBossiere 1995). Geisler and Brooks explain that begging the question is a stacking the deck fallacy in which 'the conclusion is sneaked into the premises' and 'it is a circular argument, where the conclusion actually becomes the premise' and 'if you start out with the conclusion as the first premise, it really doesn't matter what the second premise is, you can still reach the conclusion you want'. Therefore, 'the question being asked is given the desired answer before any reasoning is done' (Geisler & Brooks 1990:100).

Crossan's fallacy with his postmodern approach is that he presumes a postmodern definition of history and concludes with many postmodern examples (but not consistently applied). Readers of Crossan are exposed to his premise as conclusion: Instead of reading a text inductively and allowing the text to provide the definition of the nature of history for itself, readers have his postmodern epistemology of history imposed on the conclusion.

Evidence was provided in §4.2.1.2.5 and will be examined in §4.4 that an *a priori* postmodern approach and the historical critical method of applying such postmodernism to the data show itself to have the peculiar problems associated with postmodern epistemology and its application to the events of Jesus' resurrection.

Richard R Niebuhr's assessment of the resurrection and history applies to Crossan's understanding when Niebuhr stated that if theologians wanted 'to abandon the realm of ordinary history, when they speak of the resurrection of Jesus', then 'they must also abandon these narratives of recognition, for non-historical revelation can make no use of historical signs'. He acknowledged that for some, the bodily resurrection has questions because the meaning of resurrection faith was associated with Jesus' resurrection appearances being 'independently and tangibly present to the disciples'. His response was: 'Apart from that, common sense argues, the resurrection is meaningless' and he then stated that if his argument is valid, 'that the narratives are about encounters centered in recognition and identification – then we can affirm that the resurrection appearances shared in the same kind of independence as all historical events' (Niebuhr 1957:174).

Wright has noted that 'in the various works of the brilliant writer J. Dominic Crossan', Stephen Moore's[186] assessment was that Crossan's 'work subverts itself through his insistence on trying, at the same time as he is deconstructing the texts, to discover the historical Jesus through and behind them. The way is hard that leads to genuine deconstructionism, and those who follow it consistently are few' (Wright 1992:60). Wright asks: 'Can one, as a good deconstructionist, ever hope to find *any* historical referent, even another deconstructionist (as Crossan supposes Jesus to have been)' (Wright 1992:60, n. 34)?

A critique of Crossan's postmodern philosophy that determines his understanding of history, will be provided in §4.3 with the testing of Hypothesis 9.

4.2.1.2.9 Was Hypothesis 10 confirmed or falsified?

Based on the demonstrated evidence that Crossan used a question begging logical fallacy in defining history, the hypothesis was falsified.

4.3 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 9: THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION FOR CHRISTIANITY IS INTERPETED BY RECONSTRUCTION FOR A POSTMODERN WORLD. IT IS NOT DONE ONCE FOR ALL BUT IS REINTERPRETED FOR EACH GENERATION'S ISSUES.

To assess the validity of Crossan's *a priori* premises, the presuppositions will be challenged to the point of agreement or defeat by the provision of further evidence. Bruce Russell admitted that there is 'a variety of views about whether *a priori* justification can be defeated by other evidence, especially by empirical evidence'. However, his assessment was that 'besides being fallible, it seems that a priori justification is defeasible,[187] that is, all-things-considered *a priori* justification can be defeated by further evidence'. He asked the valid question: Why would anyone 'think that no one can be, all things considered, *a priori* justified in believing something at one time and then have that justification defeated at a later time by empirical evidence?' Based on Russell's theoretical understanding of *a priori* justification and knowledge, he stated that 'it is possible for a false belief to be *a priori* justified, and *a priori* justification can be defeated by empirical evidence. *A priori* justification is justification that is independent of experience but that does not imply that the person is justified independent of all experience, nor does it mean that she is justified, all things considered, no matter what experience she has' (Russell 2014; emphasis in original).

This framework of challenging Crossan's *a priori* assumptions with further evidence will be used here in an endeavour to verify or falsify Hypothesis 9. What further evidence could provide doubt or agreement in challenging his presuppositions concerning Jesus' resurrection?

As some of Crossan's statements regarding the manifestation of Christianity are contrary to those articulated by many prominent historians, whether Christian or non-Christian, it is important to this project that his reconstructionist hermeneutic be examined to provide evidence of its benefits, inconsistencies or irregularities.

This is pursued through an examination of various aspects of the content of his hermeneutics of reconstruction.

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[186] Here Wright refers to Moore (1989:143-146). Moore is a New Testament scholar who currently is professor of New Testament at The Theological School, Drew University, Madison NJ (Moore n d).

[187] 'Defeasible' is an adjective meaning something 'that may be annulled or terminated' (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v defeasible).

4.3.1 Hermeneutics of reconstruction

Since Crossan rejects the resurrection as an historical event and presupposes postmodern reconstruction/deconstruction as an overarching hermeneutic, it is critical to understand that postmodernism is a complex way of thinking and has pervasive influence in literary, historical, social, cultural, philosophical and other areas. It is not a mere reaction to reconstruct modernity,[188] but it has pervasive dimensions in a significant number of disciplines.

Philosopher Jack Reynolds explained that deconstruction primarily has two aspects, literary and philosophical, and that with the literary, 'invention is essential to finding hidden alternative meanings in the text'. For the philosophical, the target is 'metaphysics of presence', which is normally designated as simply metaphysics. This commences from a Heideggerian perspective where Derrida has argued 'that metaphysics affects the whole of philosophy from Plato onwards'. Because there are dualistic oppositions in metaphysics, where one hierarchy is privileged over another – such as presence before absence, speech before writing, and so on – 'the deconstructive strategy is to unmask these too-sedimented ways of thinking, and it operates on them especially through two steps – reversing dichotomies and attempting to corrupt the dichotomies themselves' (Reynolds n d).

4.3.1.1 The knower and the known

Bartholomew has rightly indicated that a central aspect to postmodernism 'is a profound sense that knower and that which is known are historically embedded so that there is no neutral vantage point from which objective, neutral analysis is possible'. He regarded Gadamer's (2004) thinking as moving from phenomenology to philosophical hermeneutics, but 'Gadamer insists on the historical nature of understanding itself'. However, Bartholomew affirmed Kurt Mueller-Vollmer's (1992:38) view that 'for Gadamer "any interpretations of the past, whether they were performed by an historian, philosopher, linguist, or literary scholar, are as much a creature of the interpreter's own time and place as the phenomenon under investigation was of its own time and period of history"' (Bartholomew 2005b:601-602).

Gadamer's own explanation was that subsequent understanding of a text was 'superior to the original production' as this elevated understanding was based on 'the insuperable difference' between interpreter and author that is 'created by historical distance'. This means that 'every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interests the age' as 'it seeks to understand itself'. Therefore, Gadamer draws the conclusion that 'the real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his original audience'. Thus, the interpreter's understanding is not identical with the author's, as understanding 'is always co-determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history. Hermeneutical scholar, Johann Chladenius,[189] according to Gadamer, stated in an 'ingenuous way' that 'an author does not need to know the real meaning of what he has written; and hence the interpreter can, and must, often understand more than he' (Gadamer 2004:296).

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[188] Modernity is used here in the sense described by sociologist Peter Berger as 'not necessarily secularizing; it is necessarily *pluralizing* that is characterised 'by an increasing plurality, within the same society, of different beliefs, values, and worldviews. Plurality does indeed pose a challenge to all religious traditions – each one must cope with the fact that there are "all these others," not just in a faraway country but right next door' (Berger 2008; emphasis in original). However, historically modernity (or modernism) had roots in the sixteenth century with Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and René Decartes, and was an intellectual revolution that was 'a way of knowing' with roots in the Enlightenment and positivism (Allan 2011:3).

An assessment of this dimension is pursued in §4.3.6.

4.3.1.2 Examination of reconstruction prior to resurrection analysis

Why is it important in this research to analyse Crossan's hermeneutics of postmodern reconstruction prior to dealing with the particulars of his view of what happened during and after Jesus' resurrection? How is Crossan's reconstruction affecting his understanding of the New Testament and its historicity? Crossan's philosophy of literature and history is exposed in:

- §3.3.5 which led to the articulation of presupposition number 23: deconstruction and postmodernism;
- An *a priori* premise in §4.2.1.2.5(a) (b) above deals with postmodernism, where the object and subject challenge and change each other;
- An abduction in §4.2.1.2 tested Crossan's view that the New Testament Gospel resurrection narratives were not historical, which was falsified (see §4.2.1.2.9 for the conclusion).

4.3.1.3 Philosophy of history

There are a number of other issues that Crossan has used to reconstruct the historical nature of the New Testament documents. One of the main contentions concerns his *a priori* definition of history (Crossan 1998:20; 1999:3) that has a pervasive influence on his assessment and conclusions concerning the resurrection. This definition – and the philosophy accompanying it – have some practical ramifications on the nature of the New Testament text as containing historical information or otherwise.

The evidence for this statement is based on analysis of Crossan's data that led to presupposition number 23 (§3.3.5.1), 'Historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world, is how to present the divine manifestation of Christianity. It is not done, once for all, but has to be redone for the different needs to be reinterpreted in each generation, based on the issues of that era'.

4.3.1.4 Aspects to be tested

The following evidence will be investigated in Crossan's reconstruction in order to confirm or deny the validity of his methodological postmodern reconstruction of the nature of Jesus' resurrection:

This hypothesis involves the testing of reconstruction's ability to be a valid method of hermeneutics for the biblical literature. Its application to the biblical documents concerning Jesus' resurrection, the resurrection appearances, and Crossan's interpretation of these events will be pursued in testing hypothesis 12 (§4.4). The following subjects are relevant to an examination of this hypothesis: The strengths and weaknesses of semiotics; Derrida's and Gadamer's influences on Crossan; reader-response impact on the reading of texts and especially on Jesus' resurrection texts; the subject-object distinction or otherwise; the impact on texts when factual, unchanging meaning is denied; the influence of Crossan's reconstructive definition of history on his historiography, including possible dogmatism in reconstructive methodology; and Crossan's reconstructive method and the biblical data.

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[189] Johann Martin Chladenius (1710-1759) was an early German hermeneutical scholar, prominent in philosophical and theological thinking, whose German publication of 600 pages, *Introduction to the correct interpretation of rational speech and writing* and other hermeneutical works, are 'long forgotten, and are still virtually unknown today'. He was regarded as a precursor of 'historiographers who were concerned with the problem of objectivity of historical knowledge' and he 'exerted a decisive influence on the later development of hermeneutics', and has become associated with the hermeneutical framework of 'a point of view' or 'historical situatedness'. Szondi noted that Chladenius' rules of the general art of hermeneutics were 'dependent on the nature or genre of the text to be interpreted' (Szondi 1995:14, 15, 17, 20). The perspectivalism of Chladenius promoted the teaching that 'all history is determined by the specific standpoint of the spectator and the historian' and this represented 'a break with the classical doctrine of historical objectivity' (Beiser 2011:29).

These subjects provide background content for four main emphases of the hypothesis:

(1) Crossan's required and legitimate hermeneutic for investigating Scripture contains the premises of postmodern epistemology.
(2) A postmodern hermeneutic requires historical reconstruction.
(3) Postmodern reconstruction of the literature and history of Christianity means that there is no fixed, unchanging meaning of the text. There is a plurality of meaning.
(4) This polyvalent hermeneutic is generated by the issues arising in each different era of Christianity.

4.3.2 Examining the evidence: An appraisal of postmodern reconstruction

The language of signs and semiotics is used often in association with postmodern deconstructionism, hence the need to pursue semiotic influences.

4.3.2.1 Semiotic emphases

Semiotics is the theory and study of signs and signifying practices in language, but there is a variety of definitions among semiotic practitioners as to what semiotics involves. Riddell's (2005:734) definition is that semiotics refers to communication, drawing on a series of signalling systems among human beings, plants, animals and in other contexts. He cites Daniel Chandler's definition which demonstrates the significant scope of the field: 'Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as "signs" in everyday speech, but of anything which "stands for" something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects' (Chandler, in Riddell 2005:734). Paul Ricoeur's explanation was that he was engaged in 'the enterprise of militant hermeneutics' and in semiotic or semantic textual analysis, semiotics means that 'texts – mainly literary ones – are ensembles or signs that have more or less broken their ties to the things they are held to denote' (Ricoeur 1991:xiv).

Semiotics contrasts with semantics, the latter being defined by the Columbia Encyclopedia (2008. S v semantics) as generally referring to 'the study of the relationship between words and meanings. The empirical study of word meanings and sentence meanings in existing languages is a branch of linguistics'. In the University of Sheffield's understanding, 'semantics is a sub discipline of linguistics which focuses on the study of meaning. Semantics tries to understand what meaning is as an element of language and how it is constructed by language as well as interpreted, obscured and negotiated by speakers and listeners of language'[190] (University of Sheffield 2012). See §4.4 for an examination of this dynamic in terms of the intention of the author as it informs the hermeneutics of a text.

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[190] The University of Sheffield (2012) linked this definition to Andrew Moore (2000).

Derrida, in his logocentricism (or metaphysics), linked semiotics with the theological. He stated:[191]

> To these metaphysico-theological roots many other hidden sediments cling. The semiological or, more specifically, linguistic "science" cannot therefore hold on to the difference between signifier and signified – the very idea of the sign – without the difference between sensible and intelligible…. As the face of pure intelligibility, it refers to an absolute logos to which it is immediately united. This absolute logos was an infinite creative subjectivity in medieval theology: The intelligible face of the sign remains turned toward the word and the face of God.[192]
>
> (Derrida 1997:13-14)

Gadamer maintained there was no difference between interpreting sacred or secular writing and that for written sources, every sentence 'can be understood only on the basis of contexts' and this also is true for content of sources as 'its meaning is not fixed'. In discussing law and Gospel, his claim was that if a text 'is to be understood properly', based on the claim it is making, it 'must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. *Understanding here is always application*' (Gadamer 2004:178, 307-308; emphasis added). Gadamer's view is consistent with Crossan's definition of reconstruction where something 'must be done over and over again in different times and different places, by different groups and different communities, and by every generation again and again and again' (Crossan 1999:5).

When applied to literary texts, Thiselton (1992:1-2) wrote that reading may 'produce transforming effects' on the reader and 'reading biblical texts can become eventful as transforming biblical reading'. One sense of 'transforming reading' is through 'sign-systems, or semiotics'.

He highlighted two aspects of semiotics. The first is that semiotic theory suggests that texts, as systems of meaning, are 'quasi-independent' of the human authors who produce a text. A second is that new or different systems into which a text is placed can radically transform the range and function of meaning. When semiotic theory is introduced into hermeneutics, it launches a postmodern understanding of texts (Thiselton 1992:47).

Dan Stiver's reply to Thiselton (1992) was that 'solid grounds exist to regard Thiselton himself as a postmodernist and to see his work ironically as itself one of the best examples of the promise that postmodernism holds for evangelical thought'. Stiver particularly referred to endorsement of 'Gadamer's critique of the Enlightenment prejudice against prejudice and Ricoeur's emphasis on the need for interpretation from within one's context whose truth cannot be objectively and absolutely guaranteed' (Stiver 1995:247). Stiver claimed (1995:250, n. 3) that Thiselton demonstrated postmodern thoughts in Thiselton (1992:21, 92, 113, 125-126, 461), but with Stiver's failure to articulate the specifics in these pages, it is difficult to know to what Stiver refers. However, Thiselton does affirm the 'irreducible textual polyvalency' of Crossan (1973) in his view of parables (Thiselton 1992:115).

How does the 'encoding' and 'decoding' of biblical texts (Thiselton 1992:47, 94) relate to the methodology adopted by Crossan and which presuppositions are motivating this method? Thiselton's view (1992:47) was that 'systems or layers of meta-language' can be used as coded strategies for subverting structures of power. When adopted by socio-critical hermeneutics, they introduce 'a hermeneutic of suspicion'. Can this be applied to Crossan's hermeneutics? The answer in the affirmative is supported by Crossan's thesis that 'the "nature" miracles of Jesus are actually credal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus' resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme "nature" miracle' (Crossan 1991:404). Christopher Bryan affirms this example of Crossan's 'hermeneutic of suspicion' (Bryan 2014:34). N T Wright's explanation is that Crossan applies 'to the texts a ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion' (Wright 2003:19). Another example of a hermeneutic of suspicion is Crossan's premise: 'I do not think that any one, anywhere, at any time brings dead people back to life' (Crossan 1994a:95). This anti-supernaturalism will not be pursued in this project.

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[191] Derrida's language and concepts were sometimes difficult for this researcher to discern meaning of content because of the obtuse semantics.

[192] A number of typographical errors, resulting in an inadequate English translation, have been corrected in this quotation.

However, this hermeneutic of suspicion is aligned with some prominent reconstructive promoters. Fish's (1980:16) perspective is that 'interpretation is the source of texts, facts, authors, and intentions'. Evidence is accumulating that this is the case with Crossan (see Crossan 1999:5).

Vanhoozer (1998:204) considers that a view of language 'as an arbitrary system of differential signs holds deconstruction captive. Postmodern views of language are concerned more with semiotics (the science of signs) than with semantics (the science of sentences)'. Has Crossan submitted to the creative development of his version of semiotics, driven by a presuppositional agenda? The evidence points in that direction.

This study will include an examination of whether Crossan's semiotic views are part of his presuppositional intent and can be supported or declined with some challenges from Thiselton (1992) and Vanhoozer (1998).

4.3.2.2 Summary of the reconstruction evidence: Part 1

This is the evidence for §4.3.2:

- Semiotics is understood as signs in language where anything is standing for something else.
- For poststructuralist semiotics (as with Ricoeur, Derrida and Gadamer), signs have broken their ties to what they are supposed to denote.
- Semiotics is in contrast with semantics where the latter indicates the relationship between words and meanings.
- An issue with poststructuralist theory is that the relationship between speaker and speech perishes with there being no fixed meaning.
- Vanhoozer's thesis is that the author and the sentence are basic to communication. Without them, discussion about other things such as speech acts and meaning are impossible.
- There is an overlap of semantics and semiotics as both may depend on a distinction between the sign-system (traffic lights, road signs) and language-system (Thiselton).
- Semiotic theory in hermeneutics launches a postmodern understanding of texts with application to Crossan's definition of history.
- Some scholars have stated that Crossan applies to texts a 'ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion'.

4.3.3 Delimiting this study: Linguistics and history

The nature of this study on Crossan's postmodernism and Jesus' resurrection means that one is dealing with what is written in the New Testament (linguistics), but this involves an event linked with a person, Jesus, in the past (hence the historical emphasis). N T Wright argues that Jesus' resurrection, 'whatever it was, can and must be seen as at least a historical *problem* (Wright 2003:12; emphasis in original). Therefore, there is a need to restrict this breadth of postmodern impact to linguistics and history and their application to the data concerning Jesus' resurrection in the New Testament.

4.3.4 Reconstructive linguistics

Gadamer wrote of the 'two different horizons', that of 'the person seeking to understand' and the historical understanding, but concluded with a 'fusion of horizons' as 'there is no such thing as these distinct horizons' (Gadamer 2004:303, 305). Others refer to a reader-response perspective where the text is incomplete without its deconstruction by the reader (Vanhoozer 1998:27-28). Professor of English, Lois Tyson, wrote of the two beliefs shared by reader-response theorists: '(1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and (2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature' (Tyson 2006:170).

She explained that the second belief suggests that different readers can not only read the same text differently but also that they may read the same text on two different occasions to 'produce different meanings because so many variables contribute to our experience of the text'. Her explanation was that personal experiences between reading of the same text or a change in purpose 'can all contribute to our production of different meanings for the same text' (Tyson 2006:170).

Note her emphases that a reader-response postmodernism is creating or actively making the meaning. Thus, the role of the literary text is not an object to be interpreted but helps the reader to produce meaning, in Tyson's view. How this happens between text and reader attracts a variety of explanations from theorists.

There will be an assessment of reader-response hermeneutics in §4.3.4.2.

4.3.4.1 The influence of seminal postmodern theorisers on Crossan's New Testament thinking

As applied to historical Jesus' studies, New Testament and theology, the postmodern hermeneutic of deconstruction has had profound influences when applied to the text of Scripture because of thinkers such as German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002),[193] French literary critic Roland Barthes (1915-1980)[194], French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault (1926-1984),[195] French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004),[196] American philosopher, Richard Rorty (1931-2007),[197] French philosopher and historian Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005),[198] and

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[193] Lifespan dates for Gadamer are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Hans-Georg Gadamer).
[194] Lifespan dates for Barthes are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Roland Barthes).
[195] Lifespan dates for Foucault are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Michel Foucault).
[196] Lifespan dates for Derrida are from Lawlor (2011).
[197] Bjørn Ramberg considered Rorty's views supported 'a distinctive and controversial brand of pragmatism' where he applied the 'achievements of Dewey, Hegel and Darwin in a pragmatist synthesis of historicism and naturalism'. Because of the broad strokes of Rorty's 'metaphilosophical deconstruction' and 'a penchant for uncashed metaphor and swift, broad-stroke historical narrative',

American literary critic, Stanley Fish (b. 1938).[199] By deconstruction, in Derrida's strongest form, Carson (1996:73) understood that meaning is bound permanently with the reader/knower rather than the text. Words only refer to other words, but with 'irony and ambiguity'. Thus, the alleged plain meaning of the text 'subverts itself' and language cannot refer to objective reality.

Foucault and Derrida resisted theological engagement. It was Brian Ingraffia's assessment (1995:7) that a foundational assumption of deconstructionists such as Foucault and Derrida was that the theological was to be avoided, not in any sense approximated and that 'God's shadow must be vanquished' in postmodern thought. However, theology has been influenced by postmodernism's pursuit of freedom. Ingraffia's appraisal is that this is demonstrated in freedom to create values, in opposition to submission to absolute truth. Or, it is demonstrated in human autonomy as opposed to obedience to the transcendent God. In hermeneutics, it represents a freedom of interpretation in contrast to belief in a final authority in meaning, based on the text (Ingraffia 1996:6).

What does this do to biblical understanding? Barthes left no doubt as to his view of the impact of deconstruction on the New Testament: 'Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (Barthes 1977:147). Barthes is firm about what this means to his understanding of theology and God: 'By refusing to assign a "secret", an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law'. What does this mean for the author of the text and the reader? Barthes explained that 'classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader…. We know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (Barthes 1977:147).

Could Crossan's understanding of the nature Jesus' resurrection be affected if his presupposition of postmodern reconstruction is confirmed? Derrida admitted that 'deconstruction owes a lot to Heidegger' (Derrida, in Caputo 1997:14). There is also the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche who believed that 'everything is interpretation…. Against positivism, which halts at phenomena – "There are only facts" – I would say: No, facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself"' (Nietzsche 1967:267). Presuppositions from Crossan's data on the resurrection and reconstruction are isolated in §3.3.5.

This project is not designed to note the detailed influence of postmodern deconstructionist, Derrida, on the thought of Crossan. However, in Crossan (1982:38), he showed an allegiance to Derrida's view of onto-theology which deals with the question of beings and of the highest, supreme being (Thomson 2000). Crossan stated he and other theologians believed 'in the necessity of a breakout from ontotheology' and 'have been researching the foundations of our tradition … to locate the best place for deconstruction'. Those who also were of this view 'may be much more willing to accept Derrida's comments on positive than on negative theology'. One of the concluding questions in Crossan's article was, 'What is the possibility of a Christian meditation breaking out of onto-theology by building, no

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this 'gained Rorty a sturdy reputation as an anti-philosopher's philosopher' (Ramberg 2009). Lifespan dates for Rorty are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Richard Rorty).

[198] Lifespan dates for Ricoeur are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Paul Ricoeur).

[199] Birth date for Fish is from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Stanley Fish).

doubt with deconstruction, upon Derrida's thematics of *différance*, *trace*, and especially *play*' (Crossan 1982:38)? For Derrida, 'the trace is a rupture within metaphysics, a pattern of incongruities where the metaphysical rubs up against the non-metaphysical, that it is deconstruction's job to juxtapose as best as it can' (Reynolds n d).

For Merold Westphal, onto-theology dealt with 'the affirmation and articulation of the Highest Being, who is the ultimate explanation of the whole of being' (Westphal 2005:548). So this 'breakout' seems to make Crossan at least an agnostic in relation to affirming the Highest Being – God Himself. When asked about his atheism, 'Derrida said, 'I confirm that it is right to say I am an atheist. I can say myself I am an atheist as a position' (Derrida 2002). Martin Hägglund's examination of Derrida's atheism led him to 'demonstrate that a radical atheism informs his writing from beginning to end' (Hägglund 2008:1).

Interviewer, Kristine McKenna, asked Derrida, 'What's the most widely held misconception about you and your work?' His response was

> that I'm a skeptical nihilist who doesn't believe in anything, who thinks nothing has meaning, and text has no meaning. That's stupid and utterly wrong, and only people who haven't read me say this. It's a misreading of my work that began 35 years ago, and it's difficult to destroy. I never said everything is linguistic and we're enclosed in language…. Anyone who reads my work with attention understands that I insist on affirmation and faith, and that I'm full of respect for the texts I read.
>
> (McKenna 2002)

Steven Shakespeare's assessment was that 'Derrida has never simply accepted the designation "postmodern" as applied to his work' and that readers should not use such an appraisal 'from that most abused, elastic and empty of labels' (Shakespeare 2009:3). Also, 'he questions the idea that one can base the meaning of a text upon an author's supposed intention', and 'Derrida's work makes meaning, truth and identity complicated' (Shakespeare 2009:3, 4, 7). When Shakespeare was a graduate student at Cambridge University and Derrida was nominated for an honorary doctorate, there were objections from the theology department which claimed his philosophy was that of a nihilist or relativist; his deconstructionism represented 'an abandonment of all ideas of meaning, truth and knowledge' and to grant him an honorary award would be 'self-defeating' as his ideas were 'an outright attack on everything a university should stand for' (Shakespeare 2009:9). At this time there was a letter in The Times newspaper in the United Kingdom, signed by philosopher Barry Smith and twenty others,[200] which stated that Derrida's writings stretched 'the normal forms of academic scholarship beyond recognition' and 'his works employ a written style that defies comprehension'. The letter continued: Where Derrida's written statements became coherent to these letter writers, 'these are either false or trivial' (in Shakespeare 2009:10).

This is part of Derrida's retort to those who criticise his views:

> Let it be said in passing how surprised I have often been, how amused or discouraged, depending on my humor, by the use or abuse of the following argument: Since the deconstructionist (which is to say, isn't it, the skeptic-relativist-nihilist!) is supposed not to believe in truth, stability, or the unity of meaning, in intention or "meaning to stay,"

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[200] The State University of New York, Buffalo, has made available a copy of the letter online in Smith et al (1992).

> how can he demand of us that we read *him* with pertinence, precision, rigor? How can he demand that his own text be interpreted correctly? How can he accuse anyone else of having misunderstood, simplified, deformed it, etc? In other words, how can he discuss, and discuss the reading of what he writes? The answer is simple enough: this definition of the deconstructionist is *false* (that's right: false not true) and feeble; it supposes a bad (that's right: bad not good) and feeble reading of numerous texts, first of all mine, which therefore must be read or reread. Then perhaps it will be understood that the value of truth (and those values associated with it) is never contested or destroyed in my writings, but only reinscribed in more powerful, larger, more stratified texts [or contexts – SDG].
>
> (Derrida 1988:146; emphasis in original)

Derrida with tongue-in-cheek language as a deconstructionist, skeptic, relativist and nihilist who is not supposed to believe in truth, unity of meaning, intention and fixed meaning, is not being hypocritical about this being applied to his own writings because truth is not destroyed in his writings but it is made more powerful and larger in his kind of stratified contexts. He pushes his claim that his 'more powerful, larger, more stratified texts' are promoting 'truth' – even though changed by being 'reinscribed'.[201]

The issues raised by Shakespeare have questioned the nature of deconstruction, its impact on literature, knowledge and truth, and Derrida's involvement with both understanding and misunderstanding of deconstruction.

Derrida's translator, professor of literature, G C Spivak,[202] asked of Derrida's publications, 'Why should we undo and redo a text at all' and 'not assume that words and the author "mean what they say?"' His answer was that it was a complex question and Derrida acknowledged that the desire for deconstruction may become a desire 'to show the text what it "does not know"'. Spivak considered that deconstruction could 'never be a positive science' and his assessment was that 'deconstruction reinscribes the value of writing' (in Derrida 1997:lxxvii-lxxviii).

Derrida's assessment was that 'the word "deconstruction" has always bothered me', explaining that he used the word rarely, perhaps once or twice, but suddenly this word 'jumped out of the text and was seized by others who have since determined its fate in the manner you well know'. For him, because of the possibility of negative connotations in certain quarters, he found he had to explain himself as 'the word by itself bothered me'. His language is interesting and challenging: 'I love everything very much that I deconstruct in my own manner. The texts I want to read from the deconstructive point of view are texts that I love, with that impulse of identification which is indispensible for reading. They are texts whose future, I think, will not be exhausted for a long time'. He calls his relationship with these texts as one that 'is characterized by loving jealousy and not at all by nihilistic fury (one can't read anything in the latter condition)' (Derrida 1985:85-87).

Derrida affirmed that 'deconstruction' was based on two words from German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).[203] One was Destruktion, which

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[201] The Macquarie Dictionary (1997) and the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (1978) do not include the word 'reinscribe'; however the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014) gave the definition as: 'to reestablish or rename in a new and especially stronger form or context <how do contemporary writers reimagine or *reinscribe* the culturally laden figure of the aging woman? — Ruth O. Saxton>', stating that the first known use of the word was in 1878.

[202] 'Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is University Professor and a Founding Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University' New York City, USA, according to the Columbia University World Leaders' Forum (2013).

[203] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Martin Heidegger).

Heidegger used not to mean destruction but ‘a destructuring that dismantles the structural layers in the system, and so on’. The second word was, ‘Abbau, which has a similar meaning: to take apart an edifice in order to see how it is constituted or deconstituted’. This is the classic meaning of the word but what was not classical was his application ‘to the whole of classical ontology, the whole history of Western philosophy’ and that the word was highlighted in a period that was dominated by structuralism. But ‘when someone [Derrida – SDG] says destructure, destructuring, or deconstruction, well, then, it acquires a pertinence which I personally did not pay too much attention to’ (Derrida 1985:86-87).

Derrida’s language at times is obtuse, an example being his explanation that by ‘deconstruction’ of a text, ‘one must be several in order to write’ (Derrida 1987:152), which seems to imply that one can more fully understand after having heard what others have said about one’s writing but uncertainty of meaning remains for this researcher.

In commenting on a paragraph from one of Nietzsche’s publications, Derrida observed that it ‘shelters too many nuances, shadings, and reserves’ to be able ‘to lay open all the issues it raises’ in the short time given for his exposition (Derrida 2007:15). The same could be applied to Derrida’s writings with statements such as ‘deconstruction loses nothing from admitting that it is impossible…. For a deconstructive operation, *possibility* would rather be the danger, the danger of becoming an available set of rule-governed procedures, methods, accessible approaches’ and this experience of the impossible is ‘of the other – the experience of the other as the invention of the impossible, in other words, as the only possible invention’ (Derrida 2007:15; emphasis in original). He maintains that ‘deconstruction is inventive or it is nothing at all…. It opens up a passageway, it marches ahead and marks a trail; its writing is not only performative; it produces rules – other conventions – for new performativities’ (Derrida 2007:23).

How do Derrida’s views of deconstruction apply to Crossan’s reconstruction of the historical Jesus? Steven Moore wrote of beginning ‘by reading Mark over the shoulder of Derrida’ and ending ‘by reading Luke over the shoulder of Foucault’ (Moore 1992:xvi). One section of Moore’s first chapter dealt with how ‘Mark and Jacques [Derrida – SDG] read each other without realizing it’ (Moore 1992:18-21). The publisher of Moore (1992) chose to obtain an endorsement from Crossan, part of which states, ‘This book is superbly well versed in the theory and practice of deconstruction and in contemporary biblical scholarship with regard to Mark and Luke-Acts. It brings these two aspects together in an extremely and mutually enlightening manner’ (Moore 1992, rear cover).

Rorty’s assessment was that ‘Derrida's early work, the work which had the most influence on deconstructionism, was a continuation and intensification of Heidegger's attack on Platonism’. Derrida did not consider himself a literary critic nor the founder of a school of literary criticism, which has been some of his destiny (Rorty 1995:166). While deconstructionism has narrow and broad dimensions, the latter becoming ‘a watchword in political science, history and law, as well as in the study of literature’. In all these disciplines, ‘it connotes a project of radical destabilization’ which for conservatives represents ‘a sort of nihilistic trashing of traditional values and institutions’ (Rorty 1995:167).

Derrida went beyond Heidegger’s influence to these quasi-political questions, according to Rorty: ‘How can we subvert the intentions of texts which invoke metaphysical oppositions? How can we expose them as metaphysical?’ Thus, he turned from Heidegger's preoccupation with philosophy to a technique that ‘could be applied to almost any text, past or contemporary, literary or philosophical. This was the technique which has come to be called "deconstruction"' (Rorty 1995:171). Rorty continued his analysis of Derrida with two main criticisms: Firstly, Derrida's doctrines are 'a sort of *reduction ad absurdum*[204] fallacy that doubts 'realism' (that language and thought are given structure and content by the world of non-language). Secondly, he promotes a philosophical position of linguistics but in an 'extravagant, hyperbolic way that has misled followers' through fallaciously derived, silly consequences (Rorty 1995:174-176).

It was Rorty's view that Paul de Man's role was to introduce and be the mediator of Derrida's thought because prior to de Man's encountering Derrida, de Man had been advocating a reading of literary texts similar to Derrida's philosophy, an example being in his early 1960s publication, 'form and intent in the American New Criticism' (de Man 1983:20-33).[205] Rorty's assessment was that de Man 'deplored the ahistorical and aphilosophical character of New Criticism' (Rorty 1995:177). De Man noted that American criticism of the New Criticism was that it discovered not a single meaning in literature, 'but a plurality of significations that can be radically opposed to each other' (in Rorty 1995:177). De Man's perspective was that whether in America or Europe, dealing in form or history, the main critical approaches used in the decades prior to his own writing 'were all founded on the implicit assumption that literature is an autonomous activity of the mind', which is a distinctive way of being in the world, 'understood in terms of its own purposes and intentions' (de Man 1983:21).

Derrida explained 'deconstruction' in dialogue with Eugene Vance (Derrida 1985)[206] and Derrida was 'no fan of modernity' or of those wanting to identify historical breaks such as 'this begins there'. Vance commented that he found it interesting to study constructions that do work, along with deconstructions that don't work. Derrida agreed but further explained:

> Here you are referring to a diagram of deconstruction which would be that of a technical operation used to dismantle systems. Personally, I don't subscribe to this model of deconstruction. What was said earlier ... demonstrates that what has been called the deconstructive gesture ... is accompanied, or can be accompanied (in any

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[204] '*Reductio ad absurdum* is a mode of argumentation that seeks to establish a contention by deriving an absurdity from its denial, thus arguing that a thesis must be accepted because its rejection would be untenable. It is a style of reasoning that has been employed throughout the history of mathematics and philosophy from classical antiquity onwards' (Rescher 2014).

[205] Leroy Searle explained that New Criticism (NC) was a name given to a 'varied and extremely energetic effort among Anglo-American writers' in literary criticism after World War I in the twentieth-century and extended to the mid-century. It focussed on literature itself, developed speculative techniques of reading, and provided 'a vital complement to the literary and artistic emergency of modernism'. It was an 'epoch project' that moved the discipline into an 'emerging professional academic discipline'. For NC, 'the literary text is treated as a self-sufficient verbal artefact' and the text was regarded as a means 'for shaping and disseminating cultural' values. Critics of NC 'have frequently charged that they ignore history, ideology, politics, philosophy, or other factors that shape literary experience. While such charges are not entirely fair, they arise because New Criticism in practice came to focus almost exclusively on problems of interpreting individual texts' (Searle 2005:1). Thiselton noted some of the NC emphases were a reaction to nineteenth and twentieth centuries' literary theories on material external to the text. Some of the emphases of NC were opposed to gaining meaning through understanding the intention of the author because of 'the inadequacy of intention … as a criterion of meaning' (Thiselton 1992:59). Then there was a paradigm shift away from the text itself to 'the context of the reader or the audience' in determining meaning. Thiselton noted how far this was removed from the conception of textuality 'of the classical world, Renaissance humanism, and the Reformers' (Thiselton 1992:60, 61).

[206] Eugene Vance was professor of French and comparative literature at the University of Washington (USA) who died in 2011 (Nichols 2012:339).

> case, I would hope to accompany it), by an affirmation. It is not negative, it is not destructive.
>
> (Derrida 1985:85)

Derrida told an audience at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, that he used the word, deconstruction, ‘rarely’ in the beginning of his writings. He stated that it was a good word among many, but was only meant to be ‘a secondary word in the text’ that would not assume a dominant place in a system. But the word, ‘deconstruction’, that he had only written once or twice and he couldn’t remember where he wrote it, was ‘seized by others who have since determined its fate’ in a manner known to that audience. So he was required to justify himself, but because of technical, negative connotations in certain contexts, ‘the word by itself bothered me’. However, he admitted that it is ‘necessary to dismantle systems, to analyze structures in order to see what is going on’, both when things function and when they don’t. But for Derrida, ‘deconstruction’ was not his chosen ‘first or last word, and certainly not a password or slogan for everything that was to follow’ (Derrida 1985:85-86).

John Rawlings’ brief assessment of Derrida’s deconstructionism was that it ‘is provocative, if not subversive, in questioning the self-evidence, logic and non-judgmental character of dichotomies we live by, such as legitimate/illegitimate, rational/irrational, fact/fiction, or observation/imagination’ (Rawlings 1999).

Crossan was more overt in his support of Derrida’s deconstruction in his article on ‘difference and divinity’ (Crossan 1982). He began by stating that it was ‘essay in the sense both of article and attempt’ and then proceeded to state that this sense was articulated in 1966 by Derrida’s statement about his own thought that, ‘I am trying, precisely, to put myself at a point so that I do not know any longer where I am going’ (Derrida in Crossan 1982:29). By application, was Crossan inferring that he did not know any longer where he was going, even though it ‘might seem too lonely for human inhabitation’ (Crossan 1982:29)? Is this an attempt to obfuscate[207] by Derrida and Crossan? The following may demonstrate this obfuscation.

For Derrida, the relationship of ‘différance’ and ‘play’ has been explained as building on the theories of French linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913),[208] but the term ‘différance’ was coined by Derrida, meaning difference and the act of deferring by which linguistic meaning is created but contrasted with related meanings, but with meanings not being the same as ideas or intentions. Instead, meanings are deferred with ‘an infinitely long chain of meanings’. This play of differences, for Derrida is ‘limitless’, ‘infinite’ and ‘indefinite’ (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014. S v Jacques Derrida).

Crossan’s final question in this article was to use a word from Derrida, ‘What, then is *differance*?’ – spelled with ‘a’ rather than ‘e’ (Crossan 1982:39; emphasis in original)? ‘Différance’ (with an ‘a’) was a word invented by Derrida and there was no distinction in pronunciation in Derrida’s native language of French with ‘difference’ (with an ‘e’). Crossan used Derrida’s essay on ‘différance’ (Derrida 1973:129-160) to provide these understandings of the word – yes, the word – even though Derrida denies it is a word or concept:

- The French verb, *différer*, according to Derrida, ‘seems to differ from itself’ (Derrida 1973:129) but according to Crossan it combines ‘the English senses of *to differ* and *to defer*’ (Crossan 1982:35; emphasis in original).

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[207] Obfuscate means, (1) to confuse or stupefy, (2) to darken or obscure (The Macquarie Dictionary 1997. S v obfuscate).

[208] Lifespan details are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Ferdinand de Saussure).

- Derrida emphasised the ‘a’, as the first letter of the alphabet, in his word, ‘différance’ and Crossan’s comment was that ‘this accidental primordiality of *a* being the start of our alphabet’ and that ‘those thinking Derrida’s thoughts in English might prefer to combine *differ* and *defer* into *defference* and thus receive the double meaning of *defer* (postponement, submission) as an even more interesting phenomenon’ (Derrida in Crossan 1982:35; emphasis in original). And this is supposed to indicate ‘hidden alternative meanings’ (Reynolds n d).
- ‘Différance’ (with the ‘a’) is ‘silent writing’, according to Derrida, because it ‘remains purely graphic: it is written or read, but it is not heard’ and the ‘a’ of ‘différance’ is to be regarded as ‘silent, secret, and discreet, like a tomb’ and, provided one knows how to decipher the legend of the writing, ‘is not far from signaling the death of the king’ (Derrida in Crossan 1982:36). The inference seems to be that this secret writing signals the death of the writer/author (the king).
- There is a combination of ‘to differ’ and ‘to defer’ in Derrida’s word, ‘différance’, which ‘can refer to the whole complex of its meanings at once, for it is immediately and irreducibly multivalent’ (Derrida 1973:137; Crossan 1982:36).

This researcher regards this as another attempt to obfuscate, but Crossan cites him favourably, without an attempt to challenge the bewilderment. Why should this be? It is because, as demonstrated in this research, Crossan’s reconstruction is endorsing some of the concepts of Derridean deconstruction.

For Crossan this leads to a breakout from onto-theology and the ‘best place’ for this to start could be with Derridean deconstruction of positive theology (Crossan 1982:37-38). As this project has documented, these are some of the emphases in Crossan’s voluminous writings.

Thus it can be affirmed that both Derrida and Gadamer (the latter is yet to be analysed) had seminal influences, whether overtly or covertly, on Crossan’s view of literature and history. Crossan’s confirmation of this is in his definition: ‘*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*’ (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). As Rorty has indicated, Derrida moved from Heidegger’s philosophy to the technique of deconstruction which has application to any text of history, philosophy or literature, past or present (Rorty 1995:171) and is adopted by Crossan as his modus operandi of postmodern, reconstructive hermeneutics. Gadamer’s hermeneutical influence on Crossan will be assessed further in §4.3.4.3.1.

4.3.4.1.1 By contrast: Poststructuralist versus critical realist

In the milieu of contemporary historical Jesus’ studies, two eminent researchers demonstrate their contrasting philosophies. This is seen in the considerable differences between N T Wright and Dom Crossan, articulated in a dialogue between them (in Robert Stewart 2006). Stewart’s assessment of the hermeneutical contrast between Crossan and Wright was that ‘Crossan represents a poststructuralist hermeneutic while Wright’s hermeneutic is that of a critical realist, worldview hermeneutic that makes use of narrative structuralism’ (Stewart 2008:2).

Stewart’s appraisal was that in rejecting ‘the quest for order and purpose in interpretation’, Crossan preferred ‘to stand on the brink of Nonsense and Absurdity and not be dizzy'.[209] Stewart saw the 'full force' of Crossan's poststructuralism in Crossan (1980) where Crossan emphasised that all language was metaphorical, and in agreement with Ricoeur, 'metaphorical language stands in binary opposition to literal language'. However, Crossan, in opposition to Ricoeur, insisted 'that metaphorical language does not grow out of literal language'. For Crossan, 'all language is essentially metaphorical and only becomes literal' through time. According to Stewart, Crossan admitted that his approach to the metaphorical has more in common with Derrida's 'absence of meaning' than Ricoeur's 'surplus of meaning' (Stewart 2008:33). Stewart saw this in Crossan's statement,

> It is precisely the absence of a fixed, literal, univocal, or univalent language that releases the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself. And this absence is the foundation and horizon of all language and of all thought. If Derrida is correct in this challenge, and I think that he is, it would mean that metaphor or symbol does not so much have a "surplus of meaning," in Ricoeur's phrase (1976) as a "void of meaning" at its core.
>
> (Crossan 1980:9-10; emphasis in original)

Donald Denton used some of Crossan's own language (Crossan 1980:9-10) to make this pointed, but valid, evaluation of Crossan's moving to the metaphorical, which then becomes absorbed into a multiplicity of meaning. He noted Crossan's 'absence of a fixed, literal, univocal, referential language' that 'leads to the inevitability of metaphor' as there is 'no absolutely literal language against which metaphor may be identified'. Thus, there is 'a void of meaning' at the core of metaphor (Denton 2004:37).

Crossan explained his view of linguistics metaphorically through a parable:

> Once upon a time there were people who lived on rafts upon the sea. The rafts were constructed of materials from the land whence they had come. On this land was a lighthouse in which there was a lighthouse keeper. No matter where the rafts were, and even if the people had no idea where they actually were, the keeper always knew their whereabouts. There was even communication between people and keeper so that in an absolute emergency they could always be guided safely home to land…. There is no lighthouse keeper. There is no lighthouse. There is no dry land. There are only people living on rafts made from their own imaginations. And there is the sea…. One moment. If there are only rafts and these rafts are really language itself, what is this sea which is "outside" language because it is beyond the raft? Maybe there is no sea either? If there is only language, then God must be either inside language and in that case ... an idol; or he is outside language, and there is nothing out there but silence. There is only one possibility left, and that is what we experience in the movement of the raft, in the breaks in the raft's structure, and, above all, what can be experienced at the edges of the raft itself. For we cannot really talk of the sea, we can only talk of the edges of the raft and what happens there.
>
> (Crossan 1975:41-44)

It is Gowler's assessment of deconstruction that for texts to be understood 'fruitfully', there needs to be an awareness of 'language's incompleteness and its unfixed nature'. Therefore, readers need to 'fill in aspects of the picture suggested by a text, but language itself is unstable. "Meanings" continually shift, change, contract, and expand as a reader moves through a text, even in a text that seems to portray a clear, unequivocal (e.g., "monologic") meaning'. He showed how Crossan (1980) 'utilizes Jacque Derrida's belief that all language is metaphoric. Metaphor creates a "void" of meaning that generates the free play of interpretations. Language thus is judged to be polyvalent – it allows no single and definitive reading/hearing to emerge' (Gowler 2000a:450).

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[209] When he gave this quote from another source, Crossan was investigating 'comic eschatology' and warned: 'Comedy must be carefully inoculated before it is safe even to investigate its processes! For my part I much prefer that vision of salvific comedy where, as Wylie Sypher has put it, "we must stand on the brink of Nonsense and Absurdity and not be dizzy"' (Crossan 1976:33). This citation is from Wylie Sypher (1956:237).

In Crossan's declaration of his definition of history, he stated four corollaries that explicate history's application (Crossan 1999:3-5). These will be examined briefly in §4.3.5 below.

Tremper Longman III's evaluation was that Crossan had 'been active in bringing Derrida's thought to bear on issues of interpretation' through Crossan (1980), 'in which he analyses the parables from a Derridean perspective. He found that the metamorphicity of the parable had a "void of meaning at its core…. It can mean so many things and generate so many differing interpretations because it has no fixed, univocal or absolute meaning to begin with"' (see Crossan 1980:9-10). Longman's assessment was that 'instead of searching for the meaning of the parable, he [Crossan – SDG] *plays* (a favorite metaphor of deconstructive method) with the words of the text' (Longman III 1987:122; emphasis in original).

This 'void of meaning' emphasis is amplified in Crossan's latest publication on parables where he concludes that Jesus, who existed, 'comes to us trailing clouds of fiction, parables *by* him and *about* him, particular incidents as miniparables and whole gospels as megaparables' (2012:251; emphasis in original). To describe Jesus as one who existed, but who trails 'clouds of fiction' and that the 'whole gospels are megaparables', indicates that Crossan has discarded or redefined the meaning of parable and that the term parable has become 'void of meaning' (that is, void of textual, original meaning) for Crossan.

4.3.4.2 Meaning and reader-response

This also impacts on the testing of hypothesis 12 (see §4.4 below, the meaning of the resurrection). See §3.3.5, the resurrection and deconstruction, for the data to demonstrate Crossan's use of reconstruction (his language for postmodern deconstruction) in gathering and interpreting the data concerning the historical Jesus, with especial application to Jesus' resurrection.

Another factor in Crossan's challenge to the historicity of the resurrection and other data from the Gospels, is his use of postmodern, reader-response, deconstructive hermeneutics, which is one of the core teachings of postmodernism. This is seen especially in the pragmatism of Fish (1980; 1989) and deconstruction of Derrida (1988; 1997). Vanhoozer explained the impact of this philosophy on literature where the text has no aims or interests of its own, being at the mercy of its reader. 'With only slight exaggeration, Mark Taylor characterizes interpretation as "a *hostile* act in which interpreter victimizes text"' (Taylor in Vanhoozer 1998:28; emphasis in original).

While the philosophy of deconstruction was adapted from Heidegger by Derrida, Catherine Botha explained how Heidegger changed his use of the German, Destruktion, over time. Botha traced

> how Heidegger's thinking on the *Destruktion* repeatedly turns against itself throughout his writings and it is demonstrated that Heidegger does indeed revise the notion by abandoning the term in his later writing; to replace it first with the concept of

> ‘overcoming’, and subsequently with the notion of *Verwindung* [distortion, twisting – SDG].[210]
>
> (Botha 2008:52; emphasis in original)

Botha’s language was that Heidegger’s concept of Destruktion was used by him, but his ‘thinking turns against itself over and over again throughout his writings’ (Botha 2008:52). Botha cited Sallis’ confirmations of this view in stating that ‘in turning to Heidegger's text itself, one must be attentive to the phantoms that haunt it and that reproduce within it precisely what the text would submit to Destruktion or commit to overturning. These spirits need to be exposed’ (Sallis, in Botha 2008:52). See §2.2.4.2.1 (c) for some details of a Derridean-Crossan connection of thinking.

Professor of philosophy and religion, Shawn Kelley, identified Crossan’s association with Heidegger’s deconstruction when he wrote that after all of Crossan’s ‘aesthetic speculation and historical reconstruction, Crossan ends up at the same place as the New Hermeneutic:[211] with Jesus’ experience of God and the implication of that experience for the faith of contemporary Christians’. Kelley’s view was that Crossan’s parabolic scholarship, like that of Robert Funk before him, ‘is an act of demythologizing’ and ‘as such, it inevitably returns to Heidegger who has been standing silently in the background, beckoning us to remain faithful…. Crossan succeeds in importing Heideggerian categories into the very heart of his analysis of Jesus’ parables’. Kelley claimed that ‘Crossan’s appropriation of Heidegger is the most imaginative and highly original since Bultmann’s demythology essays’ but Kelley’s assessment was that ‘it also wears its Heidegger lightly, avoiding existentialist jargon and slogans’ (Kelley 2002:193).

Botha’s statement that Heidegger’s ‘thinking turns against itself over and over again throughout his writings’ (Botha 2008:52) will be applied to Crossan’s writing as well with his promotion of postmodern reconstructive interactivism regarding Jesus’ resurrection, which redefines a historical understanding of the resurrection of Jesus.

With this background, what is a reconstructive, reader-response view of the text? The paradigm-shift away from the textual emphasis of structuralism has led to some significant reader-response emphases.

4.3.4.2.1 Reader-response emphases

Robin Parry’s assessment was that reader-response theories have moved ‘away from a concern with authorial intention (textual meaning lying “behind the text”). Instead, readers focus on the text itself (textual meaning as encoded “within the text,” ready for them to “discover” it), and finally on readers’ present interest (readers actualize textual meaning “in front of the text”’. Instead of the text determining the meaning, the reader controls the meaning of the text. Parry has emphasised that there are a number of hermeneutical theories that are concentrating on ‘the active role of the reader (or communities of readers) in interpretation’ but they are not in agreement on a number of issues, including: (1) the degree of control texts exercise in interpretation, (2) the role of the communities in which the readers live, (3) whether the readers to which they refer are ‘experts or ordinary readers’, and there are further issues on which they disagree (Parry 2005a:658-659).

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[210] This definition is from the Leo Deutsch-Englisch dictionary (2013. S v Verwindung).

[211] Richard Palmer (1969:47) identified the New Hermeneutic with its two leaders, Gerhard Ebeling (1912-2001) and Ernst Fuchs (1903-1983), who were ‘allies of Gadamer’s basically Heideggerian and phenomenological approach. This identification of the New Hermeneutic with Gadamer is explicit and mutual. Gadamer cites Ebeling and Fuchs with approval in his book, and the theologians advise their students to study Gadamer’s book with care’ [for support for Ebeling, see Gadamer 2004: 255, n. 3; 379, n. 91; 510; 539 n. 8; 543, n. 46; 562. For support of Fuchs, see Gadamer 2004: 379, n. 91; 510; 524-525; 543, n. 46; 562 – SDG]. Gadamer wrote, ‘Perhaps what Fuchs and Ebeling call the “new hermeneutical position” will become more apparent if we exaggerate’ (Gadamer 2004:543, n. 46). Palmer noted that ‘the theological and philosophical critics of the New Hermeneutic, such a Wolfhart Pannenberg, explicitly connect it with Gadamer’s position’ (Palmer 1969:47).

Here only a few samples will be given of statements by reader-response theorists to demonstrate the direction in which their theories are taking them.

(a) Radical reader-response theorists

Parry has noted the contrast between radical and moderate reader response theories, with his naming Stanley Fish, a literary critic who sounds much like a philosopher, as the ‘best-known radical’ as he believed the idea of meaning residing ‘in’ texts and ‘that texts exercise control over interpretation was an illusion’. So who decides the meaning of a text? It does not belong to the texts that depend on pre-existent meanings of those texts, but the reading communities determine what ‘*is the meaning of those texts*’ and ‘there are as many meanings of a text as there are community responses to that text’ (Parry 2005a:659; emphasis in original).

Fish’s radical perspective was that ‘the text as an entity independent of interpretation and (ideally) responsible for its career drops out and is replaced by the texts that emerge as the consequence of our interpretive activities. There are still formal patterns but they do not lie innocently in the world; rather they are constituted by an interpretative act’. Instead, there is a reversal of the relationship between interpretation and text. These new ‘interpretive strategies … give texts their shape’, thus making the texts and not allowing the interpretation to arise from the texts (Fish 1980:13).

Fish emphasised communities of interpreters, while Norman Holland, another radical, psychological reader-response theorist, ‘sees individual readers (not communities) as projecting themselves into texts and using literary works to symbolize and replicate themselves. The ego-unification achieved through reading texts is the meaning of the text’ (Parry 2005a:659). Holland stated that reader-response, psychoanalytic ‘critics concluded we could no longer sustain the traditional literary idea of a stable text with a determinate "meaning." Rather, readers make meaning’ (Holland 1992:15).

(b) Moderate reader-response theorists

Parry considers that Paul Ricoeur, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss fall into the moderate category (Parry 2005a:659).

Ricoeur maintained that ‘while it is true that there is always more than one way of construing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal. The text presents a limited field of possible constructions…. It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them, and to seek for an agreement, even if this agreement remains beyond our reach’. He explained that ‘the referential function of written texts is deeply affected by the lack of a situation common to both writer and reader’. He does admit that ‘the sense of a text is not behind the text, but in front of it. It is not something hidden, but something disclosed’ but then he resorts to his reader response, ‘Understanding has less than ever to do with the author and his situation’ (Ricoeur (1976:79-80, 87). ‘Behind the text’ refers to the author and his/her history and context. ‘In front of the text’ is formed by the reader. However, he places some limits on the text’s meaning (see the testing of hypothesis 12, §4.4), but the grind for him is: ‘Interpretation actualizes the meaning of the text for the present reader’ (Ricoeur 1976:90-91).

Leading German literary theorist, Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007),[212] outlined some of his proposal: 'It is this fact that causes most of the problems of literary aesthetics. The constant need for definitions induced by the text seems to jeopardize our attempts to grasp the nature of literature'. Problems of confusion can develop 'because the literary text at least potentially prestructures these "results" to the extent that the recipient can actualize them in accordance with his own principles of selection. In this respect, we can say that literary texts initiate "performances" of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves'. Iser's explanation is that the 'aesthetic quality lies in this "performing" structure, which clearly cannot be identical to the final product, because without the participation of the individual reader there can be no performance' (Iser 1980:26-27). Parry has articulated Iser's reader-response theory: 'Potential meanings do reside within texts and readers "actualize" or "concretize" dimensions of meaning by reading the text. So *actual* meanings are neither in the text nor in the reader but are realized in the act of reading. Iser speaks of 'gaps' that consist of missing information that 'readers need to fill in to "complete" the text. Different readerly gap-fillings actualize different meanings' (Parry 2005a:659; emphasis in original).

Jauss, a German literary critic, stated that 'the quality and rank of a literary work result neither from the biographical conditions of its origin, nor from its place in the sequence of the development of genre alone, but rather from the criteria of influence, reception, and posthumous fame' (Jauss 1982:5). A glimpse of his theory is seen in this statement:

> A literary work is not an object that stands by itself and offers the same view to each reader in each period. It is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence. It is much more like an orchestration which strikes ever new resonances among its readers and frees the text from the material of the words and brings it to contemporary existence.
>
> (Jauss 1982:21)

Jauss' 'reception theory' has parallels with that of Gadamer's (2004) critique of objectivism/objectivity where Gadamer argues for judgements based on the tradition in which one stands (see Gadamer 2004:297-200, 507-510, 524-527).

Whether the supporter of postmodern reconstruction or reader-response theories can be of radical or moderate persuasion, Thiselton's assessment hits the mark: 'A radical or exclusive emphasis on the role of the reading-community in *constructing* meaning *collapses "the two horizons" of hermeneutics* [text and reader – SDG] *into one single horizon*. This violates the concern for listening, openness, and dialogue which stands at the heart of hermeneutical theory'. Even further, 'if textual meaning, is the *product* of a community of readers, as Fish concedes, texts cannot reform these readers "from outside". In this case *The Reformation* then becomes a dispute over alternative community life-styles. It has *nothing to do with retrieving authentic meanings of biblical texts, let alone texts which address communities "from beyond"*' (Thiselton 1992:546, 549; emphasis in original).

Paul Noble[213] has isolated this emphasis in his critique of Fish's hermeneutics in drawing attention to Thiselton's (1992:549) assessment and Noble notes

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[212] Lifespan dates are from Brook Thomas (n d).

[213] At the time of writing these two articles, Paul R Noble taught in the Department of Religious Studies, Suffolk College, Ipswich UK (Noble 1994; 1995). Suffolk College became University Campus Suffolk in 2007 and 'is operated almost entirely independently from its parent universities of East Anglia and Essex' (Lytton 2013).

Thiselton's conclusion that 'Fish's hermeneutics has very little to offer biblical studies'. In opposition to Fish's anti-foundationalism, Noble pressed the point that 'one important constraint on interpretation is generally believed to be the reader-independent "givenness" of the text, which requires us to study it in ways that are appropriate to the kind of text it is; but it is just this givenness that Fish's hermeneutics denies' and appeals to the nature of the text are rejected. Fish's claim is that his anti-foundationalist hermeneutics is 'a description of what we all in fact do (whether we are aware of it or not) when we interpret a text (namely, that we create the text and its meaning)'. However, Fish believes in the possibility of radical reinterpretation, confirmed by numerous examples in his publication – Noble examined a list-poem example from one of Fish's classes. Fish cites John Milton's example of the Pharisees and divorce to show 'that the "same" text can mean quite different things to those who use different interpretive strategies'. Fish also dealt with the reinterpretations of sections of Milton's Paradise Lost. Noble has found some of Fish's hermeneutics to be self-contradictory and reaches the conclusion that 'all literary critics consider self-contradictory strategies to be inadequate (this is one of our central definitional constraints)'. Noble concludes that a closer examination of Fish's interpretive community reveals t hat 'his notion of an interpretive community cannot save him from thoroughgoing solipsism, because the community is itself necessarily created by the individual in his own image'. This conclusion provides Fish's answer to his own question of whether people can know whether they are members of the same interpretive community. His reply was that they can't because '*any evidence brought forward to support the claim would itself be an interpretation*' (Noble 1994: 420, 421, 424, 429, 431, 432-433, 435-436; emphasis in original).

Noble provided evidence that Fish used a straw man argument that did not deal with reason and situatedness. In his two articles, Noble tests Fish's epistemology and theories against literary and scientific interpretation. He concluded that, (a) Fish's theories fail the test consistently; (b) This failure demonstrates unsoundness in the theory. His conclusions were that: (1) In a non-trivial debate which Fish has with his critics, there has 'to be some measure of agreement about what is being discussed before there can be any sensible discussion'; and (2) 'The self-refuting character of untenable interpretations' is exposed in Fish's works. Therefore, Noble reaches the conclusion that it is possible to have an 'objective discussion about what is the true, reader-independent meaning of a text' without resorting 'to dubious or question-begging claims about atemporal criteria or eternal truths of reason'. With finality, he stated 'that Stanley Fish's reader-centred hermeneutics is a form of postmodernism that biblical studies should most definitely reject' (Noble 1995:21-22).

Stanley Porter gave five reasons (Porter 1990; 1994) why reader-response criticism had not 'caught on in New Testament studies'. These include: (1) 'The failure to arrive at an acceptable definition' of reader-response; (2) 'Preoccupation with historical concerns in biblical studies'; (3) 'Confusion about the fundamental nature of reading strategies' where a significant change in perspective is required and most biblical scholars are not willing to put these into effect; (4) No 'significant, cohesive group practicing reader-response criticism' through a major school or publication has emerged to effect such a change (he noted Culpepper at Baylor University); and (5) 'the landscape of criticism is ever-changing, especially among its most supple minds' (Porter 1994:99-100). Porter observed of his own review article in 1990, that he saw 'a significant number of cautiously worded statements that reflect my own ambivalence toward reader-response criticism at the time the article was written' (Porter 1994:100). His published assessment was made twenty years ago.

Crossan has reversed that trend and became a fulfilment of Porter's fourth point as a significant author, in a major university (DePaul University's biblical studies department until his emeritus status), in a relatively cohesive group where some members are practising reader-response hermeneutics. Crossan and fellows in the Jesus Seminar have emerged as modern advocates of a reader-response model, and Crossan as a chief advocate. Marcus Borg, a Jesus Seminar fellow, teamed up with Crossan to examine Jesus' last week in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. They gave this build-up: Mark's story of Easter is not history but parable:

> Parables can be true – truthful and truth-filled – independently of their factuality…. *The truth of a parable – of a parabolic narrative – is not dependent on its factuality*…. Seeing the Easter stories as parable does not involve a denial of their factuality. It's quite happy leaving the question open. What it does insist upon is that *the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*…. Seeing the Easter stories as parable, as parabolic narratives, affirms, "Believe whatever you want about whether the stories happened this way – now let's talk about what they mean"…. We are convinced that asking about the parabolic meaning of biblical stories, including the Easter stories, is always the most important question. The alternative of fixating on "whether it happened this way" almost always leads one astray….As we turn to the stories of Easter in the New Testament, beginning with Mark, we shall highlight their meaning as parable, as truth-filled stories, without any intrinsic denial of their factuality. We are convinced that the truth claims of these stories matter most.
>
> (Borg & Crossan 2006193-194; emphasis in original)

This is a typical reader-response presentation, a reconstruction of the biblical text, to enable the authors to make the text mean what they want it to say – not an historically factual account but a Borg-Crossan piece of creativity (a parabolic account) where it does not matter if the tomb was empty or not, whether Jesus' post-resurrection appearances could be videotaped or not. Even if people are quite sure it didn't happen according to the Borg-Crossan rewriting, that's 'fine; now what do these stories mean?' (Borg & Crossan 2006:193). This is an example of reader-response, postmodern, reconstructive thinking in action with a rewriting of the meaning of Jesus' passion in the biblical text, according to a reader-response, 2006 style. See §4.4 for an assessment.

The Jesus Seminar has articulated its 'seven pillars of scholarly wisdom' (which are really presuppositions), the seventh being 'the current assumption' where 'the gospels are now assumed to be narratives in which the memory of Jesus is embellished by mythic elements that express the church's faith in him, and by plausible fictions that enhance the telling of the gospel story for first-century listeners who knew about divine men and miracle workers firsthand'. They admitted that these seven pillars are 'useful and necessary' but there is 'no guarantee of the results. There are no final guarantees'. Then they add that 'not even the fundamentalists on the far right can produce a credible Jesus out of allegedly inerrant canonical gospels' (Funk et al 1993:4-5).

It has been stated of Crossan and Burton Mack that both of them 'have been prominent Fellows of the Seminar at one time or another' (Price 2009). Mack's perspective is that 'the postmodern view of our multicultural world is difficult to reject. It is no longer possible to think that only one worldview must be right' (Mack 1995:306).

In testing this hypothesis 9, the following factors will be investigated: deconstruction and relativism, the impact of the death of the author and the death of

God, creative rather than descriptive hermeneutics, how deconstruction unravels literature and history, the dimensions of Crossan's reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection, the impact on the factual content of any document – including Scripture, the self-defeating nature of postmodern linguistics, and reconstructionist dogmatism. There will be an examination of free play and textuality in §4.4.

4.3.4.2.2 Deconstruction and relativism

Derrida's différance means difference and deferring an act of meaning, because linguistic meaning is created and the meaning is endlessly deferred (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014. S v Jacques Derrida). Victoria Best, a lecturer in French literature at Cambridge University, writes a commercial blog in which she attempts to explain the complex ideas of Derrida in simple language and concepts. Her explanation of relativism in Derrida's deconstructionism was that his conclusion that language was an 'endless signifying chain – unless there is a definitive end point', meant that one could 'never be sure what a text means. Words are relative; meaning is a feature of that relativity'. Even if one were to try to say it plainly and simply, someone could mistake the meaning and believe something different was said. Thus, 'words have this inner fullness and flexibility – they are always ready to be bent in all sorts of different directions, to carry all sorts of meanings, so there is always a sort of bubbling undercurrent of excess in the language we use, and we can't get rid of it' (Best 2011).

As indicated above, Crossan presented an essay in which he endorsed Derrida's statement that 'I am trying, precisely, to put myself at a point so that I do not know any longer where I am going' (in Crossan 1982:29). Then add influences on Crossan of Gadamer and Ricoeur. All three of them have deconstructed the author in favour of the reader in understanding a text. Where does that leave the text? Relativism is here used to indicate multiplicity of meanings of words and concepts (the antithesis of univocal meanings) and free play with the text – see §4.4.

Examples of Crossan's reconstructed relativism, as indicated in §1.1.3, §1.1.4, §1.1.5 and §1.1.6, include:

- 'there is not in my work any presumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45);
- 'no past of continuing importance can ever avoid repeated reconstruction' (Crossan 1998a:45);
- 'This … presumes that there will always be divergent historical Jesuses, that there will always be divergent Christs built upon them'. The ultimate reconstruction is that 'the structure of Christianity will always be: *this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*' (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original).
- 'I insist that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present' (Crossan 1999:5).
- 'Mark created the empty tomb story just as he created the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane' (Crossan 1999:11).
- Jesus' burial by friends 'was totally fictional and unhistorical' and the burial, probably by enemies, was in a shallow grave accessed by 'scavenging animals' and the text has 'fictional overlays' designed to hide information (Crossan 1994a:160). There is not a word in the four Gospels of the New Testament to affirm this perspective. It is a relativistic invention by Crossan and he explains his argument that 'furnished the creative matrix for the earliest passion and resurrection traditions' (1991:397).

An application of Crossan's approach to reconstructed relativism is in his interpretation of Jesus' appearance to people on the Emmaus road after his resurrection (Lk 24:28-32). For Crossan, this was not an actual historical event, but 'that story is parable about loving, that is, feeding, the stranger as yourself and finding Jesus still – or only? – fully present in that encounter' (Crossan 2012:4). His reconstructed, parabolic understanding of this resurrection appearance is encapsulated in his statement, 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens'. For him, that is 'an introductory definition of a parable: a story that never happened but always does – or at least should' (Crossan 2012:5). The interpretation, 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens' is repeated at least four times in Crossan's writings (1991:xiii; 1994a:197; in Copan 1998:153; 2012:5). Of this Emmaus incident, he stated that 'the symbolism is obvious, as is the metaphoric condensation of the first years of Christian thought and practice into one parabolic afternoon' (Crossan 1991:xiii). The symbolism might be 'obvious' to Crossan, but that is a dimension of his idiosyncratic, inventive, postmodern interpretation of what happened on the road to Emmaus, based on his reconstructive worldview.

The above analysis demonstrates that Crossan's reconstruction of a text is designed to reread it for new meaning and his philosophy is that this must be done constantly by communities in new generations. He demonstrates this with his view of divergent Christs and the structure of Christianity on a foundation of '*this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*' (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original). This is a demonstration of Derrida's deconstructionism where language is an 'endless signifying chain' (Best 2011). Imagine using that approach to gain an understanding of Crossan's own writings? It's a self-defeating philosophy of language.

(a) Death of the author?

In 1968, Barthes acknowledged that a work may originate with an author but its destination was the reader. His pointed assessment was that 'we know that in order to restore writing to its future, we must reverse the myth: the birth of the reader must be requited by the death of the Author' (Barthes 1986:55). So for Barthes, the birth of the reader is compensated by the death of the author.

By the death of the author, Barthes was not addressing the literal death of the author but 'was attempting to kill off the tendency in literary criticism and educational institutions to use the notion of the author, and his or her supposed intentions, to limit the interpretive possibilities of reading' (Montgomery et al 2007:170). Barthes left no doubt as to what he meant by the 'death of the author':

- 'Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin' (Barthes 1977:142).
- 'The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions' (Barthes 1977:143).
- 'Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing' (Barthes 1977:145).
- 'The removal of the Author … is not merely an historical factor, an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text (or – which is the same thing – the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent) (Barthes 1977:145).
- 'We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (Barthes 1977:146).

- As indicated in §4.3.4.1 above, ‘Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing’ (Barthes 1977:147).
- ‘Writing ceaselessly posits meaning to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. In precisely this way literature, by refusing to assign a “secret”, an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases-reason, science, law’ (Barthes 1977:147).

Here Bathes has engaged in the symbolic destruction of the Author (God) of the biblical text. In a popular-level article, Andrew Gallix labelled Barthes ‘iconic’ article, as one that included the ‘symbolic slaying of the paternal "Author-God"’ (Gallix 2010).

Barthes death of the author is parallel to that of Crossan’s reconstruction of the text so that ‘history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present’ and ‘there are times we can only get alternative perspectives on the same event…. We reconstruct our past to project our future. And it is unfortunately, *not* possible *not* to do it’ (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). In Crossan (1976:39-40), he stated that he ‘is depending heavily on the work of Roland Barthes’ for these concepts: ‘The “truest” literature is the one which knows itself as the most unreal, to the degree that it knows itself as essentially language’.

While Norm Geisler’s assessment is directed at Derrida’s philosophy of deconstruction, it is as applicable to Crossan whose reconstructed relativism has been demonstrated above:

> Derrida’s view is a form of reader imperialism. The birth of the reader spells the death of the author; the author’s meaning dies once a reader takes over. But no deconstructionist really wants his books read in this manner; clearly he expects the reader to understand his (the author’s) meaning and not to read his (the reader’s) own meaning into it.
>
> (Geisler 2002:168)

Crossan promoted the view, articulated by Derrida (1970:267), that ‘I am trying, precisely, to put myself at a point so that I do not know any longer where I am going’ (Crossan 1982:29). Does Crossan even know where he is going with the texts he writes? Does he want the reader, including this researcher, to understand the stable meaning of his own words in context, or does he want the reader to pursue the reader’s own ideology of multiple meanings in interactivism of present with past in determining meaning in Crossan’s writings?

Vanhoozer asks: ‘Is there an author behind the text? In the beginning was the Word; yes, but what was the status of the Word before it was uttered? Do words really precede their speakers, or are words begotten from the mind of an author? In the case of the Logos in John’s Prologue, we know that this Word was with God, was God.... Word and Author fully coincide’ (Vanhoozer 1998:44). One solution to the author-text relation, according to Vanhoozer, ‘is to think in terms of cause and effect’. This will mean that ‘the author is the historical cause of a textual effect; his or her intention is the cause of the text being the way it is. No other explanation adequately accounts for the intelligibility of the texts. The author, an intelligent cause, is the necessary and sufficient explanation of the text, an intelligible effect’ (Vanhoozer

1998:44). This was pursued briefly in §4.2 with an examination of the viability of a view that places emphasis on the intention of the author. If the text is liberated from the meaning that the author places on it, then 'the text becomes a playground in which readers can exercise their own creativity' (Vanhoozer 1998:70). That is the view of Crossan, as indicated above with his statement: 'I insist that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present' (Crossan 1999:5).

Seán Burke's assessment was, 'The great crises of postmodernism are crises of authorship' (Burke 1995:xxix). He explains further: 'the discovery of a text like Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology" will modify psychoanalysis if and only if it is a text by Freud. Over and above the texts contents, the fact of attribution – in and of itself – is the primary factor in establishing its significance for the psychoanalytic field' (Burke 1998:93).

As indicated in §4.3.4.1, for Derrida 'différance' (with the 'a') is 'silent writing' because it 'remains purely graphic: it is written or read, but it is not heard' and the 'a' of 'différance' is to be regarded as 'silent, secret, and discreet, like a tomb' and, provided one knows how to decipher the legend of the writing, it 'is not far from signaling the death of the king' (Derrida 1973:129, 132; see Crossan 1982:36). The inference seems to be that this secret writing signals the death of the writer/author (the king).

The death of the author can be rehabilitated by a rethinking of the Scripture-tradition relationship. Vanhoozer did this by using categories such as 'script' and 'performance' in his task of examining 'performance interpretation'. He used the model of drama theorists and their controversies to defend the view that the canon of Scripture is 'a performance – an act of discourse – before being script (a design for further performance). It is precisely as a past performance (i.e., as a discourse fixed by writing) that the canon serves as normative specification of what God was saying and doing in Christ' (Vanhoozer 2005b:152). He made the following application from a performance framework.

In an examination of postmodernism in the 'drama of doctrine', he differentiates between 'two (or more) different kinds of performance interpretation' (Vanhoozer 2005b:151). He labels 'Performance I' as 'the interpretative community reacts' with an interpretation that 'privileges the script by acknowledging that it is the communicative initiative of its author', but admitted that '"performing texts" is an ambiguous phrase' (Vanhoozer 2005b:179-180) – hence his further explanation.

He supports 'Performance I' which combines two proposals:

> (1) by seeing the canonical discourse as itself an instance of triune performance, and (2) by viewing the canon as a script that requires not merely information processing but ecclesial response. The canonical-linguistic approach advocates not Performance II, which unhelpfully confuses author and reader, but Performance I, where interpreters respond to authorial direction.
>
> (Vanhoozer 2005b:184)

He compared the contrast between Performance I and II with C S Lewis' distinction between 'receiving' and 'using' texts where Lewis stated that, 'when we "receive" [a work of art – SDG] we exert our senses and imagination and various other powers according to a pattern invented by the artist. When we "use" it we treat it as assistance for our own activities'[214] (in Vanhoozer 2005b:180).

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[214] This is from Lewis (1961:88).

By Performance II, Vanhoozer refers to interpretation that 'ignores authorial acts of discourse (illocutions) in favor of performances that become the de facto equivalent of the "sense of the text." Performance II is not interested in finding out what authors said and did with their words' (Vanhoozer 2005b:180).

This provides a glaringly obvious application to how Crossan deals with Jesus' passion-resurrection, where he engages in Performance II. These are only samples:

- Jesus' burial by enemies in a shallow grave accessed by 'scavenging animals' and the text has 'fictional overlays';
- Mark created the person of Joseph of Arimathea;
- There was no bodily resurrection of Jesus but the resurrection appearances were those of apparitions.
- 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens'.

(b) Death of God?

What does the death of the author in deconstruction, including Crossan's reconstructionism, mean for God, the Author? Vanhoozer (1998:30) suggested that interpretation of any document, not simply Scripture, has a theological dimension. He saw 'the effect of the *death* of God on literary theory', citing Mark Taylor's assessment of deconstructing theology: 'The death of God was the disappearance of the Author who had inscribed absolute truth and univocal meaning in world history and human experience' (Taylor in Vanhoozer 1998:30; emphasis in original). Barthes reached a similar conclusion that if one refused to assign to the text (or writing) and to 'the world as text' an 'ultimate meaning', it 'liberates an activity which we may call countertheological, properly revolutionary, *for to refuse to halt meaning is finally to refuse God* and his hypostases, reason, science, the law' (Barthes 1986:54; emphasis added). Vanhoozer draws the parallel with Derrida: 'Similarly Derrida's rejection of philosophy's traditional concern for rationality and truth is a theological move: "Deconstruction is the death of God put into writing."[215] Literary atheism is increasingly the order of the day; the postmodern reader no longer believes in God or in authors' (Vanhoozer 1998:30).

As this exposure indicates, Crossan shows a similar disregard for the fixed meaning of words in context, exalts the death of the author through his redefinition of terms and meaning, and celebrates the arbitrariness of meaning and truth by dancing on the tombs of Scripture and of God. That all Scripture (with particular application to the Old Testament) is theopneustos – breathed out by God – according to 2 Timothy 3:16 and is 'profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness' (with a fixed understanding of the content of Scripture so that there can be constantly reliable teaching, reproof, correction and training for righteousness by Christians) seems to be ignored or refused by Crossan's ideology of reconstruction. How is it possible to rely, say, on stable teaching of the meaning of the Beatitudes (Mt 5:2-12) if Crossan's reconstructed interactivism promotes the multiple meanings of words and sentences? Why would anyone want stable meaning in the Beatitudes? For the same reason that stable meaning of words and sentences is needed for this researcher's reading and understanding of The Brisbane Times, William Shakespeare's plays, and Crossan's publications. Therefore, '*if "the author" dies, so too does the possibility of meaning in texts*' (Vanhoozer 1998:89; emphasis in original).

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[215] This sentence is an adaption from Carl Raschke's, 'The deconstruction of God' and Vanhoozer's evaluation of what he sees as the current crisis of values in the Western world which he concludes is theological. Therefore, his assessment is that 'deconstruction is the death of God put into culture' (Vanhoozer 1998:34, n. 37).

The death of the author in reconstruction leads to the death of God in Scripture and all Christian talk. This is because stable meaning about God becomes multiple meaning about 'God', which could mean anything at all. The ultimate, Almighty God is gone, dead and buried if Crossan's ideology of reconstructionism is correct.

(c) Crossan's creative understanding of resurrection

Crossan's fourth corollary of his definition of history concerns method, insisting 'that Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present'. This method will not guarantee the truth (as nothing can do that), but a self-conscious, self-critical method 'is our only discipline' for due process of history that 'is our best hope for honesty' (Crossan 1999:5). This was Gadamer's perspective, 'Understanding is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity as well' (Gadamer 2004:296)

Since Crossan does not support the resurrection narratives of the New Testament as historical documents (see the falsification in §4.2), what creative understandings does he develop to explain Jesus' resurrection? An example is seen in his perspective on the burial-resurrection details of Jesus:

> In discussing the crucifixion, I argued that the story of Jesus' burial by his friends was totally unhistorical. If he was buried at all, he was buried not by his friends but by his enemies. And not in a tomb hewed out of stone, but in a shallow grave that would have made his body easy prey for scavenging animals. Those are grim conclusions, but I cannot escape them.
>
> (Crossan & Watts 1996:152-153)

Crossan doubted whether there was any tomb in which Jesus was buried. Maybe Joseph of Arimathea '*could* have buried Jesus, perhaps out of personal piety or communal duty', but he is persuaded that 'Mark created that burial by Joseph of Arimathea in 15:43-47. It contains no pre-Markan tradition' (Crossan 1998a:553-555; emphasis in original).

Some may object to labelling this as Crossan's creative approach. However, the evidence here presented affirms his view that 'Mark created' the person of Joseph of Arimathea. He stated that his problem with Joseph 'is not on the level of could but of *did*' (Crossan 1998a:554; emphasis in original). This is contrary to the statements in the biblical texts. Crossan's further imaginative explanations include: 'I do not think that any of Jesus' followers even knew where he was buried – if he was buried at all'. His claim was that Paul, being the earliest writer about the resurrection in his letters, 'nowhere shows awareness of having heard of an empty tomb'. However, 'maybe resurrection is simply a word picture of Jesus' continuing presence among his followers'. As for the Emmaus Road story of Luke 24, it 'isn't a fact, but it is true. It's a symbolic picture of Christian faith deepening over time. Easter was much, much more than the events of a single day' (Crossan & Watts 1996:154, 156, 158). An examination of this thinking is pursued in §4.4.

Elsewhere he wrote that for the resurrection, 'Three days establishes that the body is really and irrevocably a corpse so that the disciples cannot resuscitate Jesus and remove him' and the authorities' plan 'is to prevent resuscitation by the disciples from bring interpreted as resurrection by the people'. How do death and resurrection emerge? 'The certainty of death is the macabre reality behind guarding a body "for three days." Resuscitation was a possibility – albeit remote – for at least a few days'

(Crossan 1998a:549). To enter Hades and release 'them that sleep' from bondage down below, Jesus had to be truly dead. 'That meant communal resurrection, meant Jesus rising at the head of the holy ones; and, since such vindication-resurrection was biblically promised, it was "according to the scriptures"'. In applying this to Paul and First Corinthians 15, Crossan's claim was that 'it never occurs to him that Jesus' resurrection might be an absolutely unique and personal privilege' like that of Elijah. Thus, 'Jesus' resurrection takes place only *within* the general resurrection' as in 1 Corinthians 15:13, 16 (Crossan 1998a:549-550; emphasis in original). An analysis of this challenging claim is in §4.4.

In Adam Miller's interview with Crossan, he asked him, 'In your opinion, how literal is Christ's resurrection for Paul? Does Paul ultimately conceive of resurrection as a kind of transformative resuscitation of the human body or is resuscitation too strong a word?' Part of Crossan's response was that that was thinking within the realm of Judaism where its first element was God's 'great clean-up' to be done for those who had suffered injustice and died – especially the martyrs – and they were to be bodily raised. This suffering in their bodies meant that they would be publicly, bodily justified before the world. Crossan's claim was that this Pharisaical claim influenced Paul's teaching and the 'resurrection had already begun'. His view was that there is no way to know the percentage of people who supported resurrection in a literal or metaphorical, contemporary sense. Therefore, Crossan's claim was that if Paul went through the Mediterranean world proclaiming Jesus' resurrection as a body coming out of the tomb, 'the polite pagan' would say, 'We don't believe that stuff…. Why should I care?' Crossan's view was that Paul's answer would be, 'Jesus has been raised from the dead and God is concerned with bodies. God is concerned with justice. God is concerned with cleaning-up the mess of the world. Here is what we are doing, do you want to join us? *That* is a pre-enlightenment response' (Miller 2004:34-35; emphasis in original).

Crossan's claim was that in 1 Corinthians 15 (which he understood was about 20-40 years before the Gospels were written), Paul was defending the thought of bodily resurrection, but Crossan calls it 'a very interesting twist' of never arguing 'that resurrection was a special miracle only for Jesus'. Instead, it was the opposite: 'Jesus' resurrection is for him one instance of a *general* resurrection'. Crossan's further creative explanation was that Paul did not say, 'If Christ's tomb is not empty, vain is our faith," but, "if Christ is not risen, vain is our faith." He is not talking about the resuscitation of Jesus' corpse but about the presence of Jesus in a wholly new mode of existence' (Crossan & Watts 1996:159-160; emphasis in original). He wrote of 'the list of apparitions in 1 Cor. 15:1-11' and 'the risen apparitions are given in very great detail…. One could fairly conclude from 1 Cor. 15:3b-7 that those apparitions or visions are profoundly important for traditional Christian faith', but for Mark, writing his Gospel about twenty years later, the 'apparitions or visions are completely absent'. His questions were: Why does Mark end without any apparitions of the resurrected Jesus? 'How much of this is historical accuracy, traditional piety, or Markan creativity' (Crossan 1999:7, 8)?

Why has Crossan refused to acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus as resuscitation? Evidence presented up to this point and to come, indicates that it is because Crossan has *a priori* commitments to the resurrection accounts in the Gospels not being historical; his anti-supernaturalism (not examined here), and his hermeneutics of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism determining the conclusion reached. Therefore, he has to move to another method to explain the resurrection and that is to express the resurrection in what it means to him, 'Easter means for me that the divine empowerment which was present in Jesus' and previously only available to the people of Galilee and Judea, 'is now available to anyone, anywhere in the world' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). But this statement is expected from a scholar who denies the historical nature of Jesus' resurrection, the bodily resurrection, and is committed to reconstructive interactivism. He has to establish his own creative alternative. This is his explanation of Jesus' resurrection:

> It has nothing to do, literally, with a body coming out of the tomb, or a tomb being found empty, or visions, or anything else. All those are dramatic ways of expressing the faith. The heart of resurrection to me is that the power of God is now available through Jesus, unconfined by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it.
>
> (Crossan & Watts 1996:161)

This is contradictory information when Crossan states here that Jesus' resurrection had nothing to do with 'visions' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). This is especially so in light of his statements elsewhere that 'those resurrectional visions explain the miracle of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph across the Roman empire' and 'I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably, and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' (Crossan 1999:6; emphasis in original).

However, this also is Crossan's creative way to avoid Jesus' resurrection as an historical event, to interpret it as metaphor, and to point towards his creative meaning for the event – justice and cleaning up the world's mess.

Crossan was specific about how he engaged in postmodern, creative ways with the biblical text. Crossan's (1998a) language was:

> I have emphasized gospel as *updated* good news, rewriting the Jesus of the late 20s as the Jesus of the 70s, 80s and 90s. I knew, of course, that words and deeds of Jesus were updated to speak to new situations and problems, new communities and crises. They were adopted, they were adapted, they were invented, they were created. But then so, of course, were the friends and enemies of Jesus.
>
> (Crossan 1998a:524; emphasis in original)

Note the origin, 'I knew'. This kind of explanation is out of the mind and postmodern presuppositions of Crossan. What did this mean for Crossan's understanding? 'I had called the claim that the Jews killed Jesus "the longest lie." But did not the gospels say just that?' (Crossan 1998a:524). In addition, Crossan promotes this view: For Christians the New Testament texts, including the Gospels, are 'inspired by God' but because this inspiration comes through a human heart and mortal mind, it can also be 'inspired propaganda and inspiration does not make it any the less propaganda'. He considered that while the Christians were marginalised and disenfranchised, the 'passion fiction about Jewish responsibility and Roman innocence' about the death of Jesus 'did nobody much harm'. However, his claim is that when 'the Roman Empire became Christian, that fiction turned lethal' with Christian anti-Judaism and genocidal anti-Semitism'. Crossan concludes that when the fiction turned lethal, and was not 'benign propaganda' anymore, 'its repetition has now become the longest lie, and, for our own integrity, we Christians must at last name it as such' (Crossan 1995:152).

It is penetrating that Crossan now wants to talk in terms of historical specifics – Christians marginalised and disenfranchised, Jewish responsibility, Roman innocence, anti-Judaism, and genocidal anti-Semitism. Crossan is caught with another philosophical crusher of contradiction. Does he want the entire Gospel record to be a mega-parable and other historical data to be interpreted as reconstructed interactivism? He does not, as is illustrated in this study.

If he discarded his metaphorical, parabolic, postmodern, reconstructive hermeneutics, he could understand that the death of Jesus involved both the Jews and the Romans. This conclusion is reached through plain reading of passages such as Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14, 24-26, 32-44 that declare that the 'chief priests and elders of the people' (the Jewish Sanhedrin) accused Jesus and then handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, to confirm the crucifixion verdict. There was a collaboration of Jews and Romans – according to the biblical text – that led to Jesus' execution. Lenski explained that for Jesus, his case was similar to where the Sanhedrin had decreed death for others. 'The Roman government had reserved the right of inflicting the death penalty; the Sanhedrin had lost that right. It could decree but had to ask the Roman governor to carry out the execution of the death penalty'. While the English Standard Version translates the phrase, συμβούλιον ἔλαβον (Mt 27:1) as 'took counsel', Lenski stated the expression means 'to pass a resolution' (Lenski 1943b:1076-1077). However, that interpretation is only possible through treating the biblical texts historically and literally. Crossan's presuppositions prevent such a hermeneutic.

Instead, Crossan's polyvalent, postmodern reconstruction is not based on the stable content of the meaning of the text but on Crossan's subjective, 'I knew' (1998a:524). It is a demonstration of his creative, postmodern methodology of pluralistic meaning and interpretation – his idiosyncratic reconstructive hermeneutics.

He considers that 'the resurrection is a matter of Christian faith', cannot be disposed 'to the same historical processes' as for Jesus' crime, arrest, execution and burial. He at least does regard it as 'the historical challenge of the resurrection stories' but he rejects the regular historical process for his own 'historical reconstruction' (Crossan 1995:189).

With regard to the resurrection, even though Matthew 27:62-66 states that Jesus' tomb was sealed and guarded, Crossan's pluralistic interpretation was that 'no guard is necessary because Jesus will have been proved wrong' (1995:180). This is another demonstration of the philosophical crusher that devastates Crossan's position (see the abduction in §4.2.1.2 above). It is he who defines history in *a priori* fashion, as 'the past reconstructed interactively by the present' and there is no search for the historical Jesus or quest for Christian origins. This is because his epistemology of reconstruction means that something must be redone in different times, places and communities, and every generation must do it regularly (Crossan 1999:3, 5). However, here he reverts to a traditional understanding of history by claiming that Jesus' prophecy that he would rise on the third day (as in Mk 8:31=Mt 16:21; Mk 9:31=Mt 17:22-23; Mk 10:33-34=Mt 20:18-19; Mt 12:38-40) would not happen as 'no guard is necessary because *Jesus will have been proved wrong*' (Crossan 1995:180; emphasis added). It is he who stated his presumption 'that there will always be divergent historical Jesuses, that there will always be divergent Christs built upon them, but above all, it argues that the structure of a Christianity will always be: *this is how we see Jesus-then as Christ-now*' (Crossan 1991:423; emphasis in original).

If there can always be many divergent historical Jesuses, how can anything be proven to be 'wrong' if reconstruction means something must be redone regularly by many communities and in many times and places? Consistency demands for Crossan that he allow for any reconstruction of the life and times of Jesus and Jesus' returning from the dead on the third day should be one of those reconstructive possibilities that should not be judged as 'wrong'.

The evidence for a reconstructive epistemology encounters serious problems (as the following will uncover), but to be reliably consistent in his interpretation, Crossan should be allowing for bodily resurrection of Jesus on the third day as one possible reconstruction. The philosophical crusher has exposed his position.

Crossan's creative reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection involves these elements:

- The risen apparitions in the Gospels do not relate to 'ecstatic experiences or entranced revelations', which are found in other world religions and may have been in early Christianity. Instead, the last chapters of the Gospels deal with questions of authority, according to Crossan (1995:208). Why should this be if postmodernism encourages polyvalent meaning?
- 'I do not find anything historical in the finding of the empty tomb, which was most likely created by Mark himself…. The risen apparitions are not historical events in the sense of trances or ecstasy, except in the case of Paul' (Crossan 1995:209). Why should Paul be an exception? This has a sense of arbitrariness in the decision!
- 'An empty tomb or a risen body susceptible to food and touch were dramatic ways of expressing that faith. Trances or ecstasies were dramatic ways of experiencing that faith…. Christian faith itself was the experience of Jesus' continued empowering presence' (Crossan 1995:210). There is evidence of contradictory information as it is Crossan who has defined Jesus' resurrection appearances as being apparitions, by which he means experiencing trances and altered states of consciousness (Crossan 1994a:87-88, 160-161). For an exposé of the apparitions/trances position, see §4.4 (testing hypothesis 12) where further evidence is provided to test Crossan's *a priori* suppositions of apparition and his confusing and contradictory language – the acceptance of risen apparitions as historical events that are now lost, the denial of apparition, and attempting to make Jesus' resurrection a metaphor for authority structures in the early church (Crossan in Stewart 2006:177).
- 'The resurrection of Jesus *means for me* that the human empowerment that some people experienced in Lower Galilee at the start of the first century in and through Jesus is now available to any person in any place at any time who finds God in and through that same Jesus' (Crossan 1995:216; emphasis added).
- 'Empty tomb stories and physical appearance stories are perfectly valid parables expressing that faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story' (Crossan 1995:210).

How is it known that the above details of the resurrection are creative, pluralistic, reconstructions by Crossan? He explained the core of his reconstructive perspective relating to the four Gospels, a reconstructed vision of the historical Jesus, and '*a/the* manifestation of God for its community' (Crossan 1995:217; emphasis in original). As indicated in §4.2.1.1.2, Crossan's foundational philosophy involves the outworking of what he called Christianity's historical reconstruction, which was interpreted as divine manifestation. The reconstruction means redoing the historical data in creative ways, cognisant of the contemporary needs, visions and programmes (Crossan 1995:217). Thus, for him, there is no fixed historical data for Jesus' resurrection. The contemporary needs cause those to be redone – reworked creatively.

There is an obvious problem with this approach. Anyone can make any creative interpretation and application of the data concerning Jesus' resurrection and nobody could object as there are no parameters for assessment.

(d) Further evidence to challenge *a priori* premises regarding the author's content

Professor of philosophy, Bruce Russell, wrote of *a priori* justification and knowledge, dealing with technical philosophical details of how to justify *a priori* knowledge. The general principle promoted was that '*a priori* knowledge is knowledge that rests on *a priori* justification. *A priori* justification is a type of epistemic justification that is, in some sense, independent of experience. There are a variety of views about whether *a priori* justification can be defeated by other evidence, especially by empirical evidence'. On what basis are *a priori* presuppositions developed? Russell's perspective was that '*a priori* justification seems to rest on rational intuitions, or insights'. However, there is a variety of views about the nature of intuitions and insights and how they may be justified. (Russell 2014).

One view is that *a priori* intuitions do not have much evidentiary force and when all things are considered, Russell's view is that evidence should be accepted as 'justified true belief' (JTB) as 'it is simpler and systematizes many of our intuitions about knowledge'. He admits that it is rejected by some because of its simpler scope for systematisation of intuitions and knowledge. However, he noted that those who reject the simpler perspective 'are willing to reject certain intuitions in favor of a non-JTB theory that is itself simple and general'. Russell concludes his exposition on *a priori* justification and knowledge with this warning: 'Perhaps philosophers were mistaken in thinking that if there is an explanation of how *a priori* justification, and knowledge, are possible it must be of just one type. Maybe at least two different accounts must be given, one in terms of concept possession; the other, in terms of the inability to find counterexamples' (Russell 2014).

The model pursued here is that of JTB (justified true belief) and the inability to find counter-examples, where other evidence is gathered to challenge or attempt to challenge Crossan's *a priori* presuppositions concerning Jesus' resurrection. Some of these have been pursued above but more will follow.

4.3.4.3 The biblical text cannot have factual content, according to Crossan

Crossan's statements about the biblical text not having a fixed meaning are articulated in §3.3.2.4 on truth and factuality; and §3.3.2.5 on history, myth and fiction.

Crossan's particulars are different from and his assessment uses dissimilar language, but his conclusions are parallel to those of Rudolf Bultmann who wrote,

> The understanding of the text is never a definitive one; but rather remains open because the meaning of the Scriptures discloses itself anew in every future…. Since the exegete exists historically and must hear the word of Scripture as spoken in his special historical situation, he will always understand the old word anew. Always anew it will tell him who he, man, is and who God is, and he will always have to express this word in a new conceptuality. Thus it is true also of Scripture that it only is what it is with its history and its future.
>
> (Bultmann 1961:295, 296; 2002:202, 203)[216]

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[216] The title of the article in this Bultmann publication (Bultmann 2002), from which this citation came, was a translation of the German, the title in English being, 'Is exegesis without presuppositions possible?' The original German edition was published in 1957.

This is parallel to the language of deconstruction, examples of which follow.

Part of the process of deconstruction in literary criticism involves reader-response theories. See §1.1.3, §1.1.4, and §2.2.4.2.1(c) for expositions of the nature of postmodernism, deconstruction/reconstruction, reader-response theories and their application to Crossan's scholarship.

How are these defined and understood? It is important to acknowledge that reader-response theories of deconstructive postmodernism that have influenced contemporary historical Jesus' studies have their foundations in philosophical entities outside of the Scriptures. For the postmodern reader-response literary theory that came to prominence in the twentieth century, emphasis is placed on the reader shaping meaning, since there is no sense of meaning existing in the text (Vanhoozer 1998:148). According to Parry (2005a:658-659), this means that literary theory has moved away from understanding the intention of the author – which is the 'textual meaning lying "behind the text"' – to a focus on meaning 'within the text' that is awaiting the reader's discovery. This can be related to the 'readers' present interest (readers actualize textual meaning "in front of the text"'. Parry is careful to emphasise that reader-response is not a single theory but comprises a 'family of diverse hermeneutical theories'.

The diversity in reader-response theories includes the amount of control of individuals or communities in interpreting texts. Parry (2005a:659-660) divides the theories into two broad categories: (a) radical reader-response theories, and (b) moderate reader-response theories.

The radical reader-response theorists emphasise readers who create the meaning of a text, as opposed to those who consider the text places constraints on interpretation. The radical category, says Parry (2005a:659), includes Stanley Fish (1980) and Norman Holland (1973). The later Fish considered that meaning residing 'in' a text or that texts controlled interpretation was 'an illusion' (Parry 2005a:659). Fish's statement was that 'the objectivity of the text is an illusion and, moreover, a dangerous illusion, because it is so physically convincing' (Fish 1980:43). For Fish, the meaning of a text belongs to reading communities that are not responding to pre-existent meaning in those texts. These communities are trained to be critical of a text and there may be 'as many meanings of a text as there are community responses to that text' (Parry 2005a:659).

Holland (in Parry 2005a:659) came from a psychological perspective and his emphasis was on individual readers rather than communities determining meaning.

Edward Jayne's review of Holland (1973) indicated that Holland pushed for 'critical relativism to an extreme' and was implying that any identity theme in a poem was as good as any other theme and communication happens as 'the writer creates a structure which his reader recreates for himself' (Holland's words) (Jayne 2005:2).

Another radical reader-response theorist was French social and literary critic, Roland Barthes (AD 1915-1980).[217] In describing the death of the author, Barthes told of the story by Sarrasine Balzac in which Balzac described a castrato[218] disguised as a woman. Balzac said that 'this was the woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussings, and her delicious sensibility' (Barthes 1977:142).

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[217] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Roland Barthes).

[218] *A castrato in opera* of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was 'a male singer castrated in boyhood to preserve his voice in the upper registers' (The Macquarie Dictionary 1997. S v castrato).

Bathes had his own questions as to the origin of these words: ‘We shall never know, for the good reason that *writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin*. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where *our subject slips away*, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing’ (Barthes 1977:142; emphasis added). So for the radical Barthes, in writing, every author’s voice is destroyed to the point where identity is lost and there is no point of origin for the identity of that voice.

Vanhoozer (1998:52) placed Derrida in neither the conservative nor radical reader-response camps, but as a centrist. This is because Derrida’s critique of philosophy ‘shakes it to its very foundations and takes it to its breaking point’ as Derrida, like Kant, understands ‘the implications for knowledge and interpretation of the death of God’, but without an understanding of orthodox Christian belief. For Vanhoozer, ‘Derrida’s iconoclasm performs one positive function: That of cleansing the hermeneutical temple of the purveyors of cheap interpretations’ (Vanhoozer 1998:52).

Moderate reader-response theorists, according to Parry (2005a:659), include Paul Ricoeur, Wolfgang Iser and the ‘reception theory’ of Hans Robert Jauss. By ‘moderate’ Parry means theories which ‘desire to mediate between the claim that a text means only one thing and the claim that a text can mean anything’ (Parry 2005a:659). He quotes Ricoeur: ‘It is true that there is always more than one way of construing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal’ because ‘the text is a limited field of possible constructions’, but Ricoeur maintains that texts have ‘a surplus of meaning’ that reaches beyond the author’s intention. But the text does place limits on legitimate interpretations (Ricoeur, in Parry 2005a:659).

Ricoeur himself stated that there was more to written communication than the intention of the author. Of written discourse, he stated that ‘the author’s intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide’. In addition, ‘the text’s career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text means now matters more than *what the author meant when he wrote it*’ (Ricoeur 1976:29, 30; emphasis added).[219]

For an explanation of semiotics and its difference with semantics, see §4.3.2.1 above for some semiotic emphases.

However, Ricoeur maintained that the intended content of a written document was only part of the whole and there also needs to be a focus on ‘polysemy’, which asks about the fabric of a language and is ‘readily defined as the property of words in natural language of having more than one meaning’, or having ‘one name with several senses’ (Reagan & Stewart 1978:124-125).

Ricoeur extends the meaning of polysemy by a redefined procedure of metaphor. He notes that the traditional use of a figure of speech, the metaphor, is a substitution or restitution, but it ‘teaches nothing’, thus having ‘no informative value’. He proposed a ‘metaphorical twist’ to break the ‘previous categorization’ so that in metaphor ‘several layers of meaning are noticed in the thickness of the text’. However, Ricoeur gives the proviso, ‘If this analysis is sound’ (Reagan & Stewart 1978:130-132).

Brian Ingraffia admitted indebtedness to Ricoeur in his project of ‘recovering the biblical *kerygma* which has been “forgotten” in ontotheology’ (Ingraffia 1995:238). He particularly appreciated Ricoeur’s ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ when Ricoeur stated that ‘only one path has been decisively closed off, that of an ontotheology’ and that there was a positive good to be obtained in the critique of ethics and religion by the school of suspicion. Ingraffia found Ricoeur’s emphasis to be helpful with the need to formulate ‘a hermeneutics of recovery’ by passing through the school of suspicion to ‘recover biblical proclamation’ (Ricoeur in Ingraffia 1995:238).

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[219] A significant assessment of Ricoeur’s work is in Vanhoozer (1990).

Iser, whom Parry designated as a moderate reader-response theorist, proposed that potential meanings reside in texts and that readers actualise them or make them concrete, but the actual meanings are not in the text or the reader, as many readers actualise different meanings but ‘such meanings are guided by the structures of the text’. Iser’s view is that there are ‘gaps’ in texts in which readers need to fill in the gaps to ‘complete’ the text. However, different readers will have divergent actualised meanings (Parry 2005a:659).

Parry described Jauss’ ‘reception theory’ as a moderate reader-response view in which Jauss adds a historical dimension to the text-reader mix. He is in opposition to timeless reader-response theories that do not consider the role of traditions in interpretations. As an example, contemporary Christians cannot interpret Romans without the effects of past interpretations on them. These historical interpretations set boundaries on hermeneutics of the text and these are used as ‘fertile ground for innovative interpretations’ (Parry 2005a:659). There are ‘two horizons’ in hermeneutics – those of the text and the reader/interpreter (Parry 2005a:659; Thiselton 1980).

Gadamer could fit into Parry’s definition of a moderate reader-response theorist as Gadamer maintained that there could be no understanding or interpretation of a text unless the totality of the existential structure functions, even if ‘the intention of the knower is simply to read “what is there” and to discover from his sources “how it really was”’. In Christian theology and historical sciences, both of which are ‘subject to content-specific (existential) presuppositions’, was Gadamer’s perspective (Gadamer 2004:252-253). For him, ‘the horizon of the present’ is continually being formed, but it cannot be achieved ‘without the past’ and there is a constant ‘tension between the text and the present’, thus making ‘a historical horizon that is different from the horizon of the present’ (Gadamer 2004:305). Gadamer admitted that whether it was the law or Gospel in hermeneutics, to be understood properly in concrete situations, it required new and different ways of understanding, where ‘understanding is always application’ (Gadamer 2004:307-308).

In contrast to this postmodern reconstruction model, N T Wright provides the example in regards to the ‘*sufficient*’ and ‘*necessary*’ conditions to demonstrate that Jesus’ resurrection needed to include the empty tomb and the post-resurrection meetings of people with Jesus. These were the conditions ‘for the rise of early Christian belief’ and historians have not been able to come up with anything else which ‘has the power to explain the phenomena before us’. He stresses that early Christians did not invent the empty tomb and the meetings of people with Jesus after the resurrection to explain a faith they already had. He contends that early Christians developed a faith ‘built on the occurrence, and convergence, of these two phenomena’ and there was no conversion experience that ‘generated such ideas’. Therefore, he concluded that the proof that historians ‘normally accept’ is the case he has presented in which ‘the tomb-plus-appearances combination is what generated early Christian belief’ and this ‘is as watertight as one is likely to find’ (Wright 2003:706-707; emphasis in original).

Wright puts Crossan (1998a) in the category of scholars who ‘have been driven to the desperate expedient of denying everything about Joseph, discounting almost everything about Paul, and offering us instead a narrative of their own, without primary evidence’ (Wright 2003:708, n. 66).

Augustine (1888a),[220] in his homilies (tractates) on the Gospel of John, wrote of those who provided the sacred writings as people who related 'the divine history'. Vanhoozer (2002:259) argues that the literary form of I-witness testimony is 'least welcoming to deconstruction and radical reader-response criticism' because for the reader to impose indeterminate multiple meanings on the text denies the nature of testimony, subjecting 'testimony to interpretive violence' and thus castrating the text of its true voice, causing the text to 'speak falsetto'. Therefore, Vanhoozer argues to receive the voice of the author in John's Gospel means to 'receive testimony' and not to pursue the radical reader-response view of reducing 'the voice of the other to our own'.

Elsewhere, Vanhoozer (1998:16, 30, 73, 119, 168, 435) exposed some of the crises in postmodern reader-response theories and their impacts on written discourses. These involve 'incredulity toward meaning', 'refusal to assign a fixed meaning either to the world or to texts', crises in authorship, denial of literal meaning, denial of a universal viewpoint in favour of diverse particular perspectives, and suspicion of hermeneutics. Instead, Vanhoozer defends the belief that '*we can know something other than ourselves when we peer into the mirror of the text*' (Vanhoozer 1998:31; emphasis in the original).

For reader-response theorists where the text has been castrated of the author's voice, Vanhoozer asked: 'Must not the text necessarily speak falsetto?' This was in the context of stating that 'the Author is the origin of meaning, the place where words and world come together, the guarantee that talk corresponds to reality' (Vanhoozer 2002:259).

4.3.4.3.1 Reconstruction and linguistic meaning

As indicated above, Derrida coined the term 'différance' to refer to difference and the act of deferring. This was to distinguish how linguistic meaning is created rather than based on the stable meaning of a term. This 'affirms that all meaning is limited by language. However, this very statement – that all meaning is limited by language – places itself outside the limits of language' (Geisler 2002:167). The deconstructionist engages in circular reasoning by stating that meaning, which may be deferred endlessly, is based on language. However, there is meaning outside of language and to say that 'all meaning is limited by language' is self-defeating because that is not the case – there is much meaning that does not require the limits placed on it by language.

An example would be the meaning of love. The pastor of the church where this researcher attends preached from Colossians 3:18-21 recently, with a particular focus on 'Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them'. This listener has been thinking on what this means for his own long-term marriage and how he can love his wife 'as Christ loved the church' (Eph 5:25). The pastor used I Corinthians 13:4-7 as a practical example of how this can be applied to husbands loving their wives. This parishioner has been mulling over verses 4-7 and contemplating: How can he implement this in his marriage and where has he been failing? He has not put it into language to himself until now as he writes. How can he apply these actions to his marriage? 'Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things' (1 Cor 13:4-7)

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[220] Augustine (1888a) stated in *Tractate* 61 (Jn 13:21-26): 'For it was a custom with those who have supplied us with the sacred writings, that when any of them was relating the *divine history*, and came to something affecting himself, he spoke as if it were about another; and gave himself a place in the line of his narrative becoming one who was the recorder of public events, and not as one who made himself the subject of his preaching' (emphasis added). Compare this also with John 20:2.

So the sermon had meaning to this researcher outside of linguistics, thus demonstrating Geisler's evaluation of deconstructionism.

However, Crossan's reconstruction promotes the linguistical view that 'reality is neither *in here* in the mind nor *out there* in the world: it is the interplay of both mind and world in language. Reality is relational and relationship. Even more simply, reality is language. What is there before us and is without language is as unknowable as the answer to the question of how we would feel had we never been born' (Crossan 1988b:22; emphasis in original). The serious negative implications of this emphasis must be seen as one of the critical critiques of Crossan's acceptance of reconstructive linguisticalism with his emphasis on what is '*without language is … unknowable*' (emphasis added). The sound of an ambulance siren is not linguistic communication; neither is the sound of a crocodile chomping on a man and swallowing him in Australia's Northern Territory as here reported:

15ft crocodile ate man in Kakadu National Park, Australian police fear. Australian police have found human remains inside a large crocodile that is believed to have snatched a man from a boat in a national park. Police found the remains inside a 15ft 5ins saltwater crocodile that park rangers shot while searching for a 62-year-old man who was attacked in Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory Police Sergeant Andrew Hocking said. The crocodile was one of two that were shot about a mile from the spot where the man was attacked.

(Western Daily Press 2014)

To insist that 'reality is language' and that which is without language is 'unknowable', does not match reality. Try telling the 'reality is language' message to those who are grieving the loss of a man eaten by a crocodile.

Linguistic meaning could be pursued with some of the content raised by physicists, Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont's publication, *Fashionable nonsense* (Sokal & Bricmont 1998),[221] but that is beyond the scope of this project. That publication does raise some confrontational issues that could be investigated for the impact on the linguistics of New Testament studies. They claim that 'we dissect a number of confusions that are rather frequent in postmodernist and cultural-studies circles: for example, misappropriating ideas from the philosophy of science, such as the underdetermination of theory by evidence or the theory-ladenness of observation, in order to support radical relativism' (Sokal & Bricmont 1998:x).

In Frederick Newmeyer's informal online interaction with other linguists, he pursued the impact of postmodernism on linguistic understanding. These linguists raised issues of

- 'the celebrated impenetrability of Derrida's own writings' (Newmeyer 2000), which also has been the experience of this researcher.

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[221] The British edition is titled, *Intellectual impostures*. See the review by Richard Dawkins (1998).

- Derrida's argument that the Western intellectual tradition from Socrates to the present (including linguistic tradition) privileges speech over writing. Thus, until Derrida came along, he claimed that speech was given prominence and this includes that from his opponent, Saussure. Therefore, Derrida objected and pursued his purpose of placing speech and writing on equal terms. Newmeyer notes Derrida's emphasis of asserting that writing and speech are so dissimilar that writing cannot derive from speech (Newmeyer 2000). There are many practical examples to refute this where verbal presentations have been the basis of written documents (see Zacharias 1998).

Derrida wrote in his seminal publication, *Of grammatology*, of 'modern linguistics' opposition between meaning and word. The opposition between writing and speech takes its place within this pattern' (Derrida 1997:lxix).

These are but a few examples of reconstruction's distortion of linguistic meaning.

4.3.4.3.2 Challenges to questionable meanings

This project challenges questionable meanings that Crossan has placed on:

- Entire New Testament Gospels being interpreted as mega-parables;
- The burial of Jesus in a shallow grave to be eaten by scavenging dogs;
- Joseph of Arimathea was a person created by Mark for his Gospel;
- The resurrection appearances of Jesus were apparitions;
- The events on the Road to Emmaus did not happen as historical events. The story is a parable created by Crossan's postmodern, reconstructive interactivism (Crossan 2012:4)

4.3.4.3.3 Further evidence to test *a priori* premises against unchanging meaning

Crossan (1980) demonstrated the implications when he abandoned fixed meaning in a text. He wrote that when there is no 'fixed, literal, univocal, or univalent language' – which is his perspective – it leads to 'the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself'. This absence of unchanging meaning, which is 'the foundation and horizon of all language and of all thought', (following Derrida and his challenge) leads to a metaphoric symbol not having a 'surplus of meaning', but being 'void of meaning' at its core (Crossan 1980:9-10).

Thirty-two years after writing that emphasis, he again demonstrated what happens when his presuppositions repudiate fixed meanings for texts. The sub-title of the publication explained 'how fiction *by* Jesus became fiction *about* Jesus' and it would make no difference if Jesus were not an historical person. 'What – if anything – would have been lost to Christianity? Nothing more or less than *an actual life* of nonviolent distributive justice as the revelation of the character of God. But could you not get that just as well from a nonhistorical figure in a magnificent parable? Not really. But why? What is at stake?' (Crossan 2012:251; emphasis in original).

So the theme, 'how fiction *by* Jesus became fiction *about* Jesus', is a demonstration of Crossan's postmodern reconstructive interactivism: It is seen how parabolic fiction *by* Jesus became parabolic, creative interactive inventions *by* Crossan with such imaginative, creative fictions as ''Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens'. He is audacious in his creative imagination that Emmaus is 'an introductory definition of a parable: a story that never happened but always does – or at least should' (Crossan 2012:5). For the Emmaus incident to be regarded by Crossan as obvious ‘symbolism ‘as a ‘metaphoric condensation of the first years of Christian thought and practice into one parabolic afternoon’ (Crossan 1991:xiii), is a demonstration of Crossan’s *a priori* commitment to reconstruction overtaking historical-contextual biblical interpretation. There is nothing in the biblical text to provide such an interpretation. It is unique to Crossan and his creativity.

This is but another example of how *a priori* presuppositions determine reconstructive meaning over unchanging meaning for Crossan. Of course Crossan would want to redefine what happened at Emmaus according to Luke 24:13-35 because it is involved with supernatural events which he opposes (see §3.2 on Crossan’s anti-supernaturalism).

There is a strange paradox in Crossan’s statements. He concludes that ‘Jesus was an actual, factual, historical figure and not a metaphorical, symbolic or parabolic invention by his first-century Jewish contemporaries’. However, Jesus ‘comes to us trailing clouds of fiction, parables *by* him and *about* him, particular incidents as miniparables and whole gospels as megaparables’ (Crossan 2012:251). The paradox is embedded in Crossan’s inconsistent presuppositions of not allowing the New Testament texts to speak for themselves with plain meaning. It is Crossan who made the accusation, ‘Read the text’ (Crossan 2007:138). See §4.2.1.2 for an exposé of Crossan’s inconsistencies, including the impact of the philosophical crusher.

When Crossan’s *a priori* understanding is that there is no fixed, literal, univocal, or univalent meaning in language, it inevitably leads to language incorporating universality of metaphor that is void of meaning. Denton’s assessment, as indicated in §4.3.4.1.1 above, was that when fixed, literal meaning is abandoned, moving to metaphorical structure is inevitable, where there will be polyvalent meanings (Denton 2004:37).

4.3.4.3.4 Further evidence to challenge *a priori* premises of linguistics

Derrida’s view that speech should not be privileged over writing does not harmonise with the reality of Bible linguists who are involved in translating languages and putting them into writing and then print. SIL International reported in June 2014 that ‘mother-tongue speakers from a language community in Nepal have produced a working draft of a writing system for their language’. This happened in a workshop where ‘participants needed to establish a standard for how to represent the sounds of Madhya-Purbiya Tharu with Devanagari letters. Establishing a standard way to write the language paves the way for publications by local authors, as well as for the use of the language in local schools, a future goal for the community’ (SIL International 2014). Thus, contrary to Derrida, there is a direct link between saying the language and writing the language, with speech being prior to development of the printed version.

This is allied to Crossan’s linguistic conversion of historical Gospel records to mega-parables (see §4.2.1.2.4 above).

4.3.4.4 The damage of linguistic reconstruction

In Vern Poythress’s (1993) review of Thiselton’s (1992) advanced and comprehensive text on hermeneutics, he exposed some of the damage of linguistic reconstruction in noting how Thiselton ‘has put his finger on a truly crucial issue, namely the issue of transcendent standards for hermeneutics. All theories must in one way or another commit themselves. If there are no transcendent standards, stable meaning disintegrates. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes’. Thiselton went further in noting ‘that this result in the long run will prove deeply unsatisfying to nearly everyone, but especially to the liberationists who have espoused it' (Poythress 1993). This is because 'pragmatic hermeneutics is diametrically opposed in practice to the deepest theoretical concerns which lie behind liberation hermeneutics: those whose readings of texts win the day can only be the power groups: the most militant, the most aggressive, the most manipulative' (Thiselton in Poythress 1993).

Poythress's assessment was that Thiselton recognised 'the danger of idolatry. "Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics transposes the meaning of texts into projections which are *potentially idolatrous* as instruments of self-affirmation". That is, this hermeneutics makes the reader or the reader's values or the reading community's values into an idol to which all texts are forced to bow down' (Thiselton in Poythress 1993; emphasis in original).

Appealing to the insights of Cornelius van Til, Poythress made a plea to become aware 'of the ethical antithesis between belief and unbelief. That antithesis can be seen in Thiselton's closing appeal to "the unrevisable divine evaluation" at the last judgment' which spells out the 'effects this antithesis has on the evaluation of hermeneutical theories. In addition to the present wide-spread emphasis on openness and learning from others, we need to be bold enough to bring forward offensive biblical teachings about the Lordship of Christ over scholarship, and about God's wrath, sin, hell, heresy, and excommunication'. Poythress was perceptive and penetrating in his assessment that 'some hermeneutical theories and some biblical interpretations are in rebellion against God. We need to say so and demonstrate in action that our belief is serious'. His evaluation was that 'inclusivist tradition may be commendable in some ways, but surely not when it gives legitimacy to attacks on the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3)' (Thiselton in Poythress 1993). Could Crossan's postmodern reconstructive interactivism be in rebellion against God and his revelation in Scripture?

In summary, Poythress has raised these issues of the damage caused by literary reconstruction:

- The debunking of transcendent standards in biblical hermeneutics;
- Stable meaning disintegrates;
- The hermeneutics that wins the day comes primarily from power groups – the most militant, the most aggressive, and the most manipulative;
- It promotes the idolatry of the reader's values as the determinant of the text's meaning;
- Elimination of the ethical antithesis between belief and unbelief;
- It attempts to close down the need for boldness in exposing scholarship to the Lordship of Christ and God's wrath, sin, hell, heresy, and excommunication.

Millard Erickson raised these fundamental questions about the nature of reconstruction (deconstruction was Erickson's language) that, when applied to Crossan, damage his approach to linguistic reconstruction. Here, Erickson's issues are applied by this researcher to Crossan's version of reconstruction (the following three emphases are from Erickson 1998:55-56).

(1) Crossan's version of historical reconstruction for a postmodern world is expounded and exposed in §3.3.5 and summarised in presupposition 23 in §3.3.5.1. This means for him that Christianity has to be redone through reinterpretation for different needs in every generation. Based on the influence of Derrida, Erickson's question was that if the previous prevailing logic were invalid, what is the nature of

the logic that is pursued by Derrida (and, by application to Gadamer and Crossan)? To use Wittgenstein's statement, 'What language game is used to discuss various language games?' Further, Erickson accurately assessed that

(2) If reconstruction is followed as a method, it can be presumed that reconstruction itself must be reconstructed. The logical consequence is that reconstruction 'is no more commendable or desirable than any other competitive theory' (Erickson 1998:55). Or, to adapt Crossan's own words, reconstruction of the methodology of reconstruction is something that must be done repeatedly by different New Testament scholars, pastors and other interpreters. The best hope for honest assessment and abandonment of a search for truth is constantly to reconstruct even reconstruction's methods.

However Crossan's language sounds like dogmatic proclamation of his version of unchanging truth. He states that '*reconstruction* … **must be done** over and over'; 'historical reconstruction **is always** interactive of present and past'; 'I **insist** that Jesus-reconstruction, like **all** such reconstruction, **is always** a creative interaction of past and present, and '**method, method, and, once again, method**. It will **not guarantee us the truth** because **nothing** can do that' (based on Crossan 1999:5; italicised emphasis in original, bold emphasis added).

But Crossan continues to use the language of truth in his writings: '*Parables* ***can be true*** *–* ***truthful and truth-filled*** *– independently of their factuality…. The* ***truth of a parable*** *– of a parabolic narrative – is not dependent on its factuality…. We are convinced that* ***the truth claims of these stories matter most***' (Borg & Crossan 2006:193; italicised emphasis in original, bold emphases added).

(3) In discussions on the value or otherwise of reconstruction, the term, 'logocentrism' is often used to define aspects of reality. Vanhoozer's brief definition was that '*logocentrism* stands for the fundamental presupposition that it is possible to speak truly: that our talk will be about reality, and not merely talk about talk' (Vanhoozer 1998:53; emphasis in original).[222] Crossan's language is, 'I speak of *reconstruction*, and that is something that must be done over and over again' and 'is always interactive of present and past' (1999:5; emphasis in original). This is his way of deconstructing any fixed content in a text, or attempting to assert the flaws in logocentrism, by his claim that 'if you cannot believe in something produced by reconstruction, you may have nothing left to believe in' (Crossan 1991:426).

Erickson's assessment was that there was not much of a positive argument for deconstruction as only two options are given (as Crossan would say). If logocentrism were not accepted, deconstruction was the only other option. Crossan's view is that there is nothing other than reconstruction in which to believe. As Erickson has indicated, there are other critics who have shown 'that deconstruction is not the only view that has been critical of logocentrism', so why should deconstruction be accepted instead of the other views? De Saussure[223] promoted the view that meaning of words is relative to a particular language, but that does not mean that they have no objective meaning (Erickson 1998:56).

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[222] Vanhoozer's longer definition was that 'logocentrism is the belief that there is some stable point *outside* language – reason, revelation, Platonic ideas – from which one can ensure that one's words, as well as the whole system of distinctions that order our experience, correspond to the world. It is the desire for a center, for a point of reference, for an ultimate origin – anything on which we can non-arbitrarily hang our beliefs and values' (Vanhoozer1998:53; emphasis in original). Erickson provided Derrida's understanding of the contrast between speaking and writing: 'Speaking has been concerned with "logocentrism," the attempt to discover and identify what is ultimately real or rational' and writing 'does not attempt to mirror some external reality. It deals with signs, which in turn refer to other signs' (Derrida in Erickson 1998:166).

(4) Erickson's judgement coincides with the conclusion being reached in testing this reconstructive hypothesis of Crossan: 'Deconstructionists have great difficulty living with their own theory. They want to insist that deconstruction is not simply a play on words, but is the way it is, and that the meaning of their words is objectively what they intend by them'. He used the example of Derrida who insisted that John Searle misunderstood what Derrida was saying.[224] How can it be true that Derrida disagrees with Searle if 'the meaning is not something objectively expressed by the source of the words? It may, of course, be objected that this insistence on logical consistency is only a value on traditional grounds, but if this is so, then why is Derrida so upset with Searle? Are they not both right as to the meaning of Derrida's words?' (Erickson 1998:56).

An example is demonstrated in Crossan's disagreements with Bill Craig in their debate (Copan 1998). As confirmed in §3.3.1, Crossan promoted his view of favouring his reasoning over revelation in reaching a decision on the nature of Jesus' resurrection. His words were, 'Although in theory revelation is superior to reason, in practice reason is usually the final judge' (Crossan 1995:214). In short, his idiosyncratic interpretation of Jesus' resurrection data is: 'I formulate it here as I see it' (Crossan 1998a:xxx). So who could challenge Crossan's resurrection conclusions with any impact if his formulation is based on how he sees it? In Crossan's reflections on his debate with Craig, he corrected information by respondents Craig Blomberg and Ben Witherington, before Crossan gave his interpretation of the Emmaus narrative in Luke 24. He affirmed his interpretation that 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens' and it was 'not a historical story about a one-time event on Easter Sunday afternoon, but a symbolical story about all-time Christian faith, that is, about experiencing the risen Lord partially in biblical exegesis, and fully in Eucharistic meal' (in Copan 1998:153).

How is it objectively possible for Crossan's words to have meaning when he made that kind of statement about Emmaus? His reconstruction was a play on words and the objective meaning of Crossan's words is lost to this reader. When 'never happened' seems to be synonymous with 'always happens' for the Emmaus event, objective meaning in words is abandoned. However, is that how Crossan wants the reader to interpret Crossan's own words and sentences about what he stated about the Emmaus event?

This provides further evidence to doubt the verification of the hypothesis being tested, that the Christian hermeneutic of Scripture for a postmodern world is redone in every era and that there is no constant meaning.

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[223] However, Swiss linguist Saussure claimed that meaning was a function of the difference between signs and that 'a linguistic mark "is not a link between a thing and a name but between a concept [signified] and a sound pattern [signifier]." A sign gains its sense not by referring to a thing but by differing from other signs (e.g. the word "hot" is not "cold," "warm," etc., nor is it "not," "lot," "dot," etc.). What gives a sign a specific meaning is not its place in a system of signs from which it differs. Meaning for Saussure, as well as for Derrida, is always differential, never referential' (Vanhoozer 1998:61).

[224] Erickson referred to a 1977 edition of Derrida (1988). Some examples of the conflict that Derrida had with Searle's views are in Derrida (1988:30-31, 67, 113-142).

In summary, Erickson's points about the damage of linguistic reconstruction, as applied to Crossan's works, devastate the verification of Hypothesis 9:

- To adapt Wittgenstein's statement: Which language game can be used to describe Crossan's 'game' of reconstruction?
- If Christianity has to be redone / reconstructed, according to Crossan, then so does Crossan's reconstruction need to be redone.
- Reconstruction is no better than any competing theory.
- Crossan's words present dogmatic reconstructions; he uses language of 'truth' while regularly denying there is fixed truth in texts.
- Deconstruction is not the only view to be critical of logocentrism, so why choose deconstruction over other alternatives?
- Deconstructionists have great difficulty in living with their own theory when they want to insist that words mean objectively what they want them to mean.

4.3.4.4.1 Further evidence to oppose *a priori* linguistic reconstruction

As demonstrated in the philosophical crusher in §4.2.1.2, Crossan cannot consistently apply his own postmodern definition of history to his own writings.

Erickson has isolated one of the central problems for literary deconstruction, especially Rorty's anti-realism (which has parallels with Crossan's interpretation of the Emmaus story above). The core problem is the difficulty with maintaining consistency. Feminists use this method to deconstruct paternalistic texts and Marxists have deconstructed texts of oppression. Erickson favourably cites James Sire who stated that the deconstruction of Derrida and DeMan 'is in the last analysis universal. Depending on how it is interpreted, nihilism is either the legitimate father or legitimate child of "deconstruction"…. If no text is privileged, no story more "true" than any other, then every ideology fails to be grounded' (Erickson 1998:170).

Erickson's own assessment was that 'what this means is that if deconstruction is correct, then it must also be deconstructed. If meaning is not resident within the text but created by the interpreter, if history is created by the historian, if truth is what proves good for one's community, then this must be applied to deconstruction, neo-pragmatism, and the new historicism as well'. Therefore, it is very difficult to publicly advocate deconstructionism because

> as soon as one attempts to communicate deconstruction to others and argue that they ought to accept it as true, one has denied in practice what one is professing in theory. This is because that act seems to assume that the meaning of what one is saying is the meaning the speaker or writer intends, and that there is some common point of reference to which another person can also give attention…. If, however, the position of deconstruction is that the author's intention does not control the meaning of his or her text, then this would seem to be an inconsistent position.
>
> (Erickson 1998:170-171)

Thus, deconstructionists fall on their own swords by requiring an intentional understanding of their own texts when they are advocating a position that devastates intentional reading. Erickson noted this in his assessment that deconstructionists could object to the notion of intentional meaning by claiming that intention 'assumes a logic that deconstructionism does not adopt'. His question is, 'What kind of logic is employed when we discuss kinds of logic? In other words, does the very response assume a kind of logic that it seems to reject? It would appear that for the response to make any sort of sense, or to have the right to be taken seriously, requires the assumption of some sort of logic at least resembling in some way the logic here assumed, that is, that *a* cannot both mean *x* and not-*x* at the same time and in the same respect' (Erickson 1998:171; emphasis in original).

Thus, systematic consistency becomes impossible for deconstructionists to maintain in hermeneutics. We see this in Crossan's reconstruction of the Emmaus event (see above) that requires an intentional understanding of what he meant by Emmaus, never happened = always happened, and 'the Emmaus narrative in Luke 24 is not a historical story about a one time event on Easter Sunday afternoon, but a symbolical story about all-time Christian faith, about experiencing the risen Lord' (in Copan 1998:153). Without Crossan's intentional meaning of the content of his writing, based on the words, sentences, semantics, and context used, meaning is lost or distorted. Marcus Borg's reconstructed understanding of the Emmaus event, as articulated in his response to the Crossan-Craig debate, was that 'the story is not to be understood as a historically factual account of what happened on the first Easter Sunday. Thus "Emmaus never happened." Rather, the story tells us about something that happens again and again and again – namely, the risen Christ comes to us and journeys with us, whether we know it or not. Thus "Emmaus always happens"' (Borg in Copan 1998:121). This deconstructionist view harmonises with Crossan's reconstructive hermeneutics, but it requires an intentional understanding of Borg's statements regarding Emmaus for meaning to be transmitted. This in itself devastates Borg's reconstructionist ideology that he promoted in his response to the debate.

4.3.4.5 Summary of the reconstruction evidence for linguistics: Part 2

This summary of evidence is from §4.3.4 that deals with Crossan's reconstructive views of linguistics.

This examination of reconstruction/deconstruction in linguistics has revealed several postmodern theorists who have influenced Crossan in his reconstructive expressions. These have included Derrida (influenced by Heidegger) and Gadamer who have provided some principles and content to bolster these emphases:

- There are no facts, only interpretation.
- There is a break out from onto-theology (belief in the Highest Being).
- There is an open-ended indefiniteness of textuality.
- Deconstruction is inventive or it is nothing at all (Derrida).
- Deconstruction refers to a radical destabilising of the meaning of language, subverting the intention of texts, and exposing them as metaphysical.
- 'I am trying, precisely, to put myself at a point so that I do not know any longer where I am going' (Derrida, and so Crossan).
- For Crossan and Derrida, words are multivalent in meaning.
- Derrida's and Gadamer's seminal influences on Crossan's view of literature and history, overtly or covertly, are seen in Crossan's definition that 'history is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse'.
- In the reader-response, deconstructive hermeneutic, the text is at the mercy of the reader or communities of readers. Readers move away from understanding authorial intention to actualising textual meaning themselves.
- There is a gradation from radical to moderate reader-response theorists. However, the theorists and practitioners pursue the view that actual meanings are neither in the text nor in the reader but are realised in the act of reading.

- If emphasis is placed on the role of the reading-community in constructing meaning, the two horizons (Thiselton's language) of text and reader are collapsed into one horizon.
- Thus, Borg and Crossan promote the parabolic meaning of biblical stories, including the Easter stories, as the most important issue of hermeneutics. They conclude that fixating on what actually happened 'almost always leads one astray'. This is a typical reconstructive approach to the biblical text to cause it to mean what one desires.
- Reconstruction leads to relativism in the meaning of texts, the death of the author, and the death of God.
- Crossan shows a similar disregard for the fixed meaning of words in context, exalts the death of the author through his redefinition of terms and meaning, and celebrates the arbitrariness of meaning and truth by dancing on the tombs of Scripture. The historical, fixed meaning of a text is assailed.
- In Crossan's creative reconstructive understanding of the passion-resurrection, the burial by Joseph of Arimathea was unhistorical; Mark created it. The resurrection was not resuscitation and the resurrection appearances were apparitions. The resurrection of Jesus means human empowerment. In addition, creativity leads to the interpretation of the Easter story not as the events of a single day but as the struggle of Jesus' followers over months and years in their continuing empowerment by Jesus – to make sense of his death and resurrection.
- The words and deeds of Jesus in the 20s were updated (reconstructed) to speak to new situations at the time the Gospels were written in the 70s, 80s and 90s. The Gospels are inspired by God and can also be inspired propaganda.
- Reconstruction means something must be done over and over, again and again, by many communities and in many times and places. This leads to a plurality of meanings and a remodelling of the texts.
- There is no way to affirm that Crossan's model is any better than any other creative alternative.
- The philosophical crusher caught Crossan in his regarding the resurrection as (1) not visions but literary fiction, (2) as trance, apparition, and altered state of consciousness, and (3) vision and apparition are used interchangeably. There is contradiction with these differentiations. This is expected when postmodern, reconstructive interactivism requires no insistence on fixed or stable meaning in linguistics.
- Crossan claims that human beings live from out of the depth of myth and metaphor. Examples were provided by this researcher to refute this claim with application to historical situations and the contemporary world.
- Postmodern reconstruction is self-refuting when applied to the writings of the promoter of reconstruction because of the rejection of fixed meaning of sentences and constructs.
- Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics transpose the meaning of texts into projections that have the potential to develop idols of self-affirmation. A theology of grace and revelation becomes a phenomenology of religious self-discovery (Thiselton).
- The impact of postmodern reconstruction on the resurrection is that the biblical texts are not received as historical documents. The author is dead and

the reader is responsible for creative invention of content; multiple meanings are promoted.

- Gadamer’s influence on Crossan is seen in the latter’s application to a particular text of Gadamer’s fusion of horizons (text and reader) with the meaning of a text not determined by the author and original audience, but co-determined by the historical situation of the interpreter.
- The meaning of a text goes beyond the text and includes a productive, creative activity by the reader (Gadamer). For Crossan, he stated that this means that in his publications, there is not any assumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something that a person gets once and for all forever.
- For Crossan, the biblical text cannot have factual content, which is parallel to Bultmann’s view that there cannot be a definitive understanding of a text; it remains open. Wright placed Crossan (1998a) in the category of scholars who offer a narrative of their own, without primary evidence from Scripture for the birth of Christianity.
- Contrary to Crossan, Wright’s assessment of the resurrection, the tomb-plus-appearances combination in what generated early Christian belief, is as watertight as one is likely to find.
- This project challenges Crossan’s questionable meanings regarding the passion-resurrection such as: Entire Gospels are mega-parables; Jesus’ burial was in a shallow grave with the body to be eaten by scavenging dogs; the person of Joseph of Arimathea was created by Mark; resurrection appearances were apparitions, and the events on the Emmaus road did not happen but were a postmodern parable.
- Fiction *by* Jesus (parable) became fiction *about* Jesus is an example of Crossan’s postmodern, reconstructive interactivism.
- The self-defeating nature of postmodern linguistics was exposed. Deconstruction deconstructs deconstruction. Textual meaning is perverted.
- Evidence was pursued that pointed to the damage executed by postmodern linguistics.
- The dogmatism of Crossan’s postmodern, reconstructive, unchanging truth claims was revealed.
- The presupposition of logocentrism means that it is possible to speak truly – that our talk will be about reality and not merely talk about talk (Vanhoozer).
- A core problem with linguistic reconstruction is the inability to maintain consistency. When one communicates reconstruction to others and argues for its truthfulness, this denies in practice what the theory advocates. This is because the author’s intention does not control the meaning of the text, which thus indicates an inconsistent position (Erickson). Systematic consistency thus becomes impossible to maintain in reconstruction.
- The claim of the resurrection as myth or miracle was examined and the conclusion was reached that the resurrection account was of a historical, miraculous event.
- Crossan regarded the Easter story as fictional mythology, including *Gospel of Peter*’s Cross Gospel.
- For Crossan, the last chapters of the Gospels and the first chapters of the book of Acts, if interpreted literally, factually, and historically trivialise Christianity and brutalise Judaism.

- One of the core elements of reconstruction for Crossan is the redoing of previous material for any new generation or era. This presupposition allows for the insertion of new material such as that in *Gospel of Peter*.

From this linguistic analysis, this project moves to a limited analysis of reconstructive history.

4.3.5 Reconstructive history

How does Crossan's reconstructive methodology impact on his understanding of history? Here there is an overlap of the dynamics involved in postmodern linguistics and history. Some of this already has been pursued in the examination of reconstructive linguistics.

In §4.2.1.2.5 (a), Crossan's support for a postmodern interpretation was affirmed with the object and subject challenging and changing the other. His statement was that 'postmodernism's correct assertion' is that the object known is being changed by the subject knowing it (Crossan 1998a:211). This is his *a priori* assumption but he committed a philosophical crusher when he attempted to comprehensively adopt his postmodern meaning of history in his own publications (see §4.2.1.2.3 (a), (b), (c) above). His writings contain an admixture of traditional and postmodern hermeneutics of history.

His postmodern working definition of history, exposed in §4.2.1.2.5 (b), is that 'h*istory is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public* discourse' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). He reached some rather outrageous conclusions because any writing, including that of history, has polyvalent meanings. One example was Jesus' burial by his friends was 'fictional and unhistorical.' He was buried, if buried at all, by his enemies, and the necessarily shallow grave would have been easy prey for scavenging animals' (Crossan 1994a:160). It was shown in §4.2 and the testing of the resurrection narratives of the New Testament that Crossan used a question begging logical fallacy to conclude that the resurrection narratives of the New Testament were unhistorical. He presumed a postmodern definition of history and concluded with many postmodern examples of history, but did not apply them consistently.

Another impact of reconstructive history is that the biblical text cannot have factual content, according to Crossan (see §4.3.4.3.2).

Crossan has violated one of the fundamentals for his own writing on history, the necessity of consistency, which is needed for the methodology of historical investigation. This has been exposed in the abduction in §4.2.1.2.

There are further issues that apply to both reconstructive linguistics and history. These include,

4.3.5.1 Reconstruction remodels the text

Crossan listed four corollaries that were based on his definition that history 'is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse' (Crossan 1999:3). The first corollary for Crossan is that it does not apply only to historical Jesus' reconstruction but to 'all historical reconstruction' from Caesar Augustus, a contemporary Roman emperor' to Jesus, as well as to Ronald Mellor[225] and his book on Roman historian, Tacitus. Thus, by Crossan's own corollary, his historical definition is applied to all other contemporary writings, including his own, which are now part of history and historical reconstruction.

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[225] This refers to Mellor (1993) in Crossan (1999:3-4, 4 n. 2).

However, what is reconstruction according to Crossan's definition? 'It must be done over and over again in different times, places, groups, communities, 'and by every generation again and again and again'. In addition, it 'is always a creative interaction of past and present' (Crossan 1999:5).

Vanhoozer's assessment was that 'deconstruction lifts up every voice so that no one voice – not the narrator's, or the author's, or the reader's – dominates'. This desire to elevate every voice 'explains why the Undoers [of the text – SDG] pay special attention to what seems out of place or ancillary in a given text'. This leads to the loss of the author. He cited Croatto who stated that 'authors … "die" in the very act of coding their message'. Therefore, Vanhoozer's assessment is that 'if there is no Author, *then every interpretation is permitted*. Hermeneutic non-realism leads inexorably to hermeneutic relativism (or, less polemically, hermeneutic indeterminacy)'. 'Indeterminate' meaning, in Vanhoozer's understanding, is that which 'is not fixed, but "loose" – indefinite, vague, open' (Vanhoozer 1998:88-89, 98; emphasis added). If all historical interpretation is the result of creative, repetitive reconstruction in various generations (Crossan 1999:5), then, according to Vanhoozer, 'it becomes difficult to believe in any one conceptual framework or interpretive scheme. Once one accepts the lack of a ground for determinate meaning, *it is impossible to believe in definitions or in final interpretations*. How then can we distinguish a scholarly commentary from uninformed opinion?' (Vanhoozer 1998:98; emphasis added)

The application to Crossan's paradigm is self-evident. There is no way to affirm that his model is any better than any other creative alternative. The reconstructive paradigm undermines its own efficacy. Thus, there can be no determinate meaning in Crossan's own definition of history: '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public* discourse' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). It is open to any interpreter to creatively reconstruct that definition to lead to the undoing of Crossan, the author, and his definition. As will be seen in the testing of this hypothesis, creative reconstructive methodology destroys itself by its unravelling the text to lead to meaninglessness in everyday communication, as well as in the reading of history – whether ancient or modern – and Scripture.

Crossan stated another (he numbered it as a third) corollary of his definition of history: The terms '*search* for the historical Jesus' or 'the *quest* for Christian origins' are not used because they convey 'a positivistic process' of attaining 'an answer once and for all forever'. His language is that 'that is not how I now **imagine** the process', which is, his repeated emphasis – as it is for this researcher in testing this hypothesis – that of 'reconstruction, and that is something that must be done over and over again in different times and different places, by different groups and different communities, and by every generation again and again and again'. Note his language of 'imagine' the process! He did not state that this was where the evidence pointed (Crossan 1999:5; 1998a:45; emphasis in original; **bold** emphasis added). It was his imagination in action.

Why does he use this approach? It 'is that historical reconstruction is always interactive of present and past. Even our *best* theories and methods are still *our* best ones' (Crossan 1999:5; emphasis in original). His presupposition is emphatic: 'Historical reconstruction *is always* interactive' (emphasis added). Who said this was so? It is Crossan and his dogmatic commitment to reconstructive epistemology that causes this insistence. This is the subject that is being tested in this hypothesis 9 of §4.3. Does the evidence support Crossan's anti-historical, reconstructive epistemology or not? Is this a begging the question fallacy or does the evidence lead to Crossan's conclusion? Are other issues supporting or challenging this reconstruction methodology?

4.3.5.1.1 Examples from Crossan

Since the resurrection miracle cannot happen as an historical event, based on Crossan's anti-supernatural assumptions, what are his conclusions about the first Easter event? It will be observed in what follows that remodelling of the text takes place.

This is an example of where his postmodernism enters by way of explanation. Since Jesus' burial and resurrection were unhistorical (Crossan & Watts 1996:152-153), the conclusions concerning the 'Easter story' were that this 'is not about the events of a single day, but reflects the struggle of Jesus' followers over a period of months and years to make sense of both his death and their continuing experience of empowerment by him'. But what of the stories of Jesus' appearing to various people after the resurrection? They 'are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction promoted by struggles over leadership in the early Church…. Resurrection is one – and only one – of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).

The philosophical crusher catches him out again. It was he who stated in 1994, 1998 and 1999 publications that Jesus' resurrection appearances were those of apparitions:

- 'Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women [after the resurrection – SDG] to change Matthew's negative ending into a more positive one' (Crossan 1998:552).
- A way to consider Jesus' resurrection is to regard it as an 'apparition – which involves trance, that altered state of consciousness' (Crossan 1994a:160-161).

Then he stated: 'I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' in works such as those by Felicitas Goodman or Raymond Prince (Crossan 1999:6; emphasis in original). Does he want to promote all three views?

- Jesus' post-resurrection appearances are not about visions but are literary fiction.
- Jesus' resurrection can be regarded as apparition, trance and an altered state of consciousness.
- Vision and apparition are used interchangeably.

The philosophical crusher exposes the contradictions among these statements. This should be expected when one's epistemology is based on postmodern, reconstructive interactivism where there is no insistence on fixed or stable meanings and there is an emphasis on creativity. Also, evidence is pointing again towards his use of question begging logical fallacies (see an explanation in §4.2.1.2.8 above) in relation to the resurrection appearances as apparition.

Crossan stated that his use of 'vision and apparition interchangeably', is to be understood 'within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' in works such as those of Ioan Lewis, Erika Bourguignon, Felicitas Goodman, or Raymond Price' (Crossan 1999:6; emphasis in original).

What is the nature of these visions/apparitions in the works of these four authors who influence Crossan's understanding of Jesus' resurrection appearances as apparitions? This will be pursued in testing Hypothesis 12, §4.4, that deals with the meaning of the resurrection for Crossan. In passing, it is noted that (a) Ioan Lewis (2003)[226] was a researcher of shamanism and spirit possession, particularly with a focus on the Zar-bori cult of Sudan and Ethiopia; (b) Bourguignon was a leading anthropological scholar on spirit possession. In one of her publications, she records the results after conducting a world-wide cross-cultural survey of 488 societies to investigate possession trance, possession and altered states of consciousness (Bourguignon 1968); (c) Goodman, born in Hungary, became an American linguist and anthropologist who presented a synchronic representation of world religions where one religion is not presented as 'great' and the others 'primitive'. Her cross-disciplinary framework included an examination of religious trance (Goodman 1988); and (d) Prince, a Canadian professor of psychiatry, who pursued the intersection of psychiatry and religion, included a comparison of the differences between drug 'trips' and mystical experiences (Prince 1968).

When examining the Gospel texts on the resurrection and the literal, historical content of the texts is denied, Crossan seeks a postmodern explanation and this polyvalent understanding means he creates his own meanings that do not relate to the content of the Gospels in describing the post-resurrection appearances. This uses a question begging fallacy.

Here are some further examples of Crossan's pluralistic reconstructions. His view is that 'for me', the Gospels are 'even more normative as process than as product'. This means that the Christian faith cannot tell people what they need to know about the historical Jesus. What do they need? 'Christian faith tells us how the historical Jesus (fact) is the manifestation of God for us here and now (interpretation). You cannot believe in fact, only in an interpretation. And no amount of faith can turn an interpretation into a fact'. His language was that 'a lethal deceit' occurs 'that too often renders savage the heart of Christianity. We argue that we have facts not interpretations, that we have history not myth, that *we* have truth and *you* have lies. That will not work any longer', he maintains (Crossan 1995:217-218; emphasis in original).

Why will it not work? It is because 'we need to compare one another's myths and metaphors to see how fully human is the life they engender…. Christians, like all other human beings, live from out of the depth of myth and metaphor. But there still remains, now especially, the urgent challenge to accept our own foundational myth without shame or denial and that of others without hate or discouragement' (Crossan 1995:218).

Crossan's creative reconstructions continued with his explanation that 'Mark created the empty tomb story, just as he created the sleeping disciples' as Crossan claims of Mark that 'his empty tomb story is so peculiarly his own. I know of no evidence of that story outside Markan dependence, not in Matthew, Luke, John, or the canonical stratum in Peter, so I conclude it is a Markan creation'. Instead of accepting the account in the Gospel of Mark, the *Gospel of Peter*'s version is preferred: 'My working hypothesis is that the *original stratum* or Cross Gospel in Peter had only the guards at the tomb and nothing whatsoever about the women at the tomb. It was Mark himself who created the empty tomb story and its failed anointing as a fitting climax to the literary and theological motifs of his gospel'

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[226] The Ioan Lewis publication to which Crossan referred was the first edition in 1971, published by Penguin (Crossan 1999:6, n. 5).

(Crossan 1995:184-185; emphasis in original). The Cross Gospel is a presupposition of Crossan, as an independent, consecutive source in *Gospel of Peter* that is an 'extracanonical or enemies-version' of the passion-resurrection story that is 'an earlier source and not equivalent to the fuller and later' *Gospel of Peter* itself (Crossan 1998a:115, 120, 486, 503).

The *Gospel of Peter* was found in a fragment of a Gospel text containing brief content on Jesus' passion, empty tomb, a brief excursus on the resurrection, and the epiphany. This extant Greek fragment was found at Akhmim, Upper Egypt, published in 1892, is a manuscript from AD eighth or ninth century, and is located today in the Cairo Museum. Unfortunately, the manuscript ends abruptly in the middle of a passion narrative and mid-sentence of what appears to be one of Jesus' resurrection appearances (Cameron 1982:76).

Crossan's colleagues in the Jesus Seminar, by an overwhelming majority (74 per cent), rejected his view that 'the earliest written version of the passion story is found in the Gospel of Peter' (Jesus Seminar 1998:227). Koester rejected Crossan's hypothesis regarding the Cross Gospel because of: (1) The questionable reliability of a single, late extant manuscript; (2) 'Crossan's ingenious hypothesis' of 'confidence in major literary compositions of a very early date as the well spring for, and almost exclusive source of, all later gospel literature' that needs to be balanced with the observations of continuing oral tradition and 'earliest written materials were relatively small compositions of special materials which paralleled the oral use'; (3) This relates to Crossan's hypothesis of Jesus' trial, suffering, death, burial, and resurrection where the resurrection appearances (except for the discovery of the empty tomb) 'cannot derive from one single source' but each author of the extant Gospels 'drew these epiphany stories from their own particular tradition, not from a common source' (Koester 199 0:219-220). Could Koester be too adamant about this last point? See §4.3.5.3.1 below for an assessment of *Gospel of Peter*.

It is misleading for Crossan to claim that Mark created the empty tomb story and the sleeping disciples and that these do not appear 'outside Markan dependence' (Crossan 1995:185). Why should this be? There is a strong association with an empty tomb with the information in John 20:1-10 where Mary Magdalene went to the tomb in the morning darkness and found that the stone had been removed. In gathering Simon Peter and another disciple, she told them that 'they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him' (Jn 20:2). Stooping to look into the tomb they saw linen clothes and a face cloth lying in the tomb (Jn 20:5-7). This caused a disciple to believe and understand the Scripture that Jesus would rise from the dead (Jn 20:8). It is difficult to deny the empty tomb as recorded in John's Gospel with this kind of evidence. Even though the exact words from Mark are not in John, 'He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him' (Mk 16:6), the evidence from John harmonises with Mark's data to support Jesus' empty tomb: 'Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him"' (Jn 20:1-2).

The evidence from Matthew is parallel with Mark 16:6: ''But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead"' (Mt 28:5-7a). Parallel information is in Luke, 'And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus' (Lk 24:2-3).

This explains but one example from the Gospel resurrection accounts that demonstrates Crossan's remodelling of Mark by labelling it as the empty tomb story and the disciples sleeping as Markan creations. There is resurrection information in Matthew, Luke and John that is not in Mark. So, the creative imagination of Crossan's reconstruction continues.

4.3.5.2 How reconstruction unravels text and history

According to Crossan, Christians and all other human beings 'live from out of the depth of myth and metaphor' (Crossan 1995:218). As this researcher was writing this assessment, the Australian mass media, especially where he lives in South-East Queensland, reported the conviction of the murderer of a 13-year-old, Daniel Morcombe, who was abducted at Woombye, Qld. (an hour north of where this researcher lives) and murdered in 2003 by a previously convicted paedophile. After a lengthy police search and investigation for approximately ten years, Brett Peter Cowan, a 44-year-old, was convicted and then sentenced 'to life in prison, with a minimum non-parole period of 20 years' for murder, indecently dealing with a child, and improperly interfering with a corpse (Brisbane Times 2014; Silva 2014; 60 Minutes 2014).

It would be a travesty of justice to regard this very recent historical information involving police investigators, judge, jury, witnesses, Bruce and Denise Morcombe (parents) as human beings who are living, as Crossan would say, that they 'live from out of the depth of myth and metaphor'. This is another example of where Crossan's postmodern reconstructive interactivism model of hermeneutics fails. Historical information, whether recent or ancient, requires content with a stable meaning on which to base interpretation. It is true that interpretation and application can be involved, based on these data, but Crossan's view does not conform with the evidence when he stated, 'You cannot believe in fact, only in an interpretation' (Crossan 1995:217). Try telling that to the parents, Bruce and Denise Morcombe.

Was Daniel Morcombe's murder by Brett Cowan a fact or only an interpretation? Was it myth or metaphor? There are facts to be interpreted in the Daniel Morcombe case, and understanding historical facts extends to those surrounding the existence of Plato and Julius Caesar; the birth, life, death and resurrection appearances of Jesus; the actions of Roman Emperor Nero; the birth, teachings and death of Mohammed; Luther's theses nailed to the church door at Wittenberg, the hostilities in World War I and II, Hitler's genocide, Idi Amin's military dictatorship and its atrocities in Uganda, and the Australian defeat of the Proteas in cricket in 2014. To identify these as deep myth and metaphor and one cannot believe them as facts – in a reconstructive worldview – assails the content of a significant part of history. This is one of the fundamental failures of postmodern reconstructive hermeneutics and Crossan's reconstructive, interactive postmodernism. It aborts historical realism.

If Crossan's appeal to his own reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection is taken seriously, more evidence mounts to challenge the assumptions underlying his epistemology.

4.3.5.3 Further evidence to challenge *a priori* premises of hermeneutics

Thiselton demonstrated that socio-pragmatic models could not be used as major, comprehensive theories of hermeneutics because, in Fish's and Rorty's versions, they exhibit 'inadequacy as a philosophy of language'. Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics is contextually relativistic and deals with 'the effect of the text on me and my community' which, according to Thiselton, 'runs through pietism, radical reader-response theory, pragmatic forms of narrative theology, and post-modern elements of literary theory' (Thiselton 1992:6, 12). When applied to biblical texts and Christian theology, Thiselton identified the following 'disastrous entailments' (Thiselton 1992:549; emphasis in original):

(1) Since Fish concedes that textual meaning 'is the *product* of a community of readers', then texts cannot reform readers 'from outside'. This means that the Reformation 'becomes a dispute over alternative community life-styles. It *has nothing to do with retrieving authentic meanings of biblical texts, let alone texts which address communities "from beyond"*'.
(2) 'Prophetic address', which comes 'from beyond' and is against human will, 'is either illusory or to be explained in terms of pre-conscious inner conflict…. *It is not, in the end*, an address: the community itself has created the word'.
(3) 'Such notions as *grace* or *revelation must* (by pragmatic doctrine) be illusory, because Rorty tells us that there are no "givens"'.
(4) 'The *message of the cross* remains a *linguistic construct* of a tradition', which was that which Gnostics pursued in the second-third centuries.
(5) 'It would be impossible to determine what would *count as a systematic mistake in the development of doctrine*'.

Thiselton's application was to Christian theology but it is as pertinent to New Testament disciplines. If biblical texts do not transform readers 'from beyond' or only induce 'constructions' from the 'undiscovered inner resources of the reading community', then they do not cohere for Christian theology (Thiselton 1992:550).

The implications of Crossan's postmodern reconstructive hermeneutics on the meaning of the biblical text for Jesus' resurrection is pursued in the testing of Hypothesis 12 in §4.4 below.

4.3.5.3.1 Clearing more historical impediments to enable constructive assessments of reconstruction for Jesus' resurrection

From the summary data in §4.2.1.1.1(q), it was discovered that historians are primarily in accord that there are two primary elements in affirming the historicity of a document. These are the recoverable historical facts based on historical knowledge of the data and the historians' interpretations or evaluations of these extant facts.

Ancient historian, Paul Barnett, in examining the logic regarding Jesus and history, indicated there were at least two senses in which Christianity is a historical religion. These include, (1) 'that it has been continuously part of world history for a long time', and (2) because 'Jesus was a real man who was born, lived and died at a particular time and place' and this can be demonstrated by the same methodology used to investigate other significant persons from history (Barnett 1997:11).

One of the impediments to a constructive examination of the resurrection is the claim that it involved myth and not miracle.

(a) Resurrection myth or miracle?

The Macquarie Dictionary (1997. S v myth) defined myth as 'a traditional story, usually concerning some superhuman being or some alleged person or event, and which attempts to explain natural phenomena; especially a traditional story about deities or demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants'. Burton Mack stated that 'the narrative gospels can no longer be viewed as the trustworthy accounts of unique and stupendous historical events at the foundation of the Christian faith', but they 'must now be seen as the result of early Christian mythmaking' (Mack 1993:10). Mack's proposal regarding the New Testament

Gospels was that they were myths formed in Syria and Asia Minor where Jesus' death 'was first interpreted as martyrdom and then embellished as a miraculous event of crucifixion and resurrection. This myth drew on Hellenistic mythologies that told about the destiny of a divine being (or son of God)'. The congregations became 'a cult of the resurrected or transformed Jesus', documented especially in the Pauline epistles from the 50s and that there was movement away from the teachings of Jesus to the spirit of the Christ who died and was raised. 'It was this myth that eventually made the narrative gospels possible' (Mack 1993:2). These contain Mack's presuppositions that need to be tested for verification or falsification, which is not the focus of this project.

Crossan's version concerning the passion-resurrection as told in the last chapters of the four New Testament Gospels is that Friday to Sunday of Easter are encapsulated in these questions: 'Is this fact or fiction, history or mythology? Do fiction and mythology crowd closely around the end of the story just as they did around its beginning? And if there is fiction or mythology, on what is it based?' He reiterated his argument 'that Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical. He was buried, if buried at all, by his enemies, and the necessarily shallow grave would have been easy prey for scavenging animals'. So what are his conclusions? 'We can still glimpse what happened before, behind, and despite those fictional overlays precisely by imagining what they were created to hide. What happened on Easter Sunday? Is that the story of one day? Or of several years? Is that the story of all Christians gathered together as a single group in Jerusalem? Or is that the story of but one group among several, maybe of one group who claimed to be the whole?' His summation is that 'the Easter story at the end is, like the Nativity story at the beginning, so engraved on our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994:160-161). His view is that 'fictional mythology' is preferred to 'factual history' by way of explanation. It is not surprising that Crossan rejects factual history with Jesus' resurrection because of his presupposition that 'miracles are not changes in the physical world so much as changes in the social world' (Crossan 1994a:82).

Crossan promoted a second corollary from his definition of history that related to what he described as a difference between history and story. Both contemporary culture and scholarship in North America, 'often speak too easily about story without distinguishing between historical narrative and fictional narrative'. He cited an example from David Schacter of recovery therapy in which a woman experienced 'memories of satanic ritual abuse' and the woman's therapist asserted, 'I don't care if it's true…. What's important to me is that I hear the child's truth, the patient's truth. That's what's important. What actually happened is irrelevant to me'. Crossan's assessment was that 'history matters. And history is possible because its absence is intolerable', but 'history is not the same as story. *Even if all history is story, not all story is history*' (Crossan 1999:4-5; emphasis in original). How does this apply to Jesus' resurrection? Is it myth (fiction) or miracle?

Should the apparent miraculous events surrounding Jesus' life and death, including his resurrection (as recorded in the New Testament), be regarded as historical, mythological, or of some other genre that could allow for and include a hermeneutic of postmodern reconstruction? It is posited in this research that the resurrection of Jesus needs to be investigated as a historical event in accordance with Wolfhart Pannenberg's assessment that 'whether or not Jesus was raised from the dead is a historical question insofar as it is an inquiry into what did or did not happen at a certain time' (Pannenberg 1967:128). N T Wright in his seminal exposition of the resurrection raised the issue of Crossan's (1991) publication where

Crossan pointed to some scholars who claimed the resurrection as history could not or should not be investigated. Wright's assessment was that Crossan (see Crossan 1991:396-416; 1998:550-573) explained away the resurrection evidence by applying 'to the texts a ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion' (Wright 2003:19). This has a parallel in Crossan's understanding of 'the story of Lazarus as process incarnated in event and not the reverse. I do not think that any one, anywhere, at any time brings dead people back to life. But when I read John 11:21-27 I can see very clearly what the process was for that writer' (Crossan 1994a:95). So Crossan's *a priori* presupposition is that the supernatural cannot happen with resurrection and this means that he cannot read the accounts of Jesus' or Lazarus' resurrection as providing historical details (including the supernatural) of what actually happened.

By contrast, Wright endorsed the perspective that 'we can and must discuss the resurrection as a historical problem' and that there is no reason in principle why what happened at Easter 'cannot be raised by any historian of any persuasion'. Even if one adopted a fully Christian epistemology, 'it does not mean that there is no access to Jesus and his death and resurrection in the public world. Peter did not need to appeal to Christian writings when reminding the crowd of what they already knew about Jesus' (see Ac 2:22) and Wright suggested that 'historical knowledge about the resurrection', without presupposing the Christian faith, 'cannot be ruled out a priori' (Wright 2003:14, 21-22).[227]

There have been other leading biblical scholars who have denied the historical nature of Jesus' resurrection, a noteworthy one being Rudolph Bultmann, whose view was that

> if the event of Easter Day is in any sense an historical event additional to the event of the cross, it is nothing else than the risen [sic – SDG] of faith in the risen Lord, since it was this faith which led to the apostolic preaching. The resurrection itself is not an event of past history. All that historical criticism can establish is the fact that the first disciples came to believe in the resurrection. The historian can perhaps to some extent account for that faith from the personal intimacy which the disciples had enjoyed with Jesus during his earthly life, and so reduce the resurrection appearances to a series of subjective visions. But the historical problem is not of interest to Christian belief in the resurrection. For the historical event of the rise of the Easter faith means for us what it meant for the first disciples – namely, the self-attestation of the risen Lord, the act of God in which the redemptive event of the cross is completed.
>
> (Bultmann 1953b)

For Bultmann, Jesus' 'death and resurrection were not isolated facts which concerned him alone, but a cosmic event in which we are all involved (Rom. 5: 12ff.; 1 Cor. 15: 21ff., 44b)' (Bultmann 1953a). He wrote of 'the definitely non-historical event of the resurrection' and 'on the one hand we have the resurrection as the exaltation of Jesus from the cross or grave' and 'the legends of the empty tomb and the ascension' (Bultmann 1953b). Thus, the historical, bodily resurrection of Jesus was rejected by Bultmann and the New Testament pictures of heaven and the resurrection were 'just as mythological in principle as the corresponding pictures in Jewish literature or in the Gospel of Peter' (Bultmann 1953c).

By contrast, Richard Niebuhr affirmed that 'in facing the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are confronted with an anomaly. The resurrection of Jesus is unique, having no parallel. It is the resurrection that is the point of departure for the interpretation of all the rest of the history of the Christian community'. However, he also added that there were aspects of the historical resurrection in which 'historical reason' had problems: 'As an event in history providing the key to historical thought about Christ and the church, it [Jesus' resurrection – SDG] must contain elements that historical reason can recognize. The New Testament narratives imply that in the encounter of the disciples and missionary preachers with the risen Lord, they came face to face with the familiar and with the totally unfamiliar'. However, through their faith, these disciples 'were able to assimilate the startling synthesis of the known and the strange presented to them in the risen Christ and to see more deeply into the reality of God's providence' (Niebuhr 1957:162).

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[227] Wright also compared the Acts 2:22 statement with the evidence in Luke 24:18-20 and Acts 10:36-39 (Wright 2003:22, n. 46).

It is important to discern whether the miraculous events of the New Testament, including the resurrection, were history or myth (fable). Here myth is used in the sense of mythology – 'cleverly devised myths' as indicated by historian Paul Barnett's quoting from 2 Peter 1:16 (Barnett 1999:23). In the context of 2 Peter 1:16, μύθος referred to a fable (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:530).

(i) Why history and not myth?

Barnett's assessment was that this inquiry depended on four factors: (1) Consideration is given to the number, quality and corrupted nature of the historical sources handed down through the years. (2) Were these sources 'intentionally written as history or, to be preferred, is their information incidental and gratuitous to other authorial intent?' (3) How extensive is the information about the person, time and place? And (4) 'Can the source's reliability be crosschecked at other points?' Barnett's perspective as an ancient historian was that with New Testament events, 'the same investigative methodology ought to be applied to Jesus and the rise of early Christianity as to Alexander the Great and the eastward spread of Hellenism' (Barnett 1999:22).

His consideration was that miraculous events should be evaluated on whether they were stereotypical or had dimensions of originality. If the descriptions were parallel with contemporary mythological genres of that culture, then 'serious questions will arise'. However, if explanations 'are atypical, the possibility of historicity is enhanced'. This is in accordance with the historical criterion of dissimilarity. Barnett concluded that Jesus' miracles, including the resurrection, were not 'described in the same terms as the miracles of Jewish "holy men" like Hanina ben Dosa and Honi "the circle-drawer"'. The evidence pointed to the Jewish Hasids, Hanina and Honi, as being 'merely devout individuals within the Judaism of their respective times'. However, there is a contrast with Jesus who 'is presented as the intensely intentional fulfiller of the end-time purposes of God' in his performing miraculous events. It is Barnett's view that it is 'only when the question of historical probability is determined does it become a philosophical issue' and whether one affirms or denies miracles in the New Testament as historical or mythological is based on one's beliefs or worldview. Barnett's evaluation was 'that the miraculous events in the New Testament are factual. The Gospels and Acts make little sense historically if the miraculous is removed. Those authors were convinced of the truth of the miracles and wrote their accounts out of that conviction'. In addition, when those accounts are 'subjected to the tests of rigorous historical inquiry', they 'stubbornly resist our efforts to discredit them' (Barnett 1999:22-23). This view is harmonious with the biblical account that states, 'For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty' (2 Pt 1:16).

While admitting that there were some 'serious difficulties in harmonizing' the Gospel accounts of Jesus resurrection, eminent church historian, Philip Schaff, concluded that there were none 'so great as those which are created by a denial of the fact itself'. His understanding was that difficulties 'can be measurably solved'. His appraisal was that the Gospels and the Christian church 'of every denomination and sect' have accepted the historical view that Jesus' resurrection 'was an actual though miraculous event, in harmony with His previous history and character, and in fulfilment of His own prediction. It was a re-animation of the dead body of Jesus by a return of his soul from the spirit-world, and a rising of body and soul from the grave to a new life, which after repeated manifestations to believers during a short period of forty days entered into glory by ascension to heaven'. Why were there such manifestations after the resurrection? Schaff stated that their object was not only 'to convince the apostles personally of the resurrection', but also 'to make them witnesses of the resurrection and heralds of salvation to all the world' (Schaff 1882:151). Schaff, as a church historian, was convinced that the evidence demonstrated a re-animated, resuscitated body of Jesus after the resurrection.

Was Jesus' body resuscitated, the resurrection as a mythological statement (Bultmann) or resurrection is to be interpreted as an apparition (Crossan)? Crossan asked the question regarding Jesus death, burial, Easter Sunday morning and the empty tomb: 'Is this fact or fiction, history or mythology?' His conclusion was that Jesus' burial 'by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical' and the resurrection appearances were those of an apparition (Crossan 1994a:160-161). Another Crossan interpretation is that in resurrection 'Christian faith experiences the *continuation* of divine empowerment through Jesus'. However this means that the Easter story is not regarded as 'factual history' but instead it is 'fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994a:160-161; emphasis in original).

(ii) Further evidence to challenge *a priori* presuppositions of myth

What evidence can be gathered to support or challenge Crossan's *a priori* presupposition of the Easter story containing myth as fiction? Since Crossan regards the Cross Gospel of the *Gospel of Peter* as of paramount importance in determining the death and resurrection sequence in the intra-canonical Gospels, how does he view the *Gospel of Peter* as a reliable source of foundational material for the Gospel accounts of the New Testament?

• Fictional mythology in the *Gospel of Peter*

Since Crossan regards the Easter story not as 'factual history' but as 'fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994a:161), what does he conclude concerning the *Gospel of Peter*? This extra-canonical Gospel has some added material that is not contained in and conflicts with the intra-canonical resurrection details. One aspect of this was addressed in the title of an earlier Crossan publication, *The cross that spoke* (1988a). His view is that the Cross Gospel's passion prophecy is to be taken as communal profession that leads to communal resurrection. He explained: 'Jesus did not die alone and neither did he rise alone. The holy and righteous ones of Israel were always present in that process. He died in their passion, they rose in his Resurrection. And that, of course, is the heart of the *Cross Gospel's* theology'. However this 'vision' is 'profoundly mythological' (Crossan 1988a:388). So the extra-canonical *Gospel of Peter*, for Crossan, is as mythological as the intra-canonical Gospels.

Therefore, in analysing Gospel myth, for Crossan this involves an examination of the *Gospel of Peter* Which he placed in the first stratum, dated AD 30-60 (Crossan

1991:427-450), and is ‘a single stream of tradition for the passion-resurrection traditions from the Cross Gospel in Mark, from both of them into both Matthew and Luke, and from all of them into John’. Martin Hengel’s response to this dating was: ‘For the wrong historical dating see the fantastic claims by J. D. Crossan’ (Hengel 2000:219, n. 50). Crossan’s ‘first major proposition’ was ‘that the original *Cross Gospel* is the one passion and resurrection narrative from which all four of the intracanonical versions derive’. He regarded this as ‘the most economical way of explaining the data’ (Crossan 1988a:17).

He admitted that although ‘all later versions accepted the *Cross Gospel*’s passion sequence, none of them was willing to accept its resurrection account’ (Crossan 1991:395-396). Why did the intra-canonical Gospels reject the Cross Gospel’s resurrection content?

Wright regards *Gospel of Peter* as ‘clearly much later’ (Wright 1996:49) than Crossan’s (1991:429) placing it in the first stratum. Wright considers the suggested date of composition of *Gospel of Peter* in the AD 50s to be ‘purely imaginary’ (Wright 1996:49). Quarles (2006:112) provides evidence to support the position that this Gospel is ‘a second-century work and dependent on the canonical gospels’. Hengel regards it as one of the ‘apocryphal’ Gospels ‘which knows and presupposes all four Gospels’ and is from the second century (Hengel 2000:13, 59). Funk’s assessment was that ‘the only depiction of the resurrection itself is found in the fragmentary and highly mythical Gospel of Peter’ (Funk 1996:263). Peter Head considers that ‘the cumulative evidence for a second century date [for *Gospel of Peter* –SDG] is strong and adds to the impression that the *Gospel of Peter* is a redaction of the canonical material (perhaps also influenced by oral tradition)’ (Head 1992:218).[228] Barnett dated *Gospel of Peter* as a narrative second-century work that chiefly related to Jesus’ passion and resurrection and although scholars such as Mirecki, Crossan and Koester have argued that an earlier version ‘was a source of the synoptic gospels, the reverse is more likely’ (Barnett 2009:40).

What evidence is there to raise suspicions of *Gospel of Peter*’s resurrection content that could cause it to be rejected by the canonical Gospel writers (if it is presumed that *Gospel of Peter* predates the New Testament Gospels)? This project does not examine detailed content of *Gospel of Peter*, which is regarded by some scholars as using ‘imagination in creative historiography’ (Quarles 2006:116) and the document’s failing ‘to carry conviction, on any theory of Christian origins’ and it ‘remains an enigma’ (Wright 2003:595-596).

Irenaeus in the late second century defended the four New Testament Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and only four Gospels (Irenaeus 1885:3.11.8). The need for such a defence was evident from the controversy involving one of Irenaeus’s contemporaries, Bishop Serapion of Antioch, Syria.

There is evidence of a challenge from *Gospel of Peter* to the intra-canonical Gospels. Eusebius regarded *Gospel of Peter* as not ‘universally accepted’ as ‘no ecclesiastical writer, ancient or modern, has made use of testimonies drawn’ from it (Eusebius 1890a:3.3.2). However, Eusebius provided further glimpses into the nature of *Gospel of Peter* from the extant works of Bishop Serapion of Antioch, Syria and one of Serapion’s letters regarding the ‘so-called Gospel of Peter’ in which he refuted the ‘falsehoods which that Gospel contained’, as he was responding to ‘some in the parish of Rhossus who had been led astray by it into heterodox notions’. Serapion acknowledged receiving both Peter and other apostles of Christ, but he placed *Gospel of Peter* in those 'writings falsely ascribed to' the apostles. These latter writings 'were not handed down to us' (Eusebius 1890a:6.12.1-3).

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[228] Barnett (2009:40) alerted this researcher to this information.

Serapion acknowledged that when he visited Rhossus, also in ancient Syria, he supposed that all in that region held to the true faith but he had not read *Gospel of Peter* and 'let it be read' in that Christian community. However, after he had read it, he understood that those promoting it had been 'involved in some heresy'. So he proposed to visit that region soon after he made that assessment. He understood the nature of the heresy was that promoted by Marcianus who 'contradicted himself'. Could Marcianus have been a leader of this group? Here Serapion wrote of 'the nature of the heresy of Marcianus' and did not address Marcianus, but spoke in the third person about him. Serapion's view was that the heresy was mostly from the school of the 'Docetae' – Gnostic Docetism. In *Gospel of Peter*, Serapion claimed there were 'many things in accordance with the true doctrine of the Saviour, but some things added to that doctrine' which were pointed out to those in Rhossus (Eusebius 1890a:6.12.4-6). Unfortunately, Serapion's extant works do not quote the passages that were 'added' to sound doctrine that were found in *Gospel of Peter* Bart Ehrman's comment was that 'this is unfortunate, since now it is impossible to know for certain whether the Gospel of Peter discovered in the nineteenth century is the book condemned by Serapion and known to Eusebius. Most scholars, however, assume that it is' (Ehrman 2003a:16).

Eusebius, in citing Serapion, regarded *Gospel of Peter* as promoted by the followers of Marcianus, to include people with minds 'involved in some heresy' and he wrote of 'the nature of the heresy of Marcianus'. Thus, Eusebius was associating *Gospel of Peter* with a heresy in the late second century church at Rhossus (Eusebius 1890a:4-5).

Eusebius stated Serapion's letter that was available to him was 'addressed to a certain Domninus, who, in the time of persecution, fell away from faith in Christ to the Jewish will-worship', contained information about Pontius and Caricus who were ecclesiastical men, letters to different men, and there was a 'so-called Gospel of Peter' (Eusebius 1890a:6.12.1). Serapion continued regarding *Gospel of Peter*:

> we, brethren, receive both Peter and the other apostles as Christ; but we reject intelligently the writings falsely ascribed to them, knowing that such were not handed down to us. When I visited you I supposed that all of you held the true faith, and as I had not read the Gospel which they put forward under the name of Peter, I said, If this is the only thing which occasions dispute among you, let it be read. But now having learned, from what has been told me, that their mind was involved in some heresy, I will hasten to come to you again. Therefore, brethren, expect me shortly.
>
> (Eusebius 1890a:6.12.3-4)

Crossan is aware of this material about Serapion, Rhossus, those who 'turned aside into heterodox teachings', and the heresy to which Marcianus belonged where he contradicted himself. Crossan also was attentive to those who belong to teaching ideas of the Docetae, and that this for 'the most part indeed was in accordance with the true teaching of the Saviour, but that some things were added' (Crossan 1988a:10-11). He disparaged Serapion for having 'to use the Docetic readings in order to see the heresy in the text' – that is, denying the humanity of Jesus – instead of Serapion seeing it himself. He added that in *Gospel of Peter* the problem 'was not orthodoxy of content' but probably was no more than 'authenticity of authorship'. It is significant that Crossan used the language of 'the heresy in the text' to refer to

Docetic readings by Serapion. Crossan observed that for *Gospel of Peter*, Serapion 'concludes that "the most part" is quite orthodox and only "some things" are heterodox', but he does not regard *Gospel of Peter* 'to be docetic' and 'docetism is sometimes in the eye of the beholder' (Crossan 1988a:12).

Therefore, Serapion, who lived around the time of one suggested date for the writing of *Gospel of Peter* (late second century), considered *Gospel of Peter* to contain falsehoods, heterodox notions, heresy, and the teaching of Gnostic Doceticism. Eusebius concluded that *Gospel of Peter* contained many things in accordance with true doctrine of Jesus, but there were some additions.

What is noted in the context of this discussion is that Crossan did not pursue what had been called heresy by Serapion in *Gospel of Peter* Eusebius's recording of the Serapion material (see above) indicated that Serapion described *Gospel of Peter* as containing 'falsehoods' that had 'heterodox notions'.

There are free plays with textuality in Crossan's postmodern hermeneutics. These will be examined in §4.4 and testing Hypothesis 12.

4.3.6 An appraisal of postmodern reconstruction

In contrast to modernism's exaltation of reason, Os Guinness's (1995:106) assessment was that just as modernism's self-confidence departed from earlier tradition, so postmodern philosophy departs from modernism to modesty, or even despair. In postmodernism, there is not truth but truths, not principles but preferences. There are no elevated civilisations, cultured beliefs or norms; there is only a multiplicity of such entities. Thus, universal justice is replaced by the competition of interest groups. 'There is no grand narrative of human progress' here, but numerous stories of people in the now. There can be no universal knowledge, but there is an endless representation of everything in terms of everything else.

This summary appraisal of the evidence is not convivial to reconstructive methodology as expounded in §4.2. These are its primary handicaps as found by this researcher in examining Crossan's data.

4.3.6.1 The subject-object distinction

It does not provide a subject-object distinction. When speakers and their sentences disappear in the narcissistic, reader- or community- response oblivion, meaning vanishes. Vanhoozer's language was that many common sense concepts such as the relationship between speakers and their speech 'perish into this vainglorious attempt' with poststructuralism. 'The author and the sentence are basic particulars. Without these fundamental concepts we will simply be unable to talk about certain other things, such as speech acts and meaning' (Vanhoozer 1998:213). Reconstruction confuses the knower and the known. This leads to the stark reality that

4.3.6.2 'Deconstruction castrates the text'

One of the major problems with Crossan's and other postmodern reconstructions was stated starkly in Vanhoozer's assessment: 'Deconstruction castrates the text; bereft of its voice, must not the text necessarily speak falsetto' (Vanhoozer 2002:259)? For radical reader-response criticism, testimony is particularly affected, as was shown in Crossan's autobiographical publication (Crossan 2006) in which he could not maintain consistent interpretive reconstruction in the story of his own life. The voice of the author means that the author's voice needs to be heard clearly and there is no imposition by the listener, reader or community (Vanhoozer 2002:259). Reconstruction slaughters the author and his or her intended meaning, whether it be in linguistics or history (themes of this chapter). However, there is still opportunity for application of any text, but the application is based on the content of the text, whether written or verbal.

4.3.6.3 It mutilates the voice of the author

The voice of the author is snuffed out. God's voice, in and through Scripture, is consigned to the authorities of individuals or interpretive communities in true postmodern style. William Abraham has pointed to the implications of such a view: 'We should take the traditional emphasis on divine speaking with the utmost seriousness'. It is only because God has spoken His word that there can be assurance of 'what He has done in creation and history and about his intentions and purposes in acting in creation and history'. What are the consequences if there is no word from God? 'Without His word, the alternative is not just a tentative, carefully qualified guessing at what God is doing, but a radical agnosticism' (Abraham 1982:21). This researcher's application of Abraham's emphasis to Crossan's reconstructive model is that Crossan is engaged in agnosticism about what God stated in Scripture. The replacements are creative impositions of the meaning by Crossan and/or his community of postmodern peers, those who represent his 'intellectual debt' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). Crossan's preference is for a vision of salvific comedy that causes him (and us) to stand on the brink of nonsense and absurdity (Crossan 1976:33).

4.3.6.4 Crossan and metaphorical hermeneutics

Crossan has a penchant for metaphorical hermeneutics. This was examined in §4.2.1.2.5 (j) where he associated Jesus' apparitional resurrection with a metaphor of authority. It was not a bodily resurrection or resuscitation but it was a story created by Mark. The nature of apparition was gained from outside of Scripture: 'I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably, and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' (Crossan 1999:6; emphasis in original). Jesus' resurrection was the manifestation of a metaphor (see the evidence in §3.3.2.3 and hypothesis 7 in §4.1.1.7). This hypothesis is not tested in this research.

There is nothing stated in a plain, inductive reading of the latter chapters of the New Testament Gospels to indicate that Jesus' resurrection or post-resurrection appearances were to be interpreted metaphorically. This is an *a priori* presuppositional imposition on the biblical text by Crossan.

As explained in §4.3.4.1.1 above, both Stewart (2008) and Denton (2004) saw the inevitability in Crossan's requiring the hermeneutics of resurrection to be metaphorical because Crossan is categorical in his presuppositional imposition on the text: 'It is precisely the absence of a fixed, literal, univocal, or univalent language that releases the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself. And this absence is the foundation and horizon of all language and of all thought' (Crossan 1980:9). This is emphasised by Crossan's hermeneutics where parable is a metaphorical story and Jesus is trailing clouds of fiction and the entire Gospels are mega-parables (Crossan 2012:9, 251).

Jesus, who existed, 'comes to us trailing clouds of fiction, parables *by* him and *about* him, particular incidents as miniparables and whole gospels as megaparables' (2012:251; emphasis in original). To describe Jesus as one who existed, but who trails 'clouds of fiction' and that the 'whole gospels are megaparables', indicates that Crossan has discarded or redefined the meaning of parable and that the term parable has become 'void of meaning' (that is, void of textual, original meaning) for

Crossan. This will be pursued in §4.4 and the examination of the 'meaning' of Jesus' resurrection.

Mervyn Bendle's popular level article (Bendle 2013) described Crossan's work as a representative example of Jesus, seen not as an individual but as a social type whose persona was determined by his contextual milieu. This 'postmodern anthropological approach amounts to a form of creative non-fiction' which Bendle claims is similar to Gerd Theissen's sociological novel (Theissen 1987).[229] Such a provocative conclusion can hardly be regarded as an accurate assessment for Crossan's work to be described as postmodern, anthropological, 'creative non-fiction'. Creative? Yes! Non-fiction? Hardly! How can it be creative non-fiction when he concludes that the Gospels trail clouds of fiction, complete Gospels are mega-parables (metaphorical stories) and there is no fixed, literal, univocal or univalent language? Bendle's statement, therefore, could be restated as Crossan's postmodern approach amounting to a form of creative fiction.

As indicated above, Denton's view is that Crossan's absence of a fixed, literal, univocal, referential language leads to the inevitability of metaphor as there is 'no absolutely literal language against which metaphor may be identified'. Thus, there is 'a void of meaning' at the core of metaphor (Denton 2004:37).

However, a clincher is: Does Crossan want his readers to understand the meaning of the words, 'fixed, literal, univocal or univalent' as having fixed meaning or reconstructive, multiple meanings? It was Crossan who stated that 'in terms of metaphor this would mean that it is precisely the absence of a fixed, literal, univocal or univalent language that releases the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself' (Crossan 1980:9-10). Crossan is sawing off the postmodern branch on which he stands. If all of language is metaphorical, so is the language of all of Crossan's writings. This will be pursued further when examining postmodernisms free play with textuality in §4.4.

4.3.6.5 Devastation of reconstruction

This is a primary concern for Crossan's and other author's reconstructive texts of the linguistics and history of the resurrection: Is reconstruction true to the biblical assertions about Jesus' resurrection and post-resurrection appearances in the four Gospels and Acts 1? It's an issue of truth. If Christians are to apply Jesus' death and resurrection to themselves, there is a need to discern true and false views of the resurrection data.[230]

Analysis of the data for reader-response emphases in §4.3.4.2.1 demonstrated that Borg and Crossan's creativity of the rewriting of the post-resurrection appearances led to accounts where the factuality of the resurrection did not matter, only the 'meaning' was important. As explained, this led to relativism in hermeneutical action as there are no independent standards or universal criteria to determine rival reconstructive interpretations (Vanhoozer 2005c:21). Truth is abandoned to the whim and fancy of the reconstructionist as a rewriter who remodels the text, thus unravelling text and history. Thus, the biblical text, for Crossan, cannot have factual content as there is only reconstruction. This is examined further in §4.4 in free play with textuality.

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[229] This Theissen novel is an updated edition that was first published in 1986 by SCM London.

[230] This view of truth is adapted from Carl Henry's statement, 'The fundamental issue remains the issue of truth, the truth of theological assertions. No work on theology will be worth its weight if that fundamental issue is obscured…. Durable theology must revive and preserve the distinction between true and false religion' (Henry 1976:14).

Vanhoozer summarised this large problem: Postmodernists have a tendency to treat biblical texts as sources for 'reconstructing human history and religion rather than as texts that testify to God's presence and action in history. Thus, the world 'behind' the text supersedes the world 'of' the text and the texts as testimony are deflected in favour 'of a hypothetical reconstruction of "what actually happened". History here trumps exegesis'. (Vanhoozer 2005c:20). Thus, Crossan comes to Scripture with an *a priori* postmodern, reconstructive presupposition of the pluralism of meanings for the text.

4.3.6.6 Dogmatism

There is an added problem of Crossan's dogmatism to ruin reconstruction with his emphasis that even though there may be divergent interpretative reconstructions, one cannot dismiss this search on the historical Jesus 'as *mere* reconstruction … because there is *only* reconstruction' (Crossan 1991:426; emphasis in original). However the '*only* reconstruction' project led to further negative effects of reconstruction as seen in the inconsistencies of Crossan's application to historical data he raises (see §4.2.1.2, especially the self-contradiction of §4.2.1.2.3). His own recommendation, 'read the text' (§4.2.1.2.4) was not followed because of his *a priori* commitment to postmodern reconstruction (Crossan 2007:138). See §4.2.1.2 for an exposé of Crossan's inconsistencies.

4.3.6.7 An unwarranted redefinition of history

Crossan's redefinition of history to a reconstructive masterpiece was shown to disintegrate on the basis of his use of a question begging logical fallacy (see §4.2). Most historians through the centuries have used elements of historiography that are in contradistinction to that of Crossan.

4.3.6.8 The accumulated evidence

Hypothesis 9 tests Crossan's divine manifestation of Christianity through a postmodern hermeneutic or reconstruction by which Christianity is redone over and over, reinterpreted for each generation, based on the contemporary issues.

The previous seven points of §4.3.6 summarise the evidence used to test this hypothesis. It demonstrates how a postmodern, reconstructive, interactive hermeneutic is shipwrecked on the 'rocks' of contradiction, inconsistency and a self-defeating methodology.

4.3.7 Was hypothesis 9 verified or falsified?

From the accumulated evidence examined in testing this hypothesis for a postmodern reconstruction of Christianity, the hypothesis was falsified because of the failure of reconstruction to meet fundamentals for linguistic and historical investigation and consistency in application by Crossan of the data. It was found to involve an imposition of an *a priori* postmodern, reconstructive methodology on the scriptural and other data.

4.4 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 12: IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT A PERSON BELIEVES ABOUT JESUS' TOMB, WHETHER IT WAS EMPTY OR NOT. THE IMPORTANCE IS THE MEANING OF THE EMPTY TOMB, WHICH IS INDEPENDENT OF ITS FACTUALITY[231]

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[231] This hypothesis is based on presupposition number 15 in §3.3.2.8.1.

When the Bruce Highway at North Lakes, north of Brisbane was closed after a crash in which a semi-truck trailer became jammed under an overpass, does that mean that the truck trailer was too tall to travel under the overpass (ABC News 2013)? Or, does it mean through postmodern reconstruction that this refers to the hierarchy of the Queensland government being jammed with legislation that is preventing the progress of the State? How is one to understand Crossan's statement that 'anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film should first read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138)? Is it based on the plain reading of the text that understands the semantic, etymological meaning of anyone, dramatize, death of Jesus, play or film, first read the text, and getting the story right? Or does Crossan want the reader to put his or her own creative, multivalent, free play meaning on the text? Is this Crossan statement meant to indicate what 'it means to me'? The answers to these types of questions occupy much of the assessment of this hypothesis.

From distant to recent history, is it necessary to associate meaning of an event with its factuality or with a specific concept? The facts are that it is known from historical investigation that Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon River in 49 BC to enter Italy (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014. S v Rubicon) and that Caesar was a significant person of history who crossed an actual river. This issue deals with whether meaning is associated with determinateness or indeterminateness. When something is determinate, it refers to the entire communicative act in which the meaning of a text is determined by 'what the author said/did, and that this does not change at the behest of the reader. "Single determinate meaning" is shorthand for the realist's intuition that the author's intentional action, however complex, is what it is and cannot be changed by interpreters at a later date' (Vanhoozer 2002:165, n. 12). This view is in contrast to the postmodern notion that 'the meaning and reference are radically indeterminate as well as the related idea that the author is "dead" or irrelevant to the process of interpretation' (Vanhoozer 2002:164).

It was Gadamer's judgment that 'the norm for understanding a book is not the author's meaning…. It is likely that not until Schleiermacher – with whom hermeneutics became an independent method, detached from all content – could the interpreter claim superiority over his object' (Gadamer 2004:184, 193). However, there are challenges to this view.

One is by a practitioner in the British TV industry who was for thirty years an actor, writer, director, producer and script editor before moving to the academy (Bath Spa University UK). Chris Jury has a divergent perspective. He argued that 'in watching fictional narrative film and TV all readers have to subconsciously assume human agency in the order in which shots are shown to them, otherwise a film or TV drama is just random noise and flashing nights (sic). I call this assumption of human agency an assumption of authorial intent'. His claim was 'that just as the suspension of disbelief is a psychological prerequisite for making sense of the act of watching theatre, film or TV so is the assumption of authorial intent'. Without these two perspectives, 'the act of even sitting down to watch a play, film or TV drama makes no sense'. By extension, he suggests 'that this is in fact the case with all texts, fiction or non-fiction and that to make sense of the act of reading any text we have to assume authorial intent' (Jury 2012:2; emphasis in original). Although he interacts with the reader-response views of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, Jury concludes with the opposite view to Gadamer and Crossan: 'Any readers primary concern when reading a text is to deduce what meaning the author intended to convey and that without this assumption of authorial intent by the reader they could not make sense of the text or indeed the very act of reading (or watching/listening) itself'. How has he reached that terminus? 'This perspective has been developed through 30 years of real-world observations made in the practice, study and teaching of scriptwriting (particularly screenwriting for film and TV). I have come to understand that for a "reader" to make sense of a script, film or TV fiction they have to assume "authorial intent"' (Jury 2012:6).

So, are speech-acts determinate or not? Can meaning of an event or concept be indeterminate as poststructuralists, including Crossan, promote? Is it possible to obtain meaning of the resurrection without the empty tomb? In this project, the language of referent and signifier will not be used as there are some words for which there can be no referent?[232] Here, indeterminate is used in its customary sense of 'not determinate; not fixed in extent; indefinite; uncertain' (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v indeterminate).

In this research, a recent historical incident is considered in the state of Queensland, Australia, where this researcher lives. See §4.3.5.2 where it was explained that 44-year old Brett Peter Cowan was convicted of the heinous murder of 13-year old, Daniel Morcombe, and was imprisoned for life, with a minimum parole period of twenty years. The meaning of being sentenced to a lengthy punishment (imprisonment) was directly related to an horrific crime committed by Cowan, for which there is severe punishment through the Queensland judicial system. The meaning refers to the factuality of the crime committed and the meaning was not linked to some indeterminate action.

As an example from distant history, in the first four centuries of the church's existence, at least ten major persecutions of Christians were recorded, beginning with emperor, Nero, in the first century and culminating with emperor Diocletian in the early fourth century (Latourette 1975a:85-86). What did it mean for Christians to affirm their faith openly during these centuries? Death was possibly an outcome. The meaning of living an active Christian life could lead to martyrdom. Fact (or determinate action) and meaning were inseparable for these Christians.

However, Crossan's working definition of history challenges the view of determinate speech acts: '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*'. There are no determinate fixed speech acts from which to determine meaning, but reconstruction 'must be done over and over again in different times and different places, by different groups and different communities, and by every generation again and again and again…. Historical reconstruction is always interactive of present and past' and 'is always a creative interaction of past and present' (Crossan 1999:3, 5; emphasis in original). Therefore, reconstruction deals with indeterminate actions and creates something new, over and over, for each generation.

How can purposeful meaning be associated with indeterminate speech acts?

4.4.1 In Crossan's own words

The association of meaning with determinate action is now being challenged by some of the postmodern emphases pursued in this research of Crossan and his understanding of the meaning of Jesus' passion-resurrection events. For him, Easter 'has nothing to do, literally, with a body coming out of the tomb, or a tomb being found empty, or visions, or anything else'. Instead, all of those 'are dramatic ways of expressing the faith', thus making an empty tomb independent of meaning. He stated that 'the heart of resurrection for me is that the power of God is now available through Jesus, unconfined by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161).

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[232] Derrida's translator used, 'referent' (Spivak in Derrida 1976:xxxix). However, it is to be understood that whether one uses signifier or referent, there are some words that will never be associated with a signifier. 'And', 'but', 'therefore', 'then' and other connectives come to mind. Therefore, in this project, the term 'indeterminate meanings' will be used.

However, there is a challenge: Does Crossan want his readers to understand all of the words and the syntax of his own statements according to their conventional meaning (and so determinate) or does he want the readers to create meaning according to the readers' own indeterminate desires and subjective imposition on the text? Can such a view of Jesus' resurrection be verified from the biblical and supporting evidence or is it promoting another worldview where meaning is independent of the crucified body of Christ being placed in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb and the tomb being empty on resurrection morning? Is it possible to separate the meaning of Jesus' resurrection from the fact of an empty? That is the primary task to be examined in testing this hypothesis.

See §4.3.4.2.2(c) for some examples of Crossan's creative understanding of resurrection. In his public debate with James White (White & Crossan 2005), Crossan's understanding of meaning was challenged by the debater and questioners and Crossan provided several examples of how he understood the need for meaning and its association with actions or views. This is a limited sample by Crossan:[233]

- Speaking of the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), Crossan stated that 'whether that story is actually historical or whether it is a totally made up parable Jesus made up on the spur of the moment, *I do not see any difference in the message of it*…. It's a challenge whether it's historical or parabolical or both at the same time' (White & Crossan 2005:14; emphasis added).
- Concerning the four different versions of the Gospels, 'Can we face even the possibility' that there is 'actually a stream of tradition. *What I get from this* is that it is never enough simply to tell the historical story' (White & Crossan 2005:17; emphasis added).
- When asked by White about Crossan's presupposition of divine consistency and 'what kind of evidence could possibly exist in antiquity' that would prove to Crossan that 'miraculous events such as the virgin birth or the resurrection of Christ from the dead, actually took place in historical context, Crossan's response was: 'The only way I can accept the *claims* of any one of them is *what it means.* Therefore when I read these claims about Jesus, for example, what is important for me?' He placed the miraculous in a pre-Enlightenment world in which '*what's important to me about the miracles of Jesus*' including healing is that 'in the ancient world … I make no difference between Asclepius[234] and Jesus in terms of reality' (White & Crossan 2005:25; emphasis added).
- 'I don't see anything to convince me that Caesar was born of Apollo and a human mother, Atia,[235] or that Jesus was literally born of God and the virgin

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[233] Because it is a debate, the language used by White and Crossan is colloquial and not that of academically approved publications or peer-reviewed journals.

[234] Crossan's pronunciation in the debate seemed to be close to that of Asclepius who was regarded as a healing saviour centuries before and after Jesus' ministry (see Carrier 1997). Carrier (1997) alerted this researcher to a collection and interpretation of Asclepius' works in Edelstein & Edelstein (1998).

[235] Robert Gurval (1995:100) confirmed the story from Roman historian, Suetonius, of the seduction of Octavian's mother by a snake in the temple of Apollo as Atia slept and the god in the form of a snake

Mary, but I see those as radically different claims about *the meaning of life*' (White & Crossan 2005:26; emphasis added).

- 'To say that Caesar *is divine means that his mode of running the world* by force and violence is the will of the gods or the will of Jupiter. When you say that Jesus is divine, we know simply from his life that *he is a totally different program of God*' (White & Crossan 2005:28; emphasis added).
- In the story of Jesus' walking on the water, Crossan's challenge was: 'When all else fails, read the text. It doesn't simply say that Jesus walked on the waters. It really doesn't'. How should this incident be interpreted [Mt 14:22-22 – SDG]? When the disciples cried out to Jesus for help to get him into the boat, Crossan claimed, 'I would say to them: All right take it literally …, which they will not do, and I don't. What does it mean? It means that Jesus ran a literal exercise to train them that they better get him in the boat. I take it metaphorically. I think it's a parable; by that they intended it to be a parable…. Whether you take it literally or you take it metaphorically, please ask: 'Could the meaning be the same?' I'm not saying, 'It doesn't make any difference if you take it literally'. I'm saying that when *you are reading a first century, pre-Enlightenment text there is no way you can tell which way they are taking it themselves, because they have not asked that* question'. He claimed that if you asked disciples, '"Is that literal?" they probably will give you, "It's real"…. It's changing our existence; that makes it real. How can it not be real? You start acting this way and reality changes'. Crossan does not want the historical versus metaphorical debate (whether Jesus' walking on the water is parable or history), with his constituency, to be 'the reason why people will not move towards meaning' or be a reason to leave Christianity. What is important to Crossan and he is 'not saying it doesn't make any difference what you believe, it's what you do'. His emphasis is that whether one believes in this incident literally or metaphorically, it should not be the most important thing you think about. You should also ask: If you take it literally, if you take it metaphorically – what does it mean?' (White & Crossan 2005:43-44; bold emphasis in original, other emphasis added).
- A questioner's comment was: Regarding the controversy over whether something is taken historically, literally, or factually, how a person looks at it would change what it means, wouldn't you agree? Crossan did not agree as 'there are scholars I know who read everything in the gospel literally and don't believe a word of it'. However, Crossan's question was: 'Could we ask, "What is the meaning of it [the gospel – SDG] in terms of action in this world?" Jesus tells us [it's – SDG] not enough to say Lord, Lord; you've *got to do it*. So I want to know: *Is there any agreement about meaning that might give us a basis for action in the world?* That is my question' (White & Crossan 2005:54; emphasis added).
- Crossan regards the scene between Jesus and Pilate (Jn 19:17-27) as a parable and not an historical event. What is its meaning? Pilate's is 'the kingdom of force and violence which is the normalcy of the civilization we live in, even today', while for Jesus it is 'the kingdom of justice and peace. It is a confrontation between two visions for the world and either one of them *demands faith*'. Crossan is not worried himself about it being a parable, but 'if it worries somebody else, I'm sorry….It never occurs to me that a parable

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impregnated her. Ten months later the child was born and fatherhood was attributed to Apollo. Suetonius claimed to have found the story in some obscure work (Suetonius 1913:94.4).

> cannot carry just as much truth as a piece of history, if that actually happened' (White & Crossan 2005:24; emphasis added).

These examples have application to a core teaching being investigated in this hypothesis, 'If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain' (1 Cor 15:14). Borg and Crossan's response to this verse was that 'we agree with this statement, even as we do not think that it intrinsically points to the historical factuality of an empty tomb'. They are convinced that 'an emphasis on the historical factuality of the Easter stories, as if they were reporting events that could have been photographed, gets in the way of understanding them'. Focussing on the factuality of the events, including the empty tomb, 'often misses their more-than-factual meanings'. For them, they contend that there is a need to get beyond, 'Did they happen or not?' to the more important question, 'What do they mean?' The way to do this, they argue, is to regard the Easter events as parables which 'can be true – truthful and truth-filled – independently of their factuality'. They want to leave the question of their factuality 'open'. However, they are adamant with their emphasis, '*the importance of these stories lies in their meanings*' (Borg & Crossan 2006:191-193; emphasis in original).

Crossan's changing views on parable are seen from his early publication on parables (Crossan 1973), to Easter Sunday events (Crossan & Watts 1996), the resurrection of Jesus in its Jewish context (Crossan 2003), and recently to an exposition on the power of parable (Crossan 2012). Was there anything in the later Crossan (2012) to oppose the earlier Crossan (1973)?

His earliest view was that 'metaphor can appear as either parable or myth…. A *parable* gives us "imaginary gardens with real toads in them"' (Crossan 1973:15; emphasis on original). He linked the latter part of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:27-31 and 'neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead' (which he considers as inauthentic but stemming from the early church) with Jesus' resurrection in Luke 24:11-46. This researcher found no clarity here on Crossan's preferred interpretation of Jesus' resurrection.

However, by 1996 he was unambiguous that 'stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church'. So resurrection is one 'of the metaphors to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153). His latest version was that he thinks 'of each entire gospel version as a book-length *megaparable* about the life, death, and resurrection of the historical character Jesus of Nazareth', remembering that his interpretation is that 'parables *about* Jesus' involve '*fictional* events about *factual* characters' (Crossan 2012:5-6; emphasis in original). Thus, there was movement in Crossan's scholarship from lack of clarity regarding the resurrection in 1976 to entire gospels being regarded as mega-parables (Crossan 2012).

From Crossan's perspective as a postmodern, reconstructive interpreter, how does he apply meaning to Jesus and his resurrection as recorded in the gospels? If the meaning of a text goes beyond the text and includes a productive activity (creativity) by the reader, what are the boundaries, if any, to meanings that readers could place on a text, using their creative imaginations? The major issue being addressed in this hypothesis is that articulated by Crossan and Borg when they stated that

> seeing the Easter stories as parable, as parabolic narratives, affirms, "Believe whatever you want about whether the stories happened this way – now let's talk about

> what they mean". If you believe the tomb was empty, fine; now, what does this story mean? If you believe that Jesus's appearances could have been videotaped, fine; now, what do these stories mean? And if you're not sure about that, or even if you are quite sure it *didn't* happen this way, fine; now what do these stories mean?
>
> (Borg & Crossan 2006:193; emphasis in original)

As already indicated in §1.1.3, Crossan's postmodern hermeneutics means, from his perspective, 'there is not in my work any presumption that the historical Jesus or earliest Christianity is something you get once and for all forever' (Crossan 1998a:45). See §4.3.4.2.2 above for an explanation of how Gadamer's deconstruction applies to Crossan's works and its practical implications in understanding everyday news.

With regard to crucified bodies and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Crossan stated that 'we cannot know with certainty what happened to the body of Jesus, but we can see clearly how much concern there was in the developing Christian tradition about the disposition of his body. The accounts steadily become more dignified and elaborate, as the horror of the brutal truth was, through hope and imagination, turned into appropriate and even regal burial' (Crossan & Watts 1996:140).

If the words by Crossan and Watts in the last paragraph are used as an example, from where do Crossan and Watts want their readers to obtain the meaning of the words: crucified bodies, tomb, Joseph of Arimathea, know, certainty, body of Jesus, see clearly, concern, developing Christian tradition, disposition, accounts, dignified, elaborate, horror, brutal truth, hope, imagination, appropriate, regal burial, and every other word in the citation? Do they expect these to come from Crossan and Watt's meaning of those words, from a dictionary, cultural and contextual understanding, or do they want this researcher to determine the meaning based on Crossan's own postmodern worldview because 'Jesus-reconstruction, like all such reconstruction, is always a creative interaction of past and present' (Crossan 1999:5)?[236] Do Crossan and Watts want any of their readers to be creative in their understanding of their own words above or do they want readers to read this book with the authors' intended and the dictionary's stated meaning of the words, grammar and semantics? The answer should be obvious. Why, then, apply a different standard to the reading of Scripture and the meaning obtained?

Vanhoozer's evaluation of the problem led to his conclusion that '*if "the author" dies, so too does the possibility of meaning in texts*' (Vanhoozer 1998:89; emphasis in original). If Crossan wants this student to use his own productive actions in understanding Crossan's meaning in his publications, meaning has fallen prey to this and any other reader's creative imagination and then the author has died. Meaning becomes relative, subjective and meaningless.

Crossan's appraisal was that 'an empty tomb or a risen body susceptible to food and touch were dramatic ways of expressing that faith. Trances or ecstasies were dramatic ways of experiencing that faith…. Christian faith itself was the experience of Jesus' continued empowering presence' (Crossan 1995:210).

4.4.2 The main issues to emerge

From Crossan's own statements above, the issues that emerge regarding meaning include: (1) The meaning of 'meaning', (2) Meaning is metaphorical and is not linked to historical, literal or factual understanding; (3) Meaning is independent of Jesus' empty tomb; (4) Is it possible to separate meaning from intrinsic factuality or concept? (5) Fiction (made up parable) or factuality makes no difference to meaning, thus leading to a postmodern interpretation of the text; (6) The supernatural resurrection and other miracles are rejected as they really deal with the meaning of life; (7) Jesus' walking on the water is a parable. 'Read the text' and it doesn't say Jesus walked on the waters. Instead, it has a postmodern, subjective meaning to get Jesus into the boat. Literal or parabolic interpretation doesn't matter. (8) The Emmaus road incident is not about Jesus' bodily resurrection but is interpreted metaphorically. It means to bring a stranger into the house. (9) Come to an agreement about meaning for action rather than disagreeing over taking a text as historical, literal or factual; (10) The line of reasoning should not be, 'Is that literal?' in the first century, but, 'It's real … It's changing our lives'; (11) Pre-Enlightenment texts didn't ask about whether it was literal or not; (12) Pilate's encounter with Jesus (Jn 19:17-17) was a parable and not an historical event. Parable can carry as much truth as history; (13) Pushing for the fact of an empty tomb to interpret 1 Corinthians 15:14, handicaps understanding and may fail to obtain meaning beyond the factual. So Easter events are parables that are true, truthful and truth-filled, but independent of factuality. Meaning is the most important entity. (14) Meaning is subjective: Believe whatever you choose about the Easter events; meaning is what is important; (15) Jesus' empty tomb and risen body are dramatic ways of expressing faith and Jesus' continued empowering presence. Therefore, (16) Is there any possibility of objective understanding of history, or is the historian relegated only to subjective interpretation?

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[236] The reader's response and creative understanding of the meaning of resurrection have been examined in §4.3.4.2.2(c).

The key emphases for Crossan are:

- In Jesus' walking on the water, he urged: 'Read the text' (White & Crossan 2005:43). He used this same statement also in criticising some of the content of Mel Gibson's film, The Passion of the Christ, when he stated, 'Read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138). See §3.2.2 for a brief assessment. Crossan's issue is stated as 'read the text' but he really means, 'Read the text with my postmodern understanding of meaning' as will be seen as this analysis of meaning unfolds.
- It doesn't matter whether interpretation of Jesus' resurrection, including the empty tomb, is historically true or is parable; of primary importance is the meaning – the postmodern, reconstructive, creative meaning of Crossan and his compatriots. However, Jesus' resurrection is parabolic fiction.
- Entire gospels are mega-parables of creative fiction.

Who determined the interpretation of the empty tomb and risen body susceptible to food and touch as a dramatic way to express faith? How can trances or ecstasies of the risen Christ be a dramatic way of experiencing faith through Jesus' continued empowering presence? Indications are that these are examples of how his postmodern, reconstructive interactivism enables him to create his own mystical meanings in spite of the 'utterance meaning', which is the conventionally established 'determinate meaning' of a text which is 'neither more nor less' than the original author's meaning (Turner 2005:828). See §4.4.9 below for an assessment of Crossan's use of meaning.

4.4.2.1 The meaning of meaning

How is the 'meaning' of a word, sentence or paragraph determined? A changing trend is seen in Australian high school education with movement from determinant (univocal) to indeterminate (polyvalent) meaning in the last thirty years. For high school years eleven and twelve, two textbooks supported a traditional approach. One pursued meaning from that intended by the authors and the use of a dictionary at the rear of the book (Sadler, Hayllar & Powell 1981:65). Another text for the same school years by Peter Smart stated that words are learned by using them, ‘gradually building up an instinctive understanding of what a particular word means when said in a particular way on a particular occasion by a particular person’ (Smart 1980:111).

This changed in the year 2010 with the Department of Education, Queensland, introducing a further dynamic to the English curriculum that was promoted on its website in 2014. One of the objectives moves towards a postmodern emphasis of ‘creating and evaluating meaning’ in which ‘*students create and evaluate texts to demonstrate how and why meaning is made*’ (English senior syllabus 2010:4; emphasis in original). The curriculum cited postmodern promoters, Ray Misson and Wendy Morgan (2006:136), who stated that engaging with aesthetic texts ‘allows us to rehearse different ways of seeing the world and different emotional reactions’. Mission and Morgan are Australian proponents of critical literacy, maintain that ‘poststructuralism provides the best framework we have for understanding texts and their relationship to human society and identity’ (Mission & Morgan 2006: book description).

What is the purpose of using these Australian secondary school examples? It is to reveal the changes in concepts of meaning in linguistics that have moved from determinate meaning associated with grammar, syntax, semantics and dictionary understandings to postmodern deconstruction and reader-response indeterminate meanings over a period of thirty years. Nevertheless, one dictionary stated that ‘meaning’ indicates ‘that which is intended to be, or actually is, expressed or indicated; signification; import’ (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v meaning). Even at the popular level, David Brooks penned an article for *The New York Times* on ‘the problem with meaning’ in which he stated that ‘meaning is an uplifting state of consciousness. It’s what you feel when you’re serving things beyond self. Yet it has to be said, as commonly used today, the word is flabby and vacuous, the product of a culture that has grown inarticulate about inner life’ (Brooks 2015).

In recent decades, the association of meaning with the author’s understanding has been challenged by some in the philosophical discipline who consider that to define the meaning of ‘meaning’ is a contentious concept in philosophy. Therefore, it can have an overflow effect on New Testament studies. Two further samples within this project will suffice: Professor of English, Lois Tyson, wrote that readers ‘do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text’; instead, ‘they actively make the meaning they find in literature’ (Tyson 2006:170). Crossan promoted the perspective that ‘bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of the tomb…. Bodily resurrection means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continued, as it always had, to form communities of like lives’ (Crossan 1998a:xxxi; emphasis in original). Wright, in opposition to Crossan, affirmed that

> when the early Christians said “resurrection” they meant it in the sense it bore both in paganism (which denied it) and in Judaism (an influential part of which affirmed it). “Resurrection” did not mean that someone possessed “a heavenly and exalted status”; when predicated of Jesus, it did not mean his “perceived presence” in the ongoing church. Nor, if we are thinking historically, could it have meant “the passage of the

> human Jesus into the power of God”. *It meant bodily resurrection; and that is what the early Christians affirmed*.
>
> (Wright 2003:209; emphasis added).

Jorge Gracia (2005) summarised some of the issues regarding meaning: (a) ‘What is meaning?’ It can indicate significance, reference, intention, ideas, and conditions of use. (b) ‘Are there limits to the meanings of texts?’ These can include: No limits, strict limits, and some limits. (c) ‘What determines textual meaning?’ These can be determined singly or in combination by authors, audiences, communities[237], contexts, languages, texts, truth conditions, cultural functions and theology (Gracia 2005:492-499).

If that is so, then the theologies of, say, Tyson, Crossan, Wright and Gracia will need to be assessed for validity. It is the view of this researcher that ideologies are decisive factors in determining meaning, rather than the more restrictive field of theologies. Ideology is used in the sense of ‘a relatively coherent set of ideas amounting to a world-view, or outlook on life’ (Clines 1995:10).[238] However, in testing this hypothesis, meaning will be used in association with the common understanding of ‘implication in the wider world within which this notion makes the sense it makes’ (Wright 2003:719). Meaning is used in the sense that lack of rain (drought) in the Australian outback means devastation for farming families and animals; drought-breaking rain means families and animals return to thriving on the profits and well-being of the land.

The analysis of truth and factuality in Crossan (see §3.3.2.4) led to the formulation of presupposition number 7 (§3.3.2.4.1, factuality and the empty tomb) and presupposition number 8 (§3.3.2.5.1, resurrection and divine empowerment). These presuppositions also influence the content of this hypothesis 12 which is here being tested as to whether meaning is associated with factuality or not. These and other issues denying the historical validity of the resurrection narratives will be examined below.

Crossan’s specifics challenge the meaning and intention of Jesus’ resurrection as recorded in the gospels. In testing hypothesis 12, there will be foci on these further emphases:

- How semiotics, semantics and meaning interact;
- Influences on Crossan’s understanding of meaning;
- The dynamics of Crossan’s postmodern, reconstructive interpretations;
- The impact of meaning dissociated from factuality;
- Abduction;
- Richard R Niebuhr’s perspective;
- The nature of Jesus’ resurrection;
- Was there more to the resurrected Jesus than bodily resurrection?
- Towards a solution.

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[237] The impact of readers, audiences and communities on meaning was examined in §4.3.4.2 and assessed for validity.

[238] Clines’ definition of ideology was suggested by Parry (2005b:314). Theology has a more limited purview than ideology. Gracia’s understanding was that ‘a theology is primarily a view of the world based on an attempt to understand it in terms of both human knowledge and a particular divine revelation…. Theology is the understanding of a religious faith by those who have this faith. As such, theology contains not only interpretations of the world, but also rules that determine the legitimate meaning of the texts regarded as revealed’. For Gracia, theology ‘establishes not only textual meaning, but also the degree to which other factors play roles in the proper interpretation of Scriptures. These rules are both epistemically and ontologically normative’ (Gracia 2005:498-499).

4.4.2.2 Semiotics[239], semantics and meaning

Semiotic influences were examined in §4.3.2.1. Semiotics, according to Peter Riddell, includes three broad disciplines: (a) *Semantics*, which is a study of signs in linguistics, (b) *Syntax* studies the relationship among signs or legitimate combinations, and (c) *Pragmatics* which relates signs to users in their socio-cultural and linguistic contexts (Riddell 1005:735). The University of Sheffield (2012) affirmed these dimensions but noted that meaning cannot refer exclusively to connotation ('the images that its users connect to it') or denotation (the entity in the world to which that word refers).

Vanhoozer has shown that the author needs to be resurrected for there to be meaning in communicative action. His proposal was 'that the author and the sentence are basic particulars' for communication and that 'without these fundamental concepts we will simply be unable to talk about certain other things, such as speech acts and meaning'. When 'poststructuralists reduce sentences and speakers to elements in a differential sign system' they are committing what he termed the 'semiotic fallacy' which he considered was a reductionist move away from language as a means of 'covenantal communion'. Illocution,[240] in his view, should focus attention on the author producing meaning 'as a communicative agent'.[241] This can be achieved without a return to the traditional view of the author's intention (Vanhoozer 1998:213). Vanhoozer penetrated to the core of the issue regarding meaning: Readers or listeners who expunge meaning from an author and create their own meaning have committed a semiotic fallacy. His summary is trenchant: 'A picture of language as an arbitrary system of differential signs holds deconstruction captive. Postmodern views of language are concerned more with semiotics (the science of signs) than with semantics (the science of sentences)' (Vanhoozer 1998:204).

Tyson illustrated the semiotic fallacy: 'A written text is not an object, despite its physical existence, but an event that occurs within the reader, whose response is of primary importance in creating the text'. Theorists disagree, however, about how our responses are formed and what role, if any, the text plays in creating them' (Tyson 2006:170). For Tyson, reader-response involves 'creating the text' or readers 'actively make meaning'. Therefore, any literary text or speech-act is not to be interpreted but is only a device to assist the reader 'in creating meaning'. As this research has demonstrated in gathering data to test this hypothesis, how this creation of meaning happens between text and reader has various explanations from postmodern, reader-response theorists. Their views range from the textual content being very active in providing meaning to the non-existence of the text.

One of the difficulties in sometimes understanding a theorist such as Derrida is explained by Steven Shakespeare as his 'both questioning our preconceived ideas about meaning and evoking a radical and paradoxical structuring and de-structuring of truth that can never be directly stated, grasped or defined' (Shakespeare 2009:6).

Stewart noted Crossan's insistence that Ricoeur did not follow his observations to their logical conclusions. If Ricoeur did that, he would have understood that language involves something other than indeterminate responses in the world of language, which it has created, according to Stewart's understanding of Crossan. However, Stewart pointed to Crossan's insistence that language is 'essentially and originally metaphorical' and becomes 'univalent through social convention' as the emphasis is made (Stewart 2008:33).

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[239] See §4.3.2.1 for an investigation of some semiotic emphases and issues.

[240] J L Austin regards illocution as 'what we do in saying something (e.g. greeting, promising, commanding, etc.)'. This is in contrast with 'the locutionary act: uttering words (e.g. saying the word "Hello")' and 'the perlocutionary act: what we bring about by saying something (e.g. persuading, surprising)' (Austin in Vanhoozer 1998:209).

[241] This relates to speech-act philosophy that promotes the view that language is 'a species of human action: speech acts' (Vanhoozer 2002:161).

The varied issues of a reconstructive impact on the text were discussed in §4.3. In testing that hypothesis, the various confounding factors have been noted in obtaining an understanding of the meaning of a text or speech-act. These include:

- The need to differentiate among semiotics, semantics, syntax and pragmatics.
- Vanhoozer's emphasis on the need for the resurrection of the author for there to be meaning in communicative action.
- The semiotic fallacy which was a reductionist move away from language as a means of 'covenantal communion'.
- Deconstructionist theorists such as those of Tyson, Derrida, Ricoeur, and so Crossan, introduced a new concept into writing where the 'essential' message of a text is indeterminate but was originally metaphorical; there was no unity in meaning and it only became univalent through social convention.

4.4.2.3 Determinate or indeterminate meaning?

It is common practice to understand that meaning is associated with specific determinateness, whether in everyday language or figures of speech. What is the meaning of the metaphor that Jesus is 'the light of the world' (Jn 8:12) without the determinateness of the meaning of Jesus, light, and world? Determinate is used to mean defined, definite limits, conclusive and final; indeterminate is used to mean not fixed in extent, indefinite, and vague (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v determinate; S v indeterminate)

Vanhoozer has described 'the poststructuralist reduction of sentences and speakers to elements in a differential sign system as the "semiotic fallacy." This reductionist move yields only an impoverished account of language as a medium for covenantal communion'. However, 'the concept of illocution … puts the focus of attention "on the production of meaning by the author," as Daniel Patte correctly observes'. Vanhoozer does not consider that illocution implies a return to the traditional model of the author's intention. Instead, 'in the light of speech act philosophy, the author returns as a communicative agent' (Vanhoozer 1998:213).

However, there's another dynamic that influences the understanding of meaning and it relates to the epistemology of historiography.

4.4.2.3.1 Meaning, objectivity and worldview

In §1.3.2.3, some of Crossan's historical presuppositions were documented, including admission that gospel traditions of the historical Jesus are decided before reconstruction begins: 'Everyone must. Everyone does' (Crossan 1998a:103). His claim was that each of the four gospel evangelists has '*good news*' to impart and the '*news* indicates that a regular update is involved. It indicates that Jesus is constantly being actualized for new times and places, situations and problems, authors and communities' (Crossan 1998a:101; emphasis in original). Who said so? Here he declared his postmodern, reconstructive, interactive hand before the evidence was examined. Thus it will be nigh impossible to obtain an objective, historical assessment of the gospel data because of this postmodern, presuppositional, *a priori* bias as a starting point. However, Crossan's emphasis is adamant: In Jesus' reconstruction, it 'is always a creative interaction of past and present…. Method, method, and, once again method. It will not guarantee us the truth because nothing can do that'. This self-conscious, self-critical methodological discipline, he says, 'is our one best hope of honesty. It is the due process of history' (Crossan 1999:5). Is it the due process of history or is it Crossan's presuppositional due process of imposing postmodern interpretations on the text? Note his emphasis: It 'is *always* a creative interaction' (emphasis added).

As indicated in §1.3.4, Wright's conclusion was that Crossan engages in 'a ruthless hermeneutic of suspicion' which renders the gospel resurrection accounts 'worthless as history' (Wright 2003:19). If Crossan's (1991) historical research is 'unsalvageable' (Meyer 1993:576), what is at stake? This has a particular relevance to the resurrection. The process of objectivity and historiography described in §2.3.3, establishing the facts, will be used as a basis for this section. Geisler's assessment of historiography and the historical pre-condition (Geisler 2002:181-204) particularly was useful in demonstrating the place of meaning in a milieu of historical methodology and worldview. While Crossan is correct in acknowledging that all historians use a method and the discipline must be self-conscious and self-critical, fundamental to any methodology is whether it advocates good or bad historiography. While a historian takes his or her place in history, Geisler maintained that 'it does not follow that … history is also purely a product of the time. That a person cannot avoid a relative place in history does not mean his perspective cannot attain a meaningful degree of objectivity'. If Crossan's postmodern, free play approach to history is unavoidable (see §4.4.4.3 below), he is promoting self-refuting historical relativism. Since Crossan's historical relativism in his interpretation of the resurrection (see §4.4.8) 'is itself relative, then it cannot be taken as objectively true – it is simply a subjective opinion that has no immovable basis'. It has the added issue that its subjectivism cannot disallow history as objectively knowable. Also, since Crossan claims there is a need to engage in historical reconstruction over and over, interactive of present and past, then 'this constant rewriting of history is based on the assumption that objectivity is possible' (Geisler 2002:192-193). How can Crossan reconstruct the events on the Emmaus road, the burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection appearances, if there are no objective data such as a tomb, the town Emmaus, and appearances to which reference can be made for his subjective interpretation?

How does this relate to meaning? Crossan and this researcher operate from within worldviews. The data of history are interpreted through a worldview framework. Objectivity is not excluded from an examination of worldviews. Piecing together the data from the past 'does not necessitate *revision*…. As long as the historian incorporated consistently and comprehensively all the significant events *in accordance with the way things really were, he was being objective*. *It is neglecting or twisting important facts that distorts objectivity*'. Geisler explained further: 'Meaning is system-dependent within a given meaning, but within another system it may have a very different meaning. Without context meaning cannot be determined, and the context is provided by the worldview and not by the bare facts themselves'. Thus, there is a need to establish a worldview in order to attain objectivity of historiography. (Geisler 2002:194; emphasis added).

This project has addressed some worldview dimensions of this topic (1) The material for an examination of Christianity comes from the text of Scripture: 'Anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film should first read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138), but for Crossan's approach to Jesus' resurrection: 'I formulate it here as I see it' (Crossan 1998a:xxx). He did not deal with the significant event of Jesus' resurrection in the way things were described in the biblical text, but distorted the facts (as will be seen in an examination of the Emmaus road and resurrection appearance data). This leads to, (2) the resurrection narratives in the New Testament are unhistorical documents – which failed to be verified (see §4.2). Determining Crossan's worldview is a necessity in attempting to realise objectivity. However, Crossan's postmodern framework (see §4.3) undermines his historical aptitude of consistently and meticulously incorporating significant historical events 'in accordance with the way things really are' (Geisler 2002:194) because of his subjective interpretation. As indicated in §4.3.1, Crossan rejects the traditional standards of historiography for his postmodern, subjective perspective that 'by *historical study* I mean an analysis whose theories and methods, evidence and arguments, results and conclusions are open, in principle and practice, to any human observer, any disciplined investigator, any self-conscious and self-critical student…. The historical Jesus is always an interpretive construct of its own time and place but open to all of that time and place' (Crossan 1994a:199; emphasis in original).

Therefore, it is impossible to obtain objective meaning from a biblical text from within a subjective, postmodern, reconstructive hermeneutical worldview. This will become obvious with the specifics of the resurrection examined in §4.4.8.

4.4.3 Influences on Crossan's understanding of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection

Two emphases on Crossan's scholarship regarding meaning will be pursued here: (1) Postmodern deconstructionism, and (2) Occult and spiritism emphases.

4.4.3.1 Postmodern reconstruction

This reconstructive influence on Crossan has been pursued in §4.3.4.1 to expose the impact of postmodern thinkers such as Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida, Rorty, Barthes, Ricoeur, and others. Therefore the emphasis here is brief.

Barthes regarded writing as ceaselessly causing meaning to evaporate from a text and there is no way to assign an ultimate meaning to the text of literature. Therefore, this liberates 'an anti-theological activity' because to refuse to fasten meaning ultimately amounts 'to refuse God and his hypostases-reason, science, law' (Barthes 1977:147). Crossan cited his support of Barthes' writings: 'To write is to jeopardize the meaning of the world, to put an *indirect* question that the writer, by an ultimate abstention, refrains from answering' (Barthes, in Crossan 1976:39-40; emphasis in original). Thus Crossan is confirming his commitment to the silence of the author.

Vanhoozer's conclusion concerning Derrida's postmodernism is that he 'is a nihilistic, anarchistic thinker who celebrates the arbitrariness of meaning and truth by dancing on the tomb of God' (Vanhoozer 1998:50). Crossan, in giving his reason for accepting all language as polyvalent, stressed the importance of 'play', endorsing Jacques Ehrman's statement: 'Play is not played against a background of a fixed, stable, reality which would serve as its standard. All reality is caught up in the play of concepts which designate it'. In continuing with Ehrman, Crossan said that 'even more simply, "the distinguishing characteristic of reality is that it is played. Play, reality, culture are synonymous and interchangeable". Reality *is* play' (Ehrman in Crossan 1980:76; emphasis in original).[242] The inevitable for Crossan is that 'a game … can never be won absolutely because it would destroy the play and hence also the player. Therefore, it can be played repeatedly and continuously. So also with the play of interpretation on ludic allegory[243] in metaparable' (Crossan 1980:102). Robert Stewart noted that 'Crossan credits Derrida with seeing … the impossibility of a signifier ever referring to anything other than another signifier. Semiosis provides structure to language, but it cannot ground language. The only constant is play. The result is that interpretation is never ending, and any final or official claim to interpretation does violence to the metaphor' (Stewart 2008:34). Crossan's language is that 'since you cannot interpret absolutely, you can interpret forever' (Crossan 1980:102).

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[242] Stewart (2008:34) alerted this researcher to this emphasis. The semiotic fallacy is 'a misjudgement of the pragmatic effect of signs and their semantic object relations' (Nöth 1990:188).

This is a strategic aspect in dealing with Crossan's understanding of meaning. It amounts to 'play' with the text and this involves everlasting hermeneutics, thus making it the practice of anti-contextual hermeneutics.

There are some further influences by Gadamer on Crossan's understanding of meaning and hermeneutics.

4.4.3.1.1 Gadamer's hermeneutical influence

The impact of Gadamer on Crossan's thinking was assessed in §4.3.4.3.1. Some further influential emphases include: (1) his understanding of the fusion of the two horizons of modern interpreter and the text being read, thus creating some tension in this 'fusion of horizons' (Thiselton 1980); (2) '*not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity* as well' (Gadamer 2004:296; emphasis added). This has had a profound impact on Crossan's view of reconstruction and his hermeneutics of Jesus' resurrection; (3) the one 'trying to understand a text is always projecting' (Gadamer 2004:269). (4) Palmer described elements of the New Hermeneutic and its association with Gadamer and existential meaning (Palmer 1969:47-48, 56).

The evidence from Crossan regarding text and meaning points to Crossan being a disciple of Gadamer's presuppositional worldview that meaning is indeterminate and that understanding is not only reproductive but productive activity. This dynamic contributes to Crossan's creative, mystical metaphysics when applied to Jesus' resurrection and other issues in the life of Jesus. However, Crossan does have some lapses which were exposed in the abduction of §4.2.1.2 in which there were contradictions between his reconstructive definition of history and his practice of historical statement and authentication. He accepted narratives of some authors and historiography without a reconstructive interpretation.

Another influence is from Derrida's worldview.

4.4.3.1.2 Derrida's impact

Derrida's influence on Crossan was examined in §4.3.2.1 and §4.3.4.1. Some additional points of impact include: (1) Spivak, Derrida's translator, drew attention to Derrida's section on 'The signifier and truth' (Derrida 1997:10-17) in which Derrida contrasted the literal (common sense) with the metaphorical sense of writing. (2) Derrida regarded the literal as 'the dead letter, it is the carrier of death', while the metaphorical writing is 'the natural, divine and living writing' to be 'venerated'. Thus literal writing, for Derrida, was to be rejected because human beings need to comfort themselves with the metaphorical 'notions of presence' (Spivak in Derrida 1976:xl-xli; Derrida 1997:29, 17). 'Language is originally metaphorical' (Derrida 1997:271). (3) So Crossan follows suit. What is the primary meaning of a text for Crossan? When compared with Derrida, it is the metaphorical that has the crucial meaning. Crossan explained that a *parable* is a *metaphor*, which means '"carrying something over" from one thing to another and thereby "seeing something as another" or "speaking of something as another"'. He considers that no problems are recognised with small metaphors but the large ones 'are as dangerous as they are inevitable. When a metaphor gets big, it is called "tradition"; when it gets bigger, it is called "reality"; when it gets biggest of all, it is called "evolution" or even "god"'. His prominent emphasis on the metaphorical caused him to propose 'that parables *by* Jesus during his life begot parables *about* Jesus after his death' and that the 'four gospels not only contain *parables about* Jesus, but are best understood as four discrete *megaparables about* Jesus' (Crossan 2012:8, 153; emphasis in original). His emphasis is that 'Jesus died as a parabler and rose as Parable' (Crossan 1975:103). For him, the factual history of Jesus' crucifixion became 'parabolic history or historical parable'. He defined parable as 'a *metaphorical story*' that 'always points *externally* beyond itself, points to some different and much wider referent' (Crossan 2012:3, 9; emphasis in original). He has fallen into the arms of Derrida who stated that 'language is originally metaphorical' and that the literal interpretation is 'the dead letter, it is the carrier of death. It exhausts life'. However, metaphorical writing 'is equal in dignity to the origin of value, to the voice of conscience as divine law, to the heart, to sentiment, and so forth' (Derrida 1997:271, 17). This Derridean-Crossan metaphorical-parabolic worldview will be played over and over in Crossan's interpretation and placing of meaning on Jesus' resurrection.

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[243] The meaning of 'ludic allegory' is synonymous with 'polyvalent narration' for Crossan (1977:139).

The reality of this metaphorical-parabolic hermeneutic is seen in these kinds of illustrations: If the primary meaning of language is metaphorical and the New Testament gospels are mega-parables – and parables are historical fiction – that would lead to a disturbing rewriting of ancient and recent history for the Holocaust, Pol Pot's slaughter in Cambodia, the Napoleonic Wars, nailing Luther's 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Emperor Nero and the Fall of Jerusalem, Herod's killing James and imprisoning Peter (Ac 12), and the crash of Malaysia Airlines M17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives in July 2014 (Joshi 2014).

It is no surprise to find metaphors to be user-friendly for Crossan because 'metaphors are equivocal; they do not have one clear sense, so that they cannot give rise to clear and distinct knowledge. Metaphor thus represents the epitome of textuality; in metaphor, meanings refuse to stand still' (Vanhoozer 1998:127). Thus, for Crossan to give primacy to metaphorical understanding is pivotal for his hermeneutics of indeterminacy of meaning which is seen in his interpretations of the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances (see §4.4.4.5 below).

This is in contrast with Western logical thinking which has for millennia been based on Aristotelian logic which Aristotle stated in the context of discussing the meaning of 'man', that if 'one were to say that the word has an infinite number of meanings, obviously reasoning would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning' (Aristotle 1994-2009:4.2).[244] This does not exclude the fact that there are times when the same word in different contexts can have different meanings. Words such as love, grass, hedge, cloud and mean, are a few such examples. However, these words do not have polyvalent meanings dependent on subjectivist understandings of interpreters.

Vanhoozer warns that the either/or error needs to be avoided, that is, that interpretation is wholly indeterminate or totally determinate. There is no need to 'choose between a meaning that is fully present and a meaning that is forever deferred. It may well be that the deferral of meaning is not a permanent state, only temporary. One day we may be able to understand as we have been understood' (Vanhoozer 1998:139).

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[244] This paragraph is based on suggestions and statements by Vanhoozer (1998:127).

4.4.3.1.3 Reader-response influence

See an assessment of this issue in §4.3.4.2.2(a). Now some added emphases are presented to understand the impact of this growing influence in some sections of general education and academia.

Jauss' focus, like other reader-response promoters, was on the receptor and not the originator of the literary specimen, claiming that it was an illusion to regard a text as having a '"timelessly true" meaning' (Jauss 1982:21, 29). Paul Noble showed how Stanley Fish's radical postmodern hermeneutical theory has 'severe internal problems' (Noble 1994:436) and that Fish's epistemology is a version of anti-foundationalism which advocates the perspective that facts are a product of interpretation. Stanley Porter, a supporter of Fish's reader-response criticism, called on New Testament scholars 'to become comfortable with the idea of an ahistorical close-reading before moving to what appears to be a more difficult strategy, where the centre of authority revolves around the sophisticated and perceptive reader, especially when many in New Testament studies have not had the opportunity to develop as close readers' and 'time will be needed for New Testament scholars to make the theory and practice of reader-response criticism their own' (Porter 1990:287, 290). Crossan has fulfilled Porter's challenge of advocating and presenting reader-response strategies, even in the accounts of Jesus' resurrection where Crossan stated, 'I am asking historical questions, questions about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection within its contemporary context. That question is absolutely prior, both then and now, to whether one believes or not in Jesus' resurrection. To affirm or deny something, one must first know its content and meaning' (Crossan 2003:30). How is it possible to seek meaning if one is unsure if the content actually happened? Crossan's answer is that it does not matter if content is literal, historical or parabolical. What is important is the meaning for Crossan (White & Crossan 2005:14, 43-44). This methodology creates major handicaps with many recent and ancient historical events that cannot be understood with a reader-response interpretation. To read Crossan's own writings for understanding suffers from the same dilemma.

Thus, meaning for Crossan is determined by the readers, whether they are individuals or a community of readers. Robert Stewart's accurate summary of Crossan's result is that 'Crossan's Jesus is constructed from a database of disconnected sayings that can be interpreted (played with) in many different ways. Crossan's method reduces the historical Jesus to what Ben Witherington calls "a talking head"[245] and whatever details Crossan can pull out of the things that Jesus says. Ironically, in this way *Crossan becomes the broker of history to his readers*' (Stewart 2008:62; emphasis in original).

4.4.3.1.4 Some other dynamics

When the postmodern reconstructive emphasis on 'my reading of the text' is the key to meaning, less prominence will be given to examine any text in its historical context or to integrate it in the overall message (Wright 1992:13). Wright cites Stephen Moore who pointed out that Crossan's 'work subverts itself through his insistence on trying, at the same time as he is deconstructing the texts, to discover the historical Jesus through them'. Wright's assessment was that 'the way is hard that leads to genuine deconstructionism, and those who follow it consistently are few' (Moore in Wright 1992:60).

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[245] This is in Witherington (1997a:42).

Any thoughtful reader, with a range of reading from a local newspaper to an academic journal, engages in interactions with the text. When Australian cricketer and batsman, Phillip Hughes, aged 25, was killed by a freak accident when hit in the head by a cricket ball bowled to him during a cricket match (Tomarchio 2014), this researcher interacted with the online text: How is it possible for a batsman wearing a helmet to be felled and killed by a fast bowler's bouncer? What will that mean for Australian cricket, bouncers used by bowlers, and the construction of helmets? In an academic journal, Crossan wrote that in a post-Enlightenment world, 'such things as virginal conceptions, divine births, miraculous powers, resurrections and ascensions, never have happened and never could happen. They are opposed to physical law and/or divine consistency' (Crossan 2003:31; Crossan & Reed 2001:269). This reader's interaction with the text included: Why the labelling of pre-Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment? Did God cease his supernatural actions because of a human generated 'Enlightenment' understanding and the elevation of reason and the scientific worldview? Wait a minute: Did God ever perform supernatural activities; isn't that making a presumptive assessment? Is Crossan correct or is he promoting his anti-supernaturalist worldview? Similar interaction can take place with the reading of any Scripture, including, Jesus 'was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor 15:4). Where was he buried? To what does being raised on the third day refer? Was there an empty tomb? How is that known? Was it a bodily resurrection or some other kind of appearance? Which Scriptures support the notion of being raised? What are the consequences if there is no bodily resurrection? How will that impact on salvation since the Lord Jesus 'was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification' (Rm 4:24)?

Therefore, interaction between reader and text or reader and speech-acts takes place and there is also the interaction of purpose: How does this apply to me? The reader's interaction with the text does not change the meaning of the text but may call for further explanation and clarification.

One of the prominent purposes of reader-response methodologies is to demean meaning by demeaning metaphysics, method, objectivity and interpretation (Vanhoozer 1998:98-103). 'If all determinate order is the result of creative interpretation, it becomes difficult to believe in any one conceptual framework or interpretive scheme. Once one accepts the lack of a ground for determinate meaning, it is impossible to believe in definitions or in final interpretations. How then can we distinguish a scholarly commentary from uninformed opinion' (Vanhoozer 1998:98)? This is what Crossan is doing with his wanting to have the Easter events dissociated from a literal body coming out of the bomb, the tomb being empty or their being visions or apparitions for the resurrection appearances (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). If these events are dramatic ways of expressing the Christian faith, independent of an empty tomb, then Crossan has created indeterminate, subjective meaning with the opportunity for pluralistic interpretations that point to the creation of mystical metaphysics. The Emmaus language is one example: 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens', which he claims introduces a definition of parable, which is 'a story that never happened but always does – or at least should' (Crossan 2012:5). Who said so? Crossan did with his subjective imposition on the text!

Another dynamic is Crossan's adaptation of the resurrection to mean what his postmodern reconstruction desires. Wright noted two such examples:

(1) Crossan observed that 'what we often forget about crucifixion is the carrion crow and scavenger dog who respectively croak above and growl below the dead or dying body'. For Jesus, his body was 'left on the cross or in a shallow grave barely covered with dirt and stones, the dogs were waiting. And his followers, who had fled, would know that too. Watch, then, how the horror of that brutal truth is sublimated through hope and imagination into its opposite' (Crossan 1994a:127, 154). That significant event is not in accordance with the way things were described in the gospels (Mt 27:32-55; Mk 15:21-47; Lk 23:26-56; Jn 19:16-42). Wright's assessment was that if Crossan's description had happened, no matter how many 'visions' the disciples might have had, 'the disciples would not have concluded that he had been raised from the dead'. Therefore, 'we are left with the secure historical conclusion: the tomb was empty, and various "meetings" took place' with Jesus and his followers and with Paul and possibly James. The conclusion of Jesus' body being raised from the dead is 'in the same category, of historical probability so high as to be virtually certain, as the death of Augustus in AD 14 or the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70'. Wright stressed that he was following the historical argument and not invoking *a priori* beliefs. 'The widespread belief and practice of the early Christians is only explicable if we assume that they all believed that Jesus was bodily raised, in an Easter event something like the stories of the gospels tell; the reason they believed that he was bodily raised is because the tomb was empty and, over a short period thereafter, they encountered Jesus himself, giving every appearance of being bodily alive once again' (Wright 2003:709-710).

There is the added factor that Crossan could not possibly believe in Jesus' supernatural bodily resurrection because of his anti-supernaturalist bias in which he stated, 'It's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way [by performing supernatural miracles – SDG]' (Crossan in Copan 1998:61). He wrote, 'I believe that miracles are not changes in the physical world so much as changes in the social world' (Crossan & Watts 1996:88). This was examined in §3.2.1.1 and §4.2.1.2.5(d).

Wright's second example was:

(2) Crossan's desire to continue to use the words 'bodily' and 'embodied' (Crossan 1998a:xxvii-xxx1) for Jesus' resurrection but they are 'to mean by them not that Jesus' body was itself raised from the dead but that his life somehow continues in the embodied communities that work for justice in the world, [and this – SDG] leapfrogs to a kind of postmodern Catholic ecclesiology'. But this is 'ignoring the fact that … the very concerns he is stressing are precisely the ones that the actual bodily resurrection of Jesus will ground and sustain' (Wright 2003:729-730, n. 24). Wright here refers to Crossan's statement that 'there is only one Jesus, the *historical* Jesus who incarnated the Jewish God of justice for a believing community committed to continuing such incarnation ever afterward' (Crossan 1998a:xxx; emphasis in original).

As for the relationship of history and meaning, although he did not examine the issue in detail, Wright's brief account of the concept of the meaning of meaning was that there were three primary aspects: (a) The meaning of a word it determined by its use in a context or implicit context. (b) To obtain the meaning of a sentence, the pursuit is assisted by an examination of its place in a story or implicit story. (c) The meaning of a story is understood by its place in a worldview. Even though worldviews are like the foundations of a house, they can 'in principle be dug out and inspected' (Wright 1992:115-117).

See §3.3.2.7 for an explanation of how Crossan described the first Easter (πάσχα) and its apparitions, visions and trance. By 2012, Crossan provided a revisionist adaptation of the event, meaning and intention of Jesus' resurrection. This perspective regards the entire gospels as megaparables (Crossan 2012:6). For him, 'Jesus did exist as a historical figure' and 'we can know the significant consequence of his life – from John the Baptist to Pilate the prefect – but that he comes to us trailing clouds of fiction, parables *by* him and *about* him, particular incidents as miniparables and whole gospels as megaparables' (Crossan 2012:247, 251; emphasis in original). Jesus' fiction through megaparables is hardly consistent with one who said he was 'the truth' (Jn 14:6). It seems to contain the fictive, creative work of Crossan, the reconstructionist.

The impact of Crossan's postmodern reconstructive Jesus is seen in his question (which also is his perspective): 'What if "Jesus" had been as deliberately and honestly invented as was, say, the "Good Samaritan" or the "Prodigal Son"? What – if anything – would have been lost to Christianity?' He answered: 'Nothing more or less *than an actual life* of nonviolent distributive justice as the revelation of the character of God. But could you not get that just as well from a nonhistorical figure in a magnificent parable? Not really. But why? What is at stake?' (Crossan 2012:251). What is at stake are the life, death, and resurrection of the historical person of Jesus, but he places that issue aside as he makes the entire gospels into mega-parables. For him a parable is 'a fictional story invented for moral or theological purposes' (Crossan 2012:3). Thus, the entire gospels, by application, contain fictional stories about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. If a person were uncertain about its application to the passion, he stated: 'The factual history of Jesus's crucifixion had become parable – parabolic history or historical parable' (Crossan 2012:3). As for the empty tomb on resurrection morning as recorded in Mark 16:1-8, he stated he was 'speaking – I repeat – within the viewpoint of Mark's parable'. Of another passage (Mk 13:5-7, 21-22), Crossan wrote of Mark's 'parabolic hindsight and fictional creativity' (Crossan 2012:172-173). Thus, factual history of the crucifixion and then the discovery of the empty tomb became fiction (parable). These are examples of Crossan's reconstruction in action.

Why should Crossan's be the accepted postmodern, reconstructed view where meaning is independent of a literal body of Jesus coming out of the tomb or of the finding of an empty tomb? Instead, his core understanding is that 'the heart of resurrection for me is that the power of God is now available through Jesus unconfined by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). Thus, autonomous human reason, creative postmodern invention, and reader-response ideology crowd together in Crossan's subjective interpretation of the empty tomb. He provides no reason to objectively determine why his view should be accepted; this is one of the problems with indeterminateness. It is open to multiple, subjective explanations.

Crossan's claim was that his view of the resurrection as vision, apparition, trance or altered state of consciousness is based on the research of Ioan Lewis, Erika Bourguignon, Felicitas Goodman and Raymond Price (Crossan 1999:6). Investigations of these researchers are pursued in §4.4.7.1 below.

The questions are pressing. They surround Crossan's conclusions that:

- Meaning is independent of inductive, historical content;
- The content of 'meaning' comes from the postmodern, creative imagination of
- Crossan;
- This contrived understanding includes hermeneutics of parable and mega-

- parable developed by Crossan himself;
- 'My reading of the text' – meaning Crossan's reading of the text – is the key to understanding meaning.

4.4.4 The impact of Crossan's reconstructive interpretation of the resurrection

The impact of Gadamer on Crossan was pursued in §4.4.3.1.1. Postmodern, reconstructive, interactive hermeneutics does not deal with a fixed or stable meaning of a text as Crossan indicates with his language of practising reconstructive interactivism. A moderate postmodernist such as Paul Ricoeur gave his assessment that '*the author's intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide*'. In addition, 'the text's career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. *What the text means now matters more than what the author meant when he wrote it*' (Ricoeur 1976:29, 30; emphasis added). If that is the case, then readers could provide their own meanings of a text without objection from others. This leads to multivalent meanings that generally are not related to the original intent of the written author – as the deconstructionist does not support authorial intent as applicable today. When this postmodern approach is applied to the New Testament statements about an empty tomb of Jesus, the textual intention is submerged by multiple meanings given by multiple readers. So the text becomes like putty to the reader; it can be pushed anywhere the reader's deconstructed meaning chooses.

Gadamer left no doubt as to what that application meant to him. He stated that 'the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come'. However, there is an important influence of the past on the present: 'The horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. *Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*' (Gadamer 2004:305; emphasis in original).

How does this apply to legal and biblical hermeneutics? Gadamer admitted to 'an essential tension between the fixed text – the law or the gospel – on the one hand and, on the other, the sense arrived at by applying it at the concrete moment of interpretation, either in judgment or in preaching'. So what becomes the final arbiter of meaning? Is it the historical text or the contemporary interpretation? Gadamer stated that both law and gospel are not understood 'as a merely historical document' but 'if it is to be understood properly – i.e., according to the claim it makes – [it – SDG] must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. Understanding is always application' (Gadamer 2004:307-308; emphasis added). Therefore, for Gadamer, his postmodern 'two horizons' become one interpretation and that is the understanding which he views as application. Thus, by application, the factual empty tomb is not accepted as an historical event but is understood by how the contemporary person applies it in a new way. This is harmonious with Crossan's worldview that it does not matter if there is no empty tomb; it is the meaning that is important.

Therefore, the hermeneutics of deconstruction, for practical purposes, means that the historical text is only a means of reaching contemporary conclusions that amount to hermeneutics of application that may change from one moment to the next in new and different ways. Effectively, the readers make of the text what they want and the historical, fixed meaning of the text is assailed.

Imagine what would happen if this researcher used such hermeneutics in reading Derrida, Gadamer, Crossan, the gospels or a local newspaper? It would mean that Gadamer's writings or an ABC news report in Australia would be distorted (that is, deconstructed / reconstructed) to mean whatever this researcher wanted them to mean. Thus, Gadamer's and Crossan's postmodern reconstruction is self-refuting. When applied to Crossan's own writings, they deconstruct into multiple, relativistic meanings, based on the creativity of the reader-interpreter, whether that be an individual or a community. This postmodern understanding, if applied by readers, would mean that even the postmodernist's writings would have no fixed meaning for understanding, but would be left to the whims and fancies of idiosyncrasies of individual interpretation (or application) by the reader.

The local newspaper or radio, TV and Internet news, would have no fixed meaning but would be subject to the hermeneutics of relativistic reconstruction. This would lead to misrepresentations of what happened, say, in an accident. As this researcher wrote the above, there was an accident that happened on the freeway adjoining the suburb in which he lives:

Photo: The crash happened at Anzac Avenue overpass at North Lakes about 9:30am (AEST).[246] (ABC News: Brad Ryan)

> The Bruce Highway has reopened at North Lakes north of Brisbane after a crash in which a truck trailer became jammed under an overpass.
>
> All southbound lanes were closed for several hours near the Anzac Avenue Bridge after the accident involving two B-double semi-trailers.
>
> Police say a truck crashed into the rear of another truck shortly before 10:00 (AEST).
>
> The accident forced a trailer to become stuck at a sharp angle between the overpass and the road.
>
> (ABC News 2013)

There are practical ramifications for this story! This is where multiple meaning, relativistic, reconstructive interactivism, like that promoted by Crossan, suffers a serious challenge. It cannot be used to arrive at a rational understanding of what is happening in our world, thus indicating that it is built on an unsound epistemology of linguistics and history (see §4.3). It is an invented, creative, subjective mechanism that is designed to remake the meanings of events that range from Jesus' life, death and resurrection to Crossan's own writings and the crash on the freeway at North Lakes, Queensland in October 2013. The determinateness of height of a semi-trailer could have been measured before travelling the freeway but the accident emphasised the need for semi-trailers to be below a certain height to travel without incident along that freeway. Here, meaning is associated with a specific definiteness, the height of a semi-trailer and the height of the overpass above the freeway.

As an example of the disaster that arises when a postmodern, interactive hermeneutic of meaning is applied to Crossan's writings, here is a sample of reconstructed, interactive, imaginative, creative application that this researcher has created, based on Crossan's own publication. Crossan wrote:

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[246] AEST is an acronym for Australian Eastern Standard Time.

> Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical. He was buried, if buried at all, by his enemies, and the necessarily shallow grave would have been easy prey for scavenging animals. We can still glimpse what happened before, behind, and despite those fictional overlays precisely by imagining what they were created to hide. What happened on Easter Sunday? Is that the story of one day? Or of several years? Is that the story of all Christians gathered together as a single group in Jerusalem? Or is that the story of but one group among several, maybe of one group who claimed to be the whole?… The Easter story at the end is, like the Nativity story at the beginning, so engraved on our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology.
>
> (Crossan 1994a:160, 161)

The meaning of Crossan's statement about Jesus' burial, as created now in a reconstructive way by this researcher, is that he is describing the truth (although totally fictional and unhistorical) of what happens when any human being is put down and denigrated by human enemies and suffers discouragement to the point of depressive despair. The shallow grave is a metaphor for the depression that this person experiences because of feelings of hopelessness. When suffering in this way, any human being can be vulnerable to the scavenging beasts of encouragement poachers – those demons of encouragement busters. Those who have had this negative experience know how it affects their views of relationships in the past, present and future; it happens over and over, again and again. What happened on Easter Sunday is an excellent picture of what can happen for some people with the resurrection of encouragement through participation in church growth groups. One such group may help some to experience an elevated level of encouragement but there is no such guaranteed, automatic experience of heightened encouragement. The Easter story is a picture of what has happened to some participants during a growth group, but for many people these growth groups are a hit and miss phenomenon where elevated encouragement levels could be as much a myth as reality.

Postmodern, reconstructed interactivism cannot prevent that kind of fictional, allegorical, metaphorical, irrational hermeneutics as created by this researcher. It is an extreme creation, but so is the view that Jesus was buried 'in a shallow grave barely covered with dirt and stones, the dogs were waiting' (Crossan 1994a:154), and his resurrection appearances involved apparitions (Crossan 1998a:552). The latter will be examined in §4.4.7.4.

Gadamer explained that the application of 'the methodological ideal of the natural sciences … to the credibility of the historical testimonies of scriptural tradition' led to catastrophic results for Christianity with the criticism of Jansenist miracles leading to historical criticism of the Bible in line with Spinoza's example. His comment was that the consistent application of the scientific method to the human sciences (including theology) 'would amount to their self-annihilation' (Gadamer 2004:17). A similar end can be attributed to Gadamer's own methodology of postmodern reconstruction when applied to his own writings. It leads to the 'self-annihilation' of the meaning of his own writings and those of other postmodern deconstructionists, like Crossan, who adopt Gadamer's epistemology. Why cannot these scholars see and acknowledge how self-destructive this reconstructive methodology is to all writings, including their own?

Thiselton's conclusion was that 'theology cannot dispense with metacritical[247] reflection', but there is a handicap with serious ramifications: 'Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics transposes the meaning of texts into projections which are *potentially idolatrous* as instruments of self-affirmation. Such a model *transposes a Christian theology of grace and revelation into a phenomenology of religious self-discovery*'. He affirms Ricoeur's statements as supportive of his call 'to destroy the idols, and to listen to symbols', which Ricoeur contends is the goal of hermeneutics (Thiselton 1992:550; emphasis in original). Thiselton has encapsulated the problems with Crossan's postmodern hermeneutics; they involve the socio-pragmatic, transposing of texts into Crossan's projections which are self-affirmations, with the potential of being idolatrous. This is especially noted with Crossan's support for the absence of fixed meaning of language and metaphor being the foundation of all language.

4.4.4.1 Metaphor is the primary meaning

How does Crossan get to the point of regarding metaphor as the primary meaning of language? He maintained this position in Crossan (1980:5-13) where he wrote of 'the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself' as opposed to fixed, literal, univalent language. 'The absence' of a fixed meaning and the comprehensiveness of metaphor 'is the foundation and horizon of all language' (Crossan 1980:9-10). For him, this makes all language metaphorical. He admitted that there are 'certain cases and situations' where it is possible that language may be univalent and literal, but that is not intrinsically the case. As an 'arbitrary convention', language 'is intrinsically polyvalent and only our careful endeavors or most indifferent occasions render it univalent'. He used the red octagonal stop sign as an example of univalent meaning, but his claim was that that is a dissenting view. Normally, language is metaphorical and polyvalent in meaning to Crossan (Crossan 1980:8-9). Postmodern advocate, Barthes, admitted that 'once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing'. It was engaged in liberating 'an anti-theological activity'. His conclusion was unabashed: 'To refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law' (Barthes 1977:147).

The outworking of this is stated by Crossan as, 'The Cross replaced the parables and became in their place the supreme Parable…. Jesus died as a parabler and rose as Parable' (Crossan 1975:103). Stewart's interpretation was that 'in this way, Crossan subsumes history under hermeneutics' (Stewart 2008:31). Crossan's reconstruction is not only an attack on New Testament exegesis and contextual hermeneutics, but also an offensive against theology by its promotion of mystical, elusive metaphysics.[248]

What does Crossan understand by parable? He linked parable with metaphor, stating that metaphor 'can articulate a referent so new or so alien to consciousness that this referent can only be grasped within the metaphor itself' and to receive information from metaphor one needs to participate 'in its new and alien referential world…. Remove the metaphor and you lose the referent. The metaphor is body, not cocoon'. He explained that 'parable is a metaphor of normalcy which intends to create participation in its referent'. The extremes of Crossan's view of metaphor are seen in his statement regarding, 'I am the Lord thy God' (Ex 20:2 and that the Ten Commandments 'give a parable') (Crossan 1973:15-16, 20). What could be more provocative than to redefine commandments as parable?

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[247] Metacriticism is 'a criticism of criticism, the goal of which is to scrutinize systematically the terminology, logic, and structure that undergird critical and theoretical discourse in general or any particular mode of such discourse' (Henderson & Brown 1997. S v metacriticism).

[248] Some of these conclusions were assisted by the insights of Stewart (2008:242-243, n. 15).

By 2012, he understood a parable was 'a fictional story invented for moral or theological purposes' and whole gospels were regarded as megaparables (Crossan 2012:3, 251). Thus, the consequence is that whole gospels are made up of a 'fictional story'. However, it must not be minimised that Crossan understood metaphor/parable this way: 'It is precisely the absence of a fixed, literal, univocal, or univalent language that releases the inevitability and universality of metaphor itself. And this absence is the foundation and horizon of all language and of all thought' (Crossan 1980:9). Donald Denton's assessment of this latter work by Crossan was that Crossan 'denies a clear distinction between figurative and literal language, advocating the metamorphicity of all language' (Denton 2004:37).

Crossan's metaphorical understanding of Jesus' resurrection is precisely summarised in his own words: 'Bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of its tomb. And neither is bodily resurrection just another term for Christian faith itself'. What, then, is it? As indicated, 'Bodily resurrection means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continued, as it always had, to form communities of like lives'. Therefore, Crossan considered that the title of the section in which he wrote these words should not be 'The *bodily* resurrection of Jesus' but 'The *fleshly* resurrection of Jesus' (Crossan 1998a:xxxi; emphasis in original). However, he admitted in a later publication with regard to Jesus' resurrection that 'my guess (and it is little more than that) is that a rather similar spectrum from the most literal to the most metaphorical existed then as now' (Crossan 2003:55). He affirmed a Toronto Star reporter's statement as being quite accurate when he reported that 'for Crossan, empty tomb stories are parables of resurrection, not the Resurrection itself' (Crossan 2000:166). Thus, Crossan is clearly in favour of a metaphorical/parabolic understanding of Jesus' resurrection, remembering that 'fictions and parables are both made-up stories', fictions being for entertainment and parables 'are for message' (Crossan 2000:169).

In the dialogue between N T Wright and Crossan, in the response by Doug Geivett, he affirmed the differences in the hermeneutics of Jesus' resurrection between Wright and Crossan. He stated that 'Wright affirms a literal bodily resurrection of Jesus; Crossan denies this in favor of a metaphorical interpretation. Wright and Crossan have radically different conceptions of the resurrection'. Geivett noted that 'from Wright's point of view, Crossan's conception of the resurrection surely counts as a case of "sophisticated skepticism." From Crossan's point of view, it would seem that Wright's perspective is a version of "Christian fundamentalism"' (Geivett 2006:93-94).

In regard to Jesus' resurrection, Crossan's view is that 'the metaphorical is always metaphorical *of something* beyond itself. If, for example, the resurrection of Jesus is taken metaphorically, it announces God's justification of the world and that is something literal, actual, historical, something real or else just empty talk' (Crossan 2003:55; emphasis in original). Note that his presuppositional hermeneutics that allows for a metaphorical interpretation 'of something beyond itself' does not refer to a literal body rising from the grave and an empty tomb. However, his choice is to regard the Easter story 'like the Nativity story at the beginning', not 'as factual history' but as 'fictional mythology' (Crossan 1994a:161). There are mixed messages communicated by that kind of confusing language.

Therefore, since metaphor is the primary meaning and with the resurrection the only way he 'can accept the *claims*' of it is through '*what it means*' (White & Crossan 2005:25; emphasis added), Crossan creates his own metaphorical meaning. Meaning becomes meaningless with textual free play leading to a morass of subjective Crossanism that engulfs his understanding of the resurrection (see §4.4.4.3 below). How is it possible to engage in any kind of objective assessment with metaphorical, reconstructive, postmodern, subjective Crossanism? It makes one subjective view no more reliable than any other.

4.4.4.2 The brunt of the author's death

For an assessment of deconstruction, relativism and the death of the author, see §4.3.4.2.2(a).

4.4.4.3 Textual free play

As early as 1983, Lynn Poland[249] isolated what she considered were the main literary influences on Crossan which were the New Criticism as well as two methodological issues. One was subsuming history within language and the other diminished the cognitive content at the expense of form and function (Poland in Thiselton 1992:115-116). Poland cited Crossan: 'The term "historical Jesus" really means the language of Jesus and most especially the parables themselves' (Crossan 1973:xiii), noting that Crossan's focus was on 'structure and function at the expense of the content of the meanings and beliefs embodied in the story'. Her observation was that Crossan did not seem to understand that specific content and function of a metaphor were dependent on 'the concrete situation that the narrative depicts and the auditors recognize'. She rightly saw that metaphor was an extension of ordinary meaning (Poland in Thiselton 1992:116). Free play has application both to linguistics and history.

By the time of Crossan (2012), he had evolved in his understanding of parable 'to think of each gospel version as a book-length *megaparable* about the life, death, and resurrection of the historical character Jesus of Nazareth', remembering that for him 'a parable – whether it is short, medium-length, or long – is a metaphor expanded into a story, or, more simply, *a parable is a metaphorical story*'. What is a metaphor? Crossan explained that it is a term based on two Greek words: *meta*, meaning 'over' or 'across', and the other, *pharein*, 'to bear'. So, 'metaphor means "carrying something over" from one thing to another and thereby "seeing something as another" or "speaking of something as another"' (Crossan 2012:6, 8; emphasis in original). He concludes that he follows 'the consensus of modern scholarship', agreeing that 'Jesus really existed' and we know the details of his life from John the Baptist to Pilate the prefect, but then he mixed his understanding with the fiction of mini-parables and gospels as mega-parables (Crossan 2012:251). Crossan's claim is that if Jesus were not a historical person, but was invented like the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son, nothing would have been lost to Christianity, as it would provide us with 'nothing more or less than an *actual life* of nonviolent distributive justice as the revelation of the character of God'. He questions: 'But could you not get that just as well from a nonhistorical figure in a magnificent parable? Not really. But why? What is at stake?' (Crossan 2012:251; emphasis in original). Is this not Crossan's textual and historical free play in action? He has made the entire record of the New Testament gospels to be mega-parables that are not dealing with historical material and the actual life where Jesus shed his blood to provide redemption for the sins of humanity, but for Crossan that has to do with parabolic ‘seeing something as another’. This textual free play for Crossan destroys the content of the biblical text as he invents his Jesus of ‘nonviolent distributive justice’ and confounds a fundamental of biblical Christianity, the vicarious, substitutionary atonement which he rejects (White & Crossan 2005:47).

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[249] Lynn M Poland is associate professor, Religion Department, Davidson College, a liberal arts college in Davidson, North Carolina, USA. This information was available at Davidson College (2014). Thiselton was referring to Poland (1985:108-115).

Thiselton (1992:116-120) wrote of much earlier editions of Crossan to that of Crossan (2012), but he described Crossan’s work as progressing into ‘a more radical theory of language’ (with Crossan 1988b) where ‘parables subvert’ with Crossan’s appeal to the early Wittgenstein. If ‘parables subvert’ as a description of their effects, according to Thiselton, for Crossan (1988b), parables must engage in colossal subversion when whole New Testament gospels are treated as mega-parables in Crossan (2012).

In Crossan (1976), he moved into textual free-play, based on his theory of language. This textual free-play extends to what Crossan called ‘a problematic text of Scripture’, which is the Ten Commandments, not appearing until Exodus 20:2, and ‘the all-important words, “I am the Lord thy God”’. Crossan’s questions were: ‘Why are they not the very first lines of the Bible? “Why are the Ten Commandments not said at the beginning of the Torah?”’ His answer was: ‘They give a parable’ (Crossan 1973:20). He compared the ‘parable’ of the Ten Commandments with

> a king who entered a province [and – SDG] said to the people: “May I be your king?” But the people said to him: “Have you done anything good for us that you should rule over us?” What did he do then? He built the city wall for them, he brought in the water supply for them, and he fought their battles. Then when he said to them: “May I be your king?” They said to him: “Yes, yes.” Likewise, God, He brought the Israelites out of Egypt…. The story continues in parallel so that at its end it is quite clear why God “waited” until Exodus 20:2 to become and be accepted as Israel’s king.
>
> (Crossan 1973:20)

Then Crossan stated that both the Ten Commandments and the story about the king ‘are dealing with didactic stories poised somewhere between example and allegory but inevitably linked to the problem of life or text in a very precise and specific fashion’ (Crossan 1973:20).

In other words, Crossan developed moral commands and made them parable or allegory (fiction) as his own free play, which was a creative and interpretative mechanism. This is one example of what Thiselton described: then came Crossan’s ‘radically post-modern theory of textuality’ in Crossan (1979). In Crossan (1980), he became more radical in his polyvalent meaning of texts and language. Thiselton stated: ‘Why Derrida is attractive to Crossan is understandable, for he is, in Meyer Abram’s apt characterization, the Zen master of Western philosophy’ (Thiselton 1992:119). As is unfolding in the examination of Hypothesis 21, Crossan is looking more and more like the Derridean philosopher in religious, postmodern, reconstructive garb. When the Ten Commandments are made into a parable by Crossan’s free-play of writing, anything becomes creatively possible – including the Ten Commandments and eventually entire gospels as mega-parables.

Crossan (1977:108-109) developed Derrida’s understanding of ‘metaphor’ into ‘a metaphor of metaphor’ for the polyvalent metaphors of Jesus. Thiselton cited Crossan who stated that in structuralist or postmodern thought, ‘we create the labyrinth ourselves, that it has no centre, that it is infinitely expansible, that we create it as play and for play' (Crossan 1977:112). By this, Thiselton understood that Crossan returned to semiotic theory and 'texts can be played continuously' without canonical interpretation; parables are treated as meta-parables, which are parables about parabling (Thiselton 1992:119). This is what Crossan does in Crossan (2012), making the entire New Testament gospels to be parables. So Crossan could make moral commands of the Ten Commandments into parables, based on his own subjective, reconstructive, interactive decision. Thus free-play in literature became relativism or polyvalence in action with anyone's interpretation acceptable. Words thus lose meaning with textual free play.

This provides further evidence to reject Crossan's version of reconstruction as it allows any kind of creative interpretation for any text as demonstrated by entire New Testament gospels being treated as mega-parables. It redefines language as contrary to the way things really are in the text. Crossan, surely, would not want all of his publications to be read in this fashion. This researcher rejects the content of the language of this extensive research project being turned into an interpretive free-play through postmodern reconstruction.

In a detailed chapter demonstrating how semiotics can move to deconstruction, Thiselton (1992:80-141) used Derrida's language of 'freeplay, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions' and showed how Crossan used this to promote textual free play (Thiselton 1992:117; see Crossan 1976:34).[250] Crossan's textual free play also is seen in his many citations leading to the postmodern presupposition number 23 (see §3.3.5.1), which is not pursued in this research.

For Crossan (2012:251), it does not matter whether Jesus existed as an historical person; his life was associated with fiction and entire gospels are mega-parables and thus are not statements of accurate historical events. Crossan asks, 'What is at stake?' Five obvious issues immediately arise for this Christian researcher:

(1) If Jesus' passion-resurrection never happened as a fact, his resurrection was fictional fantasy involving altered states of consciousness and Crossan's interpretation of the resurrection being an 'apparition' is as good or bad as any other free play creation by researchers or popularisers.

(2) The eternal salvation that is based on Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice and resurrection (as in Rm 4:22-25; 1 Cor 15:17) is abandoned, or perhaps Crossan would want that shedding of blood to be seen as a parable.

(3) By a man (Jesus) came the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:21). Without that man – not a fiction or fantasy of a man – the future resurrection of the dead is fantasy and not fact. First Corinthians 15:13 argues from no resurrection of dead people to Christ not even being raised. It is strange language if this is referring to a metaphorical raising of the dead for all people *and* for Jesus Christ. This is examined in §4.4.7.3.

(4) Second Peter 1:16 described the resurrection of Jesus: 'For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty'. But that involves accepting a literal, plain reading of the text – which Crossan opposes. There is no acceptance of mythical, fictional, metaphorical, parabolical endeavours in association with Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

(5) Paul, the apostle, understood the texts in a very different manner to Crossan in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20. These included:

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[250] See Thiselton (1992:117, 138, n. 199).

- If Christ is proclaimed as having been raised from the dead, how can you (the Christian Corinthians), say there is no resurrection of the dead? Is Crossan also in a category parallel to that of the Corinthians?
- No resurrection from the dead means that Christ has not been raised.
- If there is no resurrection of the dead: preaching and faith are in vain; faith is futile; Paul and the Corinthians are still in their sins (with no forgiveness).
- If there is no resurrection, Paul and the Corinthians are misrepresenting God.
- If the dead are not raised (in the future), Christ has not been raised in the past.
- Those who have died as Christians have perished.
- But, Christ has been raised from the dead and he is the firstfruits of those who have died. What kind of resurrection is this? Is it as promoted by Crossan or is there a more consistent interpretation?
- What is the meaning of Christ's resurrection as firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (died)? 'Firstfruits' is a metaphor where Christ is the first of the resurrection harvest, guaranteeing the full harvest of those believers who will be raised from the dead. This metaphor, used by Paul, asserts that 'the resurrection of the believing dead is absolutely inevitable; it is guaranteed by God himself' because of Christ's resurrection (Fee 1987:748-749).

Crossan challenges this understanding on the resurrection teaching by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 (Crossan 1999:7-8). The anti-supernaturalism in Crossan is parallel to that of Rudolph Bultmann's famous claim that 'an historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable' (Bultmann 1953:Pt II) and Crossan's assertion (yet to be further investigated in this study) was that the resurrection of Jesus was an apparition, synonymous with vision, trance, that is, an altered state of consciousness (Crossan 1994a:75-101, 160-161; 1998a:552). Crossan's claim was that 'it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not act that way' – with supernatural intervention (in Copan 1998:45, 61).

This will be pursued in §4.4.7.4, where, it will be investigated whether Jesus' resurrection and post-resurrection appearances were bodily, apparitional or in some other form.

Crossan makes a surprising and provocative appeal for support for reconstructive methodology from Augustine's Confessions (Augustine in Crossan 2012:62). An examination of the context and hermeneutics of Augustine (1961:12.17-25) reveal that this is an abduction where Crossan's pursuit of this example is not consistent with Augustine's exposition. Space limitations prevent an examination of Crossan's claim when compared with Augustine's elucidation.

4.4.4.3.1 Challenges to free play

These challenges relate primarily to words and meaning. Free play requires that,

- The cognitive content of history and language is eliminated so that pluralistic meaning can be creatively espoused by the reader;
- The historical Jesus does not refer to the person of Jesus but to the parables of Jesus and the narratives of the gospels are turned into parables of the gospels by Crossan.
- The content and function of metaphor depend on the ordinary meaning of a text. This seems to be avoided by postmodern free play.
- If Jesus were not an historical person but a parable like the Good Samaritan, it would make no difference to Christianity, says Crossan. According to him,

nothing would be lost because the fictional or metaphorical Jesus would provide an actual life as a model of nonviolent distributive justice. Try telling that to the martyrs who were ready to die and have died for their faith in the historical Jesus who bled, died and rose again!

- Free play enables Crossan to create his own kind of Jesus who is consistent with his *a priori* principles of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism.
- This is a radical theory of language that, if applied to Crossan's own writings, would make them mean whatever the reader, including this researcher, chooses. Such a position is untenable for all literature and history, from the academic to the local newspaper. Free play as the creative invention of meaning by a reader or listener becomes a self-fulfilling destructive mechanism for any speech act. With free play, no content is dependent on semantic understanding because words lose their fixed meaning.

At question time in the White-Crossan debate, a person stated that she hears comments about whether Scripture is to be interpreted literally or as a story and that 'as long as we get the ultimate meaning, that's all that it matters'. She asked for White's comments on Crossan's dealing with what he called 'the ultimate meaning of Scripture'. White's response was: 'I do not believe that the meaning of those Scriptures can be communicated outside of their reality' or 'by assuming they are all parables…. The problem is that if it didn't happen in history, the point becomes whatever you want to make it. *The point becomes very subjective*; that's why I brought up initially this idea that this methodology has led to all sorts of different views of who Jesus is'. In addition, when this Jesus does not by substitution bear in his body the wrath of God against sin, 'you are not going to take sin as importantly as Jesus did'. If you take the position 'I'm going to let Jesus mean something to me. It may not be what he means to you'. White's view was that that was not the unity of the Christian message which 'has always been that faith is focussed not in what I feel Jesus is to me, but in who Jesus truly was'. That is what binds Christians together and not some 'volunteerism of Christ' (White & Crossan 2005:51-52).

This raises a significant challenge to postmodern, reconstructive, free play interpretation (as evidenced in Crossan) that leads to meaning. Anyone's meaning has as much validity as another's. There is no standard by which to determine meaning and subjective volunteerism is the inevitable result. This applies to any interpreter who wants to dissociate or creatively generate meaning in association with indefiniteness.

Textual free play, therefore, means that for Crossan any number of subjective possibilities can be imposed on the text with reader-response, metaphorical techniques. This technique cannot lead to any objective finding of an empty tomb and a deliberate meaning that can be tested. A subjective, free play engagement with the text leads to Crossanism, one dimension of which is that he can make a text mean what he wants with free play, reconstructive postmodernism. There is no point in seeking a tomb that was empty on resurrection morning according to the gospels (Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-10) as the 'meaning' is independent of any factually empty tomb and is subjectively determined, according to Crossan.

4.4.4.4 *A priori* imposition on the text

Reading Crossan's hermeneutics of Jesus' resurrection leads to this researcher's questioning some of the *a priori* presuppositions that he seems to impose on the biblical material. This is a small range of samples:

- It's a 'grim conclusion' that Crossan claims he is unable to avoid: Jesus' burial was not in a tomb hewn out of stone but was in a shallow grave where his body became prey to scavenging dogs (Crossan & Watts 1996:152-153).
- 'The Easter story is not about the events of a single day, but reflects the struggle of Jesus' followers over a period of months and years to make sense of both his death and their continuing experience of empowerment by him' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).
- The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus 'to various people are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction promoted by struggles over leadership in the early Church' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).
- Resurrection is only one 'of the metaphors used to express the sense of Jesus' continuing presence with his followers and friends' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153).
- The empty tomb was not historical; he doubts that there was an empty tomb; Jesus' followers probably did not know where he was buried and the gospel writers cannot agree with each other. So, 'motives other than just history writing are clearly at work here' (Crossan & Watts 1996:154).
- Paul, the earliest writer on the resurrection in his letters 'nowhere shows awareness of having heard an empty tomb story' (Crossan & Watts 1996:154).
- 'Maybe resurrection is simply a word-picture of Jesus' continuing presence among his followers' (Crossan & Watts 1996:156).
- The Emmaus Road story of Luke 24:13-35 is 'highly symbolic' and did not happen as a single day incident that could be recorded on a camera but was 'a pictorial summary of the whole rethinking struggle' of Jesus' followers. This involved an encounter with 'tough questions' about Jesus fate, disgraceful death from imperial authority, and yet they still had their personal experiences to persuade them of God's wisdom and power (Crossan & Watts 1996:110, 156-157)?
- 'Easter means for me that the divine empowerment which was present in Jesus … is now available to anyone, anywhere in the world who finds God in Jesus'. There is no literal body of Jesus coming out of the tomb, the finding of an empty tomb, or any incidence of visions. Instead, these actions 'are dramatic ways of expressing the faith' with demonstrations of the power of God now available through Jesus (Crossan & Watts 1996:161).
- The stories about the Beloved Disciple, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas in Matthew 28:8-10 and John 20 'tell us absolutely nothing of historical value about the origins of Christian faith. But they tell us a great deal about the origins of Christian *authority*. They are competing pictures about who has priority and power in the early Christian community' (Crossan & Watts 1996:163; emphasis in original).

These samples demonstrate some of Crossan's *a priori* presuppositions that are imposed on the gospel material: (a) The resurrection is a metaphor; (b) he uses some postmodern reconstructions, and (c) his interpretations sometimes are accompanied by a hermeneutic of acute suspicion.

Robert Stewart's incisive appraisal was that 'at times Crossan seems anti-hermeneutical. When he writes that stories of the Last Supper, passion and burial are “not *history remembered* but *prophecy historicized*,”[251] he is no longer interacting in any meaningful way with any text at all. At this point, he moves beyond interpretation and reconstruction and into speculation and historical creation’ (Stewart 2008:63; emphasis in original).

4.4.4.5 What happens when determinateness is separated from meaning?

To ask and answer this question would be similar to separating lack of rain from failure and success for farming families and animals in Australia’s outback. If rain did not have a determinate meaning, understanding would be extinguished. Lack of rain, drought and desperate farmers have fixed meanings in the context of the Australian outback. To speak of this in indeterminate terms of metaphorical drought and desperate farmers would cause the promoters of such a view to be a laughing stock.

In his interview with Adam Miller, Crossan admitted that

> every metaphor has a literal content. It cannot be a metaphor for a metaphor for a metaphor. I think that my example is very clear: Bush is an eagle. That is a metaphor. Bush is vulture. That is a metaphor. They are opposing metaphors. We know that in our culture because in our culture an eagle is good and a vulture is bad. In another culture, of course, a vulture could be the one who cleans up the mess of the world. So what I want to know is, what does it mean behind a literal sense or a metaphorical sense? For that, I don't find the term critical literalism helpful.
>
> (Crossan in Miller 2004:34)

Here he admits the need for definiteness in content in order for a metaphor to have meaning, however with his emphasis on meaning and meaning not related to whether one reads a document historically, literally or metaphorically, it is impossible to confirm Crossan’s affirmation of the importance of meaning for the historical and literal. This is especially so when he has such a strong commitment to the primacy of the metaphorical and that the entire New Testament gospels are book-length, mega-parables of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection (Crossan 2012:6).

The issue of definiteness being separated from its meaning has already been examined under the topic of truth and factuality in §3.3.2.4 and it was demonstrated in the testing of Hypothesis 10 in §4.2 that the resurrection narratives in the New Testament were historical in spite of Crossan’s promotion of unhistorical interpretations.

N T Wright’s research on ‘Easter and history’ (Wright 2003:685-718) in dealing with the statement, ‘Jesus was raised from the dead’ (as in Mt 28:6-7; 1 Cor 15:20-23), ruled out common alternate theories such as, (1) He was alive spiritually and in a non-bodily sense; the bodily resurrection was historically impossible. Wright demonstrated that the words regarding the resurrection do not mean this spiritual interpretation. If the early Christians had meant that, that kind of belief could not explain in the second-Temple Jewish world or that of first century paganism that Jesus was Messiah and Lord and that their own future resurrection was proclaimed in the way it was (Wright 2003:718). (2) The explanation that Paul’s view of the resurrection had nothing to do with a ‘body’ was exegetically unfounded. (3) The widespread belief that the gospel accounts are ‘back-projections of Christian belief from the middle or late first century simply will not work’ (Wright 2003:718).

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[251] This is from Crossan (1994a:145).

Wright demonstrates major counter proposals to these theories, showing that the inference to the best explanation – the historical argument – has been avoided by the non-historical proponents. He acknowledged the obvious that the historical argument alone will not force people to abandon the counter arguments and believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. However, the 'historical argument is remarkably good at clearing away the undergrowth behind which scepticisms of various sorts have been hiding. *The proposal that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead possesses unrivalled power to explain the historical data at the heart of early Christianity*' (Wright 2003:718; emphasis added). Data to support such a view will be pursued in §4.4.7 and §4.4.8.

Three historians were considered for this summary hermeneutical framework, with an emphasis on factuality. Firstly, ancient historian Paul Barnett's, *Jesus and the logic of history* (Barnett 1997) demonstrated that the definition of history was that historical inquiry or the practice of history, 'focuses on events and changes of states from one thing to another' and the explanations that were based on these phenomena. He regards social analysis as having 'qualified value in regard to the study of antiquity in general and of Jesus specifically' (Barnett 1997:27). He builds his case on the Pauline letters and 'the congruity of the early church with the historical Jesus' (Barnett 1997:92). While Barnett's historical reconstruction of Jesus' person and resurrection was substantive and demonstrated the parallel between the historical Jesus, early Christianity and what the apostles taught and preached, this 'logic of history' was not designed to give a primary focus to Jesus' resurrection (Barnett 1997:102), which is a core emphasis of this research, but Barnett's methodology does have application to the resurrection.

A second model that showed promise as a study of method for an examination of Jesus' resurrection is Richard R Niebuhr's, *Resurrection and historical reason* (Niebuhr 1957). While acknowledging that 'the theologian who falls a victim of his own heterogeneous historical method is bound to become increasingly sceptical about the actual historical data of the New Testament' and 'the resurrection of Jesus Christ cannot be torn from the fabric of Christian history without destroying history itself', Niebuhr had some questions of his own regarding the resurrection that need further investigation (Niebuhr 1957:79, 103-104). These questions are exemplified on the final page of his publication:

> Naturally, those who met him after his crucifixion were the men and women who believed. It is often cited as a curious and perhaps damaging fact that only those whose lives were basically changed and who believed he was the Christ were known to be witnesses of his risen body. But the correct way to state the matter is this: Only those who acknowledged his part in their own past, and their part in his past of rejection, suffering and death, could recognize the risen Christ. They believed because they could recognize the Son of Man whom they had helped to create.
>
> (Niebuhr 1957:181)

So is Jesus' resurrection an event in history or was it created by those who saw the risen Christ? There were other questions from Niebuhr's method that needed further investigation and were an impediment to adopting his model. See §4.4.6 for a further exposition of Niebuhr's method.

Thirdly, the N T Wright model was chosen for its practicality and comprehensive ability to examine the historicity of any document, but especially the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. Wright demonstrated this model in his seminal publication, *The resurrection of the son of God* (2003).

He acknowledged that some have frequently argued, even insisted, that Jesus' resurrection was 'not accessible to historical investigation' but the model for which he argued 'can and must be seen as at least a historical *problem*' (Wright 2003:12; emphasis in original). He noted that '"history" and its cognates' have been used in a number of ways (Wright 2003:12). These include: History as *event*, *significant event*, *provable event*[252], *writing-about-events-in-the-past*, and *what modern historians can say* about a topic (Wright 2003:12-13; emphasis in original). Other elements in Wright's model included assessing Jesus' resurrection data for Old Testament Jews (especially the Pharisees), resurrection for Paul (especially in 1 Corinthians 15), for the Greeks, and the use of *sarx* and *sōma* (Wright 2003:85-398).

So what happens when indeterminateness is separated from meaning? The explanations of Barnett, Niebuhr and Wright are eliminated and socio-pragmatic hermeneutics are imposed on the texts. How does that happen?

4.4.4.5.1 Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics as projections of self-affirmation[253]

What are socio-pragmatic hermeneutics? Thiselton asks: '*Can we critically rank the different criteria by which we judge what counts as meaningful or productive effects of texts within this or that context in life?*' His claim was that the answer to this question confronts hermeneutics from university level to everyday life in the Christian community. At one end of the spectrum is the 'contextual-relative *socio-pragmatic* hermeneutics: "This is the effect of the text on me and my community". It runs through pietism, radical reader-response theory, pragmatic forms of narrative theology, and post-modern elements of literary theory. At the other end of the spectrum stands *metacritical* and *socio-critical* hermeneutics' (Thiselton 1992:6; emphasis in original).

There does not seem to be utterance meaning in the closing chapters of the New Testament gospels to indicate that Jesus' risen body that was able to eat food (Lk 24:30-31, 41), be touched (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39-40; Jn 20:17, 24-28), that showed his hands and side (Jn 20:20), and appeared to the disciples (Lk 24:36), was a metaphor for expressing faith. That is a Crossan piece of creativity. This is Thiselton's summary assessment: 'Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics transposes the meaning of texts into projections which are potentially idolatrous as instruments of self-affirmation' (Thiselton 2003:550; emphasis in original).

Which hermeneutical criteria are used to judge Crossan's perspective? Crossan's socio-pragmatic hermeneutics of projections of self-affirmation are seen in statements such as, 'Easter means for me that the divine empowerment which was present in Jesus … is now available to anyone'. There is no literal body of Jesus coming out of the tomb or the finding of an empty tomb. Instead, there are apparitions of Jesus and Easter faith is in actions that 'are dramatic ways of expressing the faith' with demonstrations of the power of God now available through Jesus (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). In other places, the projection presuppositional trigger is seen in statements in his interview with Adam Miller, '*It means* the eradication of injustice and violence and evil in this present world. *It means*, God's will be done on this earth…. Paul explains very clearly what doing right *means for*

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[252] Wright stated that this is a 'somewhat more controversial' explanation of 'historical' as it refers not only to something that happened but also 'we can demonstrate that it happened, on the analogy of mathematics or the so-called hard sciences'. It is contentious because it 'is clearly operating with a more restricted sense of "history" than some of the others' (Wright 2003:13).

[253] This is the language of Thiselton (2003:550).

the world: it means making the world just' (Crossan in Miller 2004:34, 37; emphasis added).

In White's debate, he challenged Crossan on his 'it means for me' position to demonstrate what happens when specific definiteness is separated from the meaning: 'I do not believe that apostles believed that Jesus was raised simply in the sense that his continuing presence with them meant that they were continuing his paradigm, his kingdom, his radical egalitarianism and shared broken bread. *That's not what resurrection meant*. And I don't believe that is consistent with their proclamation; he was raised from the dead for our justification. If Jesus Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins; there is no reconciliation with God' (White & Crossan 2005:42; emphasis added).

White's final assessment was: '*The issue* [between the worldviews of Crossan and White – SDG] *is not what it means to me. The issue is: Has it had the same meaning all along that we can then trust the Holy Spirit of God to apply in each and every generation, each and every culture, and each and every language, making the Gospel something that can change this world? Or, are we stuck with a Gospel that is a matter of personal opinion and each person is allowed to construct Jesus based upon what he will and will not see in the text and accept in the text? That's the difference that I see in the final analysis*' (White & Crossan 2005:54; emphasis added).

The socio-pragmatic hermeneutics of Crossan are dominated by his own creative, subjective, postmodern self-affirmations of what 'it means to me' or an imposition of metaphorical meaning on the text.

4.4.4.6 Crossan's ingenious approach to the resurrection

The data accumulated so far in Crossan's view of Jesus' resurrection is forceful in exposing his conclusions concerning the resurrection:

- Meaning is inventive, creative and subjective;
- Metaphor is the primary meaning of all language,
- So resurrection is one metaphor to express Jesus' continuing experience with his followers.
- Therefore, fixed, literal, univalent meaning is absent from language;
- Examples of metaphor in association with the resurrection include: (a) The Emmaus road incident, which does not refer to a literal body of Jesus coming out of the grave, but is a metaphor for divine empowerment. (b) Stories about John, Mary Magdalene and Thomas (Mt 28:8-10; Jn 20) are of no historical value regarding the origins of the Christian faith. They deal with origins of authority.
- This leads to relativism, textual free play, and polyvalent meaning;
- There can be no examination of the past without repeated reconstruction;
- The empty tomb is not an historical account; Paul, as the earliest Christian writer, showed no awareness of the empty tomb story.
- Mark created the empty tomb story in his gospel;
- If the person of Jesus was invented like the Good Samaritan, nothing would be lost to Christianity as Jesus is an actual life of non-violent distributive justice. That meaning could just as easily be determined from a parable.
- The content of the text is not dependent on semantic meaning.
- Anyone's meaning is valid.
- Jesus' post-resurrection appearances are literary fiction.
- In summary: (a) The resurrection is a metaphor; (b) Postmodern

reconstruction is the hermeneutic used; (c) It is a hermeneutic of acute suspicion of the text; (d) The effect is that the Last Supper, passion, burial and resurrection details are not interacting with the biblical text in a meaningful way, but promote speculation and historical creation (Stewart 2008).

4.4.5 Abduction

How does Crossan want other writers to interpret his publications, public presentations and content of debates? An example of this researcher's creative understanding of Crossan was given in §4.4.4. Wright expressed it this way: 'Even deconstructionists themselves write texts which they want others to read to discover what they, the deconstructionists, intend to say' (Wright 1992:61). Parry's parallel comment was that 'theological interpretations that run roughshod over authorial intention saw off the branch they are sitting on' (Parry 2005:661).

4.4.5.1 Self-defeating

This emphasis has been stated briefly in this project in §4.4.4.1 and §4.3.4.2.2(a) to emphasis that Crossan's definition and application of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism, if applied to his own writings, would fail to communicate to his readership any fixed meaning of words and concepts. It would devastate what he wants to disclose. What would be the impact on Crossan's own writings of the reconstructive epistemology he is advocating? It would mean linguistic relativism and textual free play would be endorsed, encouraged and implemented. Textual meaning would be perverted.

Stuart Sim made this application to Derrida's deconstructionism, but it is as applicable to Crossan's reconstruction.

> One's final attitude to deconstruction might well depend on whether one agrees that rationality and logocentricity really are the confidence tricks that Derrida insists they are. How far down this road one can follow Derrida without collapsing into a self defeating solipsism and private language is, however, an interesting question to ponder. It might also be objected that if language is as marked by indeterminacy as deconstruction claims, then it is difficult to see how it can establish this indeterminacy through the use of language: some sort of logical paradox would seem to be involved at that point.
>
> (Sim 1998:135)

Sim raised Madan Sarup's claim that Derrida can be exonerated from this kind of accusation because it represents 'the usual superficial criticism of Derrida' where the critique 'questions the value of "truth" and "logic" and yet uses logic to demonstrate the truth of his own arguments'. Sarup seems to ignore this fundamental, overt criticism of Derrida's writings because Sarup claims the real issue which Derrida raises is 'the predicament of having to use the resources of the heritage that he questions' (Sarup in Sim 1998:135).

Sim's justified response was that it is unlikely that Sarup will persuade 'too many doubters that the logical paradox has been explained away, although that rarely deters philosophical sceptics from proceeding with their enquiries'. Sim's conclusion regarding the self-defeating nature of deconstruction was that the impact of deconstruction on critical discourse is more likely to be remembered for being on occasion 'a little eccentric' in its philosophical scepticism 'that forced re-examination of the subject's foundations of argument' (Sim 1998:135).

So does Crossan want his readers to use logic to read and understand his version of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism and to agree with or challenge its truth claims? These issues will be pursued in what follows.

4.4.5.2 Crossan's philosophical crusher: Implicit and explicit contradiction

This is the language of Ben Meyer (1991) in which he described one of 'the philosophical crushers' as being an explanation of a secret of 'how the human subject functions' with ''the reduction of implicit to explicit self-contradiction'. The implicit becomes explicit when 'the actuality of performance belies the all-comprehensive explanation'. Thus, this is an examination of the human performance when compared with the theories promoted by the scholar.

Meyer (1991) described the challenge of 'the new possibility of systematically confronting theories of knowing with facts of knowing'. He explained that 'my horizons are the product of my life-history' and they are limited because there are whole worlds outside a person's horizons and they are 'riven with error – but where they are erroneous and why, I do not know'. He explained that 'dialectic is designed to tell me where I am not only limited but wrong, not only wrong but wrongheaded' and this leads to this problem: 'dialectic is productive in the measure that its practitioners are radically pointed in the right directions'.

When applied to any human work, how does the performance line up with the stated theory? By application, how does Crossan's performance of postmodern reconstruction conform to his stated theory? How consistent is he in doing what he proposes in theory – outside of the horizon of the historical Jesus? Is there any implicit reduced to explicit self-contradiction in Crossan's works? Specific examples were given in §4.2.1.2 and especially §4.2.1.2.3.

4.4.6 Richard R Niebuhr's perspective

Richard R Niebuhr, in his research on resurrection and historical reason, examined the power of the past and its impact on the contemporary church, making a statement that seems to parallel that of Crossan:

> The inter-action of the present and the past demands this continual re-creation of the historical Jesus Christ and the continual re-living of his times. Therefore, it is not what the church has created or done for itself, but the new situations into which it is thrust that elicit the relevance of the past to the present, and specifically, the power of Jesus Christ in the contemporary scene.
>
> (Niebuhr 1957:143-144)

Niebuhr's marked difference with Crossan on his assessment of the nature of the resurrection was that the historical signs that affected the moment of recognition after the resurrection have an 'indispensable element' that is necessary for all recognition: 'No meaning can be attached to the event if that to which the witnesses respond is not the historically recognizable Jesus' (Niebuhr 1957:174). These are some further elements that lead to Niebuhr's reasoned conclusion:

- 'Any attempt to give the church status, as the church, independently of its origin in the resurrection must fail'. The historical causality to be applied to the resurrection 'cannot be reduced to the dimensions of the present. The present is dependent on it; we are dependent on the Apostles. We require this piece of past history, for without it, our present situation is wholly unintelligible, yet in itself this portion of the past remains mysterious and aloof…. It is no more possible for us than for Paul or the Reformation to get around the apostolic testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1957:153).

- 'The genesis of the church's faith and hope is in history, and it must not seek another ground of assurance, since there is none available to men' (1957:154).
- 'The gospel of justification by faith means nothing apart from the concrete historical events of which it is an interpretation' (1957:152).
- 'The New Testament mentions witnesses only of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. It cites none who was a witness to the rising itself' (1957:160).
- Regarding the post-resurrection appearances of Christ, 'as with all history, the total event or complex itself has an historical depth, and the center can only be inferred from the circumference' (1957:161).
- 'The interpretation of history demands that we equip ourselves with something more than the idea of Nature, which, if made the key to history, deprives it of its constituent spontaneity. The alternative to relying exclusively on Nature is to *allow history to be its own interpreter*' (1957:170; emphasis added).
- 'The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an event in this kind of history, in which events must be treated for their own sake. The resurrection shares in the arbitrariness, irrationality and independence which characterize all events to some degree; and like them, it is problematic'. Niebuhr noted that there is no logical implication from any other event or events. It cannot 'be subsumed under any laws, nor brought under the aegis of any calculus of probability. In this latter respect it can be compared only with the event of creation out of nothing. But otherwise the resurrection of Jesus Christ differs from the creation because it draws upon the past and evokes the historical possibilities of the future'. Therefore, Niebuhr concludes that 'the resurrection of Jesus epitomizes the nature of the historical event, and our memory of it within the community of faith typifies the character of historical reason' (1957:171). There is no apparition here or creation by a gospel writer for Niebuhr.
- 'If theologians really wish to abandon the realm of ordinary history, when they come to speak about the resurrection of Jesus, hoping thereby to escape the embarrassment posed by our popular ideas of historical causality, they must also abandon these narratives of recognition, for non-historical revelation can make no use of historical signs' (1957:174).
- An essential element of the meaning of resurrection faith was Jesus' bodily resurrection that was 'independently and tangibly present to the disciples' in his appearances to them. 'Apart from that, common sense argues, the resurrection is meaningless. If the preceding argument is sound – that the narratives are about encounters centered in recognition and identification – then we can affirm that the resurrection appearances *shared in the same kind of independence of all historical events*' (1957:174; emphasis added).
- 'The risen Christ vivified historical signs and demanded historical recognition. But to affirm so much is to affirm the historicity of the events, for *independence and contingency, recollection and recognition are the categories of history*' (1957:175; emphasis added).
- 'The resurrection despite its similarity to all historical events, is an event unlike any other. It runs directly counter to our contemporary understanding of history, because it represents the unfathomable and irrational power of history itself'. It is an event that 'cannot be probed by reason armed only with general

> laws' because it violates death. The biblical word, *scandal*, conveys the sense of 'the miraculous quality of the resurrection' which cannot be effaced. 'Our experience of Nature and of history, deeply colored by our knowledge of dying and fear of death, openly conflicts with the resurrection of Christ' (1957:177, 178).

Niebuhr's assessment firmly places Jesus' resurrection in the realm of history, linked to the history of recognition, but the resurrected Jesus is 'unlike any other' because of his victory over death. Thus, 'the resurrection does not obliterate for the disciples the memory that Jesus was Jesus of Nazareth, but presupposes as much. It can be demonstrated that 'the resurrection of Jesus Christ is neither simply the appearance of Jesus, nor is it the resurrection of an anonymous man, nor is it the rise of faith in his disciples. It is a single and indivisible event, which does not thrust forward one facet or aspect for our consideration to the neglect of the others' (Niebuhr 1957:176).

In his era, Niebuhr addressed Lionel Thornton's metaphysics of Jesus' resurrection that Thornton adopted as a metaphysical interpretation of the gospels where 'the concept of history is thus artificially limited, because what is meant by the word "history" here is simply process' – according to Niebuhr. Niebuhr concludes concerning Thornton's approach, that 'when history is dissolved by meta-history, the questions of the historians have been begged, not answered'. Therefore, 'the fallacy of the metaphysical approach represented by Thornton is that it forgets that we do not have the option of thinking either historically or metaphysically. We have only the option of thinking historically about historical events, or historically about metaphysical implications of such events' (Niebuhr 1957:20-22).

Therefore, Neibuhr's emphasis on the resurrection concludes that: (1) It is a resurrection placed in history; (2) It was a bodily resurrection, with Jesus' being independently and tangibly present to his disciples through appearances to them; (3) It was a resurrection 'unlike any other' because of the conquering of death – its miraculous quality; (4) The origin of the church is dependent on Jesus' bodily resurrection.

Along with this evaluation by Niebuhr, the biblical texts reveal that

- The resurrection appearances were those of the recognisable Jesus – identified from his pre-resurrection state.
- Evidence is here presented that it was a bodily resurrection. See §4.4.7.9.
- There is a mandatory need to 'read the text', the New Testament gospel texts, a theme promoted by Crossan: 'any study of the historical Jesus stands or falls on how one handles the literary level of the text itself' (Crossan 1991:xxix). Which 'text' is Crossan reading? His requirement is that 'anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film should first read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138). Therefore, this researcher's application to Crossan is: 'When Crossan wants to determine details of the passion-resurrection of Jesus, he should first read the text to get the story correct'. Borg and Crossan state that 'when all else fails, read the text' (Borg & Crossan 2009:159).

An application to Crossan is that his begging the question fallacy of postmodern, reconstructionism is that it forgets that when history is dissolved into meta-history,[254] it forgets that the only options we have are to think historically about the historical events of Jesus' resurrection and to make applications, based on those historical events. Crossan would want to add, 'make postmodern, reconstructionist, interactive applications', as his preferred methodology. However, this question begging fallacy is illustrated again by Crossan in his *a priori* postmodern, reconstructive presuppositions that dictate his conclusions concerning Jesus' resurrection appearances.

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[254] Hayden White (1973:IX) explained briefly his understanding of metahistory: 'In this theory I treat the historical work as what it most manifestly is: a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse. Histories (and philosophies of history as well) combine a certain amount of "data,"

4.4.7 The nature of Jesus' resurrection

In appraising Crossan's data on the resurrection, the warning issued by Professor emeritus of history at the Ohio State University, Clayton Roberts, is on target: 'Historians are not free to construct whatever whimsical interpretation they wish. In constructing an interpretation they are governed by rules, rules that are objective, "objective" in the sense that they are accepted by nearly all historians'. Roberts admitted that historians intrinsically rely on these rules but they 'have given little thought to them' and there is practically no literature on them. His beginning list of rules includes: (a) 'All classifications must be accurate and meaningful'; (b) 'Samples should be truly representative'; (c) Summation, where possible, should be in quantitative terms. He pointed to the best control for these summations as those from 'impressions formed by other historians'; (d) In making summations, 'the historian should give more weight to the crucial or critical issues' – to those that are abnormal rather than routine (Roberts 1996:265). This research has covered many of these rules in the 'criteria of historicity' in §2.3.

In discussing the assessment of multiple causes of an event in the past and the difficulty in distinguishing between critical and routine conditions in the initial causation of an event, Roberts raised Karl Popper's statement that 'the only way out of this difficulty is … consciously to introduce a *preconceived selective point of view* into one's history; that is, to write *that history which interests us*' (Popper 1957:150; emphasis in original). Roberts' critique was that if 'a preconceived selective point of view should govern which facts are chosen to explain the occurrence of a phenomenon, then it is a highly dangerous doctrine'. It is treacherous because 'such a proposition reduces an interpretation to the expression of the whims of the historian' in a subjective interpretation (Roberts 1996:265-266). Evidence is emerging that the subjective 'whims of the historian' are seen in Crossan's postmodern, reconstructive, interactive interpretations. Evidence will be presented in what follows which demonstrates some subjective interpretations that are idiosyncratic to Crossan and scholars and colleagues who are his 'intellectual debts' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv).

The nature of Jesus' resurrection, 'as long as the historian incorporated consistently and comprehensively all the significant events in accordance with the way things really were, he [or she – SDG] was being objective. It is neglecting or twisting important facts that distorts objectivity' (Geisler 2002:194). Searching for and exposing subjective interpretation is critical in an examination of historical data.

The specifics of Jesus' resurrection, based on the above analysis, indicate that Crossan's criteria for evaluating the resurrection data flounder because,

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theoretical concepts for "explaining" these data, and a narrative structure for their presentation as an icon of sets of events presumed to have occurred in times past. In addition, I maintain, they contain a deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic, in nature, and which serves as the precritically accepted paradigm of what a distinctively "historical" explanation should be'.

(1) He fails to follow his own recommended instruction, ‘Read the text’ (White & Crossan 2005:43; Borg & Crossan 2009:159). The common meaning of ‘read the text’ is to read the text in accordance with the way things are, in order to gain an understanding of the available evidence from the gospel texts. Because it deals with historical investigation, an analysis of the evidence will lead to probable conclusions and not absolute certainty. The call for Crossan is to examine the available evidence. Too often for Crossan, the plain meaning of the text is reinterpreted through …
(2) An imposition of postmodern reconstructive subjectivism on the text, including Jesus’ resurrection appearances interpreted as metaphors. It was demonstrated in §4.3 that Crossan’s technique of postmodern reconstruction unravels and reconstructs texts and history to the detriment of the pursuit of a rational and reasonable understanding of historiography. Based on this analysis, any postmodern hermeneutic by Crossan’s analysis of Jesus’ resurrection data will be rejected.
(3) Relativistic free play (see §4.4.8) with the resurrection texts is rejected.
(4) Any anti-supernaturalism imposed on the text by Crossan will be discarded (see §3.2).
(5) Imposition of a worldview on the texts that is contrary to a hermeneutical plain reading of what the text states grammatically, semantically and contextually will be redundant (see §4.4.2.2 above for an analysis of the need to maintain grammatical, semantically contextual interpretations for sense to be made of textual and historical data).
(6) There are occasions when Crossan seems to promote an anti-hermeneutical paradigm: ‘When he writes that stories of the Last Supper, passion and burial are “not *history remembered* but *prophecy historicized*” he is no longer interacting in any meaningful way with any text at all. At this point, he moves beyond interpretation and reconstruction and into speculation and historical creation’ (Stewart 2008:63; emphasis in original).
(7) Crossan refuses to accept the resurrection narratives of the New Testament documents as historical (see §4.2 for an analysis that exposes this false view). Thus an unhistorical approach to the resurrection and post-resurrection narratives will be rejected as contrary to the evidence produced in this project.

Therefore, Crossan’s data on the nature of Jesus’ resurrection will be evaluated according to these standards:

(1) Read the text for the common meaning of the way things are in determining the meaning of the text;
(2) Grammatical, semantic, contextual meanings of texts;
(3) Is a postmodern, reconstructive hermeneutic imposed on the text?
(4) Anti-supernaturalism, and
(5) The New Testament resurrection texts as historical documents.

4.4.7.1 Additional presuppositional bias

Evidence thus far for Crossan’s historical Jesus is pointing in the direction of what Barnett calls, ‘the imaginative historian, like a flighty poodle on a retractable lead’ who ‘must be reeled in by that mundane and boring reality called evidence, evidence weighed according to criteria and “rules.” Otherwise history writing is fiction writing’. Also, when scholars in the field of New Testament studies think it ‘is temporally undefined, boundary-less’ and ‘somehow able to accommodate the most remarkable explanatory hypotheses', there are some relativistic interpretations that do read like creative fiction (Barnett 2005:181).

An example of this is seen when Crossan steps outside of his postmodern reconstructive worldview to seek further help for his view of Jesus' resurrection appearances being apparitions. What research would he consult to bolster his claim that Jesus' resurrection was not a bodily resurrection but the appearances involved resurrection apparitions or visions? It comes from a rather unexpected worldview source. An overview of this influence was introduced in §4.3.5.1.1. He explained that when Jesus' 'tomb was found empty and he appeared to his former companions as risen from the dead', these appearances were as 'resurrectional vision' that explained 'the miracle of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman Empire'. He used the terms '*vision* and *apparition* interchangeably' but these were to be understood 'within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion' and he appealed to the works of Ioan Lewis, Erika Bourguignon, Felicitas Goodman and Raymond Prince (Crossan 1999:6). These researchers describe occult and spiritistic worldviews that include examples of spirit possession.

The Ioan Lewis' publication to which Crossan referred (Crossan 1999:6, n. 5) portrayed visions as those of spiritism and spirit possession. In the third edition of his work, Lewis described these visions as those which are 'the "possession" of human beings by alien spirits, an exotic condition that seemed to have virtually disappeared from Western culture', but it has now 'returned with a bang in the shape of what psychiatrists call "Multiple Personality Disorder" [MPD – SDG]'. The 'current appeal of New Age beliefs and practices' has encouraged more people into neo-spiritualism groups that have adapted 'exotic shamanistic lore for ritual healing and other spiritual purposes'. MPD 'connects with another popular contemporary preoccupation: satanism' (Lewis 2003:ix). Lewis acknowledged 'the Sudanese/Ethiopian zar/bori cult[255] to whose inspiration this book owes so much', as being a spirit cult that may involve some men but is most often practised by 'women in the male dominated local Islamic context' (Lewis 2003:x, xi). He explained: 'My slogan, if one is still necessary, is: let those who believe in spirits and possession speak for themselves' (Lewis 2003:25).

Erika Bourguignon, considered 'one of the foremost anthropological scholars of spirit possession' (Cohen 2008:1), recorded the results after conducting a world-wide cross-cultural survey of 488 societies to investigate trance, possession and altered states of consciousness (Bourguignon 1968). She distinguished two forms of possession in a later publication, one of which 'causes a change in bodily functioning' and the other 'alters consciousness, awareness, the personality or will of the individual' (Bourguignon 1976:3). Crossan admitted his deep indebtedness to Bourguignon's research on altered states of consciousness, presuming and adapting her conclusions, including the view that 'trance is susceptible to a natural or a supernatural explanation' (Bourguignon[256] in Crossan 1994a:87-88).

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[255] Adeleine Masquelier summarised some of the actions involved in the Zar cult: 'Zar refers to a type of spirits, the afflictions such spirits may cause, and the rituals aimed at preventing or curing these afflictions. It is one of the most widely distributed "cults of afflictions" in Africa and the Middle East'. Medical 'treatment involves initiation into the *zar* cult during a propitiatory ceremony in which the initiate will ideally enter a trance, allowing the spirit to possess his or her body so as to affirm its identity and reveal its requirements. Once initiated, devotees must continuously negotiate the terms of their relationships with the possessing spirits'. They confirm their relationship to *zar* by attending ceremonies, making offerings and fulfilling other requirements. 'Thus, getting well becomes a lifelong exercise'. Zar devotees often see no incompatibility with Christianity or Islam; others consider Zar is antithetical to Christianity and Islam (Masquelier 2004:747; emphasis in original).

Felicitas Goodman, doctoral student of Bourguignon, born in Hungary, became an American linguist and anthropologist who presented a synchronic representation of world religions where one religion is not presented as 'great' and the others 'primitive'. Her cross-disciplinary framework included an examination of religious trance. She stated that 'no matter how we turn the individual arguments, the difference between magic and religion remains unclear' (Goodman 1988:4). She stated that in order to be a religious practitioner, one of the most important dimensions is to learn how to see 'the alternate reality' which relates to the soul or portion of it that 'passes either in vision or death'. This alternate reality is not neutral but has an effect on human beings because 'it is a realm where power hovers'. Contact with it may be positive with new abilities achieved which provide protection, blessings, and good fortune. The dangerous side is like fire with the burning capacity and under certain circumstances may lead to misfortune. Therefore to determine what is in store for people, they turn to divination (Goodman 1988:46-47).

Raymond Prince was a Canadian professor of psychiatry who pursued the intersection of psychiatry and religion, including a comparison of the differences between drug 'trips' and mystical experiences. He has an article in this volume in which he presented information on whether electroencephalography (EEG) could be used in studying possession states (Prince 1968:121-137).

It is expected that non-Christian researchers of the occult, trance, altered states of consciousness and spirit possession would not use the language of demon possession as Jesus did (see Mt 12:22-32; Mk 5:1-20; 9:14-28; Lk 4:33-36). However, it stretches the boundaries of historiography for Crossan, who calls himself a Christian (see Borg & Crossan 2006:35, 156; Crossan 1995:214; 1998a:xxx, 26, 29, 30, 46; 2007:94-95, 224, 235, 241; White & Crossan 2005:52), to use the language of '*vision* and *apparition* interchangeably' for Jesus' resurrection appearances and associate them with the conclusions of non-Christian researchers of the occult, trance, altered states of consciousness and possession of spiritism (in Crossan 1994a:87-88; 1999:6; emphasis in original).

Thus, Jesus' resurrectional visions or apparitions are understood within the framework of spiritistic experiences described by Lewis, Bourguignon, Goodman and Prince. Crossan appeals to those who expounded on occult, spiritualistic, new age techniques and possession to gain support for his apparitional view of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. However, here is the contradiction through Crossan's own statement, 'I myself, for example, do not believe that there are personal supernatural spirits who invade our bodies from outside and, for either good or evil, replace or jostle for place with our own personality. But the vast, vast majority of the world's people have always so believed, and according to one recent cross-cultural survey, about 75 percent still do' (Crossan 1994a:85). So, it is acceptable to Crossan to align Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to be parallel with that of spirit possession, divination, trance and altered states of consciousness, but he himself does not believe in such experiences. Therefore, it is not surprising that Crossan wants to redefine what happened in the post-resurrection of the Emmaus Road incident with Jesus. Crossan imposes a presuppositional bias on the post-resurrection appearances. They are aligned with his view that 'trance and ecstasy, vision and apparition are perfectly normal and natural phenomena' but he does not believe in them (Crossan 1999:6). When Crossan aligns Jesus' resurrection appearances as a parallel with occult, spiritistic, new age possession and altered states of consciousness, he is imposing a foreign worldview on the biblical material and thus creates what Barnett has described as the work of an 'imaginative historian' whose 'history writing is fictional writing' (Barnett 2005:181). Of the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37), Crossan's view was that 'I do not think that there ever was an event such as that' because it 'is just too perfect an embodiment of every Jewish revolutionary's dream' (Crossan 1994a:94).

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[256] This was from Bourguignon (1979).

A critique of the apparitional view of Jesus' resurrection will be pursued below in §4.4.7.4 with an examination of Jesus' post-resurrectional activities.

4.4.7.2 Was Jesus dead?

An analysis of the nature of Jesus' resurrection is impertinent if he were not dead. Were there indications that Jesus' crucifixion led to his physical death? A brief summary of the evidence includes:[257]

(a) Immediately prior to the crucifixion. When he was on the Mount of Olives, he was in agony and 'his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground' (Lk 24:44). The soldiers of the governor's headquarters put the crown of thorns on his head and 'took the reed and struck him on the head' (Mt 27:30). Jesus had predicted to his disciples that he would be condemned to death, be delivered up to the Gentiles 'to be flogged and crucified' (Mt 20:19). This happened when 'Pilate took Jesus and flogged him' and the soldiers 'struck him with their hands' (Jn 19:1). Don Carson described the three kinds of flogging administered by the Romans: (i) *fustigatio*, which was for milder offenses; (ii) *flagellatio*, which was a brutal flogging for more severe offences; and (iii) *verberatio*, the most severe scourging of all and was associated with other punishments such as crucifixion. For this scourging, which Jesus received, he was stripped, tied to a post, and then beaten by several torturers (in the Roman provinces they were soldiers). This continued until the perpetrators were exhausted or the commanding officer called it off. If the victims, like Jesus, were neither Roman citizens nor soldiers, the favoured whip had leather strips that were fitted with pieces of bone, lead or other metal. The beatings could be so savage that the victims sometimes died. Some eyewitness accounts 'report that such brutal scourgings could leave victims with their bones and entrails exposed' (Carson 1991:597). The whip with hard pieces at its end was designed to tear 'the flesh of the skeletal muscles and set the stage for circulatory shock' and Jesus could have been in a critical medical condition before crucifixion (Geisler & Brooks 1990:120).

Which pain killers were given to him prior to crucifixion? At Golgotha he was offered wine mixed with gall (Mt 27:34). A T Robertson wrote of this verse,

> Late MSS. read *vinegar* (*oxos*) instead of wine and Mark (15:23) has myrrh instead of gall. The myrrh gave the sour wine a better flavour and like the bitter gall had a narcotic and stupefying effect. Both elements may have been in the drink which Jesus tasted and refused to drink. Women provided the drink to deaden the sense of pain and the soldiers may have added the gall to make it disagreeable. Jesus desired to drink to the full the cup from his Father's hand (John 18:11).
>
> (Robertson 1930a:231; emphasis in original).

(b) The extent of his injuries. Crucifixion included being on the cross from nine o'clock in the morning (third hour) until just before sunset (ninth hour) (Mk 15:25, 34).

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[257] Some of these details were suggested by Geisler & Brooks (1989:120-123) and Geisler (2003:612-614).

Crucifixion involved the infliction of five major wounds, four of which were from the nails used to fix a victim to the cross (Geisler & Brooks 1990:121). Although it has been known from ancient literary sources that tens of thousands of people were crucified in the Roman Empire, the estimate was thousands in Palestine. However, it was not until 1968 that archaeologists uncovered a single victim of this horrifying method of execution. Vassilios Tzaferis, the archaeologist who investigated this ossuary, stated that this crucified person was ‘a Jew, of a good family, who may have been convicted of a political crime. He lived in Jerusalem shortly after the turn of the era and sometime before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.’ For this crucified man, a nail 7 inches (or 17-18 centimetres) long held his heel bones together, which Tzaferis claimed was ‘the most dramatic evidence that this young man was crucified’. Tzaferis provided more extensive details of the Roman procedure of crucifixion. He explained that ‘if the victim was attached by nails, he was laid on the ground, with his shoulders on the crossbeam. His arms were held out and nailed to the two ends of the crossbeam, which was then raised and fixed on top of the vertical beam. The victim’s feet were then nailed down against this vertical stake. Without any supplementary body support, the victim would die from muscular spasms and asphyxia in a very short time, certainly within two or three hours’. To prolong the agony, the Romans used the *sedile* which was a small seat half way down the front of the cross and the second was *suppedaneum*, a foot support. The evidence from this crucified man enabled the following graphic design to be constructed of a possible method of crucifixion (Tzaferis 1985).

Where were the nails in the crucified person’s body? Tzaferis’ judgement was that ‘Christian iconography usually shows the nails piercing the palms of Jesus’ hands. Nailing the palms of the hands is impossible, because the weight of the slumping body would have torn the palms in a very short time. The victim would have fallen from the cross while still alive. As the evidence from our crucified man demonstrates, the nails were driven into the victim’s arms, just above the wrists, because this part of the arm is sufficiently strong to hold the weight of a slack body’ (Tzaferis 1985). The doubting Thomas told the Twelve that he would not believe he was resurrected ‘unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails’ (Jn 20:25). Jesus’ response was to provide the evidence: ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands’ (Jn 20:27).

When Jesus was crucified, ‘one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water’ (Jn 19:34). An earlier assessment of the physical cause of Christ’s death regarding the ‘blood and water’ issue was by Dr W Stroud who argued that ‘this fact proves that the spear pierced the left side of Jesus near the heart and that Jesus had died literally of a broken heart since blood was mixed with water’ (in Robertson 1932:305). Instead of breaking Jesus’ legs, which was the normal practice to indicate that the crucified one was dead (as Jn 19:32 indicates for the two thieves crucified with Jesus), the soldier’s piercing Jesus’ side with a sudden flow of blood and water has brought differences of interpretation among modern medical experts. One view is that the pericardial sac produced the flow of blood and water; the other view is that the fluid from the pericardial sac could not easily escape from the body through this wound as it would fill up the chest cavity, occupy the space around the lung and ooze into the lung through the wound made by the spear (Carson 1991:623). Christian archaeologist, John McRay, confirmed that death from crucifixion was not based on the penetration of the nails but involved other factors. Even the American Medical Association has weighed in on this one: ‘The actual cause of death by crucifixion was multifactorial and varied somewhat with each case, but the two most prominent causes probably were hypovolemic shock[258] and exhaustion asphyxia. Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, stress-induced arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and perhaps pleural effusions' (Edwards et al 1986:1461).

The biblical data confirm that there was no need to break Jesus' legs because 'he was already dead' (Jn 19:33), was embalmed with a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing seventy-five pounds (32.7 kilograms) (Jn 19:39-40). Geisler & Brooks' comment that 'even if He had woken up in the tomb, He could not have unwrapped Himself, rolled the stone back up the side of its carved-out track, overcome the guards, and escaped unnoticed (Matt. 27:60)' (Geisler & Brooks 1990:122). The death of Jesus is affirmed by Pilate when 'Pilate ordered it [Jesus' body – SDG] be given to him', that is, Joseph of Arimathea (Mt 27:58). Then Jesus' dead body was wrapped in a clean linen shroud and laid in Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb and a great stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting opposite the tomb, so it is presumed they were eye-witnesses to this burial event (Mt 27:60-61).

Based on the best available evidence, Jesus was dead and buried after his crucifixion.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published this medical assessment:

> Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right rib, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge.
>
> (Edwards et al 1986:1463)

4.4.7.3 Resuscitation or not?

An Austrian specialist researcher on the resurrection, Jacob Kremer, concluded that 'by far most exegetes hold firmly to the reliability of the biblical statements concerning the empty tomb' (Kremer[259] in Craig & Ehrman 2006). Others take a contrary view: 'We can no longer take the statements about the resurrection of Jesus literally. However, it is certain that people at that time believed in the resurrection "literally"…. *The tomb of Jesus was not empty, but full, and his body did not disappear, but rotted away*'. He called this an 'inevitable conclusion' because of 'the revolution in the scientific view of the world' (Lüdemann & Ŏzen 2005:134-135; emphasis added). N T Wright described Jesus' resurrected body as 'transformed physicality' or 'transphysicality' (see the description in Wright 2003:612). Are these different perspectives supported by the biblical evidence?

Crossan's fundamental understanding of Jesus' bodily resurrection is that it 'has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of the tomb'. It was not human flesh that was resuscitated, but 'bodily resurrection means that the embodied life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world. That life continues, as it has done for two millennia, to form communities of like lives' (Crossan 1998a:xxxi; 1999:46). Thus, there is no physical resurrection in the flesh, but it is a metaphorical understanding of

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[258] 'Hypovolemic shock, also called hemorrhagic shock, is a life-threatening condition that results when you lose more than 20 percent … of your body's blood or fluid supply. This severe fluid loss makes it impossible for the heart to pump sufficient blood to your body. Hypovolemic shock can cause many of your organs to fail. The condition requires immediate emergency medical attention in order to survive' (Nall 2012).

[259] Kremer was cited by Craig in the debate.

(a) the presence of salvation in the world that
(b) is powerfully effective, in and through
(c) the community of Christian believers.

Is this interpretation by Crossan accurate when compared with the biblical data or is he engaging in a reconstruction of the text? This is pursued in testing this hypothesis.

What is the meaning of resuscitation when applied to a dead body? To 'resuscitate' means 'to revive (someone), especially from apparent death or from unconsciousness … return to life or consciousness' (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v resuscitate). Stephen Davis clarified the implications of resuscitation: One key criterion of resuscitation is that 'the resuscitant must inevitably die a second time at some later point, and at that time death would presumably be permanent' (Davis 1997:132). In the New Testament, this happened with Lazarus, the widow's son at Nain, and Jairus' daughter, but for Jesus the New Testament does not record the resurrection as synonymous with resuscitation. He did not die again. Davis emphasised that 'the New Testament witness is that Jesus was not merely restored to his previous life, but rather was transformed to a new and glorious life fit for the kingdom of God. What I find odd is the vehemence with which it is argued'. He noted those scholars who try to demonstrate that Jesus' resurrection 'did not genuinely occur' but occurred in some 'spiritual' sense and they 'invariably begin with a robust attack on resuscitation' (Davis 1997:132).

Crossan fulfils Davis's expectations and engages in a vigorous attack on the resurrection as resuscitation to enable him to promote a metaphorical view of the resurrection (Crossan 1998a:xxxi; 1999:46) and this is associated with his apparitional emphasis on the resurrection appearances (see §4.4.7.4). From the outset, Crossan's New Testament exposition cannot accept Jesus' resurrection as a supernatural, physical resurrection because of an *a priori* presuppositional commitment. He does not believe in acts of God's supernatural intervention in this world (see Crossan & Watts 1996:88). Elsewhere he and Borg stated that there are 'difficulties with a literal-factual reading of the Easter stories…. It requires a "supernatural interventionist" understanding of the way God relates to the world' and they question: 'Does God ever act this way?' (Borg & Crossan 2006:218-219, n. 18). The presumed answer is, 'No'. Therefore, a literal, bodily, miraculous resurrection of Jesus' body from the grave is impossible because of Crossan's *a* priori presuppositional worldview. See §3.2 for an explanation of Crossan's view of anti-supernaturalism.

Instead, he claims there are 'changes in the social world' for Jesus' resurrection, and they include: (a) Not an individual but a general resurrection, and (b) Jesus' resurrection means an implementation of justice. The data to support these statements for Crossan are as follows: In referring to 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 to support his hermeneutics on Jesus and the general resurrection, he argued that Paul did not present a case for Jesus' resurrection as 'a special privilege afforded only to him' but that Jesus' resurrection was 'dependent on the general resurrection' and Paul could 'argue in either direction: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; or, no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection' (Crossan 1994a:164). In Crossan's rejection of the supernatural with Jesus' nature miracles, his claim was that the 'nature' miracles were 'creedal statements about ecclesiastical authority, although they all have as their background Jesus' resurrectional victory over death, which is, of course, the supreme "nature" miracle' (Crossan 1991:404). From where did he gain this understanding? It is out of his anti-supernaturalist worldview and his postmodern reconstructive methodology.

What is at stake in rejecting Jesus' literal resurrection and accepting it as meaning changes in the social world for justice (Crossan 2012:251)? It involves the turning of Jesus into a fictitious character, an invented person told in a parabolic story, and the shed blood of vicarious atonement is discarded from Crossan's theology because it is outside Crossan's interpretive radar. Crossan made that clear in his debate with White: 'I don't see any necessity to do substitutionary atonement of vicarious satisfaction to understand the New Testament' (White & Crossan 2005:47). In addition, the essential need for belief in the resurrection for salvation is rejected by Crossan (see §4.4.7.8.1).

Therefore, Crossan has to reject the bodily resurrection because of his presuppositional postmodern bias in favour of the metaphorical and anti-supernatural. However, Crossan's rejection of Jesus' bodily resurrection raises some issues that need more careful examination. These surround the meaning of what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20-21 where believers' citizenship is in heaven and they wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven 'who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body'. The language 'like his glorious body', wrote George Ladd, 'is the problem that confronts the historian as historian' because 'Jesus' body was not of this world; it belonged to the Age to Come'. Through the gospel, especially the resurrection, the Saviour Christ Jesus 'abolished death and brought life and immortality' (2 Tm 1:10). As will be discussed in §4.4.8.4, Jesus' resurrected body had a new dimension – it violated the laws of space, gravity and time. For Ladd, 'these are matters of Christian faith, not of historical investigation. Although it was an event in history, Jesus' resurrection had no antecedent historical cause – a sequence which the historian assumes' (Ladd 1975:125). So agreement can be made with Crossan that the resurrected body of Jesus was not affirming resuscitation. However, Crossan has an additional issue: He does not read the passion-resurrection data from a perspective of a hermeneutical plain reading of what the text states grammatically, semantically and contextually. To test the historicity or otherwise of Jesus' resurrection, a hermeneutical framework has been chosen in this research as a means of examining the data. How does one discern what Jesus' resurrection 'means' without some hermeneutical principles to determine meaning? These have been articulated in §1.1.7.3.2; §2.3; and §3.3.2. An outline of these principles (also used for resolving conflicts of presuppositions) is:[260]

(1) Choose exegesis and not eisegesis of the text; [#1][261]
(2) Use ordinary or normal meaning of a statement; [#2]
(3) Meaning is coherent with the writer's in-text context; [#3]
(4) Biblical statements to fit original cultural and historical context of writer and readers; [#4]
(5) Meaning is coherent with the writer's own cultural context; [#5]
(6) The Reformers' analogy of faith – biblical statements will not be contradictory; [#6]

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[260] Many of these principles are based on §1.1.7.3.2.
[261] When the various numbers in brackets are used, they indicate that Crossan has violated this hermeneutical principle.

(7) The intended meaning of a statement or sentence is that which is literal, historical, grammatical and contextual and will not be determined by some deeper, secret, or plural meaning; [#7]
(8) Give priority to more extensive passages on a topic; [#8]
(9) Expose logical fallacies; [#9]
(10) Method must not displace the meaning of a text; historical method is a servant of the interpretive task; [#10]
(11) Methodology for determining if the tomb was empty;[262] [#11]
(12) Subjectivism or free play cannot be a final determinant of validity of evidence[263] [#12]

4.4.7.4 Apparitions

For Crossan, an important dimension of Jesus' resurrection was that the resurrection was an apparition, 'which involves trance or an altered state of consciousness' (Crossan 1994a:160-161). Dictionary meanings of 'apparition' include: (1) 'a ghostly appearance; a spectre or phantom; (2) 'anything that appears, especially something remarkable or phenomenal; (3) 'the act of appearing' (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v apparition).

A thesaurus synonym of hallucination is apparition (Roget's 21st century thesaurus 2013a). Hallucination is a 'subjective sense perception for which there is no appropriate external source, as psychiatric disorder' and 'a suffering from illusion or false notions' (The Macquarie dictionary 1997. S v hallucination).

However, Crossan does not want to identify his view of Jesus' resurrection appearances with hallucination or delusion: 'I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably, and I understand them within the psychosocial and cross-cultural anthropology of comparative religion in works such as those by Ioan Lewis, Erika Bourguignon, Felicitas Goodman, or Raymond Price'. Therefore, he pressed the point: 'It is imperative, against that background, to distinguish between vision or apparition and delusion or hallucination. It is helpful, in making that distinction, to compare dreams and visions. Hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares, visions and apparitions are not the same as delusions and hallucinations'. For this differentiation, Crossan pressed the point that this 'is not about delusions and hallucinations, about losing touch with reality, and neither is it about tricks and lies, about losing touch with honesty. Trance and ecstasy, vision and apparition are perfectly normal and natural phenomena' (Crossan 1999:6; emphasis in original). If they are 'perfectly normal and natural phenomena', why did he choose to identify the resurrection apparitions with the spiritism of Lewis, Bourguignon, Goodman, and Price?

Then Crossan proceeds to unfold the evidence to try to support his presupposition of Jesus' resurrection appearances being that of vision or apparition. In an interview with John Hanley Jr., Crossan told him that:[264] 'I think it is historically true that followers of Jesus had visions of him after his execution. In fact that wouldn't surprise me, a priori' (Crossan in Hanley 2006).

This is unusual language by Crossan: 'That wouldn't surprise me, a priori'. Is this Crossan's *a priori* understanding that Jesus' followers had post-resurrection visions (instead of seeing a fleshly resurrected Jesus) or that of Jesus' followers having these kinds of *a priori* beliefs? '*A priori*', as a general understanding, is 'a type of epistemic justification that is, in some sense, independent of experience' (Russell 2014). As indicated in §4.2.1.2.5, the procedure used to challenge *a priori* presuppositions is to provide counter evidence to those presuppositions. Crossan has clearly stated that post-resurrection experiences by Jesus' followers with Jesus were apparitions. He cited 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (on the third day after his crucifixion, Christ appeared to Cephas, the twelve, more than five hundred people, James, all the apostles and to Paul) and expounded that 'the thrust of that description is **not just its emphasis on the risen apparitions of Jesus** but its insistence that Paul himself is an *apostle* – that is, one specifically called and designated by God and Jesus to take a leadership role in the early church' (Crossan 1994a:165-166; italics emphasis in original; bold emphasis added). Here he acknowledged that the resurrection appearances were at least 'risen apparitions', but elsewhere he wrote that 'stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to various people are not really about "visions" at all, but are literary fiction prompted by struggles over leadership in the early Church' (Crossan & Watts 1996:153). So resurrection appearances are really 'risen apparitions' but these are not 'visions'. But that's not what he stated in his discussion of apparitions when he affirmed that three days after the legal execution by the Roman imperial power, Jesus' tomb was found empty and he appeared to former companions: 'Those resurrectional visions explain the miracle of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman empire…. I use *vision* and *apparition* interchangeably' (Crossan 1999:5-6; emphasis in original). So Crossan has been caught with this contradiction – apparitions are visions, but they are not visions.

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[262] This is deduced from Crossan's statement that 'the empty-tomb story is neither an early historical event nor a late legendary narrative but a deliberate Markan creation' (Crossan 1998a:558).
[263] See §4.4.4.3 for an assessment.
[264] Because it is an interview, the language used was Crossan's responses expressed in an ad lib fashion and not in the mode of academically refined peer-reviewed expressions.

What is the evidence of experiences that the followers of Jesus had with Jesus after his execution and resurrection? Were they visions/apparitions? Elsewhere Crossan described them as trances, ecstasies or altered states of consciousness (Crossan 1994a:75-101, 160-161; 1995:210; 1998a:552). There are two main areas to investigate: (a) The empty tomb (three examples), and (b) the nine other post-resurrection appearances.[265]

In the preaching of Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue at Antioch, Pisidia, Acts 13:30-31 records that they preached of Jesus that 'God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people'. How did Jesus 'appear' to 'his witnesses' after he was raised from the dead? The verb, translated 'appeared' in Acts 13:31 is ὤφθη, aorist passive indicative of ὁράω, which is a common verb, according to Arndt and Gingrich, in its transitive form to mean '*see, catch sight of, notice* of sense perception' of someone (Ac 2:3). In the passive (as in Ac 13:31) it means to '*become visible, appear*'; '*a vision appeared to Paul at night*' (Ac 16:9 – the Macedonian call and not a resurrection appearance); 'of persons who appear in a natural way' (Ac 7:26). In this latter verse, it states, 'On the following day he appeared to them as they were quarrelling and tried to reconcile them'. However, 'appear' speaks 'mostly of beings that make their appearance in a supernatural manner' (see angels, Lk 1:11; Moses and Elijah, Mt 17:3), including 'the risen Christ Lk 24:34; Ac 9:17; 13:31; 26:16a; 1 Cor 15:5-8; Christ at his second coming (Heb 9:28) (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:581-582; emphasis in original).

Thus, Acts 13:31 could be translated 'was seen' (NIV) or as the intransitive, 'he appeared' (ESV). However, there are no direct statements in the text that it was a visionary apparitional appearance by Jesus after his resurrection, but those who came from Galilee to Jerusalem with him were ‘his witnesses to the people’ (Acts 13:31). This evidence points to those who saw the risen Christ were not seeing apparitions but they were literally ‘his eyewitnesses who are qualified in every way to testify to all that they have seen’ (Lenski 1934:534). This is the point Peter made in his sermon at Pentecost that ‘this Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses’ (Ac 2:32) and Paul’s address to the ‘men of Israel’ that ‘you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses’ (Ac 3:15). They were witnesses, not of an apparition, but of the bodily resurrected Jesus (see below for a demonstration of the evidence for this point of view).

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[265] A listing of this information and explanation of the biblical texts was provided by Geisler (1989:129-141).

There are twelve appearances of Jesus associated with Jesus’ resurrection. These are:

The order of the twelve appearances of Christ[266]

Persons	Saw	Heard	Touched	Other evidence
1. Mary (Jn 20:10-18)	X	X	X	Empty tomb
2. Mary & women (Mt 28:1-10)	X	X	X	Empty tomb
3. Peter (1 Cor 15:5)	X	X*		Appeared (empty tomb/grave clothes)
4. Two disciples (Lk 24:13-35)	X	X		Empty tomb/ate with him
5. Ten apostles (Jn 20:19-23)	X	X	X**	Saw wounds, ate food
6. Eleven apostles (Jn 20:24-31)	X	X	X**	Saw wounds
7. Seven apostles (Jn 21)	X	X		Ate food
8. All apostles (Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:14-18)[267]	X	X		
9. More than 500 brothers & sisters[268] (1 Cor 15:6)	X	X*		
10. James (1Cor 15:7)	X	X*		
11. All apostles (Ac 1:4-8)	X	X		Ate with him
12. Paul (Ac 9:1-9; 1 Cor 15:8)	X	X		

*Implied **Offered himself to be touched

The specifics of these post-resurrection appearances will be addressed below in §4.4.8. However, the emphasis cannot be camouflaged that Crossan’s agenda is that the actuality of a physical empty tomb is not important. What *is important* is the *meaning* of the empty tomb, which Crossan claims is independent of factuality. Where does the evidence point?

Before examining the specifics, inferences can be made from the available evidence regarding supposed apparitions and appearances of Jesus, based on the summarised evidence, ‘the order of the twelve appearances of Christ’.

4.4.7.4.1 An examination of apparition theory

In his interview with Hanley, Crossan stated:

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[266] Based on Geisler (2006). Portion of the chart is in Geisler (1989:141).

[267] This researcher does not consider Mark 16:9-20 to be part of the New Testament canon of Scripture.

[268] Although Geisler used the translation of ‘brethren’, the Greek *adelphoi* means ‘brothers and sisters’, as translated by the NRSV, NIV and NET Bible translations.

> If we didn't have evidence of it, I would say from psychological anthropology the existence of visions of the beloved dead, especially of somebody killed brutally or suddenly or somebody who has disappeared and no bodies are found, it is almost inevitable. I think there's (sic) cases of something like 70 to 80 percent of cases like that and even more so among women than men that they have visions of the beloved person as real to them as if we were sitting across the room from one another either in dreams or they see the person going down the street. So I take it for granted that there were visions.
>
> (Crossan, in Hanley 2006)

Crossan here is orienting his readers to accept his presuppositional worldview of psychological anthropology that includes visions and spiritism that he will apply to Jesus' resurrection data. This is imposing a worldview on the data that is foreign to the plain meaning of the text. This has been addressed in §4.4.7.1. It is eisegesis – a reading into the text – which Crossan uses to provide his version of reconstruction. [#1], [#2], [#4] [#10]

Crossan continued:

> I do not take for a moment the stories that we find in the New Testament about the competition between who had them, or whether it [was – SDG] Peter or the beloved disciple. I do not think those are stories of what happened immediately afterwards, but that they were visions. That sounds right to me.
>
> (Crossan, in Hanley 2006)

It has been shown already that Crossan is contradictory in his statements about vision and apparition as applied to Jesus. 'I do not think' and 'that sounds right to me' are subjective and idiosyncratic to Crossan. Anyone else with a different perspective could not have that view rejected if subjectivism was the measure of testing evidence. Subjectivism thus promotes a hermeneutic that refuses to allow the texts to speak for themselves and to allow for a semantic understanding of the passion-resurrection gospel data. [#6], [#12]

He was unrelenting with his metaphorical emphasis:

> They've experienced the power. So there's a pull from simply saying to themselves, "This was all a terrible mistake; let's go back to Galilee and forget it." That's one historical event, whether it's right or wrong, but that Jesus has told them all of this and they've accepted it; that happened. And put that together with the apparitions, visions – I'm using that in exactly the same sense as if you had a vision of anyone who is not defrauding us and lying has had a vision.
>
> (Crossan, in Hanley 2006)

This is another example of Crossan's refusal to accept the intended meaning of a statement in its literal, semantic, grammatical and contextual understanding. 'Simply saying to themselves' is not in agreement with, 'This is simply the way it is'. He has imposed his metaphorical, postmodern understanding on the text, thus causing a literal perceptive to be excluded. [#1], [#7], [#12]

> When you put those two things together, then you're ready to make an interpretation. Then if the kingdom has begun, and if Jesus has appeared to us, then the general resurrection which was expected to be the first part of the great clean up within certain strands of Judaism, Pharasaic strands especially, has already begun.
>
> (Crossan, in Hanley 2006).

The ‘two things’ in context for Crossan are: Firstly, they leave Galilee, go to Jerusalem, do not return to Nazareth, and then they move to the cities of the Roman Empire. Secondly, ‘I think it is historically true that followers of Jesus had visions of him after his execution’ (Crossan in Hanley 2006). What is being tested in this hypothesis is Crossan’s claim that the meaning of the empty tomb is independent of factuality. However, Crossan does not use that principle – of meaning separate from factuality – in this interview. He depends on the factuality of what happens regarding Galilee, Jerusalem, Nazareth, other cities of the Roman Empire, and Pharisaic Judaism to determine his interpretation – his meaning. It is hypocritical for him to want to separate the meaning of the resurrection from the empty tomb. He himself will not separate the meanings of the beginning of the kingdom of God, the general resurrection as the first part of the great clean up as anticipated by Pharisaic Judaism, from the specifics of the cities mentioned and the people of Pharisaic Judaism. Crossan claims that his followers had ‘visions of Jesus after his execution’. The understanding of ‘visions’ is from his spiritistic imposition on the text and his attempt to avoid the supernatural resurrection of Jesus (see §4.4.7.1). These issues will be pursued in the specifics of some post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in §4.4.8.

What do the facts state? The evidence is accumulating that these are not visions that Jesus’ followers had of him. What are the issues with Crossan’s perspective? Many of these have been raised by Peter Kreeft and Ron Tacelli in their rebuttal of the hallucination theory of the resurrection but they are as applicable to expose the apparition theory (Kreeft & Tacelli 1994:186-188). The encyclopedia of occultism and parapsychology (2001. S v apparitions) provided this definition of apparition: ‘An apparition, from Latin *apparere* (to appear), is in its literal sense merely an appearance – a sense perception of any kind, but as used in *psychical research* and *parapsychology* the word denotes an abnormal or paranormal appearance or perception, which cannot be explained by any mundane objective cause’. If it is taken in this sense (which seems to be Crossan’s view with his citing occult and spiritistic researchers), the designation of apparitions ‘covers all visionary appearances, *hallucinations*, *clairvoyance*, and similar unusual perceptions. "Apparition" and "ghost" are frequently used as synonymous terms, though the former is, of course, of much wider significance’ (emphasis in original).

As a general assessment, these are some of the issues with Crossan’s apparitional hermeneutics:

(1) There were too many witnesses to the appearances of Christ after the resurrection. Apparitions are primarily private, individual and subjective, as explained by The University of Virginia school of medicine’s division of perceptual studies, which investigates ‘apparitions and after-death communications’ when it stated that

> the kinds of apparitions we are particularly interested in are often referred to as “crisis apparitions.” “Crisis apparition” is a term that we use to describe a wide range of experiences occurring at or near the time that a distant loved one or acquaintance was dying, involved in an accident, or experiencing some other unexpected event. For example, many people have reported that they have seen a lifelike apparition of a friend or relative at about the time that that person was dying or involved in an accident, although the person experiencing the apparition had had no normal way of knowing about this event at the time. Similarly, other people have reported having had a vivid dream, hearing a loved one's voice, or feeling an unusual physical sensation or emotion at a time coinciding with an unexpected death or other event.
>
> (University of Virginia 2014)

After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to Mary Magdalene, the disciples, two disciples on the Emmaus road, fishermen on the shore, James, and to more than 500 brothers and sisters. This extent and variety of witnesses is at variance with Crossan's understanding of the resurrection appearances as visionary or apparitional and point to a contrary interpretation, based on the University of Virginia's assessment of 'crisis apparitions' (2014).

(2) Those who were witnesses of Jesus were honest followers of Jesus who had firsthand knowledge of him. The witnesses included Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Mt 28:1-10); the eleven disciples (Mt 28:16-20); Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mk 16:1-8); the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee – Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, 'the eleven and … all the rest (Lk 23:55-24:12); two going to Emmaus (one being Cleopas), 'some women of our company', 'the eleven and those who were with them', and Simon (Lk 24:13-49); Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and the other disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, Thomas (Jn 20:1-29); appearing to seven disciples – Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, two others, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of the disciples (Jn 21:1-14) (Kreeft & Tacelli 1994:187-188).

(3) According to Paul, after the resurrection, Jesus 'appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive' – at the time of Paul's writing (1 Cor 15:6), which is estimated to be about AD 54-57 (Fee 1987:4-5; Godet 1977:16). Appearing to more than 500 people at the same time and in the same place is surely more extraordinary than an event where there could be 500 private apparitions at different times and places of the very same Jesus. To add to the impact of the more than 500 witnesses, it was stated that most of them were still alive. The inference is: 'Go to check with them if you are unsure and have questions about the nature of Christ's resurrection'. Further impact is that this appearance to the more than 500 was 'at one time', thus confounding any conclusion about the appearance being an apparition.

(4) What is the duration of visions/ apparitions? Sometimes they may continue for seconds, minutes and perhaps hours. Alexander Moreira-Almeida explained the spiritistic view of mental illness by referring to Allan Kardec's work of 1861 that 'apparitions or true visions' result from 'real spiritual perception' that may happen two ways: (a) The spirit appears to the person who sees another person, or (b) the person's spirit is transported to meet an incarnated spirit. 'True visions and apparitions convey unknown information to the individual, that is later confirmed as accurate'. Kardec wrote of apparitions that are 'far more frequent at the time of death' (Moreira-Almeida 2012:42-34). This is in the world of spiritism, the discipline to which Crossan turns for his understanding of Jesus' resurrection. However, Jesus' alleged resurrectional apparitions, contrary to the world of spiritism, were experienced by people for forty days according to Acts 1:3. Crossan's apparition theory of Jesus' resurrection is pushing the boundaries of reasonable understanding.

(5) Visions/apparitions usually happen irregularly, except to the mentally ill or those in a psychic state. However, these alleged apparitions of Jesus returned many times, to ordinary people – including the disciples – over a period of forty days (Jn 20:19 – 21:14; Acts 1:3).

(6) It is difficult to imagine that the visions of the risen Christ to so many people happened with Jesus doing surprising and unexpected things among them – waiting for the promise of the Father and his ascension (see Acts 1:4, 9). The narrative reads like that of a real person – with some remarkable events like his appearing and

disappearing – but it is unlike that of an apparition. In addition, it affirms the historical criterion of discontinuity, thus increasing the possibility of historicity.

(7) The disciples did not expect this. They were troubled and had doubts at first, including those of Peter. What did it take to convince them? He showed them his hands and feet and invited them to 'touch me and see' (Lk 24:36-43) – more on this below. This is not the language of an apparition but of the physical Jesus being in the presence of his physical disciples.

(8) Those experiencing apparitions do not eat with the person with whom they are experiencing that vision or altered state of consciousness. Jesus ate with them on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-4).

(9) According to these Scriptures, the disciples touched him; this is hardly an explanation of a trance (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).

(10) It would be a strange visionary experience for the disciples to speak with Jesus after the resurrection and have him speak back to them. Those experiencing a trance or altered state of consciousness (Crossan's synonyms for apparition) would have great difficulty engaging in extended conversations. But this apparition converses with at least eleven people at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3).

(11) How could the disciples believe these were apparitions of Jesus if his corpse was still in the tomb or buried in a shallow grave and then easy prey for scavenging dogs (Crossan's view in 1994a:160)? This is a challenging issue for Crossan's information: If the resurrection appearances were those of apparitions, where was the corpse? The gospels state that the tomb of Jesus was empty (Mt 28:6; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:3; Jn 20:1-10). Crossan seems to be left with no other alternative than to resort to occult experiences for the risen Jesus because Jesus' body is gone, thanks to scavenging dogs.

(12) If the disciples and the other witnesses had visionary experiences and spread the apparition story, the Jews could have stopped it in its tracks by producing the body or producing the evidence that dogs ate his body, the disciples stole it, or some other inventive story. They did not produce the evidence of a deceased body and what happened to it. This information has been given to Crossan to invent his apparitional hypothesis that is finding empty tomb holes in it.

(13) An apparitional theory tries to explain the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, but apparitional experiences do not explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, the inability to produce the corpse (or explain its disappearance), or any other inventive story that is designed to create fictional content or eisegesis.[269]

Kreeft and Tacelli stated that some of these arguments of refutation go back to the church fathers, evidence from the eighteenth century, and especially that of William Paley. They note that few try to answer these arguments. Hugh Schonfield attempted to do it in *The Passover plot* (Schonfield 1965). However, as Kreeft and Tacelli state, 'the counter attack to the resurrection generally takes two forms': (1) dismissing the resurrection 'simply because it is miraculous', pursuing Hume's line that other explanations are more probable than the miraculous. (2) The most popular counter-attack is 'by interpreting the Gospels as myth – neither literally true nor literally false, but spiritually or symbolically true' and this is a standard approach for liberal theology (Kreeft & Tacelli 1994:188). It is noteworthy that these two counter attacks are those used by Crossan (1994a:160-161). His anti-supernaturalism is exposed in §3.2. His refusal to accept the plain reading of the biblical text exposes his metaphorical, postmodern, occult-defined view of apparitions imposed on the text. That was uncovered in §4.3 and is being assessed here in §4.4.

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[269] This assessment is adapted from Kreeft & Tacelli (1994:186-188).

Crossan rejects the apparitional resurrection appearances as referring to delusion and hallucination (Crossan 1999:6). However, that is not how those involved in the occult and spiritualism make the differentiation. They regard apparitions as covering 'all visionary appearances, hallucinations**,** clairvoyance**,** and similar unusual perceptions', including ghosts (Encyclopedia of occultism and parapsychology 2001. S v apparition). Thus Crossan is violating one of the fundamentals of hermeneutics, coherence [#3]. Since he uses the parallel between spiritism and apparitions to define apparitions, to be consistent, Crossan need to pursue the apparitional definition from the literature of the occult and spiritism.

Eminent German-American theologian and church historian, Philip Schaff, provided this summation of Jesus' resurrection evidence: 'It was a re-animation of the dead body of Jesus by a return of His soul from the spirit-world, and a rising of body and soul from the grave to a new life, which after repeated manifestations to believers during a short period of forty days entered into glory by ascension to heaven' (Schaff 1882:151). This contradicts Crossan's anti-bodily resurrection view and the evidence which follows should expose more of the inconsistencies in Crossan's views of Jesus' resurrection.

As indicated in §4.2.1.1.1(q) above, the two primary factors to establish history, as applied to Jesus' resurrection narratives in the New Testament, are:

(1) Examine the historical facts that remain which are recoverable. These facts for Jesus are anchored in historical knowledge in the same way they would be for any person or event in history. The methods used to recover the historical information concerning Alexander III of Macedon, also known as Alexander the Great (356-323 BC),[270] King of Macedon and conqueror of the Persian Empire, or the Australian and New Zealand military forces landing on the Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey, on 25 April 1915 during World War I, commemorated as 'Anzac Day'[271] in Australia and New Zealand (Gallipoli and the Anzacs 2010), are the same as for assessing the historical details for the life and death of Jesus. They are based on a plain reading of the given texts and understood from the perspective as the writer of the documents being communicative agents.

(2) The second primary tactic is the historian responding to the persons and events in these extant historical documents as one would for any historical piece of evidence. There will be personal evaluation by the historian, positive and negative, that will be expressed in interpretation, based on these facts.

Can this framework of historical investigation be articulated more precisely for an examination of Jesus' resurrection accounts in the New Testament and the early church, to determine the nature of Jesus' resurrection? Were the appearances apparitions, the stories myths, or was resurrection another way of expressing the continuing Christian experience (Crossan)? Is Bultmann's understanding of the resurrection myth preferred? Was the resurrection a mythological fable? Or was it an historical event that has been documented and the available evidence can be accumulated as evidence?

An overarching philosophy of literature and history provides the foundation, impetus, direction and conclusion for Crossan's investigation of the historical Jesus. As has already been demonstrated in §4.2.1, Crossan's presupposition that the resurrection narratives of the New Testament are not historical has been tested in this study and was falsified because of his use of a question begging logical fallacy.

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[270] Lifespan dates are from Joshua Mark (2011).

[271] 'Anzac' is an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

4.4.7.5 Indications the tomb was empty

Crossan’s working hypothesis is that the names of Barabbas, Simon of Cyrene, and Joseph of Arimathea (who took Jesus’ body and put it in his tomb) as well as the events surrounding them, were created by Mark in his gospel. They were fictional creations. In addition, ‘no guard is necessary [at the tomb – SDG] because Jesus will have been proved wrong’ (Crossan 1995:177, 180).

Bill Craig has raised some practical issues supporting the historical reliability of the event of Jesus’ burial supporting the empty tomb: (a) There was no possibility of the disciples believing in Jesus’ resurrection if the corpse still lay in the tomb. (b) If the disciples had preached the resurrection without an empty tomb, the people would not have believed them and they would be considered foolish. (c) If they had preached the resurrection, the Jewish authorities would have exposed the falsity of the claim by pointing to Jesus’ tomb and even exhuming his body to prove he had not been raised. Therefore, if the story of Jesus’ burial is true, then the story of the empty tomb in association with the resurrection is linked to the burial story (Craig 1994:272).

To discern the possibility or otherwise of an empty tomb, there is other evidence that is here pursued and these include burial requirements in Judaism and with the Romans.[272] Craig Evans’ consideration was that

> the question of the empty tomb is important for critical assessment of the resurrection stories. If Jesus’ earliest followers actually knew that Jesus had been buried and that his tomb was later found empty, it makes their proclamation that Jesus was *resurrected* (and not just a spirit) more intelligible. After all, there must have been compelling reason to speak of resurrection, instead of simply (and more easily believed, given the culture) speaking of apparitions. Jews who believed in resurrection thought in terms of a general, eschatological resurrection, not the resurrection of an individual. The claim that Jesus was resurrected would have been viewed as problematic, even for his own followers.
>
> (Evans 2005b:188; emphasis in original)

Evans considers that the evidence for the burial of Jesus ‘is compelling’, based on ‘the necessity of burial in Jewish thinking’, the ‘burial and non-burial of executed criminals’, and how this fits with the gospel narrative (Evans 2005b:188-201).

Some samples of this Jewish evidence are:[273]

(a) The need for Jewish burial is based on the Old Testament data. Special attention is paid to the choice of a tomb and burial of Sarah (Gn 23:4-20), patriarchs and monarchs of Israel, Jacob’s body and burial in a tomb in Pharaoh’s jurisdiction (Gn 50:4-14), and Saul and his sons (1 Sm 31:12-13). Concerning those who buried Saul, David said, ‘May you be blessed by the Lord, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord, and buried him’ (2 Sm. 2:5).

This applied also to the burial of unbelievers, including for transgressors and those executed (see Nm 11:33-34; Dt 21:22-23) and God’s judgement (as with the house of Jeroboam) by the dogs and birds eating the bodies of those who died (1 Ki 14:10-11). There are other similar Old Testament examples (see 1 Ki 21:23-24; 2 Ki 9:23-27). Jeremiah warned the sons of Judah who had done evil in the sight of the Lord and the consequence in the Valley of Slaughter: ‘And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and none will frighten them away’ and ‘they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshipped. And they shall not be gathered or buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground' (Jr 7:33; 8:2).

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[272] The following assessment is provided with assistance from Evans (2005b:188-196).

[273] This is based on information from Evans (2005b).

(b) There is support for the burial tradition in other Jewish writers. Josephus wrote: 'Our law hath also taken care of the decent burial of the dead, but without any extravagant expenses for their funerals' (Josephus n dd:2.27). More specifically, 'the Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men, that they took down those that were condemned and crucified, and buried them before the going down of the sun' (Josephus n dc:4.5.2).

Philo also is overt about burial issues. When he heard the false report that his son was dead, slain by wild beasts, he said,

> It is not thy death that grieves me, O my son, but such a tomb as has fallen to your lot; for if you had been buried in your own land I should have been comforted; I would have cherished you, I would have tended you in sickness if you had died before me, I would have given you my last embrace, I would have closed your eyes, I would have wept over your dead body lying before me, I would have buried you sumptuously, I would have omitted none of the customary observances…. But if it was necessary that he should die violently and by treachery, it would have been a lighter evil to me for him to have been slain by men, who would have laid out his corpse, and have pitied him so far as to scatter dust over him, and at least to have concealed his body; and even if they had been the most merciless of all people, what more could they have done than have thrown him out unburied, and so got rid of him? And then, perhaps, some one of the passers by on the road, standing by, and beholding him, and conceiving pity for our common nature, would have thought him worthy of some care, and of burial.

(Philo 2015:5.23, 25)

After investigating this and more extensive evidence, Evans concluded that the data examined 'strongly encourages us to think that in all probability Jesus was indeed buried and that his corpse and those of the two men crucified with him would not have been left hanging overnight and perhaps indefinitely, or at most cast into a ditch or shallow grave, exposed to animals. Quite apart from any concerns with the deceased men or their families, the major concern would have had to do with the defilement of the land and the holy city' (Evans 2005b:195).

The argument could be raised: That is apt for the Jewish tradition and its burial practices, but Jesus died under the Romans and Jewish funeral rites did not matter. However, the evidence indicates that the Romans also used this cruel, heinous practice of crucifixion with a variety of procedures and also had various practices on how to deal with the body of a deceased person. Josephus provided an eyewitness account of the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the Roman treatment of prisoners. There were hundreds of Jewish prisoners, sometimes more than five hundred a day, who 'were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city…. So the soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest, when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies' (Josephus n dc:5.11.1). Joel Green's comment on the Roman brutality of crucifixion was that the form of crucifixion 'included a flogging beforehand, and victims often carried the crossbeam to the place of crucifixion, where they were nailed or bound to the cross with arms extended, raised up, and perhaps seated on a sedicula, or small wooden peg' (Green 1992a:147). Martin Hengel has provided one of the most comprehensive surveys of the punishment of crucifixion in the ancient Graeco-Roman and Jewish worlds. He described 'crucifixion as the supreme Roman penalty' (Hengel 1977:33).

The biblical evidence is that Pontius Pilate, a prefect[274] in the Roman province of Judea under Emperor Tiberius (Tacitus 1864-1877:15.44), who held office from AD 26-36,[275] condemned Jesus to death (Jn 19:1-16).

With that background to crucifixion and burial for both Jews and Romans, there is debate among some scholars over whether Joseph of Arimathea who took the body of Jesus and buried it in his empty tomb (Mt 27:57-61) was a disciple of Jesus (Mt 27:57; Jn 19:38) or a Jewish antagonist who performed what Green called 'the last act of the crime against Jesus' even though Joseph 'is never named as Jesus' enemy'. Mark 15:43 identified him as 'a respected member of the Council', that is, an eminent member of the Sanhedrin. By New Testament times, according to Graham Twelftree (1992:730), both Josephus and the New Testament confirm that the Sanhedrin, made up of Pharisees and Sadducees (Ac 23:6) consisted of the chief priests as the key figures (Mt 27:41; Mk 14:53; Josephus n dc:2.15.6; 2.16.2) who belonged to the Sadducees (Ac 4:1; 5:17; Josephus n db:20.9.1), but the scribes were a major component who dominated the Council (Ac 23:6). Thus they were the principal men of the people and of Jerusalem and were powerful dignitaries (Lk 19:47; Josephus n dc:2.17.2; n de:11-13). Green's conclusion regarding Joseph of Arimathea was that 'in light of the available evidence it seems probable that, historically, his actions were motivated by his response to the Law' (Green 1992b:90).

Bill Craig confirmed the understanding that 'as a member of the Jewish court that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be a Christian invention. There was strong resentment against the Jewish leadership for their role in the condemnation of Jesus (I Thess. 2.15)'. Therefore, it is 'highly improbable that Christians would invent a member of the court that condemned Jesus' as one 'who honors Jesus by giving him a proper burial instead of allowing him to be dispatched as a common criminal' (Craig n d).[276]

An examination of each of the first four passages about the empty tomb (see the table in §4.4.7.4) reveals:

1. Based on John 20:10-18, Mary, weeping outside the empty tomb, saw two angels in white in the tomb and they spoke to her. She did not recognise Jesus at first at the tomb until he said, 'Mary' and she responded in Aramaic, 'Rabboni'. While Mary Magdalene announced to the disciples that she had 'seen' (ὁράω) the Lord (Jn 20:18), Arndt and Gingrich give the meaning of this verb in John 20:18 as '*see*, *catch sight of*, *notice* of sense perception' (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:581; emphasis in original). Thus, it is not an indication of an apparitional experience, but was a seeing in the visual, physical sense (as John 20:19-23 also will demonstrate). [#1], [#2], [#7], [#11]
2. Another Scripture describing the empty tomb, Matthew 28:6-7, states that the angel said to the women, 'Come, see the place where he lay.... He has risen from

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[274] Harold Hoehner wrote that 'in 1961 an incomplete inscription was found in Caesarea which gives the correct technical title of his position as *praefectus Iudaeae*, a military title of a commander of auxiliary troops (500-1,000 soldiers) rather than *procurator*, a financial officer of a province, or *governor*, a general term for leader which is consistently used in the NT' (Hoehner 1992:615; emphasis in original).

[275] The dates for which Pilate held office are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Pontius Pilate).

[276] A similar affirmation of Joseph of Arimathea's details and probable historicity are in Craig (1995:147-148).

the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee'. One may not comprehend angels speaking to the women, but there is no statement or inference that it was an apparitional or trance encounter. In Mark 16:1-8, there is an empty tomb discovered by Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome. They found a young man sitting on the right side of the empty tomb but there is no statement to indicate it was an apparition they experienced. Luke 24:1-12 tells of the women going to the empty tomb, being frightened by the encounter with two men in dazzling apparel, but there is no articulation that this is an encounter involving altered states of consciousness. According to John 20:1-7, Mary ran to tell Peter about the stone having been removed from the tomb's entrance. Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved ran to and entered the empty tomb. They did not understand the Scripture that indicated that Jesus must rise from the dead, but there is no suggestion in this description of any apparitional encounter. [#1], [#2], [#5], [#11]

Outside of Old Testament references, Josephus wrote of the demeaning view of women as witnesses, 'Let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex' (Josephus n db:4.8.15).[277] Samuel Byrskog considers that Josephus 'represents the dominating ancient Jewish view. The rabbis made the same determination. Yes, the Jew was, according to Rabbi Judah, to praise God daily that he was not created a woman (t. Ber. 7:18)' (in Byrskog 2002:74). N T Wright's view was that 'nobody inventing such stories would have allowed women pride of place, since women were not regarded as credible witnesses in that world. The formal, stylized account in 1 Cor. 15 has carefully removed them' (Wright 2005a:675).

Therefore, the empty tomb with women as witnesses would be an embarrassment to Jewish sensibilities for witnesses. Thus female witnesses comply with the criterion of embarrassment for historicity (see §2.4.7), confirming the probability that the empty tomb was an historical event.

3. 'He appeared to Cephas' (1 Cor 15:5). What kind of appearance was it, physical or apparitional? The inference is that for Jesus to appear to Cephas, Jesus was alive, the tomb was empty and this is confirmed in the parallel gospel text of Luke 24:12, 34 where Peter ran to the tomb, stooped and looked in and saw 'the linen clothes by themselves' (Lk 24:12) and no physical or apparitional body was in the tomb. Luke 24:34 confirms that 'the Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' John 20:7 stated that when Simon Peter, after the resurrection, saw the face cloth that was not lying with the linen cloths but was 'folded up in a place by itself', something special had happened. A T Robertson explained the John 20:7 passage where 'rolled up' (*entetuligmenon*) is from a 'late verb [*entulissō* – SDG], to wrap in, to roll up, already in Matt. 27:59 and Luke 23:53. It was arranged in an orderly fashion. There was no haste' in folding it (Robertson 1932:310). Arndt and Gingrich (1957:269) give the meaning of *entulissō* as 'wrap (up) … a body in a linen cloth' (Lk 23:53; Mt 27:59) and 'fold up' (Jn 20:7). As has been affirmed, the appearance was not that of an apparition. [#8]

4. The two disciples (Lk 24:13-35), one of whom was Cleopas (Lk 24:18), in going to the village of Emmaus were talking with each other when Jesus drew alongside and travelled with them. But they did not recognise him, even as they had a conversation about 'the things that have happened' in Jerusalem in those days. The

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[277] The editor of this edition of Josephus provided the footnote at this point, 'I have never observed elsewhere, that in the Jewish government women were not admitted as legal witnesses in courts of justice. None of our copies of the Pentateuch say a word of it. It is very probable, however, that this was the exposition of the scribes and Pharisees, and the practice of the Jews in the days of Josephus' (Josephus n db:n. 21).

two told him how 'some women of our company amazed us' by being 'at the tomb early in the morning' and they could not find his body. They had seen a vision of angels. Then, 'some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see' (v 24). Even though he taught the two from what the prophets had spoken about the Christ's suffering, their eyes were not opened to recognise him until he took bread and blessed it at the table (vv 30-32). Then he vanished from their sight.

There are many issues that could be raised about this incident and especially in light of Crossan's rejection of the literal story, claiming 'the symbolism is obvious, as is the metaphoric condensation of the first years of Christian thought and practice into one parabolic afternoon. Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens' (Crossan 1994a:197). The symbolism is *not obvious*, but the *postmodern reconstructionism and its imposition on the text* by Crossan *are obvious*. This is especially so, in light of Crossan's desire to take the Emmaus event right out of a literal, syntactical, contextual understanding [#7] and impose his postmodern reconstructionist interpretation on the text with this assessment: 'What we have here is not an event from Easter Sunday but a process that happened over many years. The presence and empowerment of Jesus remain in the community as it studies the scriptures "about" him and shares a meal of bread and fish together'. In addition, his claim is that the 'two missionaries leave Jerusalem, experience the full presence of Jesus through Scripture and especially Meal, most probably of bread and fish, and return to Jerusalem to report' (Crossan 1994a:172). For him, the road to Emmaus event 'is an apparition without blinding light or heavenly voice. This is a vision without slow demonstration or immediate recognition'. So the interpretation of Luke 24:31 for Crossan is that 'resurrected life and risen vision appear as offered shelter and shared meal. Resurrection is not enough' (Crossan 1998a:xi). This meaning placed by Crossan on the text is not derived from a semantic, grammatical, literal, contextual understanding of the text. It is a rejection by him of exegetical meaning and replacing it with his own postmodern meaning. [#1], [#2], [#3], [#4], [#5], [#7], #11], [#12]

Key issues here are: (a) The tomb is empty (Lk 24:22-23), and (b) Jesus was at the table, took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave to the two disciples (Lk 24:30). This was no apparition but a physical body involved with the disciples. No amount of anti-supernaturalism and postmodern reconstruction by Crossan will counter these facts. A further examination of the Emmaus incident is pursued in §4.4.8.1 below.

Robert Stein summarised 'several powerful arguments' in support of the empty tomb being a very early Christian tradition. These are: (1) It is found in the four gospels and in at least three gospel strata; (2) Semitisms and Semitic customs in the gospel empty tomb accounts indicate these are early and may have originated in a Palestinian setting; (3) 'Jewish belief in the resurrection necessitated an empty tomb'; (4) Women were witnesses to the empty tomb; (5) A Jewish polemic against the empty tomb is difficult to understand if the polemic had developed late (as the critics claim). There would be no point in arguing against the 'legend' at a later date. (6) The reference to Joseph of Arimathea indicates that the tomb of Jesus' burial was well known for Joseph's name is firmly fixed in the traditions of how and where Jesus was buried. (7) The empty tomb traditions place the incident as happening on the first day of the week, the day of the week on which this momentous event changed the religious life of the early Church, including worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. (8) The earliest tradition to refer to the resurrection (probably 1 Cor 15:3-4), according to 'a common consensus today among scholars', is that Paul is quoting a confession of the early church (Stein 1977:25-27).

Crossan's views lead to the conclusion that Easter does not refer to a literal body of Jesus coming out of the tomb, the finding of an empty tomb, visions, or any other literal thing. Instead, the Easter events are dramatic ways of expressing faith and God's power being available through Jesus, not limited to space and time, and available to anyone who believes and experiences it (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). Now that's a nice, subjective invention but it has nothing to do with what is stated in the biblical text. Crossan's skewed, personal understanding is of no more value than a person – scholar or lay person – who brings forth another subjective interpretation that does hermeneutical violence to the biblical text. This is one of the major problems with Crossan's postmodern reconstruction. It is individualistic, personal, free play, reader-response, creative, invention. It produces fiction that carries no more weight than a preacher's allegorisation of a biblical text or a journalist's parody of political events. It is tragic to see such a learned scholar as Crossan descend into such subjective morasses with his reconstructions of critical, passion-resurrection biblical material.

If the empty tomb is irrelevant (Borg) or 'what it means to me' is important (Crossan), then there are shattering implications of deconstructing the resurrection of Jesus so that the literal resurrection disappears into the oblivion of Crossan's metaphorical understanding with no empty tomb necessary: 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain…. If the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins' (1 Cor 15:13-14, 16-17). No metaphorical, subjective, reconstructed resurrection of Jesus fits the resurrection of the dead at the end of time, the resurrection of Christ himself, preaching of Christ since the era of the passion-resurrection, faith in Christ and its futility or otherwise. There are terminal consequences for subjectively redefining (reconstructing) Jesus' resurrection so that the empty tomb is reduced to personal meaning to satisfy anyone's individual whim. It's as destructive as reducing a political party's defeat to a needed whipping to bring balance to a nation's economic woes. The truth is that if there is no empty tomb, this means that Jesus is not resurrected and Christianity's foundation has been shattered. Christianity disappears into religious nothingness or foolishness without the literal resurrection of Jesus (see §4.4.7.9.1 below for further explanation).

Before examining the views of resurrection within Judaism, there was another concept of human beings that had an influence prior to Christ and in the early centuries after Christ that had considerable impact on Christian thinking. That was the Greek view of the nature of human beings. That, in turn, influenced their understanding of resurrection.

4.4.7.6 Resurrection for the Greeks

George Ladd wrote an eminent exposition comparing the differences between the Greek and Hebrew views of human beings. He drew attention to

> a body of Greek literature that contains a view of man and the world very close to that of developed Gnosticism, namely, those Greek philosophical and religious writings that reflect the influence of Platonic dualism. These are writings that are well known and datable; and it is profitable to compare their view of man and the world with the biblical view in both the Old and New Testaments. Such a comparison leads to two

> conclusions: that the Greek view[278] of man and the world is different in kind from the biblical view; and that the unity and diversity of the several important strands of New Testament thought can be illustrated in terms of this contrast.
>
> (Ladd 1968b)

Plato (ca 429-347 BC)[279] wrote of 'the existence of the soul before birth'. Socrates asked him what causes the body to be alive. What does it mean behind a literal sense or a metaphorical sense? For that, I don't find the term critical literalism helpful His reply was that this was always the soul; the opposite of life was death but the soul cannot die because 'the soul is immortal'. He continued, 'May we say that this has been proven?' 'Yes, abundantly proven, Socrates, he replied…. If the immortal is also imperishable, the soul when attacked by death cannot perish; for the preceding argument shows that the soul will not admit of death, or ever be dead, any more than three or the odd number will admit of the even, or fire or the heat in the fire, of the cold'. (Plato 2014).

As for Aristotle (384-322 BC),[280] he wrote of some holding to a divisible soul, 'the parts of the soul' and that the soul 'holds the body together' with the body disintegrating and decaying when the soul departs. He stated that 'if the whole soul holds together the whole body, we should expect each part of the soul to hold together a part of the body. But this seems an impossibility; it is difficult even to imagine what sort of bodily part mind will hold together, or how it will do this'. He contended that 'plants and certain insects go on living when divided into segments; this means that each of the segments has a soul in it identical in species' (Aristotle n d:1.5). What causes the body to live? 'The soul is the cause or source of the living body. The terms cause and source have many senses. But the soul is the cause of its body alike in all three senses which we explicitly recognize. It is (a) the source or origin of movement, it is (b) the end, it is (c) the essence of the whole living body…. In the case of living things, their being is to live, and of their being and their living the soul in them is the cause or source' (Aristotle n d 2:4).

Thus, in Plato and Aristotle, there is a view of the soul, immortality and death, before its articulation in the New Testament. Geisler noted that Augustine followed Plato's dualistic, pre-existence view of the soul and Aquinas assimilated some of Aristotle's hylomorphic (soul and body in unity) perspective (Geisler 2004:37).

Geisler has helpfully summarised Ladd's material and the contrast between the dualistic Platonic view and the hylomorphic (unity) Christian view of the soul and body from Ladd's article:

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[278] Ladd's (1968b:n. 14) footnote reads as follows: 'We are deliberately using the expression, the "Greek view," in spite of Prof. Barr's protest against it (*Old and New in Interpretation* [1966], p.39) because the Platonic dualism is roughly similar to Gnostic dualism, and the contemporary debate centers around the influence of this dualism on the New Testament. If is obvious, as Barr points out, that the Platonic view is not the only Greek view. Indeed, Guthrie says that Stoicism might be called the representative philosophy of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman ages (*A History of Greek Philosophy* [1962], 1,17). However, Stoic pantheistic materialism with its all-permeating divine fire is philosophically the opposite of dualism and plays no role in the current debate on syncretism. We shall show that the Platonic view was of wide currency in New Testament times; and in view of its later influence on Christian theology, we feel justified in calling it the Greek view'.

[279] Lifespan dates are from Kraut (2013). Guidance to citations from Plato and Aristotle was provided by Geisler (2004:37-38).

[280] Lifespan dates are from Shields (2014).

Two contrasting views of human nature: Platonic vs. Christian[281]

Platonic view of human nature	Christian view of human nature[282]
Dualistic	Unity
Is a soul (soul is complete without body)	Is a soul/body (soul is not complete without body)
Matter is not good	Matter is good
Reincarnation into another body	Resurrection in the same body
Body is prison/tomb	Body is expression of the soul
Body is the enemy of soul	Body is the friend of soul
Soul is simple	Soul is composed
Soul is indestructible	Soul is destructible
Salvation from the body	Salvation in the body
Salvation is by knowledge	Salvation is by faith
Soul is divine	Soul is human
Soul is eternal	Soul had a beginning
Soul pre-existed	Soul was created
Earth is an alien place	Earth is a friendly place
Humans have three parts (body, soul, and spirit)[283]	Humans have two dimensions (inner and outer)
Sin results from body burdening soul	Sin results from rebellion of will
Redemption of soul	Redemption of whole person
God is known by fleeing the world	God is known in and through the world
Salvation is by human effort	Salvation is by divine visitation
Reality is in the invisible realm	Reality includes the visible realm[284]

How does the Greek view of human nature impact on the resurrection? Ladd summarised: ‘Like Gnosticism, Platonism is a dualism of two worlds, one the visible world and the other an invisible "spiritual" world. As in Gnosticism, man stands between these two worlds, related to both. Like Gnosticism, Platonism sees the origin of man's truest self (his soul) in the invisible world, whence his soul has fallen into the visible world of matter. Like Gnosticism, it sees the physical body as a hindrance, a burden, sometimes even as the tomb of the soul…. There is no trace of the idea of the resurrection of the body in Philo.[285] The destiny of men is not a redeemed society living on a transformed earth; it is the flight of the soul from earth to heaven. In this basic thinking about man and his destiny, Philo is quite Greek and Platonic’ (Ladd 1968b).

Therefore, to consider the bodily resurrection of Jesus would be outside of the understanding of Greek thinking in the first century. Greek dualism has sometimes influenced Christian thinking with the idea that the soul is more important than the body with the soul belonging ‘to the real, permanent, noumenal world’ while ‘the body belongs to the visible, transitory, temporal, phenomenal world’. While 2

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[281] Geisler (2004:68-69).

[282] The ‘Christian view of human nature’ summarised here is not debated as it is not the focus of this section.

[283] The footnote was ‘Plato, *Republic*, Book I’ (Geisler 2004:69, n. 63).

[284] The footnote stated, ‘Above [meaning, what Geisler wrote prior to this – SDG], we noted that dualism differentiates soul and body, while trichotomy also posits a dualism within the soul itself’ (Geisler 2004:69, n. 64).

[285] Philo of Larissa, ‘(159/8–84/3 BC) was the last known head of Plato's Academy during its skeptical phase’ (Brittain 2006).

Corinthians 4:18,[286] taken out of context, could be interpreted that way, but in Pauline exposition, the eternal 'things that are unseen' refers to 'the world of God which eventually will break into the world and transform it. This includes the resurrection of the body. Paul never conceives of the salvation of the soul apart from the body' (Ladd 1975:44-45). Paul's understanding is based on the Old Testament view of human beings – body and soul.

4.4.7.7 Judaism and resurrection

What was the understanding of the resurrection in Judaism that could impact on first century Jewish Christians and early Christianity? Crossan's article on the resurrection of Jesus in its Jewish context asked two primary questions: (a) What did a first-century Jew mean by 'resurrection' whether it was in belief or disbelief of such? (b) Against that background, what 'did a first-century Christian Jew mean by claiming that God had raised Jesus from the dead?' (Crossan 2003:29).

Crossan's statements concerning first-century Jewish beliefs and disbeliefs in the resurrection were:

- For Jesus, the Jew, 'the bodily resurrection of Jesus can only be understood correctly within the faith and theology about resurrection present in certain circles of his contemporary Judaism' (Crossan 2003:30).
- 'I am asking historical questions, questions about the meaning of Jesus resurrection within its contemporary context. That question is absolutely prior, both then and now, to whether one believes or not in Jesus' resurrection. To affirm or deny something, one must first know its content and meaning' (Crossan 2003:30).
- He only accepts Jesus' burial, the empty tomb, and the apparitions as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John *dato non concesso* (conceding for the sake of argument). 'That acceptance allows me to ask this more fundamental question: Even if all of that happened as recorded, why did anyone call it "resurrection"?' (Crossan 2003:30).
- Jesus' burial and the empty tomb's discovery were deliberate Markan creations to avoid ending with risen apparitions (to Peter and the Twelve!)' (Crossan 2003:30, n. 1).
- As for Jesus' resurrection, 'the gospels conclude not simply with such experiences of continued presence by Jesus but with assertions of apostolic authority from Jesus' (Crossan 2003:30, n. 1). This is a repeat of his metaphorical understanding of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection.

Crossan has asked provocative and insightful questions here about the Jewish context of Jesus' resurrection that need answering. These questions from Crossan will be pursued in what follows: (1) How do researchers 'get post-Enlightenment ears and eyes, hearts, minds, and imaginations back into a pre-Enlightenment time and place?' (2) 'What did a first-century Jew *mean* by the term "bodily resurrection"'? For Pharisees and Sadducees who disputed over resurrection, 'what common meaning did they presume as its basis?' (3) 'What did a first-century Jew mean by claiming that God raised Jesus from the dead or by asserting the bodily resurrection of Jesus?' (4) There is 'the choice between bodily resurrection understood literally or metaphorically' and Jesus' bodily resurrection 'as individual and personal or communal and structural' (Crossan 2003:30-31; emphasis in original).

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[286] This verse states: 'As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal'.

By using pre-Enlightenment versus post-Enlightenment scientific language and concepts, Crossan is providing another glimpse into his *a priori* worldview. In this article (Crossan 2003), he revealed his presuppositions by stating that post-Enlightenment 'virginal conceptions, divine births, miraculous powers, resurrections and ascensions, never have happened and never could happen' (Crossan 2003:31; see also Crossan & Reed 2001:268). This conforms to Crossan's *a priori* anti-supernaturalism that has been exposed and countered in §3.2 and §4.2.1.2.5(d).

To address Crossan's issues on the Jewish context of Jesus' resurrection, the broader questions are: (1) What did the Old Testament teach about life after death and the resurrection of the dead? (2) At the time of Jesus in the first century, when the Pharisees and Sadducees had a dominant position in Judaism, what were their views on resurrection? (3) For first century Jews, what were their teachings on being raised from the dead? (4) Among scholars, there are various meanings of resurrection: literal versus metaphorical and individual/personal versus communal/structural (Crossan 2003:51-55).

Therefore the subjects pursued here are: (1) Resurrection and the Old Testament; (2) Pharisees, Sadducees and the resurrection; (3) First century Jews and resurrection; (4) Paul and 1 Corinthians 15; (5) Various meanings of resurrection (in the first century and today).

There were other influences in Judaism on the teaching of the after-life and resurrection. These are those of the Intertestamental period (see §4.4.7.7.3), for the Pharisees and Sadducees (see §4.4.7.7.2), the Essenes, Sanhedrin, and Talmud.

The Essenes of Qumran (located several kilometres south of Jericho on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea) were members of a Jewish sect that was established around 100 BC and its library of fragmentary scrolls is in the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in the Qumran caves in 1947-1956 (Harlow 2005:159). Émile Puech has identified some of the material in the scrolls that deals with the Essenes' view of resurrection. Samples include:

(a) In 'The Instructions' (Sapiential Work A^{a-e}), a composition dating from second century BC, it provides 'strong evidence concerning the importance of eschatology in wisdom literature…. It depicts the judgment of sin/unrighteousness which will come to an end at its appointed time. Human beings shall be judged and their eternal fate determined as a result of their behaviour, either following the impulses of a fleshly existence … or their adherence to a spiritual community of people … molded by the example of the saints – for a reckoning of their works is recorded in the ledger books that shall be opened at the judgment' (Puech 2006:265-266). The 'Instructions' from Qumran continue after a series of rhetorical questions, 'then the Pit shall wake up and all those destined for eternity, the seekers of the truth shall awake for your judgment' (Puech 2006:267).

(b) 'The rule of the community', a Qumran document of the second half of the second century BC, deals with the Day of the Lord when rewards for the righteous and punishments for evil will be distributed and each person and creation are subject to the influence of two spirits – the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness. Puech concludes that 'the description of the rewards and the punishments which can only be *post mortem* in relation to the Day of the Lord clearly reflects the words or themes of Dan 12:2' (Puech 2006:271).

Thus, these two Qumran documents affirm life after death with judgement for all people, sinners and saints.

However, according to Ladd, this Essene sect 'seemed little interested in the question' of resurrection. He considered that resurrection 'is most prominent in the apocalyptic literature and in the later Talmudic writings, and … since we believe that the New Testament writings stand in the tradition of Jewish apocalyptic, this fact is important' (Ladd 1975:58). Wright has a different view, providing evidence from Josephus (ca 37/38-100)[287] and Hippolytus of Rome (ca 170-235)[288] concerning the beliefs of the Essenes. Josephus stated that the doctrines of the Essenes included the following dimensions:

(a) In the Essenes' war with the Romans, abundant evidence was provided when their souls experienced trials in which 'they were tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, and went through all kinds of instruments of torment, that they might be forced either to blaspheme their legislator, or to eat what was forbidden them, yet could they not be made to do either of them, no, nor once to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear; but they smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again' (Josephus n dc:2.8.10).[289] Wright considers that this 'final phrase, *hos palin komioumenoi*, "as those about to receive them again", is a similar phrase to that found twice 'in the famous passage in 2 Maccabees 7' (Wright 2003:183).

(b) Also, according to Josephus, the doctrine taught 'that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever… This is like the opinion of the Greeks' where there is a place for good or bad souls, the good experiencing 'the hope they have of reward after their death; and whereby the vehement inclinations of bad men to vice are restrained, by the fear and expectation they are in, that although they should lie concealed in this life, they should suffer immortal punishment after their death'. The souls of the wicked go to 'the region of the ungodly, in Hades' (Josephus n dc:2.8.11).

Hippolytus of Rome, at least a century later than Josephus, wrote of the belief by the Essenes in the resurrection where

> they acknowledge both that the flesh will rise again, and that it will be immortal, in the same manner as the soul is already imperishable. And they maintain that the soul, when separated in the present life, (departs) into one place, which is well ventilated and lightsome, where, they say, it rests until judgment. And this locality the Greeks were acquainted with by hearsay, and called it "Isles of the Blessed"…. Now they affirm that there will be both a judgment and a conflagration of the universe, and that the wicked will be eternally punished.
>
> (Hippolytus in Kirby 2015:9.22)

Therefore, both Josephus and Hippolytus affirm that the Essenes taught that the souls were immortal; there will be a resurrection of flesh for judgment for blessedness or punishment. However, the Hippolytus citation reads much like a highly influenced or edited version of Josephus.

4.4.7.7.1 Resurrection and the Old Testament

Crossan's claim was that 'for most of their history before that first common-era century, the Israelites and/or the Jews disbelieved in an after-life' (this claim will be tested below). His claim in support of 'a this-world-only situation' with all sanctions for good and evil taking place in this life is Deuteronomy 28 as 'the classic and clearest statement of this theology'. His conclusion was that 'deuteronomic theology was false in its promised blessings and threatened curses but lethal in its personal results and communal effects'. He admitted to 'cracks' in the 'deuteronomic façade' in Job 42:7-8 with sufferings to test Job's holiness and the 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah 52-53 in which there were 'symbolic hopes or hyperbolic prayers' that could 'be taken quite literally when an after-life was affirmed' and even for bodily resurrection (for example, Is 26:19) (Crossan 2003:34, 35, 37). So does that make Scripture (Deuteronomy) wrong and Crossan's view correct? Isaiah 26:19 states, 'Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead'. That was the language of the Old Testament to intimate resurrection. Puech's assessment is that this verse 'is an undeniable witness to the certainty within the pious circle of Jews of a life after death and a resurrection of the just of the people of Yahweh already at an early date (at least in the third century B.C.)' (Peuch 2006:249). Job 19:25-27 provides another Old Testament glimpse of the life beyond death: 'For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.[290] And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in[291] my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!'

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[287] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Flavius Josephus).

[288] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Saint Hippolytus of Rome).

[289] Wright cites a modern translation by Thackeray of this last sentence: 'Smiling in their agonies and mildly deriding their tormentors, they cheerfully resigned their souls, confident that they would receive them back again' (Josephus in Wright 2003:183).

This is only an overview of this necessary topic.[292] Two factors influence the Old Testament teaching on resurrection: Firstly, the Hebrew understanding of the nature of human beings and, secondly, progressive revelation. Resurrection for the Greek Platonists (see §4.4.7.6) was based on a dualism of body and soul with the body belonging to the visible, transitory, temporal world, while the soul refers to the real, permanent world – the thing as it appears without phenomena. The body is considered evil, as in later Gnosticism, and is a hindrance to the development of the soul or mind. Thus, the soul is immortal and salvation means for the Platonist that at death souls escape 'the burden of the phenomenal world and find fulfilment in the world of eternal reality'. This is in contrast to the Hebrew view of human nature where the *nephesh* (soul) is the person's primary life and is not a separate part of a human being. God's Spirit (*ruach*) refers to his breath and power (Is 40:7) and this created and sustains all living things (Ps 33:6; 104:29-30) (Ladd 1975:44-45).

What happens at death? The person's spirit (*nephesh*) is withdrawn (Ps 104:29; Ec 12:7) and Ladd stated that 'neither man's soul nor spirit is viewed as an immortal part of man which survives death' (Ladd 1975:45). The language used includes statements such as: 'Let me [my soul – SDG] die the death of the upright' (Nm 23:10); by Samson, 'Let me [my soul – SDG] die with the Philistines' (Jdg 16:30); The soul is said to depart at death to Sheol: 'For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol' (Ps 16:10) (Ladd 1975:45). In summary,

> the Old Testament view of man is that he is an animated body rather than an incarnated soul.[293] "Life" in the Old Testament is bodily existence in this world in fellowship with the living God (Deut. 30:15-20). "Death" means the end of *life* but not the cessation of *existence*. The dead exist in Sheol as "shades" (Prov. 9:18; Isa. 14:9;

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[290] The footnote stated, 'Hebrew *dust*'.
[291] The footnote stated, 'Or *without*'.
[292] The pressure of brevity at this point in the thesis causes this topic to be restricted to an overview. Assistance has been gained from Ladd (1968b; 1975:44-50).
[293] The endnote at this point was, 'See N. W. Porteus in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, K-O, p. 243' (Ladd 1975:50, n. 3)

> 26:19). A “shade” is not man's soul or spirit; it is man himself, or rather a pale replica of a man. It is man stripped of his vitality and energy – a shadow of his earthly self. The evil thing about Sheol is that in death, man is cut off from fellowship with God (Ps. 6:5; 88:10-12; 115: 17).
>
> (Ladd 1975:45; emphasis in original)

With Old Testament progressive revelation, the conviction among the Jews grew that even death could not interrupt fellowship with God, as the Psalmist expressed it: ‘If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!’ (Ps 139:8). Other Psalms express rejoicing or hope and not darkness after death (see Ps 16:9-11; 49:15; 73:24). The Psalmists do not indicate that the soul or spirit survives death or that there is something immortal in human beings. ‘There is merely the confidence that even death cannot destroy the reality of fellowship with the living God. This is very different from the Greek view of immortality’ and the Psalmists do not promote a doctrine that fellowship with God is broken at death (Ladd 1975:47).

There are glimpses of the hope of bodily resurrection in the Old Testament in occasional, exceptional passages that deal with the bodily raising up through Elijah and Elisha (see 1 Ki 17:17-24; 2 Ki 4:31-37; 13:21) and Enoch’s translation from earth (Gn 5:24). While the vision of the valley of dry bones coming together in Ezekiel 37 refers to the restoration of Israel (37:11-13), there is a symbol of bodily resurrection with a statement such as, ‘You shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people’ (v 13). Are there any clear references to resurrection in the Old Testament? Two verses from the prophet Isaiah are among the clearest: ‘He will swallow up death for ever’ (Is 25:8). In this eschatological context, it is referring to the establishment of God’s kingdom on the earth and the gathering of God’s people where death will be abolished. Isaiah 26:19 provides further evidence of the resurrection among Israel, ‘Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead’. This does not seem to be a reference to the resurrection of all people, but to ‘you’, the Israelites; these two verses from Isaiah are clear indicators of resurrection being intimated at this stage of God’s revelation. There are further cues to resurrection in Psalm 16:10, ‘For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol’, but this is not as clear as Daniel 12:2: ‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt’. Also, ‘but go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days’ (Dn 12:13). So there is a resurrection of ‘many’, some of these being the righteous who are raised to ‘everlasting life’ while the unrighteous will rise ‘to shame and everlasting contempt’. This is the first appearance of the phrase ‘everlasting life’ (Hebrew ‘to the life of the age’) in the Bible. It refers to ‘life that extends indefinitely into the future. By New Testament times, the equivalent Greek phrase meant “the life of the Age to Come” (see Mk. 10:30)’ (Ladd 1975:48-49) and that which includes a person’s designated place at the end of their days.

This does not provide evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, but for the general understanding of eschatological resurrection of people at the end of the age. Evidence of Jesus’ resurrection comes through a rather unusual source (a criterion of embarrassment to affirm historicity) that was exposed when the two people met Jesus on the Emmaus road: ‘And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself' (Lk 24:25-27). So the passion-resurrection understanding from the Old Testament, according to Jesus, is based on the suffering, death and resurrection of Messiah articulated in Moses and the Prophets. The apostle Paul conveys a similar message in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 that 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures'.

Which Scriptures affirm Jesus' death, burial and being raised on the third day, 'in accordance with the Scriptures'? The Old Testament predicted the passion of Christ, the Messiah, in prophecies such as the suffering servant passage of Isaiah 53 and the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 provided a precedent for the manner of atonement. However, 'since neither the tradition of the third day nor the Resurrection is well attested in the OT', several theories of explanation have arisen, one being that 'an early tradition combined the evidence from Pss. 16:8-11 and 110:1 as bearing witness to the Messiah's resurrection (cf. Acts 2:25-36); and it happened "on the third day" was probably seen in terms of the variety of OT texts in which salvation or vindication took place on the third day' (Fee 1987:727). Acts 2:25-28 confirms that Psalm 16:8-11 was used by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost to confirm an Old Testament prophecy that 'God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it' (Ac 2:24). While some have attempted to use passages such as Hosea 6:2 and 2 Kings 20:5 as proof of Old Testament Scriptures referring to the resurrection, this is unacceptable as neither passage refers to Christ's resurrection (Lenski 1963:632-633). The most satisfactory explanation, in this researcher's view, is that Jesus himself provided one of the clearest pointers to his resurrection 'in accordance with the Scriptures': 'For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (Mt 12:40). Thus, Jesus' burial for three days and nights before his resurrection is given as a type in Jonah 1:17, which states, 'And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights'.

N T Wright is firm in his understanding of resurrection in the Old Testament, based on the data, 'Resurrection means bodily life *after* "life after death", or, if you prefer, bodily life after the *state* of "death". That is why it is very misleading – and foreign to all the relevant texts – to speak, as does one recent writer, of "resurrection to heaven"'[294] (Wright 2003:108-109; emphasis in original).

In summary, what does the Old Testament teach about life-after-death and the resurrection?[295]

1. The soul of human beings is not the immortal part of a person;
2. Death does not end existence but the dead exist in a shadowy realm of Sheol;
3. Progressively, Scripture revealed that death cannot forbid God's people from continuing to enjoy fellowship with God;
4. Eschatologically, death will be destroyed and there will be a resurrection of the body;
5. The view of human beings is that bodily existence is essential for life to have full meaning;
6. This resurrection of people is eschatological (in the future) and does not explain the rise in belief in Jesus' resurrection;

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[294] Here he refers to Davies (1999:93) where Jon Davies makes the statement: 'In comparison with later Christianity, for example, references to "resurrection" (to heaven) are nuanced and oblique, although they are certainly there and gradually become more explicit'.

[295] With primary assistance from Ladd (1975:49-50).

7. Moses and the prophets predicted Messiah's death, burial and resurrection.
8. Psalm 16:8-11 was used by Peter at Pentecost to demonstrate that the Old Testament predicted Jesus' resurrection.
9. Jesus used the example of Jonah being three days and three nights in the belly of the fish as a prophetic type of what was to happen to Jesus in his burial and resurrection.
10. This evidence points to the necessity of including the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for Christian faith to exist. The empty tomb does matter.

Therefore, Crossan's claim that 'for most of their history before that first common-era century, the Israelites and/or the Jews disbelieved in an after-life' (Crossan 2003:34) is demonstrated to be false by the evidence provided above and in that which follows.

4.4.7.7.2 Pharisees, Sadducees and resurrection

Crossan admitted that 'Paul's language is that the resurrection has already begun. That is, Paul is thinking within Judaism where the first element in God's great clean-up, the first thing that has to be done is that those who have suffered injustice and died, especially the martyrs, must be raised in their bodies'. Therefore, because of this suffering in their bodies, 'they must be publicly justified in their bodies before the world. That is the claim of Pharisaic resurrection and that's the background to Paul's claim that the resurrection has already begun' (Crossan in Miller 2004:34).

(a) The Pharisees

According to Acts 23:6, when Paul appeared before the Sanhedrin Council and he 'perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial"'. A dissension broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees over the doctrine of the resurrection because of the divergent views of these two Jewish sects.

Josephus's description was that the Pharisees 'believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again' and that they were 'able greatly to persuade the body of the people' with these doctrines' (Josephus n db:18.1.2).

Hippolytus regarded the Pharisees as a 'sect' of the Essenes who 'acknowledge that there is a resurrection of flesh, and that soul is immortal, and that there will be a judgment and conflagration, and that the righteous will be imperishable, but that the wicked will endure everlasting punishment in unquenchable fire' (Hippolytus in Kirby 2015:9.23). Is this a Hippolytus' Christian interpolation (he lived in the second-third centuries) of the Pharisees' doctrine as Josephus' explanation does not refer to a resurrection of the flesh, only life after death and eschatological rewards and punishments?

(b) The Sadducees

Because 'we have no documents that we can be sure are written by Sadducees themselves', the best sources for their beliefs (positive and negative) are in the New Testament, in Josephus, in the writings of the rabbis and those close to the time of the New Testament. Wright's assessment was that 'the Sadducees denied resurrection; it seems more than likely that they followed a quite strict interpretation of the Old Testament, and denied any significant future life at all', not because they were the radicals but 'because they were the conservatives' (Wright 2003:131; 131, n. 3).

What is the Sadducees' direct claim of resurrection? The New Testament evidence is that they denied the resurrection of the dead (Mt 22:23-32; Mk 12:18-27; Ac 23:8). Jesus refuted the Sadducees' position by citing Exodus 3:6, 'As for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not God of the dead, but of the living"' (Mt 22:31-32). Acts 23:8 confirms that 'the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge all of them'. Josephus wrote of the Sadducees that they 'take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades' (Josephus n dc:28.14). Elsewhere he wrote that 'the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with their bodies' (Josephus n db:18.2). Thus, there is no life beyond the grave nor eschatological future for those who have died.

Hippolytus claimed that even the Pharisees agreed with this understanding of the Sadducees' doctrine that 'they deny that there is a resurrection not only of flesh, but also they suppose that the soul does not continue after death. The soul they consider nothing but mere vitality, and that it is on account of this that man has been created'. As for the resurrection, their claim is that it 'has been fully realized by the single circumstance, that we close our days after having left children upon earth. But (they still insist) that after death one expects to suffer nothing, either bad or good; for that there will be a dissolution both of soul and body, and that man passes into non-existence' (Hippolytus in Kirby 2015:9.24). Again, could this be a Hippolytus' digression into Christian thinking as the evidence from Judaism does not indicate that the Sadducees were referring to a disbelief in the resurrection of the body? However, there could be an inference about their denial of bodily resurrection with their understanding that people pass 'into non-existence' at death.

4.4.7.7.3 First century Jews and resurrection

Three main factors influenced the Jewish view of resurrection in the first century. Two are discussed above in §4.4.7.7.1 (resurrection in the Old Testament) and §4.4.7.7.2 (resurrection for Pharisees and Sadducees). A third here deals with resurrection in the Intertestamental period and a fourth with resurrection in the Talmud.

Crossan's claim was that Christian Jews, when they spoke of resurrection in the first century, did not mean bodily resuscitation, post-mortem apparition, or heavenly exaltation. But it did mean general resurrection (Crossan 2003:46-47). However, his 'guess' is that bodily resurrection as literal or metaphorical existed on a 'spectrum from the most literal to the most metaphorical' then (the first century) as now, but he did emphasise that 'the metaphorical is always metaphorical *of something* beyond itself. If, for example, the resurrection of Jesus is taken metaphorically, it announces God's justification of the world and that is something literal, actual, historical, something real or else just empty talk' (Crossan 2003:55). However, who defines what is 'just empty talk'? Why does it have to favour Crossan's assessment of empty talk? Could it be that the evidence points to Jesus' resurrection as being bodily resurrection and, thus, would not be in the category of 'empty talk'? In addition, to state that Jesus' metaphorical resurrection refers to something literal, actual and historical – God's justification of the world – is not dealing with what happened to Jesus' body after crucifixion and then burial. Crossan's referral to the resurrection as announcing 'God's justification of the world', is referring to Crossan's application of the resurrection data and not to what actually happened to Jesus' body on resurrection morning. It is an astute way of avoiding the circuit breaker of literal, bodily resurrection versus resurrection as metaphorical parable.

What does the evidence indicate regarding the belief of Jews about the after-life and resurrection in the first century AD? For the Old Testament, the after-life progressive revelation moved from existence in a shadowy place to resurrection life.

A relatively contemporary Rabbi Pinchas Lapide (1922-1977),[296] who was an orthodox Jewish theologian and New Testament specialist, wrote about the first century and Jesus' resurrection, based on his scholarly investigation: 'I accept the resurrection of Easter Sunday not as an invention of the community of disciples, but as an historical event' (Lapide 1983:15). His opinion was that 'the resurrection belongs to the category of the truly real and effective occurrences, for without a fact of history there is no act of true faith' (Lapide 1983:92). His assessment was that Jesus' resurrection by the creator God was a

> fact which is indeed withheld from objective science, photography, and a conceptual proof, but not from the believing scrutiny of history which more frequently leads to deeper insights. In other words: Without the Sinai experience – no Judaism; without the Easter experience – no Christianity. Both were Jewish faith experiences whose radiating power, in a different way, was meant for the world of nations.
>
> (Lapide 1983:92)

For him, this resurrection understanding was in the time of Second Temple Judaism.[297] However, his conclusions about the historical nature of the resurrection in the first century did not lead him to accept Jesus as the divine Messiah, the son of God. Instead, for Lapide Jesus was an eminent prophet to whom Israel should have paid more attention.

(a) The Intertestamental writings

While there is a significant body of literature in the Intertestamental period, mainly from the first and second centuries BC and during the first century of the Christian era, the writings most commonly known as the Apocrypha (the deuterocanonical books) will be examined for this project. These books are contained in the Latin Vulgate, either as part of the Old Testament or as an appendix, but are not in the Hebrew Bible. With the exception of 2 Esdras, these books also appear in the Septuagint. 'In 1546, the Council of Trent decreed that the Canon of the Old Testament includes them (except the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras' (The Apocrypha 1973:vii-viii).[298]

Among the books from the Apocrypha that refer especially to life beyond the grave and resurrection are Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach) and 2

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[296] Lifespan dates for Lapide are from Australian-based historian Paul O'Shea (2010).

[297] 'Although it has its roots before the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE – that is, in the earlier pre-exilic period that is described in the Hebrew Bible – Jewish culture emerged in the so-called Second Temple period. This period begins when Jews in Judaea, Mesopotamia, and Egypt found themselves under Persian rule, and Jews were able to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The Second Temple period continues for six centuries, with Jews living under Persian, Greek, and Roman empires until the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE' (Weitzman & DeBold 2015). Much of this time is often identified with the 'Intertestamental' period.

[298] All citations from the Apocrypha are from the NRSV.

Maccabees.[299] 'Jesus, the son of Sirach, was a Jewish scribe or wise man whose profession was the teaching of the Old Testament Law' and in about 180 BC he committed his oral teaching into writing. It is not surprising that his view of life beyond the grave is similar to that of the Old Testament teaching on Sheol (Ladd 1975:52). His statements include:
'For when one is dead he inherits maggots and vermin[300] and worms' (Sir 10:11).
'Give, and take, and indulge yourself, because in Hades one cannot look for luxury' (Sir 14:16);
'From the dead, as from one who does not exist, thanksgiving has ceased; those who are alive and well sing the Lord's praises' (Sir 17:28).
'Weep for the dead, for he has left the light behind; and weep for the fool, for he has left intelligence behind. Weep less bitterly for the dead, for he is at rest; but the life of the fool is worse than death' (Sir 22:11);
'Death is better than a life of misery, and eternal sleep[301] than chronic sickness' (Sir 30:17).
'Do not forget, there is no coming back; you do the dead[302] no good, and you injure yourself' (Sir 38:21).
'Before the time of his eternal sleep, Samuel[303] bore witness before the Lord and his anointed' (Sir 46:19);

Thus, Sirach is teaching that at death, one inherits disintegration (maggots, vermin and worms), presumably referring to the disintegration of the body. As for life after death, in Hades there is no pleasure; thanksgiving has ended; the person has escaped the light, left intelligence behind and this is a condition worse than death for this one who is designated as a fool. Death leads to eternal sleep.

As related to this hypothesis being tested, the Apocrypha is not affirming a metaphorical state at the end of life, but one of no pleasure and light in this place of eternal sleep. There is a literal place of Hades (or Sheol) that agrees with the Old Testament data.

As for 2 Maccabees, the information is more specific in relation to life beyond death and the resurrection than with Sirach.

Second Maccabees 7:9 states, 'And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws"'. The specifics are: Of the young man who was being brutally slaughtered, of his tongue and his hands, he 'said nobly, "I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again"' (2 Macc 7:11). There was a further development, 'When he was near death, he said, "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!"' (2 Macc 7:14).

The mother who had seen her seven sons perish in a single day, encouraged each of them with this message, ''I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws' (2 Macc 7:22-23). She said to the youngest son who was facing death from Antiochus, 'Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers' (2 Macc 7:29). The son said to Antiochus Epiphanes: 'You have not yet escaped the judgement of the almighty, all-seeing God. For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk[304] of ever-flowing life, under God's covenant; but you, by the judgement of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance' (2 Macc 7:36-37).

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[299] Ladd (1975:51-59) and Wright (2003:147-153) referred this researcher to these emphases.
[300] Greek, 'wild animals'.
[301] 'Other ancient authorities lack *eternal sleep*'.
[302] Greek, 'him'.
[303] Greek, 'he'.

In the campaign against Gorgias, Judas and his men went to pick up the bodies of the dead and discovered that 'under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen' and the Lord, the righteous judge, had revealed these hidden things (2 Macc 12:40-41). Judas then exhorted the people: 'He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin-offering. In doing this he acted very well and honourably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead' (2 Macc 12:43-44).

Nicanor, who had fallen on his own sword, preferring 'to die nobly' rather than by the hands of sinners, was alive but dying a gruesome death by tearing out his innards but was 'calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give them back to him again. This was the manner of his death' (2 Macc 14:42, 46). Ladd's comment was that 'here is the idea of bodily resurrection of the crudest physical sort' (Ladd 1975:53).

Thus 2 Maccabees provides these insights into life beyond the grave: believers will be raised to everlasting life by God (the King of the universe); they hope to get a physical body back with life and breath, resurrection to over-flowing life for the believing martyrs and just punishment for unbelievers, praying for the dead of those who would rise again, and the Lord would give back physical parts. Here, the historical book of the Maccabees is promoting a determinate view of a physical and not a metaphorical resurrection.

In the LXX, ἀνάστασις is the word for 'resurrection' in 2 Macc 7:14 and 12:43. Wright's comment was that 'the relevant passages in 2 Maccabees (e.g. 7.9, 14; 12.44) all use what became the standard "resurrection" language, namely the Greek verbs *anistemi* and *egeiro* and their cognates. We find the same with Isaiah 26, both in the verse that denies resurrection (14) and the verse that affirms it (19)' (Wright 2003:147).

(b) The Talmud

The Mishnah is a collection of centuries of interpretations of the Old Testament law (completed in about AD 200). The Gemara, composed of a variety of Jewish writings after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, was joined with the Mishnah to form the Talmud in the one volume. There were two versions of the Talmud, the Palestinian or Jerusalem version (completed in the fourth century) and the larger Babylonian versions (completed in the fifth century). 'The Talmud is the authoritative source of Jewish law and tradition' (Corduan 2012:70-73).

What is its teaching concerning the resurrection? Sanhedrin 11 includes the Mishnah's statement, 'All Israel has a share in the world to come. As it reads [Is. LX. 21]: "And thy people – they will all be righteous, for ever shall they possess the land, the sprout of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may glorify myself". The following have no share in the world to come: He who says that there is no allusion in the Torah[305] concerning resurrection, and he who says that the Torah was not given by Heaven'. The Gemara commentary was: 'Is he who does not believe that the resurrection is hinted at in the Torah such a criminal that he loses his share in the world to come? It was taught: He denies resurrection therefore he will not have a share in it, as punishment corresponds to the deed…. Where is resurrection hinted at in the Torah? [It reads, Num. xviii. 28]:[306] "And ye shall give thereof the heave-offering of the Lord to Aaron the priest." Should, then, Aaron remain alive forever? He did not even enter into the land of Israel. How, then, could Israel give him heave-offering? Infer from this that he would experience resurrection and Israel would give him heave-offering. Hence here is a hint of resurrection' (Babylonian Talmud, San 11). Thus, the Talmud taught that the Torah 'hinted at' resurrection and believed in the eschatological 'world to come' for people, but there is no statement about bodily resurrection.

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[304] Greek, 'fallen'.

What is the teaching of resurrection in the Old Testament and how does it prepare the Jews and Christians of the first century for the resurrection of Jesus?

There were four major parties (religious and political) in Judaism: The Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt 16:6), Herodians (Mt 22:16), Zealots (Lk 6:15), and the Essenes (not mentioned in the New Testament).

In all of these examples from Judaism, there are specifics relating to life after death and hope for eschatological resurrection of people, even though oblique at times. Two passages stand out as speaking more openly of a possible bodily resurrection. As explained above, these are Daniel 12:2-3, 13 and 2 Maccabees 7:9, 14; 12:44.[307]

While these statements may not be as clear as a twenty-first century historian or exegete would like them to be, there are enough indications in early Judaism of life after death and a looking forward to specific, determinate resurrection in the eschatological world to come. It is stretching the limits of language to make this statement, 'he denies resurrection therefore he will not have a share in it, as punishment corresponds to the deed' (Babylonian Talmud, ch 11) into Crossan's metaphorical resurrection and denial of bodily resurrection and promotion of post-mortem apparitions.

(c) Apocalyptic books

A number of apocalyptic books from the Intertestamental period are here surveyed. This is a very limited sample. For a more comprehensive examination, see Wright (2003:129-206).

The apocalyptic book of 2 Esdras in the Apocrypha is comprised of three separate writings, (i) 5 Ezra (2 Esd, chs 1-2). This is understood to be a prophetic Christian work in Greek in the mid second century. (ii) 4 Ezra (2 Esd, chs 3-14) deals with the meaning of Israel's suffering and what God will do in the future; it was written by 'an unknown Palestinian Jew who probably wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic near the close of the first century A.D.' and it was subsequently translated into Greek

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[305] Wright notes that 'no allusion in the Torah' ('prescribed in the Law' is Wright's translation) 'is missing from several important manuscripts, and probably reflects one strand of debate; clearly there is quite a difference between denying the resurrection altogether and denying that it is taught in the Five Books of Moses (though in practice the same people probably did both' (Wright 2003:192; Wright refers to Urbach for details).

[306] This insertion was in the online edition.

[307] This explanation is made with assistance from Wright (2003:147-148).

(The Apocrypha 1973:23). (iii) 6 Ezra (2 Esd, chs 15-16) provides pronouncements of doom on the enemies of God's people and is thought to be a Christian composition from the third century AD (Kirby 2013). It is in the second major section that significant evidence is provided of how the Israelites understood the afterlife:

- 'And I will raise up the dead from their places, and bring them out from their tombs, because I recognize my name in them' (2 Esd 2:16).
- 'The earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them. The Most High shall be revealed on the seat of judgement, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn.[308] Only judgement shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. Recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep.[309] The pit[310] of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell[311] shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight. (2 Esd 7:32-36)
- For 'those who have kept the ways of the Most High, when they shall be separated from their mortal body … their face is to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on (2 Esd 7:88, 97).

The specifics are determinate: people will be raised from the dead tombs and their names will be recognised. The earth will give up the dead (those who sleep in it) and souls will come from the 'chambers' and the Most High God will sit in judgement, based on truth and faithfulness. There will be recompense for those who committed righteous and unrighteous deeds. For the unrighteous, there will be the pit of torment, the furnace of Gehenna (hell) and by contrast for the righteous, there will be a place of rest and entrance into the delightful paradise.

Again, the specifics are straightforward from 2 Esdras. What happens after death is not some metaphorical fiction, but a specific paradise for the believer and hell for the unbeliever.

Another apocalyptic writing, The Apocalypse of Baruch (Lyons 2000), also known as the book of the apocalypse of Baruch the son of Neriah, is a pseudepigraphical work from late in the first century. The author 'is overwhelmed by the tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem. Reflecting on the evils of this life, he sees hope only in the world to come, including the resurrection of the righteous' (Ladd 1975:53). Baruch's insights into the world to come include:

- 'Let Sheol be sealed so that from this time forward it may not receive the dead, and let the treasuries of souls restore those which are enclosed in them'. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all those like them 'sleep in the earth' (Lyons 2000:Ap Bar 21:23-24).
- 'Sheol will receive the dead' (Ap Bar 23:5).
- All who have 'fallen asleep in the hope of [Messiah – SDG] shall rise again'. Then the 'souls of the righteous … shall come forth' and this shall be 'the

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[308] The footnote stated: 'Lat *shall gather together*'.

[309] The footnote stated, 'The passage from verse 36 to verse 105, formerly missing, has been restored to the text'.

[310] The footnote was, 'Syr Ethiop: Lat *place*'.

[311] The footnote was, 'Lat Syr Ethiop *Gehenna*'.

consummation of the times' and the souls of the wicked 'shall know that their torment has come and their perdition has arrived' (Lyons 2000:Ap Bar 30:1-5).
- 'The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead, [which it now receives, in order to preserve them].[312] It shall make no change in their form, But as it has received, so shall it restore them, And as I delivered them unto it, so also shall it raise them. For then it will be necessary to show the living that the dead have come to life again, and that those who had departed have returned (again)' (Lyons 2000:Ap Bar 50:2-3).

The evidence is determinate from the Apocalypse of Baruch that Sheol receives the dead who 'sleep in the earth'. There will be a resurrection (they 'rise again') of both the souls of the righteous and the wicked, the latter receiving torment and perdition. Those who rise again will be in the form (by inference, bodily) in which they entered the earth. The living will see the dead returning to life again. No metaphor of life beyond the grave, including resurrection, is inferred here.

A third apocalyptic writing from the Pseudepigrapha, 1 Enoch, while not indicating resurrection directly, has implied evidence. The Ethiopic book of 1 Enoch is a writing of uncertain history and composition. Ladd states that such 'is impossible to construct' but some of its five diverse parts were probably written during the last two centuries or so BC (Ladd 1975:55). Wright agrees with that dating, but adds that some parts may have been written later (Wright 2003:154). The after-life includes these statements:

- While there will be judgment on all people, 'with the righteous He will make peace. And will protect the elect, and mercy shall be upon them. And they shall all belong to God, And they shall be prospered, And they shall all be blessed. And He will help them all, And light shall appear unto them, And He will make peace with them' (Williams 2013:1.7-8).
- 'But for the elect there shall be light and joy and peace, and they shall inherit the earth' (Williams 2013:5.7).
- There is a picture of the righteous enjoying peace and the whole earth cultivated with righteousness and sin, unrighteousness and uncleanness will be cleansed (Williams 2013:10.17-11.2).
- Where do the spirits of the souls of the dead go? 'These hollow places have been created for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein, yea that all the souls of the children of men should assemble here. And these places have been made to receive them till the day of their judgement and till their appointed period [till the period appointed],[313] till the great judgement (comes)[314] upon them,' and there is 'the great day of judgement and punishment and torment of those who curse for ever and retribution for their spirits' (Williams 2013:22.3-5, 11). Most of the emphasis here is on judgment for the wicked, so the destination of the righteous is not known. Wright notes that these verses make 'it clear that the future life is regarded as having two stages: the time of waiting and the time of final judgment' (Wright 2003:154, n. 96). For a group of unrighteous transgressors, it is declared that 'their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement nor shall they be raised from thence' (Williams 2013:22.13).

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[312] Insertion in the original.
[313] Insertion in the original.
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- It is stated of kings of thrones and kingdom in 1 Enoch 46:6, ‘And he shall put down the countenance of the strong, And shall fill them with shame. And darkness shall be their dwelling, And worms shall be their bed, And they shall have no hope of rising from their beds, Because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits (Williams 2013:46.6).
- 1 Enoch 51:1-2, ‘And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, And hell shall give back that which it owes. For in those days the Elect One shall arise and he shall choose the righteous and holy from among them: For the day has drawn nigh that they should be saved’ (Williams 2013:51.1-2).
- 1 Enoch 62:13-16, ‘And the righteous and elect shall be saved on that day, And they shall never thenceforward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous. And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them and with that Son of Man shall they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever. And the righteous and elect shall have risen from the earth and ceased to be of downcast countenance. And they shall have been clothed with garments of glory and these shall be the garments of life from the Lord of Spirits: And your garments shall not grow old, Nor your glory pass away before the Lord of Spirits’ (Williams 2013:62.13-16).
- 1 Enoch 91:2-5, ‘For the Holy and Great One has appointed days for all things. And the righteous one shall arise from sleep, [Shall arise][315] and walk in the paths of righteousness, and all his path and conversation shall be in eternal goodness and grace. He will be gracious to the righteous and give him eternal uprightness, and He will give him power so that he shall be (endowed)[316] with goodness and righteousness. And he shall walk in eternal light. And sin shall perish in darkness for ever, and shall no more be seen from that day for evermore’ (Williams 2013:91.2-5). A similar message is conveyed in 1 Enoch 96:1-3, except that in verse 1 it provides insight into what will happen to the sinners: ‘Be hopeful, ye righteous; for suddenly shall the sinners perish before you, And ye shall have lordship over them according to your desires’ (Williams 2013:90.1).
- According to 1 Enoch 108:9-15, for those who loved God and gave their bodies to torture and for those who opposed such people, there will be a final judgment articulated at the end of the book (Williams 2013:108.9-15).

First Enoch teaches that there will be a final judgment of all people, righteous and unrighteous: (a) The souls of the dead go to places in Sheol until the day of judgment; (b) For the righteous (the elect), peace, mercy and light will bless them; sin and unrighteousness will be gone; their rewards have been assigned because they loved heaven more than worldly life (c) For the unrighteous, there will be punishment, torment and retribution in darkness. There is metaphorical language used with ‘worms shall be their bed’. The earth and Sheol shall give back the dead who are there. (d) When the righteous are saved, they shall not see the face of sinners again and will be ‘clothed with garments of glory’ (metaphorical language). (e) What is clear in these verses is that at death there is a two-step process: (i) Both the righteous and unrighteous go to a place (Sheol) and are there awaiting (ii) A time of judgment when the spirits of all people will be summoned to go to a destiny that the Lord has prescribed. Wright's summary of 1 Enoch is that though 'the imagery does not always permit precision, it is quite clear that those who have died, both righteous and wicked, are presently awaiting a future day when their fate will become not only permanent but also public and visible'. He does not see 1 Enoch's many parts supporting a single doctrine on the after-life and resurrection, but 'as a whole it supports something like the view of resurrection we find in Daniel and 2 Maccabees' (Wright 2003:157).

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[315] Insertion in the original.

[316] Insertion in the original.

The application to Crossan's indeterminateness is that the evidence from these apocalyptic books is that, while there is the occasional metaphorical perspective, the overall understanding is determinate. There is a place for the righteous and wicked to go at death, Sheol, and there is God's determinate time when he will raise the souls of the dead to life again for the day of judgement when there will be determinate and divergent destinations for the ones who love God and those who are unrighteous.

4.4.7.8 Paul in 1 Corinthians 15

This extensive exposition on the resurrection was to deal with this question: 'How can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?' (1 Cor 15:12). George Ladd pointed to what was once the obvious, but it is no more if Crossan's argument wins with academia and the popular mind about Jesus' resurrection. Ladd wrote forty years ago: 'If Jesus is not raised, redemptive history ends in the *cul-de-sac* of a Palestinian grave. Then God is not the living God, nor is he the God of the living as Jesus said (Mk. 12:27). Death is stronger than God…. God's acts are proven futile in the face of man's greatest enemy – death. One may not discount the resurrection, and accept the Bible's witness to redemptive history' (Ladd 1975:144; emphasis in original).

How does this kind of statement mesh with Crossan's? His view is that 1 Corinthians 15, written 20-40 years before the gospels, has Paul 'defending the idea of bodily resurrection', but in 'a very interesting twist … he never argues that resurrection was a special miracle only for Jesus. Just the opposite: Jesus' resurrection is for him one instance of a *general* resurrection' (Crossan & Watts 1996:159; emphasis in original). His language in 1998 in referring to 1 Corinthians 15:13, 16, and 20 was, 'It never occurs to Paul that Jesus' resurrection might be a special or unique privilege given to him because he is Messiah, Lord, and Son of God…. Risen apparitions are, for Paul, not about the vision of a dead man but about the vision of a dead man who begins the general resurrection. It is … an apparition with cosmically apocalyptic consequences' (Crossan 1998a:xix).

Crossan's opposition to the uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection continues: Paul 'doesn't accept the whole Pharisaic background of the general resurrection. All of that stuff, I could see a Jew in the 1st century becoming a Christian and not even knowing anything about the resurrection and not particularly caring' (Crossan in Hanley, n d). The data examined above on the place of resurrection in the Jewish literature and worldview, should make that kind of statement highly questionable.

In his interview with Hanley, Crossan said:

> To use the word "resurrection" in the 1st century context is to claim that what some people expected to be the first element of the clean up, the resurrection of the dead, especially the martyrs, begins with Jesus, is another way of saying the key word for me in early Christianity "already" as in the kingdom has already begun. The general resurrection has already begun or in our book, The Last Week, the Son of Man is already here. The claim of Christianity they think as essential can be distilled down to

> that one word, "already." And then what's going to happen next and all the rest of it is pure guess work, no matter who it comes from, including Jesus.
>
> (Crossan, in Hanley 2006)

In this examination of 1 Corinthians 15, does it support Crossan's 'already' view that does not confirm the empty tomb (as suggested by Jesus' resurrection appearances) and the uniqueness of Jesus' action? Only those verses in this chapter that have statements that point to a possible empty tomb will be examined. There have been explorations above of some of this section in §4.4.4.3 (textual free play – 1 Cor 15:12-20) and §4.4.7.4.1 (an examination of apparition theory and the issues generated by Crossan's support for such). However, Crossan's presuppositional favouritism for Jesus' resurrection as apparitions is seen in his dogmatic statement, 'In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul begins by enumerating all the apparitions of the risen Jesus. But, having recited them in 15:1-11, he never mentions them again throughout the rest of the argument in 15:12-58. The reason is quite clear. The Corinthians know all about visions and apparitions and would not dream of denying their validity' (Crossan 1998a:xxviii). To the contrary, Crossan should have allowed 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 to speak for itself within the contextual, semantic hermeneutic of any document instead of imposing his 'apparitional' views on the text. It does have appearances of a case of special pleading by Crossan.

Paul begins 1 Corinthians 15:1 with the reason for his writing to the Corinthians, 'Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand' (NIV). Then he proceeds to tell them that they are saved if they hold firm to the word preached, that was of 'first importance', based on what he had received (15:3). This involved:

- 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures' (15:3);
- 'That he was buried' (15:4);
- 'That he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures' (15:4).

The pursuit of the meaning of, 'in accordance with the Scriptures', was examined in §4.4.7.7.1.

4.4.7.8.1 First Corinthians 15 and Jesus' empty tomb

There is no direct statement in this chapter that states directly something to the effect, 'The tomb was empty on resurrection morning'. However, are there any emphases in 1 Corinthian 15:1-11 or elsewhere in the chapter that would be compatible with the teaching from the gospels of an empty tomb and what is stated in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4? The latter two verses state that Christ died, was buried, and was raised up on the third day. It is stated that 'raised from the dead' is the equivalent of resurrection (1 Cor 15:12). It is here assumed as self-evidently true that death, burial, resurrection and appearances to many people (1 Cor 15:5-8) means that Jesus somehow came out of the tomb alive and that the tomb was empty. If Jesus is physically alive in any physical or apparitional (Crossan) sense, it is expected that he who died, was buried, was raised and made appearances to over 500 people had something happen to the tomb in which he was buried. Could it have become empty? Crossan does not accept the possibility of an empty tomb and a physical, bodily resurrection because of his preference for the 'bodily resurrection' having a metaphorical meaning (Crossan 1998a:xxxi)[317] and resurrection appearances as apparitions, 'The Corinthians know all about visions and apparitions and would not dream of denying their validity' (Crossan 1998a:xxviii) (see §4.4.7.4).

Mark Powell noted that for Crossan 'the life and mission of Jesus are what counts in terms of historical significance'. However, he contrasted Crossan's view of Jesus' prominence with that of 'Paul who maintained that the three things "of first importance" were the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4). For Crossan the first of these is less important than the so-called apostle thinks, and the second and third did not happen. As usual, Crossan is honest and clear: "My thesis … is that Christian faith is not Easter faith"'[318] (Powell 1998:88).

Therefore, the emphasis in this examination of 1 Corinthians 15 will be on whether the Crossan thesis of resurrection as metaphorical and the appearances as apparitions fit the resurrection data from this chapter. This will have application to whether there was an empty tomb to harmonise with or contradict the data in the gospels.

(a) 1 Corinthians 15:12

Why is this verse examined first? It reads, 'Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?' This is the primary verse for understanding the interpretation of this chapter because the answers to this question are given in this entire chapter. The theme of the chapter and outline are:

Evidence to counter the teaching:
There is no resurrection of the dead (15:1-58)

1. The gospel preached to the Corinthians (15:1-4)
    a. Christians: A reminder of the gospel preached and received (5:1)
    b. It brings salvation (15:2)
    c. The content includes Jesus' death, burial and being raised (15:3-4)
2. The evidence by witnesses of the resurrected Jesus on earth (15:5-8)
    a. Paul's testimony (15:9-11)
3. The core issue: Some do not believe in the resurrection of the dead (15:12)
    a. Then Christ has not been raised (15:13)
    b. Then preaching and faith are vain (15:14)
    c. Then we are misrepresenting God (15:15)
    d. Resurrection of the dead connected with Christ's resurrection (15:16-19)
        (i) No resurrection of the dead if Christ not raised (15:16)
        (ii) No resurrection of Christ: Faith futile (15:17)
        (iii) Still in your sins (15:17)
        (iv) The dead have perished (15:18)
        (v) Pity for those who only have hope in this life (15:19)
4. The fact: Christ has been raised from the dead (15:20-28)
    a. He is the firstfruits of those who have died and been raised (15:20)
    b. How death and resurrection came (15:21)
    c. Those who are made alive at his coming (15:22-23)

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[317] Here his statement was that 'bodily resurrection means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced by believers, as powerfully efficacious and salvifically present in this world' (emphasis in original).

[318] This citation is from Crossan (1994c:132).

        d. Then comes the end: Destroying every rule and authority (15:24)
        e. Jesus rules until all enemies subjected to him (15:25-28)
                (i) Death destroyed (15:26)
5. If there is no resurrection,
        a. Why baptism of the dead? (15:29)
        b. Why do I put myself in danger? (15:30-32)
        c. Why not live it up in the present? (15:32)
6. You are deceived by bad company and drunken stupor (15:34-35)
        a. Wake up and quit sinning
        b. Some have no knowledge of God
        c. Shame on you
7. The resurrection body (15:35-41)
        a. What kind of body is it? (15:35)
        b. Fools don't understand (15:36-41)
                (i) Sowing, dying and life (15:36)
                (ii) Body like kernel sown (15:37)
                (iii) God gives the body after each kind (15:38)
                (iv) Examples from humans, animals, birds, fish (15:39)
                (v) Heavenly and earthly bodies (15:40)
                (i) Different kinds of glories (15:41)
8. So it is with the resurrection of the dead (15:42-49)
        a. Dynamics of the resurrection body (15:43-46)
                (i) Perishable vs imperishable (15:42)
                (ii) Dishonour vs glory (15:43)
                (iii) Weakness vs power (15:43)
                (iv) Natural vs spiritual (15:44-49)
9. What will happen when God's kingdom happens? (15:50-58)
        a. No place in it for flesh and blood (15:50)
        b. Nothing perishable (15:50)
        c. It's a mystery (15:51-58)
                (i) Not all will have died (15:51)
                (ii) All will be changed (15:51-52)
- In the twinkling of an eye (15:52)
- At the last trumpet when it sounds (15:52)

                (iii) The dead in Christ will rise (15:53-54)
- Perishable body puts on imperishable
- Mortal puts on immortality, then

                (iv) Death swallowed up in victory (15:54-58)
- Sting of death swallowed by victory (15:55)
- Sting of death is sin (15:56)
- Power of sin is God's law (15:56)

10. Because of the resurrection (15:57-58),
        a. Thank God for the victory over death through the Lord Jesus Christ (15:57)
        b. Therefore, you have reason to be steadfast and immovable (15:58),
                (i) Always abounding in the work of the Lord
                (ii) Knowing your labour is not in vain

The essence of resurrection, according to Wright, is: 'What the creator god did for Jesus is both the *model* and the *means* of what he will do for all Jesus' people'

(Wright 2003:216; emphasis in original). Crossan and Reed's emphasis on I Corinthians 15:12-13, 15b-16 is that 'the argument is very clear: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection'. They continue with interpretation of I Corinthians 15:20, 'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died' (NRSV) as meaning, 'Jesus's resurrection is to the general resurrection as first fruits are to the rest of the harvest. There is no possibility of Christ's resurrection as a special, unique, peculiar privilege accorded to him alone' (Crossan & Reed 2004:342-343).

It is true that this passage teaches that Jesus' resurrection and the general resurrection are connected, 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised…. If the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised' (1 Cor 15:13, 16). However, Crossan and Reed's statement that 'there is no possibility of Christ's resurrection as a special, unique, peculiar privilege accorded to him alone' needs challenging because of these facts:

(1) Preaching is vain and faith is futile 'if Christ has not been raised' (1 Cor 15:14). This verse does *not* say, 'If Christ has not been raised *and* there is no general resurrection, your preaching is without content and ineffective and your faith is pointless'.[319] Christ's resurrection is unique in order to provide content and foundation to preaching and faith. This is related to another unique necessity of Jesus' resurrection,

(2) 'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins' (1 Cor 15:17). This is explained further in Romans 4:25, 'He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification'. The unique, peculiar, and special mission of Jesus' resurrection was to provide justification for sins so that people are no longer in their sins. They are declared righteous (justified) before God. Of this verse, Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'In order to complete the work of our salvation: because, just as for this reason did He endure evil things in dying that He might deliver us from evil, so was He glorified in rising again in order to advance us towards good things' according to Romans 4:25 (Aquinas 1947:3.53.1). The death of Jesus 'for us', as articulated in Romans 4:25 and 5:10 includes both justification and sanctification and 'they are inextricably bound together with his resurrection' (Fee 1987:743-744). For Crossan to denigrate this unique role of the resurrected Son in salvation is to deny an essential Christian doctrine. The uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection cannot be detached from eternal salvation itself. Crossan's reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection to exclude its uniqueness is tantamount to a denial of Christian existence for the sake of a postmodern view of human beings and reconstruction of the meaning of the resurrection.

(b) 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

What was of first importance to Paul 'by which you are being saved' and it was the word he preached to them (1 Cor 15:2)? The meaning of ἐν πρώτοις (of first importance) is uncertain as it could refer to (1) priority in time, or (2) that which Paul preached and the Corinthians believed from the beginning. Fee supports the former, stating that 'among all the things he proclaimed and taught while he was with them, these are the matters of "first importance." Here is the "bare bones" content of the gospel that saves' (Fee 1987:722). Three facts comprise what Paul delivered to the Corinthians in his gospel proclamation: Christ died, was buried, and was raised. The close connection of Jesus' body that was buried and his resurrection is seen elsewhere in the New Testament (see Rm 6:3-5; Col 2:12; Ac 2:23-24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39-40; 13:19-30). In his examination of *sōma* (body) and its application to Jesus' resurrection, Robert Gundry called attention to this emphasis: 'To say that for Paul the resurrection of Christ is not somatic also does not pay enough attention to Paul's apparent agreement with the tradition that Christ died and was *buried* and raised. As an ex-Pharisee, Paul could not have used such traditional language without recognizing its intent to portray the raising of a corpse' (Gundry 1987:176; emphasis in original). Therefore, this language of death, burial, and being raised on the third day cannot be separated from the body of Jesus coming out of the grave and leaving the tomb empty.

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[319] The Greek is κενὸς, for which Arndt & Gingrich provide the meaning, 'without content, without any basis, without truth, without power' of preaching and faith for 1 Cor 15:14a (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:429). Albrecht Oepke's study concluded it meant '"empty", "futile"', that is, 'without content and also ineffective' (Oepke 1965:659-660). Colin Brown's understanding was that 'under certain circumstances certain things would be pointless, fruitless, or in vain' and that applies to preaching and faith in I Corinthians 15:14 (Brown 1975:547).

What was Jesus' view of the nature of his resurrection body? According to John 2:18-22, the Jews at the temple whose money changing tables were overturned by Jesus, asked Jesus for a sign and his answer was, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'. They thought he meant the physical temple that had taken forty-six years to build. John clarified: 'But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When, therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken' (Jn 2:21-22).[320] Jesus left no doubt in this statement what kind of resurrection from the dead his would be. It would not be a metaphorical resurrection or one in which there would be post-resurrection apparitional encounters. He said the raising would be of 'the temple of his body'; it would be a corporeal (bodily) resurrection. After his resurrection, his disciples remembered what he had said and John recorded it here.

There is evidence from the Jewish Intertestamental literature (see §4.4.7.7.3(a)) of bodily resurrection. Gundry's appraisal was that 'to maintain that Christ's resurrection is not somatic, we would have to dispose of the Pauline reference to the "glorious body" of Christ in Phil 3:20-21: "we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body"' (Gundry 1987:177).

This evidence is further proof for the bodily resurrection of Jesus; thus, it is strongly implied that the tomb was empty. The empty tomb does matter because it is a necessity for salvation and as a demonstration of the nature of the resurrected believers at the general resurrection – a changed lowly body. 'The same but different' (explained in §4.4.8.4 below) is how Jesus' resurrected body will be explained in parallel with the resurrected bodies of believers at the end of the age.

(c) 1 Corinthians 15:5

How do Crossan and Reed interpret Paul's proclamation of 'the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus' (their language) in Corinth? The Corinthians, in their view, would have called the reintegration of the body and soul 'foolishness' or more politely, they would have translated it as '*immortality of the soul*' in good Platonic fashion (Crossan & Reed 2004:341-342; emphasis in original). They claim Paul's arguments are a repeat of the basic tradition that after Jesus' death and burial 'he "was seen" by many people including himself (1 Cor 15:3-11), but this would not have helped Paul with 'the wise Corinthians' because the Corinthians would have replied that their past Greco-

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[320] See also Mark 14:56-58 and the false witness before the Sanhedrin that included some of these details from Jesus.

Roman tradition included individuals who ‘had often come back from the dead to visit the living’ (Crossan & Reed 2004:342).

1 Corinthians 15:5 states, ‘He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve’. ‘Appeared’ is the aorist passive verb, ὤφθη, of ὁράω and an explanation was given in §4.4.7.4 that it means to see with a sense of perception of someone, of persons who appear in a natural way. It speaks mostly of supernatural appearances as with the resurrection here (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:581-582). Karl Dahn’s word study of ὁράω indicated that the word group in the New Testament is generally ‘used in the same sense’ as in secular Greek and the LXX. In classical Greek it ‘means to see, look, perceive, observe’ something or look towards something. In the New Testament it can mean see or perceive and can be used figuratively and for a vision of the spirit or intellect. ‘Paul attests that the risen Christ was seen or appeared with the aor. pass. *opthē* (1 Cor. 15:5ff.). The appearances are never only visual, but are always bound up with hearing the word of the risen Christ; yet hearing should not be stressed at the expense of seeing. The Easter message is summed up in Jn. 19:35: “He who has seen it has testified to it, so that you may believe”’ (Dahn 1978:511, 513, 515, 518).

Wilhelm Michaelis adopted a dissenting view, acknowledging that ὁράω and έιδον are the most common verbs meaning ‘see’ in the New Testament and have ‘a broad range of meaning’. But Jesus’ resurrection ‘is itself exaltation to God’ and the appearances between Easter and the ascension in the Synoptics and Acts were ‘appearances of the risen Lord from heaven’. Even though the language for appearances is not ὁράματα, they ‘do not occur in a reality which can be perceived by the natural senses’. So the resurrection appearances are ‘characterised by the antithesis of ὅράμα and ἀληθές’. He admitted that the corporeality of the Lord should be viewed spiritually in his passing through closed doors (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19, 26) and sometimes very literally with his eating (Lk 24:41-43). However, this researcher observes that his *a priori* presupposition could not allow him to accept the literal understanding as original. Instead, ‘we must regard the more literal view as later, but both are closely intermingled in the same stories’. Therefore, it is not surprising that Michaelis concludes that ‘when Paul classifies the Damascus appearance with the others in 1 C. 15:5ff.’, Paul regards that appearance as equivalent to the others. This presence of the risen Lord and his appearances recorded in this passage demonstrate, says Michaelis, ‘the presence of the exalted Lord from heaven…. This presence is in non-visionary reality; no category of human seeing is wholly adequate for it…. The appearances are to be described as manifestations in the sense of revelation rather than making visible’ (Michaelis 1967:340-341, 356-357, 359). Davis’s assessment was that Michaelis (1967) ‘is probably the most influential recent scholar who holds that the appearances were revelatory encounters with Jesus that primarily involved hearing rather than sight’ (Davis 1997:134, n 13).

How can the kind of ‘appearing’ for Cephas, the twelve, more than 500 brothers, James, all the apostles, and to the apostle Paul be explained? Was it normal sight or was the appearance visionary (apparitional) or revelational that was not visible, or of some other reality? There has been ‘considerable discussion’ over whether this seeing is by revelation or ‘a true “seeing”’, but it needs to be remembered that the grammatical voice of the verb is passive, implying that Jesus took the initiative, but this ‘does not mean that he was any less visible to those who saw him’ (Fee 1987:728, n. 73).

Firstly, Jesus took the initiative in appearing and Paul records that it applied to four other people or groups of people before an appearance to Paul. How is it possible to be a spiritual or revelational seeing when he appeared to more than 500 people at one time? Wright's assessment was that 'the resurrection of Jesus was a real event as far as Paul was concerned, and it underlay the future real event of the resurrection of all God's people'. His reason for reaching this conclusion is based on all that emerges from every point in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11: 'Paul refers to the resurrection of Jesus as an event for which there were witnesses – a large, though finite number, comprising at least 500 who had seen Jesus. Some of these witnesses had already died'. He emphasised that this 'seeing the risen Jesus', in Paul's thinking, could not have had 'anything to do with regular and normal, or even extraordinary "Christian experience", with ongoing visions and revelations or a "spiritual" sense of the presence of Jesus. As is clear from 1 Corinthians 9.1, this "seeing" was something which constituted people as "apostles", the one-off witnesses to a one-off event' (Wright 2003:317-318).

Stephen Davis's research into the nature of 'seeing' relating to the resurrection appearances, led him to conclude that there were three different ways of seeing: (1) Normal vision, and at the other extreme, (2) Subjective vision, in which nobody else can see it; usually it is called an hallucination. (3) An objective vision that is sometimes called a 'grace-assisted vision' or 'graced seeing' in which someone sees something that nobody else can see because the person 'has been enabled by God to see the real and objective presence of the thing; the see-er has an ability to see that others lack' (Davis 1997:126-127; 127, n. 2). What kind of sight was in involved in seeing the risen Jesus?

Davis said that a 'quick and pre-critical reading of the appearance stories in the New Testament … would naturally lead one to hold that the witnesses to the resurrection, saw, rather than visualized him…. Normal vision was involved' (Davis 1997:129). These details will be assessed in §4.4.8.2.

Secondly, there is a strong confirmation of Simon Peter's verbal (and hence corporeal) encounter with the resurrected Jesus:

> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep".
>
> (John 21:15-17)

There is confirmation here that Jesus bodily appeared to Peter so that he could give him the commands to feed and tend the lambs and sheep.

Also, there is an indication in Mark's gospel of this kind of encounter between Jesus and Peter after the resurrection. The two Marys found Jesus' empty tomb and were told by the young man in the tomb, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will *see* him, just as he told you' (Mk 16:6-7; emphasis added). The instructions were for the disciples and Peter to go to a specific region, Galilee, to 'see' Jesus. This is a substantial inference of a physical seeing in a specified place. It seems hardly reasonable to expect that Peter and the disciples would be instructed to go to Galilee for a visionary, apparitional, subjective encounter with Jesus. 'Just as he told you’ (Mk 16:7) refers back to Jesus’ statement before his betrayal, arrest and death, ‘After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee’ (Mk 14:28).

Thirdly, Borg and Crossan dismiss the factuality of the resurrection stories by giving their *a priori* presuppositional interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:14, ‘If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain’ (NRSV). In making reference to this verse, they stated that ‘emphasis on the historical factuality of the Easter stories, as if they were reporting events that could have been photographed, gets in the way of understanding them’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:191). This statement has a breadth that extends to the Easter stories and not just the resurrection. When the breadth is compared with another of Crossan’s writings there is a contradiction. He referred to the ‘historical passion – what actually happened to Jesus, what anyone present would have seen. That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be, since both Josephus and Tacitus … agree with the Christian accounts on at least that basic fact’ (Crossan 1994a:145). Which is it? Crossan and Borg claim the ‘Easter stories’ are opposed to historical factuality but Crossan’s claim is that the ‘historical passion’, which is an essential part of the ‘Easter stories’ is as surely historical as it can ever be. How can the ‘Easter stories’ on one account be counter factuality and in another statement the Easter stories contain the historical passion – the factual, historical passion? This is another example of a Crossan philosophical crusher of contradiction.

Then Borg and Crossan stated that ‘Paul does not emphasize an empty tomb. Rather, he grounds his confidence in Jesus’s resurrection in the appearances of Jesus to his followers and ultimately to Paul himself, which Paul understands as visions’ (Borg & Crossan 2006:218, n. 16). The facts are that Simon Peter encountered the resurrected Jesus to receive his commission to feed and tend the sheep; he and the disciples went to the specific region of Galilee to see Jesus. Jesus, before his crucifixion (which was a specific historical event according to Crossan), told his disciples to meet him in Galilee after he was raised. Only a presuppositional bias against a literal interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection encounter with Peter could cause Borg and Crossan to require that the Easter events were not factual. It is true that Paul did not make a direct statement about an empty tomb in 1 Corinthians 15. However, it is impossible for the Jesus who was crucified and buried to encounter Peter and the disciples in the specific place of Galilee if he was not raised from the dead and, by inference, left an empty tomb behind. The post-resurrection encounter with Peter and the disciples and Peter’s commission received after the resurrection from Jesus assumes the tomb is empty and that Jesus was raised from the dead and able to speak with the disciples.

Fourthly, it is proper to examine the meaning of the verb, ‘was raised’ (1 Cor 15:4) and its association with resurrection. The verb is ἐγήγερται, perfect passive of ἐγειρω. Lother Coenen’s study of the etymology and use of ἐγειρω led to the conclusion that it means to ‘wake, rouse, raise up’ and the noun form, ἐγερσις, means ‘awakening, i.e. resurrection’. In classical Greek, the meaning of ‘resurrection (from death) in our understanding of the term can hardly be found’ and the LXX meaning corresponds with the classical Greek idiom. It is ‘virtually synonymous with the *anhistemi* (sic) group, it represents the Heb. *qûm* (rise), *‘ûr* (arouse) and *‘āmad* (stand)’. In the New Testament, the ἐγερσις generally has the same meaning as in classical Greek and the LXX but is used only once in connection with the resurrection of Jesus (see Mt 27:53) while the verbals based on ἐγειρω occur 143 times. ‘The heart of the concept … has to do with the raising of Jesus’ and the epistles ‘never use *egeirō*, except in Phil. 1:17, in any sense but that of resurrection from the dead'. He noted that the word is so frequently used in Romans 1 and 2 Corinthians that

> we recognize that it must have been a dominant element in Paul's preaching…. In 1 Cor. 15 he explains that God's breaking into history in the resurrection of Jesus is the decisive factor in the gospel, the means by which we are saved, without which all faith would be vain. Witnesses are adduced for the truth of the happening; they were those to whom Jesus had "appeared" (*ōphthē* is used four times in vv. 5-8). For the preacher of the gospel it had become the touchstone of its truth. The one who disputed or denied the resurrection made God a liar and their faith a hollow mask (vv. 14-17: *kenos* and *mathios*).
>
> (Coenen & Brown 1978b:279-281)

There has been a suggestion that Jews of Jesus' time would have thought that there was continuity of identity between the earthly body and the resurrected body and that there would be an assumption of an empty tomb (as in 1 Cor 15:3-4). Colin Brown responded to this idea by citing C F D Moule's assessment of Jesus' resurrection body when compared with that of people in the eschatological general resurrection: 'The story in its essentials is very far indeed from conforming to the presuppositions of Jewish apocalyptic. Jewish apocalyptic did not believe in a *permanent* raising from death until the End, which was still in the future' (Moule in Coenen & Brown 1978b:293). Before the resurrection of Jesus, the Pharisaic Jew would have understood raising as temporary as with Elijah, Elisha, Lazarus, and Jairus' daughter. However, Brown's summary of Moule is that he considers 'failure to produce the body of Jesus should not be too readily dismissed' because 'women were the principal witnesses' and this 'argues in favour of credibility, as women were notoriously invalid witnesses according to Jewish principles of evidence'. In addition, Moule's belief is that 'the empty tomb does not imply that the body of Jesus was exactly the same in its risen state. Rather, he suggests that the evidence implies transformation in a way comparable with the resurrection of believers' and that this would be a creation 'out of nothing into something new' and that this is congruous with the idea that God does not create without purpose (Moule, in Coenen & Brown 1978b:293). This will be discussed further in §4.4.8.4, with the resurrection body as the same but different from the body originally on earth.

Crossan and Reed claim that Paul uses another argument to exclude misunderstanding and in it, Paul insists on 'only one meaning for the term *resurrection*, namely, the *general bodily resurrection* at the end of the evil aeon when God raises all the dead for judgment in prelude for transforming this earth into eschatological perfection and utopian peace'. Then Paul adds the 'stunningly original adaptation, the totally original variation, the utterly creative revision that Christian Judaism had already made to that Pharisaic theology'. This was that the 'general bodily resurrection *had already begun* with the bodily resurrection of Jesus' (see I Cor 15:12-13, 15b-16). 'The argument is very clear: no Jesus resurrection, no general resurrection; no general resurrection, no Jesus resurrection' (Crossan & Reed 2004:342).

However, the evidence outlined above is that Jesus was raised to a new bodily existence (not expected by Judaism) which was continuous from the previous body, but different. This bodily resurrection was a core dimension of Paul's gospel proclamation. This deduces that the tomb was empty in order for the same but different resurrection body to appear and be seen in the post-resurrection appearances.

Fifthly, what was the meaning of ἀνάστασις (resurrection) in the first century that could enlighten Paul's understanding in 1 Corinthians 15:12? As already indicated in §4.4.7.7.3, of the passage in the Apocrypha where the young man was being brutally slaughtered, losing his tongue and his hands, he 'said nobly, "I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again"' (2 Macc 7:11) and there will be a 'resurrection [ἀνάστασις – SDG] to life' (2 Macc 7:14). The hope to get back his tongue and hands is a definite reference to an expected bodily resurrection. In the examination of 2 Maccabees 12:43-44, it was stated that the person acted very well and honourably, 'taking account of the resurrection [ἀνάστασις – SDG]. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead'. So ἀνάστασις meant a bodily rising from the dead, as was illustrated in the crude way of putting it in 2 Maccabees 14:42, 46. In the relevant passages of 2 Maccabees 7:9, 14; 12:44, what is used is 'the standard "resurrection" language, namely the Greek verbs *anistemi* and *egeiro* and their cognates. We find the same with Isaiah 26, both in the verse that denies resurrection (14) and the verse that affirms it (19)' (Wright 2003:147). Thus, this interpretation of Jewish history included bodily resurrection.

See §4.4.7.7.2 for an examination of the Pharisees' and Sadducees' views of resurrection. However, what is the meaning of ἀνάστασις in connection with Jesus' resurrection? Coenen's etymological and usage analysis of the New Testament data for the noun, ἀνάστασις, and the verbals based on ἀνίστήμι as they relate to Jesus' resurrection led to the conclusion that 'through an act of God, the dead and buried Lord had been awakened to life again (cf. Acts 2:32, 34; Eph. 5:14) with a body, which was new, material, not identical with the old, but not merely visionary (cf. Jn. 20:21). He appeared to his disciples in a form that could be seen and felt (Jn. 20:27; Lk. 24:16, 31, 39; Acts 1:1, 9: cf. 1 Jn. 1:1 ff.), though he might not always permit the latter (Jn. 20:17)…. He maintained normal human fellowship with his disciples by eating and drinking with them (Lk. 24:29 f.; Jn. 21:12 f.)'. In relation to John, even if he gives 'a concept of resurrection as something apparently contemporaneously realized, that is only a beginning…. It is always in the sense of the resurrection body; it is never a mere continuation of being, or a reawakening of the soul'. This view was rejected by the Sadducees and was not accepted by the Greeks 'because the teaching was too materialistic for their spiritualized thinking (Acts 17:18, 32; 1 Cor. 15:12)'. Coenen noted that the analogy of the seed and harvest has only a superficial resemblance to the process of general resurrection because 'God gives a body as he wills (1 Cor. 15:38), and so he alone guarantees the identity of the person' (Coenen & Brown 1978a:276-278).

Based on his analysis of 1 Corinthians 15:12-28, Wright concluded that 'there can be no question, granted the normal meaning of the words Paul uses, that what he has in mind is bodily resurrection' and it is not possible to historically or lexicographically provide the meaning of resurrection as 'non-bodily survival…. *Egeiro* and *anastasis* were words in regular use to denote something specifically distinguished from non-bodily survival, namely, a return to bodily life. There is no evidence to suggest that these words were capable of denoting a non-bodily survival after death' (Wright 2003:330). As this examination of 1 Corinthians 15 will demonstrate, that is the topic that Paul was answering throughout the chapter, based on the problem and question he raised in 15:12.

Are there other references to Jesus appearing to 'the Twelve' (1 Cor 15:5)? In John 20:19-20, 26, 'the Twelve' were called 'the disciples'. Jesus appeared to them in a locked room and said, 'Peace be with you' and he showed them his hands and his side and Scripture records that 'they saw the Lord'. Verses 26-27 singled out Thomas being with the disciples and Jesus stood among them and spoke to them. To Thomas, Jesus said to 'put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side'. Jesus' charge to Thomas was, 'Do not disbelieve, but believe'. Therefore, Jesus not only appeared to the disciples, hence the Twelve (including Thomas), but it was bodily so that he could speak to them and show his hands and side. This is not the manifestation of apparitions. While Mark 16:14 is in the section of Mark 16:9-20 whose genuineness is questioned because it is in some manuscripts but not the two oldest, Aleph and B, verse 14 does provide evidence for Jesus appearing to the eleven while reclining at table and he spoke to them by way of rebuke. The rebuke was for their unbelief and hardness of heart because of their not believing those who saw Jesus after he had risen. Then Jesus gave his proclamation to take the gospel to the whole of creation (Mk 16:15). While this researcher does not regard this portion as Scripture, it does provide early extra-biblical evidence of Jesus' seeing and talking with the eleven disciples. Matthew 28:16-17 also records an appearance of Jesus to the disciples, 'The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted'. It was here where Jesus spoke to them about all authority that was given to him and gave the command to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:18-20). The evidence from Matthew 28 is that of a bodily person who communicates with people. The language is not that of apparitional experiences.

Peter in his preaching, as recorded in Acts 10:41-42, affirmed Jesus' appearance to the chosen ones (presumable referring to the twelve apostles): 'God raised him on the third day and caused him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead'. This affirms the nature of Jesus' resurrection appearances to the 'chosen ones'. They ate and drank with the risen One and he spoke to them by way of command. This is not a visionary, apparitional or metaphorical post-resurrection encounter.

Thus, the appearances of Jesus to Cephas and the twelve are critical to an understanding of the nature of Jesus' resurrection body. It was a corporeal resurrection. It has been demonstrated that 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 associates 'being saved' with belief in Jesus' resurrection which was proclaimed by Paul. This message included Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Salvation is an essential foundation for Christianity and this is a specific meaning associated with the passion-resurrection. To explain it away in reconstruction as the empty tomb being unimportant and replaced with 'meaning' being reduced to a subjective, postmodern reconstruction is to trivialise Christianity.

(d) 1 Corinthians 15:6

This verse states that 'he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters[321] at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died'[322] (NRSV). A T Robertson considers that this incident is the one in Matthew 28:16 where the eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee to which Jesus had directed them

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[321] The footnote said, 'Gk *brothers*'.

[322] The footnote said, 'Gk *fallen asleep*'.

(Robertson 1931:188).[323] Wright agreed: 'It is far more likely that the appearance to the 500 was an occasion like that reported in Matthew 28.16-20 (though Matthew only mentions the eleven there)' (Wright 2003:325). Jesus met Mary Magdalene and the other Mary after his resurrection and he told them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me' (Mt 28:10). It does seem unusual that Jesus would tell his eleven disciples to go to distant Galilee to meet on a mountain with only eleven of them (Mt 28:16) when Jesus had met twice with them in Jerusalem after his resurrection (Lk 24:36-42; Jn 20:26-29). The contemporary distance calculator gives the driving distance from Jerusalem to the Galilee Mountains as 195 kilometres (121 miles); the straight line or air distance is 130 kilometres (81 miles).[324] This would have been a couple days journey in the first century.[325]

It is unfounded speculation to state that this Galilee mountain meeting place refers to Jesus' appearing to more than 500 people at the same time. There is nothing in the Matthew 28 or 1 Corinthian 15 passages to align the 500 people with Galilee. It is safest to say that we do not know who they are. What is important is that some had died but 'most … are still alive'. The inference is that if people wanted to check on the evidence of the reality or nature of Jesus' resurrection, they could seek information from the living witnesses. No indication is stated where these witnesses were located. It is best to conclude that 'nothing more is known' about them (Fee 1987:730) or 'nothing in the Gospels or Acts corroborates the figure of 500 brothers' (Kistemaker 1993:532). There is a circumstance where Peter addressed 120 people who were present when they were seeking to appoint a successor to Judas Iscariot after the resurrection (Ac 1:15). That is the closest to the number of 500, but there is no link stated directly with the number in 1 Corinthians 15:6.[326]

Visions, apparitions, or altered states of consciousness generally are not the experience of more than 500 individuals 'at one time'. They tend to be individualistic and not a mass event; they sometimes happen in small groups (see §4.4.7.1 above for further explanations). Goodman was unclear about the difference between magic and religion and that 'the alternate reality' consists of 'a reality where power hovers' and positive and negative contact is made with that 'reality' – that is, spiritism – for individuals (Goodman 1988:4, 46-47). Crossan connected Jesus' apparitions with Goodman's view of spiritism.

(e) 1 Corinthians 15:7

This verse states, 'Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles'. Which James is he? Acts 1:13 confirms that James is numbered with the 'apostles' in the upper room who were devoting themselves to prayer to choose a replacement for

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[323] Wright noted that it has been suggested that Jesus on the mountain in Galilee with his eleven disciples (Mt 28:16-20) was the time when the 'five hundred at once' saw Jesus all together. However, 'it is noticeable that Matthew only mentions "the Eleven" (28.16). If, then, this is a different event, this is the only mention of it, so we cannot gain historical binocular vision of it'. Wright warns against what happens frequently with Gospel criticism in ancient history when a single source is 'dismissed because it lacks corroborating parallels'. His perspective is that 'a single source needs to be evaluated on its own merits' (Wright 2003:642). He provided no guidelines in that context for how to evaluate such a single source. Godet (1977:762) also supported the Matthew 28:16 link with I Corinthians 15:6.

[324] Distance calculator (2014). This direct line distance is approximately the same distance in a manual measurement taken of Jerusalem to lower Galilee in 'Palestine in New Testament times, AD 6-70', in the Oxford Bible atlas (May 1974:86-87).

[325] This distance factor was suggested by Lenski (1963:636).

[326] The Acts 1:15 connection was suggested by Kistemaker (1993:532).

Judas Iscariot and this person must be one who had accompanied them during Jesus' time on earth from John's baptism 'until the day when he was taken up from us – one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection' (Ac 1:22). James, the Lord's brother, even though a former unbeliever (see Jn 7:5), may have been a witness after Jesus' resurrection (Ac 1:22). However, it is not mentioned in the gospel narratives that James was a follower of Jesus. Wright asks: 'If it is true that stories of people meeting Jesus were invented in order to legitimate leaders in the early church, it is remarkable that we hear nothing, throughout the gospel stories, of James the brother of Jesus. The only time anyone mentions him as a witness of the resurrection is in 1 Corinthians 15.7' (Wright 2003:610). Acts 1:13 indicates James and a James, the son of Alphaeus, are witnesses of the risen Jesus. Church history reveals that James, Jesus' brother, was ranked next to Peter in the Jerusalem church (Cairns 1981:80).

Paul has already mentioned Jesus' appearance to 'the twelve' (1 Cor 15:5). Are 'the twelve' different from 'all the apostles' (15:7)? It seems unusual that in a list of witnesses that 'the twelve' could be used as a synonymous term for 'all the apostles'. Fee considers there are three options: (1) To *all* the apostles which include Peter, the Twelve, James, etc; (2) Another term for 'the Twelve', and (3) The larger group of *apostles*, implying another group that is not mentioned. Even though there are 'some difficulties' with the first position, which is the most commonly accepted view, Fee favours the association of this group (1 Cor 15:7) with those recorded in Acts 1:6-11. Fee's conclusion was that 'all the apostles' included Peter, the Twelve, James and a larger group that became known as the apostles. Paul's understanding was that they had seen the risen Lord and were commissioned by him to proclaim the gospel and found churches (see I Cor 9:1-2). Fee understood 'their authority was that of ministry rather than jurisdiction' (Fee 1987:732).

So Jesus who appeared to James and all the apostles provided further evidence that he was alive, had appeared to them, and was inferring the obvious – the tomb was empty. This means that the appearance of Jesus to James and all the apostles after being raised from the dead on the third day has a climactic meaning: The gospel of salvation is preached (1 Cor 15:3). Meaning is directly related to the determinate content of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. The meaning is stated directly 'being saved' (15:2), there being no resurrection of the dead (15:12, 21, 29), preaching and faith vain/futile (15:14, 17), not misrepresenting God (15:15), bodily general resurrection in the future (15:37-38); imperishable, glorious, spiritual (animated), changed, immortal bodies in the future (15:42-54), and death swallowed up in victory (15:54-55). There is victory over death, thanks to the resurrected Jesus. The meaning of the resurrection is stated clearly in this resurrection chapter. Any attempt to reconstruct the empty tomb, resurrection appearances, and the meaning of the resurrection through postmodern reconstruction devastates the content of I Corinthians 15 and the determinate meaning, which is stated with clarity.

(f) 1 Corinthians 15:8

This verse reads, 'Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me'. Paul himself asks in 1 Corinthians 9:1, 'Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' and 15:8 probably refers to this 'seeing' at his conversion on the Damascus road (Ac 9:3-9). Davis's appraisal was that most scholars read I Corinthians 9:1; 15:8 and Galatians 1:12, 16 'as references to his Damascus Road conversion experience' (Davis 1997:138). There are hermeneutical challenges in understanding the three phrases of this verse:

(i) To what does ‘last of all’ refer?

Paul includes this phrase at the end of a list of ‘appearances’ he is enumerating. It would be natural, considering the immediate context, to think of this as a physical appearance of Jesus to harmonise with the other appearances. As discussed in (iii) below, this is not so. Fee calls this phrase ‘ambiguous’ and suggests three possible meanings: (1) Comparable with 1 Corinthians 4:9, it means least significant. The context does not seem to allow this one in an inventory of appearances. (2) Last on this list of apostles, which could be possible but it does not pursue Paul’s emphasis (of evidence by appearances). (3) ‘Most likely it is the final link in the chain that began with Peter and means “finally”’ (Fee 1987:732, n. 98). Lenski agrees, considering that the meaning is that ‘Paul was called to the apostleship rather late’ (Lenski 1963:638).

(ii) ‘As to one untimely born’

This unusual phrase, τῷ ἐκτρώματι, from το ἐκτρώμα, is used only here in the New Testament, but appears three times in the LXX (Nm 12:12; Job 3:16; Ec 6:3)[327] where it refers to a still-born or aborted child. The noun, ἐκτρωμα, means ‘untimely birth, miscarriage’ and in reference to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:8, he perhaps is accepting an insult by using this ‘as a term of contempt’ that was ‘hurled at him by his opponents’ (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:246). Johannes Schneider, while admitting that the ‘meaning of the expression is contested’, stated it is not possible for the word to refer to one who is born late. He concluded the word is used ‘in a very general sense’ and Paul ‘was not born at the right time because he had not been a disciple during the lifetime of Jesus’. Instead, Paul’s calling to the apostolic office, ‘which presupposed having seen Jesus, could not take place in the normal, orderly, organic sequence’. Instead, ‘the main emphasis is on the abnormality of the process, which took place when the Risen Lord had ceased to manifest Himself to the disciples’. Thus, abnormal spiritual birth for Paul is stressed as he is the only apostle who experienced such an appearance (revelation) of Christ, in contrast with what happened to the twelve apostles (Schneider 1964:466-467).

In 2 Corinthians 11:5, 23, Paul identifies himself as ‘not the least inferior to these super-apostles’ and asks, ‘Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one … with far greater labors, far more imprisonments’. So Paul labels himself as ‘the least of the apostles’, unusually born out of time (after Jesus’ ascension). However, the phrase, ‘as to one untimely born’ is too weak when it refers to ‘as to the dead foetus’. A dead foetus is expelled from the womb and Paul, the unworthy ‘dead’ one is placed among the number of apostles because Jesus took the initiative to appear to Saul and lead him to salvation (Lenski 1963:638-639).

(iii) ‘He appeared also to me’

Along with 1 Corinthians 9:1, this most likely refers to Paul’s conversion on the Damascus road (Ac 9:1-19), assumed but not itemised in these two Corinthian verses (1 Cor 15:8-9). The encounter with the Lord came in a voice associated with a light from heaven and Paul received instructions from the Lord. Acts 26:15-16 records Paul’s response: ‘I said, “Who are you, Lord?”[328] And the Lord said, “I am

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[327] This was identified by Schneider (1964:465).

[328] ‘Lord’ is the translation of κύριε, which translations such as the Roman Catholic, New American Bible, translate as ‘sir’, in agreement with the translation of this noun in other verses (see Mat 21:39-40; Jn 5:7; 9:36; 12:21; 20:15; 20:28; Ac 10:4; 16:30; 22:10).

Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you"'. According to Acts 26:19, Paul told King Agrippa the nature of this appearance, 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision' in referring to his encounter with the Lord. It was a heavenly ὀπτασία, which Michaelis described as 'always non-visionary' in the LXX. In the New Testament it refers to 'angelophanies' (Lk 1:22; 24:23) and 'could be called visions only if the sense "visionary appearance" were firmly established, but this is not so'. Of Acts 26:19 and the appearance outside Damascus, Luke is not calling this a vision, says, Michaelis, as he commonly used ὅραμα for vision. 'Less, or even no emphasis at all is placed on the visual element as compared with the revelation by word and its demand for obedience'. Michaelis's interpretation, contrary to that which is recorded in Acts 26:19, claims that 'Paul himself could hardly have called this appearance an ὀπτασία' (Michaelis 1967:372-373).

'He appeared' in many translations is rendered as the active voice (see ESV, NRSV, NIV, NASB, NAB, NJB, REB) when it is aorist passive so a translation such as 'he let himself be seen' would convey the mood of the verb more accurately than 'he was seen' or 'he appeared' (Davis 1997:134). However, Paul does use the same verb but with the active voice in a rhetorical question in 1 Corinthians 9:1, 'Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?', where the negative οὐ accompanies these questions and anticipates a positive answer, 'Yes, I have seen Jesus our Lord'. 'Have seen' is ἑόρακα, the perfect, active, indicative of ὁράω, thus indicating a seeing that happened and continued to be experienced. What kind of seeing was it when he saw Jesus (1 Cor 9:1) and Jesus' took the initiative to appear to Paul (1 Cor 15:8)? This has generated considerable academic and expositional debate. For it to be included in the list of 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, it would seem to need to have a parallel in some way with these other appearances.

These two kinds of emphases – physical seeing or visionary appearance – demonstrate that lexical grounds alone cannot determine the meaning of ὤφθη in verse 8. In verses 5-7, physical seeing has been the most suitable interpretation of the other appearances, but the meaning of Paul's declaration of his own experience is of a different kind. It relates more closely to what Davis described as an objective, grace-assisted vision in which Jesus appeared to Saul and nobody else could see the Lord (but those travelling with Saul heard the voice but saw nobody, Ac 9:7). Jesus enabled Saul to see the real, objective presence of the Lord himself. Saul, the one who saw, had an ability to see Jesus that those who travelled with him lacked (Davis 1997:127, n. 2). This was not an apparitional appearance of Jesus but a heavenly, objective vision in which Saul saw Jesus after Jesus' ascension. Robertson's comment was that in Acts 26:19, this was the only time that Paul used ὀπτασία about seeing Jesus on the Damascus road, but it is 'no reflection on the reality of the event' (Robertson 1930b:450). However, when Paul's conversion experience is first recorded in the Book of Acts, it is not labelled as a 'vision' (see Ac 9:1-19).

After considering the impact of the above list of witnesses, N T Wright reached a logical and pointed conclusion about this passage from 1 Corinthians: 'The list of witnesses, despite the anguished protests of Bultmann and his followers, is a clear indication that Paul does not suppose Jesus' resurrection to be a metaphorization of an experience of the disciples, or of some "ineffable truth beyond history".[329] What is more, “the great variety in times and places of the appearances makes it difficult to hold all the reports of appearances to be legendary”’[330] (Wright 2003:324). With application to Crossan, the list of witnesses demonstrates that Paul does not propose that Jesus’ resurrection was a part of the meta-parables of metaphor that mean ‘the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced by believers’ (Crossan 1998a:xxxi). He is not affirming that the ‘empty tomb stories are parables of resurrection or the resurrection itself is a parable’ (Crossan 2000:166). The list of witnesses militates against the metaphorical-parabolic understanding of Jesus’ resurrection being fictitious parables, made-up stories (Crossan 2000:169). Wright’s conclusion is more consistent with the evidence from the paragraph of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, ‘The whole thrust of the paragraph is about evidence about witnesses being called, about something that actually happened for which eyewitnesses could and would vouch. Paul would hardly call eyewitnesses for an experience which continued unabated, not least in Corinth itself’ (Wright 2003:325, 329).

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[329] This is a citation from Hays (1997:257) which is included in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 where he described these witnesses of Jesus resurrection as Cephas, the Twelve, and more than

Because no human being saw the exact event of Jesus’ rising from the dead,[331] it was necessary to provide evidence that he was alive in the same body in which he was crucified. This evidence was made available to the early church (and to all people who read the Scriptures) that he was alive in the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. To his apostles, ‘he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God’ (Ac 1:3). In addition to the evidence of Jesus’ appearances to people that are recorded in the closing chapters of each gospel in twelve different instances, there is this list from 1 Corinthians 15:5-8. Why the stress in the gospels on the corporeal Jesus who spoke, could be seen, touched and had meals? It was to demonstrate what he prophesied would happen according to John 2:19-21. The temple of his body would be destroyed (the crucifixion) and this actual body would be raised.

The evidence from the gospels, Book of Acts, and 1 Corinthians is that Jesus’ had been raised in a physical resurrection body that was the same as his previous body – but with a difference (as will be demonstrated in §4.4.8.4). The empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus demonstrate his resurrection. The appearances stress his physical resurrection (with the exception of the appearances to Paul), but this is an understanding that is impossible to harmonise with Crossan’s apparitional, metaphorical interpretation of the resurrection. Why would that be? As already demonstrated, Crossan rejects the role of the supernatural God involved in Jesus’ resurrection. Therefore, he has created a postmodern, fictional, creative alternative that does not co-ordinate with the evidence presented here.

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five-hundred others – and most of them are still alive. ‘This is clearly calculated to provide further evidential support for the resurrection of Jesus; anyone who is disposed to be skeptical will find a formidable gallery of witnesses waiting to testify that they have seen him alive. This shows that Paul did not think of the resurrection of Jesus as some sort of ineffable truth beyond history; rather it was an event that had occurred in the immediate past, an event for which historical eyewitness testimony was readily available’ (Hays 1997:257).

[330] The quote is from Stuhlmacher (1993:49) but Wright notes that Stuhlmacher retreats from the implications of such a legendary view, considering that legends ‘are not descriptive of an objective fact’ and they are failing to justify them as historically viable but are used as a contemporary apologetic (Stuhlmacher 1993:50). Wright’s response was that there can be an issue with false ‘objectification’ but there also is a danger with its opposite ‘of collapsing everything into subjectivity’. Wright’s understanding is that these contrasting alternatives caused 1 Corinthians 15 to address the danger of subjectivity (Wright 2003:324, n. 34).

[331] Some of the assessment in this paragraph was suggested by Geisler (1989:113-114).

This is compounded by Crossan's postmodern reconstruction that permits him to impose *a priori* indeterminate meaning on any text through a reader-response, textual free play where the metaphorical is the primary meaning. His apparitional theory of Jesus' resurrection permits him to discard the evidence that has been presented above. So, the literal empty tomb of the resurrected Jesus is of no importance because he can impose any meaning he wants through a metaphorical hermeneutic. The text becomes putty in the mind and writing of Crossan, the postmodern reconstructive scholar.

(g) 1 Corinthians 15:13-14

In verse 12, Paul was dealing with those who believed there was no resurrection. Now he answers them further with two critical verses that presume the error of the Corinthians that there was no resurrection of the dead. Here he links Jesus' resurrection and meaning. The meaning is not some indeterminate, postmodern reconstructive view. It is very definite: 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain'.

The nature of Jesus' resurrection is related to three determinate meanings: (1) If there is no resurrection of the dead in the future, then Jesus has not been raised. The meaning of being raised from the dead is directly associated with the nature of Jesus' resurrection. The logical extension of their view is that 'no resurrection' means Christ has not been raised. If the Corinthians are correct in their denial of the resurrection, 'then he and all the apostles are wrong. Neither has Christ been raised' (Fee 1987:742). (2) Preaching is without a basis, 'null and void' (REB), and (3) So is your faith vain. There are determinate meanings associated with the resurrection. A postmodern, reconstructive, free play of creative indeterminate meaning does not provide substance for the meaning of Jesus' resurrection. Whether or not there was an empty tomb and whether the resurrection accounts of the gospel records, the Book of Acts, and 1 Corinthians 15 provide reliable accounts of the nature of the resurrection are linked to its meaning. The empty tomb does not matter to Crossan, only the meaning – his free play, subjective meaning. But it does matter to the apostle Paul. In this chapter, he associates the resurrection with the meaning of salvation, faith and preaching.

Paul's view is contrary to Crossan's anti-supernaturalism and metaphorical meaning. Crossan's view makes for a provocative mass media story around Easter time, as demonstrated by his interview with Rachel Kohn in 2000 on Australia's Radio National, 'Easter special: John Dominic Crossan and the resurrection'. These statements have great grab value for the mass media's attention: 'It would be a particularly wrong departure to think of Jesus' resurrection as unique. In fact I don't even want to use the term "resurrection" for that. If you had somebody in the first century who wanted to talk of a unique privilege given to Jesus because he was a very holy person, because he was a Messiah, because he was the son of God, but uniquely special to him, the term you would use is exaltation…. The bodily resurrection of Jesus has nothing for me to do with what happened to the body of Jesus' (Crossan in Kohn 2000). However, that is presenting a view of the resurrection that denudes it of its association with the content of salvation, faith and preaching in 1 Corinthians 15.

(h) 1 Corinthians 15:20-21

What is the connection among death, resurrection and human beings? ‘But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.[332] For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being’ (NRSV). The basic truth is that by a human being, Eve and then Adam, death came into the human race (Gn 3:6) and by the resurrection of the man (God-man) Jesus, came resurrection from the dead. There is a direct link between the resurrection of a human being (by inference, in a body) and the eschatological resurrection of the dead.

(i) 1 Corinthians 15:22-23

‘For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ’. For people not used to working the land, this language may have little meaning, but for an agrarian culture that benefits from the firstfruits of the stone fruit, grapes, cherries and mango season, and a Palestinian understanding that ‘first fruits meant *the actual beginning of the harvest*’, verse 23 means that ‘*the resurrection body of Jesus was of the same order as the resurrection bodies of the saints at the end of the age*’ (Ladd 1975:123; emphasis in original). Again, Paul provided a determinate example of the nature of Paul’s resurrection body and its extension to the general resurrection body of believers eschatologically. Meaning of Jesus’ resurrection has a direct and determinate connection to the resurrection of believers.

(j) 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Crossan and Reed offer an argument they claim ‘goes to the heart of the debate’ with the wise Corinthians: ‘“But someone will ask,” says Paul, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” (15:35)’. They call on Plato’s tradition of the soul in the body, with the soul as superior to the body and the body is a shadow that keeps the soul company. Therefore, Crossan and Reed claim, the physical body is raised a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44) which they consider is a bad translation and should be, ‘It is sown a soul-body, it is raised a Spirit-body’ and for Paul, a ‘“spiritual body” is not just a square circle, but the normal human body transformed by the Spirit of God. Read it, in other words, as a “Spiritual body,” a body transfigured by divine empowerment’. They want this to leave at least two options for the Christian faith: the resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul? Then they conclude ‘quite simply, *the general bodily resurrection was, first of all, about the justice of God amid the goodness of creation here below upon a transformed earth, and, second, within that, it was about the martyrs who had died for justice and from injustice with their bodies tortured, brutalized, and murdered*. Resurrection was not just about us and survival, but about God and this earth. It was not about the heavenly evacuation, but the earthly transfiguration of this bodily world’ (Crossan & Reed 2004:343-345; emphasis in original). This is another version of Crossan’s metaphorical understanding of the resurrection.

However, is it consistent with an exegetical understanding of verses such as 1 Corinthians 15:35, 44? With what kind of body are the dead raised (1 Cor 15:35)? Verses 42-44 state: ‘So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a *soma psychikon*;[333] it is raised a *soma* p*neumatikon*. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body' (KJV). Verse 44 supplies part of the answer, 'It is sown a *soma psychikon*; it is raised a *soma pneumatikon*'. However, what is the meaning of *psychikon*? In the concluding verses of this chapter, Paul emphasises the contrast between *psychikon* and *pneumatikon*, between the body that dies and the one that is resurrected: perishable / imperishable (corruption / incorruption), dishonour / glory, weakness / power, natural / spiritual, and mortality / immortality. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, the *psychikoi* (natural man or woman) and the *pneumatikoi* (those with the Spirit) are used to contrast those who are merely human with those who have the Spirit (Fee 1987:116). From the nouns in chapter 2, Paul moves to 1 Corinthians 15:44 where 'the two adjectives "natural" (*psychikos*) and "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) are used with the noun "body" (*sōma*) to describe its present earthly and future heavenly expression respectively'. Fee's contention is that the use of this language 'must have had special shock value in Corinth, where the word *pneumatikos* is most likely what set them apart from Paul and was a catchword for their antisomatic understanding of Christian existence. They would probably have had little trouble with the description of the present body as *psychikos*. But the use of *pneumatikos* to describe *sōma* must have been troublesome indeed'. Fee explains that 'natural' versus 'spiritual' is describing the contrast between the life of the body in the present age and Spirit-animated life of the body in the age to come. It is 'spiritual', not because it is 'immaterial' but because it is 'supernatural', as explained in 1 Corinthians 15:45. Then Paul uses analogies from everyday life to describe the two different bodies. There is a genuine continuity between the body in this age and the resurrection body in the age to come (Fee 1987:785-786). The contrast is between a body on earth that is corruptible and will decay, die and disintegrate and resurrected body which cannot and will not decay or die; something permanent, established, not transient or temporary and a resurrected body that is 'a life indwelt by the Spirit of God' (Wright 2003:347, 350)

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[332] The footnote said, Greek, ‘fallen asleep’.

The emphasis in 1 Corinthians 15 is on a future resurrected body that is different from that which is experienced in earthly existence, but there is continuity – it is a *sōma* (body).

Earle Ellis noted that I Corinthians 15 lacks a stress on the empty tomb. However, he contends that Paul did not have to say 'empty tomb' because it is implicit in his term resurrection, *anastasis*. 'The *rising* on the *third* day [1 Cor 15:4 – SDG] can hardly refer (only) to "appearances". Most probably it presupposes and implies the "empty tomb" traditions. Also, the seed analogy [1 Cor 15:36-38 – SDG] presupposes a continuity between what is buried and the raised body. "Spiritual body" refers to the vitalizing principle and has nothing to do with immateriality' (see 1 Cor 15:4, 37, 44) (Ellis 1974:273-274; emphasis in original).

As stated above, 'God gives a body as he wills (1 Cor. 15:38), and so he alone guarantees the identity of the person' (Coenen & Brown 1978a:276-278). The seed analogy (1 Cor 15:36-38), although imperfect, 'presupposes a continuity between what is buried and the raised body. "Spiritual body" refers to the vitalizing principle and has nothing to do with immateriality' (see 1 Cor 15:4, 37, 44) (Ellis 1974:273-274). Wright considers that this passage 'addresses the what, i.e. the type of body envisaged: going beyond any previous Jewish expositions of the topic, Paul argues that resurrection is not a resuscitation into the same kind of body, but is rather a going on, out the other side of death and whatever lies immediately beyond, into a new, transformed embodiment' (Wright 2003:315-316; emphasis in original). Ellis's comments are pertinent: 'It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, "grave-emptying" resurrection. To them an *anastasis* (resurrection) without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle' (Ellis 1974:273; emphasis in original).

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[333] These two Greek transliterations are used by Wright (2003:347) to highlight the problem in translating the transliterated words.

What was the understanding for the Corinthians about resurrection that they would have gained from the pagan and Jewish worlds of the first century? As has become evident from the above survey of resurrection in Judaism (that in paganism[334] is outside this project), there was life after death, rewards or punishments in the eschatological age to come, and that 'following bodily death and burial, the Messiah had already been raised from the dead. If Paul and the others had intended to refer to anything other than this, the talk of "seeings" would be irrelevant; the idea that they occurred for a while and then no more would be incomprehensible; and the idea that with this event the new age had broken in to the present age would be unimaginable' (Wright 2003:329).

This examination of 1 Corinthians 15 has revealed the connection between Jesus' death, burial and resurrection; the resurrection appearances were of a physical nature except for that to Paul. Evidence throughout the chapter infers an empty tomb for Jesus' resurrection to be possible. The resurrection of believers at the end of the age is directly linked to the resurrection of Jesus. The meanings of the resurrection are determinate (as opposed to Crossan's indeterminate meanings) and are directly linked to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' resurrection has the meaning of bringing salvation, giving faith and Christian proclamation a sound foundation (not vain), and guaranteeing the resurrection of believers at the end of the age. The difference between the apostle Paul's view of Jesus' resurrection and Crossan's is that Jesus' resurrection has salvifically determinate meaning and not related directly to Crossan's metaphorical call for justice. The call for justice is related elsewhere in Scripture.

4.4.7.9 Various meanings of resurrection

Crossan has proposed these alternative meanings of Jesus' resurrection: (a) Literal versus metaphorical, where it is 'talking of Jesus' bodily resurrection and/or the general bodily resurrection'. Taken metaphorically, the resurrection, for example, may announce 'God's justification of the world'. He accepts 1 Corinthians 15:14 as true, 'If Christ has not been raised, then your proclamation has been in vain' but the reversal of that statement also is true, 'If your faith has been in vain (that is, if it is not visibly and publicly making the world more divinely just), then Christian proclamation has been in vain (that is, if it is not about making the world more divinely just), Christ has not been raised (that is, as the *start* of the general resurrection and apocalyptic consummation). Exalted, maybe (as in Psalm 2), but certainly not raised' (Crossan 2003:51, 55-56; emphasis in original), and (b) Individual/personal versus communal/structural. His view of individual or personal resurrection is 'something that happened to Jesus and Jesus alone' or as communal or structural, 'something that happened to Jesus as the leader of them that sleep (what eventually was called the "Descent into Hades" or the "Harrowing of Hell"' (Crossan 2003:51).

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[334] Wright's excellent overview of 'shadows, souls and where they go: Life beyond death in ancient paganism' (Wright 2003:32-84) led him to stress 'that from Homer onwards the language of "resurrection" was not used to denote "life after death" in general, or any of the phenomena supposed to occur within such a life. The great majority of the ancients believed in life after death; many of them developed … complex and fascinating beliefs about it and practices in relation to it; but other than within Judaism and Christianity, they did not believe in resurrection'. Wright explains that 'when the early Christians spoke of Jesus being raised from the dead, the natural meaning of that statement, throughout the ancient world, was the claim that something had happened to Jesus which had happened to nobody else'. His footnote at this point was that 'the belief in the uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection is not, then, a modern fundamentalist invention, as suggested by Crossan' (Crossan 1998a:xviii) (Wright 2003:83, n. 267). Wright continues: The pagan world assumed the impossibility of resurrection; 'the Jewish world believed it would happen eventually, but knew perfectly well that it had not done so yet. Jew and non-Jew alike heard the early Christians to be saying that it had happened to Jesus. They did not suppose the Christians were merely asserting that Jesus' soul had attained some kind of heavenly bliss or special status. They did not think Jesus' disciples were merely describing with gross hyperbole, their regular feasts at the tomb' (Wright 2003:83).

One of the major issues with Crossan's discussion on resurrection is his redefinition of terms to agree with his presuppositions. In his interview with Kohn he repeated what he has written in his publications (see Crossan 1998a:xxxi; 1999:46). He does not want to use the term 'resurrection' about Jesus but preferred the use of 'exaltation'. In addition, 'the bodily resurrection of Jesus has nothing for me to do with what happened to the body of Jesus…. What bodily resurrection has to do with me is that it is the life of Jesus in the body'. Which 'body' is this? It is not the physical body of Jesus. Crossan explained, 'This life lived for justice, which is perennially, continuously, normative for Christians of all time. It is the body of Jesus which lived and died for justice, which is normative for us'. Practically speaking, this 'bodily resurrection' is redefined to mean that Crossan sees it 'most clearly … when in Christian gospel, Christian art, Christian mysticism, Jesus reappears, the wounds are always still there, they seem to never heal as it were, even after 2,000 years, because it's always the crucified Jesus who is bodily normative' (Crossan in Kohn 2000).

So, for Crossan, Jesus' resurrection is really exaltation and 'bodily resurrection' does not deal with Jesus' physical body but is seen by application in the body of Christians. They are engaged in Christian expressions through justice, the gospel, art, mysticism, and pictures of the wounds of Jesus are seen as bodily normative for two millennia. This demonstrates a refusal to examine the biblical text in light of contextual and semantic understanding. Instead, he imposed his *a priori* metaphorical meaning of 'bodily resurrection' on the text.

4.4.7.9.1 Literal versus metaphorical resurrection

In his interview with Crossan, Adam Miller asked him how literal Christ's resurrection was for Paul. His response was that 'I do not know (and neither does anyone else – and if they tell you they do, they're wrong) what percentage of people in the first century took that literally in our sense or metaphorically in our sense. But we have a pretty good idea what percentage took it programmatically'. His contention was that 'if Paul went around the Mediterranean saying that Jesus bodily came out of the tomb, the proper first century reaction is not, if you are a polite pagan, we don't believe that stuff. Rather you say: okay, so what? I've heard that type of story before. What does it matter to me? Why should I care?' Paul's answer to that question would be: 'Yes, Jesus has been raised from the dead and God is concerned with bodies. God is concerned with justice. God is concerned with cleaning-up the mess of the world. Here is what we are doing, do you want to join us? *That* is a pre-enlightenment response'. But 'what we prefer to do in a post-enlightenment world is to spend our time arguing about the distinction between literal and metaphorical, which of course they knew in the first century as well as we do, but they were quite capable of hearing the meaning of a story without asking that question' (Crossan in Miller 2004).

How does Crossan know this perspective for the first century that 'they' were disinterested in asking the literal versus metaphorical question since he is twenty centuries removed from that time? However, it does have a tone of Crossan's own perspective that literal facts (for example, the empty tomb) are not important, but the meaning is critical. It would be more appropriate to obtain his information from the plain meaning of the biblical text. Instead, he imposes his *a priori* 'parabolic stories *by* Jesus seemed remarkably similar to the resurrection stories *about* Jesus' view on Paul and Jesus' resurrection (Crossan 2012:3). His language in 1998 was in support of metaphorical resurrection: 'Bodily resurrection has nothing to do with a resuscitated body coming out of the tomb…. Bodily resurrection means that the *embodied* life and death of the historical Jesus continues to be experienced, by believers' (Crossan 1998a:xxxi). Therefore, Crossan's presupposition is that Jesus' resurrection is metaphorical. It is a question begging logical fallacy to state that in a post-enlightenment world time is spent arguing about literal versus metaphorical views of Jesus' resurrection, which they knew in the first century but did not find meaningful. The facts are that Crossan is not ready to discuss the literal resurrection in a post-enlightenment world because of his presupposition in favour of the metaphorical resurrection. If the bodily resurrection of Jesus was meant to be taken metaphorically, with application to justice, art, mysticism, the wounds of Jesus in imagery, that would have been indicated in the text. It was not told as such in the latter chapters of each of the gospels and in 1 Corinthians15. Therefore, the conclusion is reached that Crossan is imposing his *a priori* presuppositions of metaphorical understanding on the text to arrive at his conclusion.

Crossan 'does not claim that all Jews' in the time of 2 Maccabees (ca 180-161 BC)[335] 'or ever, accepted after-life faith let alone *bodily* resurrection as its only investment. Some could consider ideas of after-life a piece of divine impertinence'. He claimed that in the final texts from 2 Maccabees, even more so than Daniel 12, 'we see, clearly and unambiguously, that bodily resurrection is not about survival of us but about the justice of God. Immortality of soul will not do, for that comes to all alike' is his outlook (Crossan 2003:42; emphasis in original). Seeing 'clearly and unambiguously that bodily resurrection' in 2 Maccabees and Daniel 12 is about the justice of God is not what this project has discovered regarding resurrection from those two books (see §4.4.7.7.1 and §4.4.7.7.3 for refutations of Crossan's proposals).

Another reason to challenge Crossan's metaphorical understanding of the 'bodily resurrection' of Jesus is that when Crossan reads the biblical text, he does not pursue a plain reading of the text and contextual hermeneutics to arrive at his conclusion. If this researcher did to Crossan's texts what Crossan does to the biblical texts by imposing postmodern, reconstructive, metaphorical interpretations, Crossan would have every reason to protest vigorously. This is one of the reasons why this researcher objects to what Crossan does to the biblical text. He violates fundamentals of contextual, historical, semantic hermeneutics. Metaphor is used in Scripture, but it is obvious when it appears: I am the door; you are the light of the world; I am the good shepherd; and the body of Christ, are but a few examples.

A substantive example to help determine the literal or metaphorical understanding of the resurrection relates to the original disciples.

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[335] Dates are from The Apocrypha of the Old Testament (1973:263).

(a) Resurrection belief of the disciples

In a summit on the resurrection held in Dunwoodie, New York in 1996 by an interdisciplinary group of scholars Paul Eddy responded to Bill Craig's paper on Crossan's view of Jesus' resurrection (Craig 1997) with the recommendation 'to revise the claim of self-contradiction' (Craig 1997:271), language which Craig used to describe Crossan's view of the resurrection. Eddy's suggestion was to use the language of 'massive implausibility' to describe Crossan's view. This was a different description to Craig's conclusion (Eddy 1997:275). However, Craig did use the language of Crossan's 'merely enormously implausible' hypothesis regarding the origin of the disciples' belief in Jesus' resurrection (Craig 1997:271). Eddy's recommended revision from 'self-contradiction' to 'massive implausibility' is based on Eddy's reading of Crossan, where he does not see Crossan claiming that Paul or Pauline Christianity 'originated' the concept of Jesus' resurrection. Instead, Eddy's understanding is that Crossan 'merely claims that Pauline Christianity "emphasized" and *literalized* it'[336] (Eddy 1997:275).

However both Eddy and Craig are in agreement that the issue that is 'the heart of the dilemma' for Crossan is, 'Can Crossan's thesis [of a metaphorical resurrection – SDG] adequately explain the quite strong evidence suggesting that Jesus' earliest disciples held to a belief in a *literal* resurrection?' (Eddy 1997:275; emphasis in original)

Craig asked, 'When the earliest Christians said that Jesus was raised from the dead, did they mean it literally or not?' He had 'no doubt that the earliest Christians asserted a literal resurrection of Jesus', based on this evidence:

(1) Paul's declarations in 1 Corinthians 15:12-23, 29-32 of the essentials of Jesus' being raised from the dead that cannot be interpreted as a metaphorical continuing presence, but these verses 'show how literally and seriously this event was taken'.

(2) The nature of the resurrection body is determined by answering the questions, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' (1 Cor 15:35)

(3) The sermons in the book of Acts present Jesus' resurrection as a literal event (see Ac 17:31-32). 'An empty tomb tradition would be superfluous and pointless were not a literal event [be – SDG] in view, since mere continuing spiritual presence does not require an empty tomb'.

(4) The earliest Christians were capable of expressing Jesus' continuing presence 'without recourse to the misleading language of resurrection from the dead' (see 1 Cor 5:3; Col 2:5). Continuing presence could be expressed through the notion of the Holy Spirit of Christ (Rm 8:9-11), but they also believed in Jesus' resurrection from the dead as the herald of their own resurrection (Rm 8:11, 23) (Craig 1997:267).

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[336] Here Eddy (1997:275, n. 5) referred to Crossan (1994a:163, 165). Crossan wrote of two different groups of Jesus' earliest followers, those before his death and those after it. Of the latter group, 'they were concerned with departure and return, passion and parousia, not death and resurrection. They could imagine Jesus being with God and returning in triumph but never have to mention resurrection at all. Where, then, did all the emphasis on resurrection come from? In a word, from Paul' (Crossan 1994a:163). Crossan continues by questioning – referring to the theological vision of resurrection articulating the presence of Jesus for Paul, 'inextricably linked to the *imminent* general resurrection at the end of the world. But if the end is not imminent, is resurrection still the best way to put it? Is *first fruits* a credible metaphor if the harvest is long delayed?... Is resurrection so understood the only way or just one of the ways to express faith in the continuing power and presence of Jesus in the world?... My point is not that Paul was wrong but that his emphasis on *resurrection* was but one way of expressing early Christian faith and should not be taken as normative for all others' (Crossan 1994a:165; emphasis in original). Eddy rejects Craig's labelling Crossan's view as 'self-contradiction' and favours 'massive implausibility'.

Eddy supported Craig's emphasis on Crossan's 'real problem': Crossan 'is still left with the heart of the dilemma posed by Craig'; the earliest disciples believed in a literal resurrection (Eddy 1997:275). This will be pursued further in §4.4.8.2 when the post-resurrection appearances according to the gospels are examined.

In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, he preached: 'This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it' (Ac 2:23-24). The determinate language is obvious: Jesus delivered up; the definite plan of God; crucified and killed by lawless men; God raised him up; loosing the pangs of death; it was not possible for death to hold him. Thus, he was a literal person raised up (by resurrection) and this looses the pangs of death that proceeds from being crucified and killed.

Peter's preaching at Pentecost continued with a passion-resurrection emphasis, citing Psalm 16:8-11, and the patriarch and prophet David who 'foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses' (Ac 2:31-32). These disciples (from Ac 1-2) were μάρτυρές (witnesses) to the fact that God had raised Jesus through resurrection. Note the emphasis, 'We *all* are witnesses' (emphasis added).There is no statement or intimation that this is a metaphorical view or an apparitional experience after Jesus' resurrection.

Crossan wrote that 'allusions to the Suffering Servant lie behind Jesus as God's servant (*pais*) in Acts 3:13 and 16 and 4:27 and 30, where the context is his death and resurrection' (Crossan 1998a:440). However, Crossan omitted mentioning in this context the nature of Jesus' resurrection. Peter addressed the people in Solomon's portico of the Temple after the lame beggar was healed and referred to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob glorifying his servant Jesus who was delivered to Pilate; the Author of life was murdered, the one 'whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses' (Ac 3:13-15). Crossan disregarded including the fact that Peter and John were physical 'witnesses' (μάρτυρές), thus refuting Crossan's concept of metaphorical resurrection. The consequence was that 'with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all' (Ac 4:33). The power was not associated with Jesus' metaphorical or apparitional resurrection, but one that involved the disciples being witnesses.

When Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul preached of Jesus' execution, that he was laid in a tomb, and 'God raised him from the dead and for many days he appeared to those who had come from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people' (Ac 13:26-31). It is affirmed again that people were witnesses of Jesus after the resurrection and that this is the fulfilment of what is written in Psalm 2 (see Ac 13:33). These are not apparitions but appearances for which witnesses can verify what they say. This is the Jesus who was raised from the dead and did not return to corruption (Ac 3:27).

When Paul was in Athens and addressing the people at the Areopagus, he revealed God's plan of action for the present, leading to the future, as recorded in Acts 17:30b-32. Paul used determinate language:

- God 'commands all people everywhere to repent,
- He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world,
- This judgment will be by a man whom he has appointed,
- The assurance of this judgment is demonstrated by raising him from the dead.
- When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.

- Others said, ‘We will hear you again about this’.

The determinate emphasis on all people, repentance, a day to judge the world, the appointed man, the man whom he raised from the dead, leading to mocking by some, and desire to hear more by others, suggests a literal resurrection because of the plain, fixed meaning of the text. Determinate reading of the text is in opposition to Crossan’s indeterminate, metaphorical understanding of the resurrection.

These emphases involving the disciples from the Book of Acts on a physical resurrection for which they were witnesses, assumes that the tomb was empty to enable the resurrection appearances to be made possible for witnesses to see. As to the meaning of the resurrection, the references in Acts articulate them:

- With great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection;
- The call for repentance;
- The day of judgment for the world by Jesus;
- Jesus is the affirmed judge because of his resurrection;
- Some will mock this resurrection news; others will request to hear more.

There is no need to engage in Crossan’s kind of fictional, reconstructive creativity such as the Easter story being ‘so engraved on our imagination as factual history rather than fictional mythology’ (Crossan 1994a:161).

The evidence from the disciples/apostles and their references to the resurrection in the Book of Acts and 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 demonstrate that they were witnesses to a physical resurrection of Jesus (post-resurrection). This assumes the truth of the description of the empty tomb on resurrection morning, confirmed in the closing chapters of the gospels. As to the meaning of the resurrection, it is stated in determinate terms in the Book of Acts and 1 Corinthians 15. There is no need to engage in fictional free play with the text to impose a postmodern, reconstructive philosophy on the text, as Crossan does.

4.4.7.9.2 Personal and individual versus communal and structural

Some scholars pursue another resurrection meaning which Crossan describes as the individual-personal versus communal-structural interpretation (Crossan 2003:51-55). By ‘personal and individual’, Crossan refers to ‘something that happened to Jesus and Jesus alone’. The communal and structural model ‘happened to Jesus as the leader of them that sleep (what eventually was called the “Descent into Hades” or the “Harrowing of Hell”)’ (Crossan 2003:51).

Crossan’s claim is that ‘three days establishes that the body is really and irrevocably a corpse so that the disciples cannot resuscitate Jesus and remove him…. The authorities’ plan, in other words, is to prevent resuscitation by the disciples from being interpreted as resurrection by the people’ (Crossan 1998a:549).

The communal resurrection, for Crossan, ‘meant Jesus rising at the head of the holy ones; and, since such vindication-resurrection was biblically promised, it was “according to the scriptures”’. Crossan’s claim is that for Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, ‘it never occurs to him that Jesus’ resurrection might be an absolutely unique and personal privilege, like Elijah taken up to God long ago. Jesus’ resurrection takes place only *within* the general resurrection’ (Crossan 1998a:549; emphasis in original).

In Crossan’s rejection of the individual-personal over the communal-structural resurrection, a few issues emerge:

(1) In Jesus' personal resurrection, was there something unique that happened to Jesus alone?
(2) Is resurrection after three days a time frame that is necessary from Scripture to confirm that a body was dead?
(3) Did Jesus' resurrection take place only *within* the general resurrection as the head and first fruits of such a resurrection?

(a) Uniqueness and Jesus' resurrection

This issue was addressed in §4.4.7.8.1(a) where it was concluded that for Crossan to denigrate the unique role of the resurrected Son is to tamper with the fundamental doctrine of salvation and faith and deny an essential Christian doctrine. The uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection cannot be detached from eternal salvation itself. Wright's consideration was that 'without the resurrection, there is no reason to suppose that Jesus' crucifixion dealt with sins, or with sin. But, with the resurrection, the divine victory over sin(s), and hence over death, is assured' (Wright 2003:320). Crossan's reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection to exclude its uniqueness is tantamount to a denial of Christian existence for the sake of a postmodern reconstruction of the meaning of the resurrection.

(b) Resurrection after three days

See §4.4.7.7.1 where it was shown that Jesus himself provided one of the clearest pointers to his resurrection 'in accordance with the Scriptures': 'For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (Mt 12:40). Thus, Jesus' burial for three days and nights before his resurrection is given as a type in Jonah 1:17.

While Crossan aligns the 'three days' with establishing 'that the body is really and irrevocably a corpse' (Crossan 1998a:549), Jesus' prophetically explained the three days (Mt 12:40). Wright affirms the perfect tense of 'he has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor 15:4b) and not the aorist 'was raised' (as translated in the ESV). 'The Greek perfect tense indicates the ongoing result of a one-off event, in this case the permanent result that Jesus is now the risen Messiah and lord (see verses 20-28)'. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Wright's view is that 'according to the Scriptures' is not proof-texting a few isolated passages about Jesus' death but 'he is referring to the entire biblical narrative as the story which has reached its climax in the Messiah, and has now given rise to the new phase of the same story' (Wright 2003:320-321).

What was the Jewish view of burying a condemned criminal who had been crucified? The Pentateuch is clear, 'When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you for possession' (NRSV). There was no need to wait three days to determine the corpse was dead. In Judaism, the crucified criminal's 'body must not remain upon the wood over night, but they were to bury him on the same day upon which he was hanged; "*for the hanged man is a curse of God*" (Keil & Delitzsch n d:3.408; emphasis in original). Funeral rites in the Roman Empire, although determined by a person's status, included preparation of lying-in-state by washing and anointing (400 BC to first century AD), followed by burial as the norm for most people. Toynbee's statement about the Roman Empire was that if a corpse remained unburied, it ‘had unpleasant repercussions on the fate of the departed’ (Green 1992b:89).

A biblical scenario that is divergent to that of Crossan is that Jesus prophesied that if the temple of his body was destroyed, ‘in three days I will raise it up’ (Jn 2:19). This is affirmed in Matthew 26:61; 27:40 and Mark 14:58. How this originated and made it into the creed of 1 Corinthians 15:4 is difficult to discern. Fee surmised that the resurrection on the third day had such an impact on those who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion that they carried this into the creed that was circulated in a similar manner to the Lord’s Supper tradition that ‘on the night that he was betrayed took bread’ (1 Cor 11:23) (Fee 1987:726).

However, for Crossan to regard the need for resurrection ‘after three days’ to confirm Jesus was really dead, seems to be theorising about the resurrection day, but without substantive evidence. The fact of Jesus’ being dead at the crucifixion and at time of burial was pursued in §4.4.7.2.

(c) General resurrection and first fruits

This was covered briefly in §4.4.7.8.1(h) when examining 1 Corinthians 15:20-21. In that investigation, it was found that there is a connection between Jesus’ unique resurrection and the future eschatological resurrection of the dead. He wrote to the Corinthians: ‘If in Christ we have hope[337] in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ’ (1 Cor 15:19-23).

Did Jesus’ resurrection take place only *within* the general resurrection as the head and first fruits of such a resurrection? The connection, according to 1 Corinthians 15, is that the resurrection of the dead, presumably referring to the eschatological future (see also 1 Th 4:13-18), is directly linked to Christ’s resurrection: ‘For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins’ (1 Cor 15:16-17). Paul is trying to penetrate the thinking of Corinthians who were denying the resurrection, ‘If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead’ (1 Cor 15:12)? His argument is that Christ has been raised from the dead and *therefore* the dead *will be raised*. It is predicated on and directly linked to Jesus’ resurrection. Crossan’s appraisal is: ‘I cannot find any text in Paul that indicates knowledge of or concern with a *corporate* resurrection where Jesus’ own rising causes and/or leads the rising of earlier saints’ (Crossan 2003:51-52). His context is mentioning the first fruits of those who have died (1 Cor 15:20) and that he claims Paul does not tell of rising alone or at the head of Jewish martyrs or the Jewish just (Crossan 2003:51). Then Crossan cites what he described as ‘this very clear statement in 1 Thess 4:14-17)’ in which it is stated that at Christ’s Parousia, ‘the dead in Christ will rise first’ (1 Th 4:16). Crossan’s complaint was that in the 1 Thessalonians 4 passage, ‘Jesus rose alone but soon all Christians, whether living or lately dead (martyred?), will join him in resurrection. Corporate resurrection, yes, but for future Christians not past Jews’ (Crossan 2003:52).

Several aspects of Crossan’s hermeneutics on this topic need to be exposed:

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[337] The footnote stated, ‘Or *we have hoped*’ (emphasis in original).

(1) Since 1 Thessalonians is from the pen of Paul, he does teach of a corporate resurrection of Christian believers, 'The dead in Christ will rise'. To expect that Jews of the past will rise, is a dimension of Crossan's theology that needs to be examined in light of 'the dead in Christ'. That is outside the topic of this project.

(2) 1 Corinthians 15 does include Crossan's idea of corporate resurrection because Crossan's hermeneutic militates against this. The corporate resurrection is included in the language of 'resurrection of the dead': 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised…. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead' (1 Cor 15:13, 20-21).

Who are included among those who will eventually be raised from the dead in the communal resurrection? The context of 1 Corinthians 15 is that Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians by which they were saved (15:1-2); Christ died for their sins (15:4) and if Christ is not raised, preaching and faith are in vain or futile (15:14, 17); they are still in their sins (15:17), but Christ has been raised from the dead (15:20), and those 'in Christ shall all be made alive' (15:22). Here's the emphasis of this chapter: Those in the communal resurrection are the ones who are 'in Christ'. This does not apply only to 'past Jews' and future Christians (Crossan 2003:52) as Crossan desires, but to those who are Christian believers and are 'in Christ'. Crossan will not discover a satisfactory connection between Jesus' resurrection and the communal resurrection he desires because those included in Crossan's corporate resurrection are not according to the actual biblical content of the text, but are according to Crossan's desired content.

Christ's resurrection is certainly compared with the first fruits of the harvest of those who have died (15:20). Wright's language is that 'Paul never loses sight of the main question he is addressing, and nor should we. He is arguing for the certainty of the future bodily resurrection of all the Messiah's people' and he 'sketches the framework' of the timing: 'First the Messiah, later all the Messiah's people' and he uses the language that 'the Messiah has been raised from the dead at the *aparche*, the "first-fruits", the first sheaf of the harvest which guarantees that there will be more to come' (Wright 2003:333). The communal resurrection is for 'all the Messiah's people' and not for Crossan's designated future Christians and not past Jews (Crossan 2003:52).

How is this discussion related to the testing of the hypothesis that the empty tomb does not matter but its meaning is what is important? The fact of Jesus' resurrection and the communal resurrection of those in Christ, all of Messiah's people, are linked to the tomb being empty to enable there to be Jesus' resurrection as the first fruits of the resurrection for those who have died. The meaning of Jesus' resurrection is determinate. It is linked directly to their being a future eschatological resurrection of all of God's people. An actual empty tomb is needed for a determinate resurrection by Jesus to lead to a determinate resurrection of God's people in the future. Otherwise, there is the Crossan scenario of a metaphorical, parabolic, fictional resurrection by Jesus that would be the first fruits of a fiction future resurrection for Messiah's people. That would be a description of futility for preaching and faith.

4.4.7.9.3 Σωμα and σαρξ

Was the body of Jesus that lived, died, placed in a tomb, and was raised, that of σῶμα or σὰρξ? This deals with continuity or discontinuity between the death and resurrection 'body' of Jesus and the meaning of the resurrection. Was there a 'body' that came out of the tomb and thus left it empty?

Arndt and Gingrich give the meaning of σῶμα as a ‘*body* of man or animal … *dead body, corpse* … *the living body*’ (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:806; emphasis in original). Eduard Schweizer’s evaluation of the New Testament data for σῶμα is parallel to that of Arndt and Gingrich, noting that ‘σῶμα is never used for the inorganic body’ but Schweizer’s view that ‘the word has true content only in Paul’ is challenged below with the use of σῶμα in reference to Jesus’ post-resurrection body in the gospels. However, Schweizer admitted to σῶμα having the traditional sense of corpse, the body of Jesus (Mk 15:43 and parallels; Mt 27:59; Lk 23:55; 24:3, 23; Jn 19:31, 38, 40; 20:12), of an animal (Lk 17:37; Hb 13:11; Mk 14:18 and parallels), and the dead σῶμα can be raised again (Mt 27:52; Ac 9:40). Hebrews 10:5, 10 also record that ‘a body [σῶμα – SDG] has been prepared for me’ and there is ‘the offering of the body [σῶμα – SDG] of Christ’. Schweizer describes this as ‘the body of Jesus which dies and rises again’ (Schweizer 1971b:1057-1058).

Jesus’ prediction concerning the destruction of the ‘temple’ and its raising in three days dealt with the resurrection of his body, σῶμα (Jn 2:21). Those who passed by and derided Jesus when he was being crucified reminded him of his prophecy about himself (Mt 27:39-40; Mk 15:29-30). When Jesus died on the cross, yielded up his spirit, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, the tombs were opened, and ‘many bodies [σώματα – SDG] of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised’, it refers to his σῶμα (Mt 27:51-52). Joseph of Arimathea took the crucified and dead body (σῶμα) of Jesus and laid it in his own, new tomb (Mt 27:59-60; Mk 15:43; Lk 23:52; Jn 19:38). It was the day of Preparation when Jesus and the two criminals were crucified and their bodies (σώματα) could not remain on the cross. On resurrection morning, Mary looked into the tomb ‘and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body [σῶμα – SDG] had been’ (Jn 20:12).

So the σῶμα, when referring to any body, including the body of Jesus up to the point of crucifixion and burial, meant a living or dead physical body/corpse. What was the nature of the ‘bodily’ resurrection and the ‘body’ in the post-resurrection appearances? How was the σῶμα different from σὰρξ?

Arndt and Gingrich’s definition of σὰρξ is ‘*flesh*, literally of the material that covers the bones of a human or animal body…. *the body* itself, viewed as substance…. *a man of flesh and blood*…. *human* or *mortal nature, earthly descent*… *corporeality, physical limitation(s), life here on earth*…. *The external or outward side of life*’ (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:750-751; emphasis in original).

Schweizer also examined the etymology and usage of σὰρξ in the New Testament. There are uses of the word in association with husband and wife becoming ‘one flesh’ in marriage (Mk 10:8 and parallels) and citations from the Old Testament of ‘all flesh’, that is, all people in Luke 3:6 and human beings (Mk 13:20). Apart from these references, Matthew 16:17 indicates ‘flesh and blood has not revealed it to you’, denoting ‘man in his limitations *vis-à-vis* God’, not regarding his mortality but in his ‘inability to know God’ (Schweizer 1971a:124).

On resurrection morning, the women went into Jesus’ tomb and ‘did not find the body [σῶμα – SDG] of the Lord Jesus’ (Lk 24:3). In the post-resurrection appearance to his disciples, when Jesus stood among them and said, ‘Peace to you’, they were ‘startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit’ (Lk 24:37). Jesus was clear in his clarification that he was not ‘a spirit’ when he said, ‘See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh [σὰρξ – SDG] and bones as you see that I have’ (Lk 24:39). This is one of the clearest post-resurrection verses to demonstrate that Jesus’ body was that of ‘flesh and bones’ and was not ‘a spirit’. What was the nature of Jesus’ flesh and bones and not being spirit? Schweizer’s view was that ‘flesh and bones’ regarding Jesus’ resurrected body 'denotes the substance of earthly man' and Luke 24:39 provides 'the contrast between the corporeal and the non-corporeal worlds…. Transition to incorporeality is not salvation' (Schweizer 1971a:124).

In the book of Acts, apart from two quotations (Ac 2:17, 26), the only reference to σὰρξ is to deduce 'the incorruptibility of the σὰρξ of Jesus' (Ac 2:31). In Acts 2:26-27, the use of ψυχη and σὰρξ, as with the Old Testament, is used 'as terms for the whole man' (Schweizer 1971a:125).

How are σῶμα or σὰρξ associated with Jesus' resurrection? In Peter's preaching at Pentecost, he stated that the patriarch and prophet, David, foresaw and spoke of the Christ's resurrection, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh [σὰρξ – SDG] see corruption' (Ac 2:31). The relationship of σῶμα and σὰρξ with the resurrection body is seen in 1 Corinthians 15:35-40:[338]

> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body [σῶμα – SDG] do they [the dead – SDG] come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body [σῶμα – SDG] that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body [σῶμα – SDG] as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body [σῶμα – SDG]. For not all flesh [σὰρξ – SDG] is the same [σὰρξ – SDG], but there is one kind for humans, another [σὰρξ – SDG] for animals, another [σὰρξ – SDG] for birds, and another [σὰρξ inferred – SDG] for fish. There are heavenly bodies [σώματα – SDG] and earthly bodies [σώματα – SDG], but the glory of the heavenly [σώματα inferred – SDG] is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly [σώματα inferred – SDG] is of another.

Crossan and Reed's response to the questions of verse 35 was to 'hear again the voice of Platonic tradition in the background' with the soul in the body (*sōma*) as in a tomb (*sēma*) in Plato's *Cratylus* or as an oyster in a shell in his *Phaedrus*. Crossan and Reed cite Plato's *Laws*: 'Soul is utterly superior to the body, and that which gives each one of us his being is nothing else but his soul, whereas the body is no more than a shadow which keeps us company. So 'tis well said of the deceased that the corpse is but a ghost; the real man – the undying thing called the soul – departs to give account to the gods of another world, even as we are taught by ancestral tradition' (Plato in Crossan & Reed 2004:343).

However, Paul's understanding of the resurrection body in the communal resurrection is very different from that of Plato as the interchangeability of σῶμα and σὰρξ in 1 Corinthians 15:35-40 demonstrates. Schweizer noted that the combination of flesh and bones is not in Pauline writings but σὰρξ in Paul 'always denotes the whole of man's physical existence' (Schweizer 1971a:125).

In brief, σῶμα meant a living or dead physical body or corpse, while σὰρξ referred to the body itself, a person of flesh and blood. Therefore, σῶμα and σὰρξ are interchangeable words and both of them are used to refer to Jesus' body before and after his resurrection. Thus, these two words affirm that Jesus' body after resurrection had some of the same bodily characteristics as before his death. In the words of Gundry, '*Sōma* does not mean form and *sarx* substance; both terms refer to the physical body…. Paul uses *sōma* precisely because the physicality of the resurrection is central to his soteriology' (Gundry 1987:167, 169). In Paul's argument, he 'does argue that denial of the one logically ends in the denial of the other: "if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised"' (1 Cor

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[338] This example was given by Gundry (1987:166) in his seminal examination of the use of σῶμα in biblical theology, with an emphasis on Pauline anthropology.

15:13; Gundry 1987:169). The same, but different, emphasis regarding Jesus' post-resurrection body will be pursued in §4.4.8.4.

The biblical evidence presented affirms that the post-resurrection Jesus had a physical body of flesh and bones. From where did this body come? The tomb was empty on resurrection morning as the latter chapters of all four gospels affirm (see Mt 28:6; Mk 16:5-6; Lk 24:3; Jn 20:2-8).

4.4.7.10 Resurrection as a supernatural intervention

Why do both modernists and postmodernists baulk at the nature of Jesus' resurrection being bodily? Rudolph Bultmann, as a modernist, wrote that 'the resurrection body will no longer be a body of flesh (1 Cor. 15:50), not a "physical" (ψυχκικόν) body or one of "dust" (1 Cor. 15:44-9), but a "spiritual" (πνευματικόν) body, a "body of glory" (Phil. 3:21, *cf*. II Cor. 3:18)'. He then speaks about and rejects the view of interpreters who conceived of *sōma* as body-form stamped on fleshly or material kinds. However, Bultmann is challenged by this research as he regarded Paul as committing a 'methodological error' by using *sōma* as Paul's point of departure for 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 as he allegedly is adopting his opponents' arguments (Bultmann 2007:192).[339]

Mark 15:33 states, 'When the sixth hour [that is, noon – SDG] had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour [that is, 3 p.m. – SDG]'. Borg and Crossan's comment was, 'That it was a "supernatural" darkness is also exceedingly unlikely. Not only would this require an interventionist understanding of God's relation to nature, but an inexplicable darkness of this duration most likely would have been remarked upon by non-Christian authors, and we have no such reports'. Instead, their interpretation is that 'the darkness is the product of Mark's use of religious symbolism…. The darkness from noon to 3 PM is best understood as literary symbolism' (Borg & Crossan 2006:148).

In other words, there was no supernatural intervention by God and the writing of this information was not of factual information but was to be 'understood as literary symbolism' or from a metaphorical perspective.

Crossan's statement was that 'in my view the supernatural *always* (at least till this is disproved for me) operates through the screen of the natural. The supernatural is like the beating heart of the natural. It does not come seeping through cracks every now and then, so we can see it. It is always there – but we seldom see it'. What then are miracles? They are 'acts of faith which say, "Here the supernatural, which is permanently present, is made, as it were, visible to us." That is how I understand miracles. That is not naturalism. It is the belief that the supernatural never forces faith. Maybe that's the blunt way to put it' (Crossan in Copan 1998:45-46). Elsewhere, Crossan in his debate with Bill Craig stated in a discussion on miracles that a doctor might announce at Lourdes that God had intervened. However, Crossan's stated that 'it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way [by performing supernatural miracles – SDG]' (Copan 1998:61). Therefore, any supernatural, factual event of darkness at noon on crucifixion day at Golgotha (Mk 15:33) could not happen. Meaning here is not related to what actually happened according to the gospels, but is based on Crossan's presupposition. Therefore, he is imposing his subjective, presuppositional bias (an anti-supernatural interpretation) on the text by not allowing the text to speak for itself.

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[339] Gundry (1987:165) alerted the researcher to this Bultmannian emphasis.

Paul Barnett, an ancient historian,[340] provided a contrary view to Crossan's. Barnett's assessment of the historicity of events that involved the miraculous was:

> The view taken by this author is that the miraculous events in the New Testament are factual. The Gospels and Acts make little sense historically if the miraculous is removed. Those authors were convinced of the truth of the miracles and wrote their accounts out of that conviction. Those accounts, when subjected to the tests of rigorous historical inquiry, stubbornly resist our efforts to discredit and remove them.
>
> (Barnett 1999:23)

See §3.2.1.1.1 for an exposé of Crossan's redefinition of miracles.

What are the biblical indicators that Jesus' resurrection involved supernatural interventions?

- The Scriptures indicate that there was a great earthquake, an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and intervened in rolling back the stone covering the entrance to the tomb. The appearance of the angels was like lightning and with clothing as white as snow; this caused the guards of the tomb to tremble and become like dead men (Matt 28:2-4).
- There were appearance of two angels in white to Mary inside Jesus' empty tomb and they spoke to Mary (Jn 20:11-13) and Jesus, the formerly dead and buried one, stood before Mary and spoke to her (Jn 20:14-17).

The nature of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, including those involving supernatural interventions is examined in §4.4.8.4, where Jesus' body was the same, but different.

To this point, the evidence is pointing to a bodily resurrection of Jesus through supernatural intervention. However, Crossan's call, 'When all else fails, read the text' (White & Crossan 2005:43) is automatically excluded for his own reading of the biblical text because of his *a priori* anti-supernaturalist worldview (Crossan in Copan 1998:61).

4.4.7.11 'Easter means for me'

Crossan was asked about the events of Easter and his own Easter faith. His response began, '*Easter means for me* the divine empowerment which was present in Jesus'. It was once available for a limited time to people in Galilee and Judea who had contact with him. However, that 'is now available to anyone, anywhere in the world, who finds God in Jesus'. Crossan's own meaning 'has nothing to do, literally, with a body coming out of a tomb, or a tomb being found empty, or visions, or anything else. All those are dramatic ways of expressing the faith. The heart of resurrection *for me* is that the power of God is now available through Jesus, unconfined by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161; emphasis added). From where does he obtain such a meaning? He does not provide in context any biblical reasons for these views. They are in the language of individualism: 'Easter means for me' and 'the heart of resurrection for me'. It is metaphorical application for Crossan of the power of God to anyone who believes in Jesus and experiences it. It has nothing to do with a literal resurrection body of Jesus leaving the tomb. So, meaning is not based on the syntactical, exegetical statements of the biblical text but Crossan's idiosyncratic, metaphorical and parabolic application. It begs the question: How can there be any personal, idiosyncratic, 'for me' application if there was no Jesus who left the tomb empty?

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[340] At the time of writing this publication, Barnett was 'Anglican bishop of North Sydney, Australia, visiting fellow in ancient history at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, and research professor at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia' (Barnett 1999:rear cover).

For those who know the New Testament, some obvious questions arise that Crossan acknowledges: 'What about all the stories of the risen Jesus appearing to people? If Easter for you doesn't have anything to do with visions or a literal resurrection, what do you do with all those stories?' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161-163). While admitting the importance of these questions, Crossan's emphasis included, 'What I've concluded'. Is it his conclusion or presupposition? His explanation is:

> We usually regard those stories of post-Easter appearances by Jesus as visions of some sort. I think they're nothing of the kind. They have no marks that you would expect – no blinding lights, no heavenly voices, nobody knocked to the ground. Neither does Jesus bring back from "the other side" some new revelation, as you might expect. Rather, what really matters is *who Jesus appears to*. That is, these stories are dramatizations with a political purpose. And that purpose is to tell us who's in charge, now that Jesus is no longer personally present.
>
> (Crossan & Watts 1996:161-162; emphasis in original)

His language is that 'we usually regard'. Should that be, 'I usually have this presupposition about these matters'? He considers that the clearest example of this kind of story is in John 20 [Jn 20:1-10 – SDG] with the race of the two disciples, Peter and an unnamed follower (whom Crossan identifies as the Beloved Disciple[341]) to Jesus' empty tomb. The Beloved Disciple enters the tomb first and takes first place away from Peter. The next person to be subordinated, says Crossan, is Mary Magdalene (see Mt 28:8-10). Crossan's conclusion is that 'stories like that tell us absolutely nothing of historical value about the origins of Christian faith. But they tell us a great deal about the origins of Christian authority. They are competing pictures about who has priority and power in the early Christian community'. Therefore, Crossan's creative interpretation is that stories such as those in John 20 tell us about authority in the community where the Beloved Disciple's authority was challenged by Mary Magdalene, Peter and Thomas and so there are writings outside the New Testament such as a Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Mary, and Gospel of Thomas. So Crossan's inventive interpretation is that stories such as John 20 'really have nothing to do with appearances on Easter Sunday. They are dramatizations about where power and authority rest in the early Church' (Crossan & Watts 1996:162-163).

It is here noted:

- This is certainly creative and it comes with statements of originality by Crossan;
- What would his statements or interpretations of John 20 mean if they were given this researcher's creative hermeneutic?
- There would be no way that Crossan could oppose this researcher's interpretation – based on his own practice – but,
- The ultimate meaning is that anyone can make anything mean anything he/she wants with postmodern reconstruction.

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[341] The Greek of John 20:3 is ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής (SBLGNT 2010), meaning 'the other disciple' (as in the ESV translation).

- That leads to chaos in interpretation (whether in history, literature, legislatures, school text books, or reports in contemporary newspapers, telecasts or online).
- How is it that intellectually sophisticated individuals can conclude with such mundane interpretations?
- Why should this researcher not interpret Crossan's statements in this example (Crossan & Watts 1996:161-162) with this researcher's idiosyncratic creativity?

Ben Witherington has pointedly challenged the issues that can be applied to Crossan's 'Easter means for me' standpoint:

> Any position in which claims about Jesus or the resurrection are removed from the realm of historical reality and placed in a subjective realm of personal belief or some realm that is immune to human scrutiny does Jesus and the resurrection no service and no justice. It is a ploy of desperation to suggest that Christian faith would be little affected if Jesus was not actually raised from the dead in space and time. This is the approach of people who want to maintain their faith even at the expense of historical reality or the facts. A person who gives up on the historical foundations of the Christian faith has in fact given up on the possibility of any real continuity between his or her own faith and that of a Peter, Paul, James, John, Mary Magdalene, or Priscilla. Whatever may be said about such an approach today, its nonhistorical faith is not the faith that the early Christians lived and died for. They had an interest in historical reality, especially the historical reality of Jesus and his resurrection, because they believed their faith, for better or worse, was grounded in it. Nor was this faith of theirs something conjured up generations or even years later than the time of Jesus' life. Paul was in direct contact with various eyewitnesses of the life, death, and resurrection appearances of Jesus. It is striking that in Paul's letters, nowhere does he have to argue with other major Christian leaders about his views on the resurrection and the risen Lord. Indeed, he suggests in Romans 10, Philippians 2, and elsewhere that the common and earliest confession of all these first Christians was "Jesus is the risen Lord." Furthermore, he suggests in 1 Cor. 15:1-5 that the earliest Christians also held very particular beliefs about the end of Jesus' earthly life and the transition to his present heavenly state as risen and exalted Lord. Paul writes 1 Corinthians 15 within twenty-five years of Jesus' death, while various original eyewitnesses were still around to correct him. The silence of his Christian peers on this issue compared to their criticism of his views on the law (see Galatians) is deafening. It shows where the common ground truly lay.
>
> (Witherington 2001:167)

4.4.7.12 Summary evidence for the nature of the resurrection

Crossan seeks assistance for his apparitional view through researchers in spiritism. The boundaries of historiography are exploded by his imposition of the conclusions of non-Christian researchers in occultism (spiritism), trance, altered states of consciousness, and possession to define his apparitional interpretation.

Twelve hermeneutical principles were summarised by which any text should be assessed. Using these principles, it was affirmed that Jesus' was dead at the crucifixion and that the resurrection was not resuscitation. Thirteen issues were examined which question the validity of Crossan's apparitional conclusion with a focus on Crossan's rejection of the supernatural and his metaphorical, parabolic and mythological interpretations.

Indicators that Jesus' tomb was empty on resurrection morning were examined, including evidence from the gospels and 1 Corinthians 15.

Resurrection for the Greeks was that of dualism (the body dies but the soul is immortal). For Judaism in the Old Testament, specific evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is not provided but there is a general understanding of eschatological resurrection at the end of the age for people. The Jews did believe in an after-life, contrary to Crossan's statement. The Pharisees believed in life after death and eschatological rewards and punishments but the Sadducees did not believe in life beyond the grave. For first century Jews, the Intertestamental writings indicate believers will be raised to everlasting life with the hope of a physical body with life and breath. The Talmud gives evidence of life after death and a determinate eschatological resurrection while the Intertestamental apocalyptic books affirm people being raised from the dead and there will be judgement for the righteous and unrighteous.

For Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, post-resurrection appearances were physical, except for Paul and there is an inference of an empty tomb. There will be a resurrection at the end of the age and it is directly associated with the fact of Jesus' resurrection. The meaning of the resurrection is salvifically determinate, making faith and preaching not in vain or futile. Jesus' resurrection guarantees the communal resurrection at the end of the age. The meaning of the resurrection is directly linked to Jesus' resurrection and is determinate – there is salvation and a future communal resurrection. This is in contrast to Crossan's postmodern, reconstructed hermeneutic.

Various meanings of the resurrection were examined, concluding in favour of the literal rather than the metaphorical resurrection, including the disciples' belief in such. The unique resurrection of Jesus and the communal resurrection at the end of the age were affirmed. An examination of the etymology and use of σῶμα and σὰρξ concluded that they are interchangeable words and both of them are used to refer to Jesus' body before and after his resurrection.

There is evidence to confirm that Jesus' bodily resurrection involved a supernatural intervention by God. However, Crossan's emphasis on 'what Easter means for me' will not enable him to objectively 'read the text' (his language) and interpret according to the hermeneutical principles outlined for a plain reading of the text.

4.4.8 Specifics of some post-resurrection appearances

The post-resurrection appearances include:[342]

(1) Jesus' meeting of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they ran from the empty tomb to tell the event to the disciples (Mt 28:9-10);
(2) The eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus gave them the commission to go to all nations and make disciples (Mt 28:16-20).
(3) Jesus' appearing to the two people on the Emmaus-Jerusalem road (Lk 24:13-33);
(4) The Lord's appearance to Peter on resurrection day (Lk 24:24; 1 Cor 15:5);
(5) While the disciples were talking, Jesus stood among them and conversed with them about their doubts and showed his hands and feet, asking them to touch him and see that he was not a spirit but had flesh and bones as they saw him and confirmed his identity (Lk 24:36-40; 1 Cor 15:5).

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[342] Seventeen post-resurrection appearances were isolated by Walvoord (1963). Of the following nineteen examples, no attempt has been made to place them in an approximate chronological order.

(6) As a continuation of the previous incident, the disciples continued to disbelieve, Jesus asked for food to eat and was given a piece of broiled fish which he took and ate (Lk 24:41-43);

(7) Then Jesus taught them about his resurrection being a fulfilment of his words spoken before the crucifixion from the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms that had to be fulfilled. He taught that what happened to him was how the Christ had to suffer, rise from the dead on the third day and that this meant that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to the nations, starting at Jerusalem. The promise of the Father of power from on high would happen and included viewing the Lord's ascension (Lk 24:44-53).

(8) Mary stood weeping outside the empty tomb and was confronted by the two angels in the tomb, she turned around and saw Jesus and he spoke to her (Jn 20:11-18).

(9) On the evening of the first day of the week, the disciples were located somewhere with the doors locked (for fear of the Jews) and Jesus came and stood among them with the message, 'Peace be with you', and he breathed on them saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit', and gave them the message of forgiveness (Jn 20:19-23).

(10) 'Eight days later' when the disciples with Thomas were inside with the doors locked, Jesus stood among the disciples and instructed Thomas to put his finger 'here' and see his hands and place the finger in his side and so believe (Jn 20:26-29).

(11) Jesus revealed himself to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (the disciples names were stated) when Simon said he was going fishing and the others said they also would go with him. They caught nothing (Jn 21:1-3).

(12) When Jesus asked the disciples about their fish catch and they had caught nothing, he told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and the catch was a huge quantity of fish (Jn 21:4-14). This was regarded as 'the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead' (Jn 21:14) and included Jesus' instruction for Simon Peter to 'feed my lambs' and 'tend my sheep' (Jn 21:15-17).

(13) He appeared to more than 500 brothers and sisters (in Christ), many of whom were still alive, although some had died (1 Cor 15:6).

(14) There was the appearance to James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor 15:7) who was numbered with the disciples (Ac 1:13; Gl 1:19).

Several other appearances of Jesus were not of the same nature as the post-resurrection incidents recorded in the closing chapters of the gospels. These included:

(15) Before his martyrdom by stoning, Stephen saw Jesus, the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of God (Ac 7:55-56);

(16) Saul on the Damascus Road (Ac 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; 1 Cor 15:8-9);

(17) It is uncertain where and when Paul received the revelation of the gospel, although he wrote of going away into Arabia and returning to Damascus (Gl 1:12, 17).

(18) A revelation to Paul in the Jerusalem temple, warning him to escape from Jerusalem because of anticipated opposition to his testimony by the Jews (Ac 22:17-21);

(19) After addressing the Sanhedrin Council and the dissension between Pharisees and Sadducees, Paul was taken away into the barracks by the soldiers where the Lord stood by him and said he would testify of the Lord in Rome (Ac 23:10-11); and

(20) John, the revelator, saw ‘one like a son of man’ who instructed him to write ‘what you see in a book’, which led to the writing of the book of Revelation (Rv 1:9-20).

Only two of these appearances will be pursued as they seem to be among the most contentious for Crossan: Firstly, the Emmaus Road incident, and secondly, the nature of appearances of ‘seeing’ Jesus. The exposé of Crossan’s apparitional view of the post-resurrection incidents has been covered in §4.4.7.4.

4.4.8.1 Emmaus

A questioner at the Crossan-White debate asked about the Emmaus Road story, saying, ‘Their eyes were opened. Does that prove that he rose from the dead bodily?’ Crossan’s response was that it did not refer to bodily resurrection because that is not the Emmaus incident’s function. Instead, ‘*what I see that is intended to say is that you have to bring the stranger into your house or you will not have Jesus in your home*. It’s not saying anything about the resurrection in that story**’** as that has already been said before and after Emmaus in Luke chapter 24 (White & Crossan 2005:51; emphasis added).[343] Examples of Crossan’s idiosyncratic understanding of the Emmaus event have been given throughout the testing of this hypothesis in §4.4.

Concerning the Emmaus event, Crossan’s postmodern summary has become iconic, ‘Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens’ (Crossan 1991:xiii). His continued assessment was: ‘The Emmaus story isn’t a fact, but it is true. It’s a symbolic picture of Christian faith deepening over time. Easter was much, much more than the events of a single day’. He denied that Emmaus was ‘a straightforward historical account of what happened to two people on Easter Sunday…. But it is *certainly* historical in the sense of describing a *process over time* that happened in the Christian community’ (Crossan & Watts 1996:158; emphasis in original). Crossan’s presuppositions are manifest in this relativistic, free play explanation. In Crossan’s dialogue with N T Wright, he explained that ‘that was simply a terse summary of my view that the story was parable intended as permanent challenge. But the first half of that aphorism was about *mode*, and the latter half about *meaning*’ (Crossan in Stewart 2006:173; emphasis in original).

The Emmaus Road story on resurrection Sunday in Luke 24:13-35 is used to promote Crossan’s emphasis that ‘the road to Emmaus is not the road to Damascus. This is an apparition without blinding light or heavenly voice. This is a vision without slow demonstration or immediate recognition’ (Crossan 1998a:xi). Then he associated the Emmaus event ‘as a perfect metaphorical summary of the first years of the church – the searching of the Scriptures and the breaking of bread’ but here he emphasises that ‘Jesus is present – not in a vision, not in a trance, not in a hallucination – but in searching the Scriptures and sharing food with strangers’ (Crossan in Copan 1998:66). Here is contradiction within two different publications from the same year: Emmaus ‘is a vision’ (Crossan 1998a:xi) and ‘not in a vision’ (Crossan in Copan 1998:66).

Thus, for Crossan, postmodern reconstruction is seen in his statement, ‘Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens’ (Crossan 1991:xiii; 1994a:197). Marcus Borg rightly understood this statement as meaning that ‘Crossan does not think the story of the two disciples on the Emmaus road in Luke 24:13-35 is an actual event which happened on the first Easter Sunday’ but rather is a ‘metaphorical narrative’ (Borg 1998b:121). When Luke 24:31 states, ‘Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight', Crossan's view was that it meant that 'resurrected life and risen vision appear as offered shelter and shared meal. Resurrection is not enough. You still need scripture and eucharist, tradition and table, community and justice; divine presence remains unrecognized and human eyes remain unopened' (Crossan 1998a:xi).

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[343] The Emmaus Road incident is recorded in Luke 24:13-35.

Crossan has denied the Emmaus' road story as an actual historical event and has redefined it by postmodern, reconstructive interactivism ('Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens'). This leaves his readers floundering in the morass of relativism. He has made Emmaus mean what he wants it to mean. He has not practised his own epithet, 'Read the text' (White & Crossan 2005:43; Crossan 2007:138) or 'any study of the historical Jesus stands or falls on how one handles the literary level of the text itself' (Crossan 1991:xxix).

He has gone even further in a more recent publication where he moved from explaining the Emmaus story as metaphor to designating it as parable with his statement, after visiting Oberammergau, 'I had observed that the parabolic stories *by* Jesus seemed remarkably similar to the resurrection stories *about* Jesus'. His questions were: 'Had we been reading parable, presuming history, and misunderstanding both, at least since literalism deformed both pro-Christian and anti-Christian imagination in response to the Enlightenment?' He asked his readers to think 'of the Jerusalem to Jericho road with its Good Samaritan and the Jerusalem to Emmaus road with its Incognito Jesus after the resurrection'. He admitted that most people regard the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-35) 'as a fictional story with a theological message, but what about the latter [Emmaus road – SDG] (Luke 24:13-33)? Is the latter story fact or fiction, history or parable?' He admits that many regard the Emmaus story as something that 'actually happened' but he considers that 'the Emmaus road story was meant as parable and not history'. His understanding now was that 'parables *about* Jesus presumed historical characters – for example, John and Jesus, Annas and Caiaphas, Antipas and Pilate – but invented stories about what they said and did' (Crossan 2012:3-5; emphasis in original). So the Emmaus story is one of invention – parable.

These examples from Crossan demonstrate his support for conventionalism,[344] which, according to Michael Rescorla, considers that a phenomenon, 'despite appearances to the contrary … arises from or is determined by convention'. Conventionalism applies to 'virtually every area of philosophy' and other topics. It has many different forms, so it is difficult to articulate much of substance about its general understanding. 'However, a distinctive thesis shared by most conventionalist theories is that there exist alternative conventions that are in some sense equally good. Our choice of a convention from among alternatives is undetermined by the nature of things, by general rational considerations, or by universal features of human physiology, perception, or cognition'. Free choice is a distinguishing feature of conventionalism (Rescorla 2011).

In the White-Crossan debate, White noted that as he examined Luke's record of the Emmaus incident what Luke states regarding the appearance of Jesus**, '**"Did not our hearts burn within us when he opened the Scriptures to us". What was he doing? He was demonstrating the prophetic fulfilment of who he was and that prediction that pointed to him'. White's perspective was, 'I simply let the text itself, the authors themselves, recognize and tell us what they are trying to communicate' (White & Crossan 2005:51).

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[344] It was Geisler (2002:99-105) who suggested the nature of conventionalism, its association with Saussure, Frege and Wittgenstein to this researcher who saw its application to Crossan's philosophy. See Geisler's critique of conventionalism's theory of meaning (Geisler 2002:103-104).

This is in accord with Crossan's own stated standard that was examined in §4.2.1.2.4, Crossan's self-contradiction: First read the text. It concluded that Crossan violates his own standard, as he does with the Emmaus incident. If he allowed the text to speak for itself, he would discover from this story (in Lk 24:13-35) that (these are only a few samples and not a comprehensive list from the passage):[345] There is the determinate,

- 'Two of them' were going to the stated village of Emmaus, which was 'seven miles from Jerusalem' (24:13);
- They were 'talking with each other' when Jesus drew near and travelled with them (24:14-15);
- One of the two people was named Cleopas who answered Jesus (24:18);
- Concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was condemned to death and crucified (24:19-20);
- 'Redeem Israel' and now it was the third day since the events (24:21);
- Women of the company were at the tomb early in the morning and they did not find his body (24:22-23);
- Others went to the tomb, as the women reported, and found it empty (24:22, 24);
- He (the Christ) spoke to them (24:25-26);
- Jesus taught on Moses and all the Prophets from the Scriptures (24:27);
- It is toward evening (24:29);
- He was at the table, took bread, broke it and gave to them (24:30);
- They returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven disciples and others (24:33);
- The Lord has risen indeed, has appeared to Simon; and they told them what happened on the road, including the breaking of bread (24:34).

All of these specific, determinate examples contradict the postmodern, free play of reconstruction that Crossan has imposed on the text with his 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens' (Crossan 1991:xiii). His continued assessment was: 'The Emmaus story isn't a fact, but it is true. It's a symbolic picture of Christian faith deepening over time' (Crossan & Watts 1996:158). The conclusion is that Crossan uses the philosophy of conventionalism to disguise the determinate meanings of the biblical text in this postmodern reconstruction. Thus, Crossan turned a post-resurrection appearance that was supposed to reveal the determinate resurrected Jesus' appearing, speaking and eating with his disciples, into a metaphorical, fictional story.

How does this relate to the hypothesis being tested that it does not matter whether there is an empty tomb or not and that the meaning of such is what is important? This incident demonstrates that it does matter if there is a factual empty tomb. That is what the text states. As to the meaning of the resurrection, that is not determined by a Crossan postmodern reconstruction of conventionalism, but by what the Scriptures state. The meaning of the resurrection has been stated already as relating to salvation, faith and preaching not being in vain or futile (see §4.4.7.8.1). No scholar needs to invent a parabolic meaning when the plain meaning is stated in the text; Jesus' was raised from the grave for believers with the meaning that it was for their salvation, justification, faith and preaching (Rm 4:25; 1 Cor 15:2-3, 14).

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[345] This is not designed to be an exegesis of each verse of the passage but to gain an overall understanding of what happens when one allows the text to speak for itself.

4.4.8.2 Seeing, eating with, and touching Jesus

How is it possible to determine whether Jesus' post-resurrection appearances were those in a body, or as visualising or apparitional appearances? This is primarily determined by following Crossan's theoretical mandate, 'Read the text'. If the biblical text of post-resurrection biblical details is consulted, Luke puts it in concise fashion: 'He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God' (Ac 1:3). What activity did this involve?

As indicated in §4.4.7.5,

- all gospel writers unambiguously provide evidence for Jesus' empty tomb (Mt 28:5-6; Mk 16:5-6; Lk 24:3-4; Jn 20:6-8);
- it is said that Jesus was seen or appeared (Mt 28:17; Lk 24:34, 39-46 – 'see my hands and my feet'; Jn 20:14, 18, 21 – 'I have seen the Lord' (see also 1 Cor 15:5-8);
- Jesus spoke to them (Mt 28:9, 18-20; Lk 24:17-30, 36-49; Jn 20:15-17, 19-23, 26-29; 21:5-23; Ac 1:4-8);
- He walked (Lk 24:13-28);
- He gave food to them (Lk 24:30; Jn 21:13);
- He ate food (Lk 24:41-43; Ac 1:4; 10:41);
- He performed signs (Jn 20:30);
- He lifted up his hands and blessed them (Lk 24:50);
- He showed his hands and side (Jn 20:20);
- He was touched (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:17, 27).[346]

A plain reading of these texts, based on this information, would naturally lead the reader to conclude that these are physical (bodily) appearances. Is normal sight of Jesus' body the preferred understanding of these appearances or will a critical examination provide other alternatives?

Stephen Davis's insightful chapter on 'seeing' the risen Jesus assumes that Jesus really was raised and that the appearances were not subjective visions. He considers two possibilities of 'seeing'. These are: (1) The seeing of Jesus by the witnesses 'was fully normal in every or virtually every sense'. This option of seeing by, say, Mary Magdalene was seeing Jesus like he would see a colleague. (2) This is the possibility that 'what Mary visualized (Jesus' raised body) was so abnormal (a "spiritual body" from heaven) that it could only be seen by her with special assistance from God'. He called this seeing 'enhanced, graced seeing, seeing illuminated by the Holy Spirit, an objective vision'. This kind of 'graced seeing' could not have been detected by a camera and nobody else would see it. He was not of the view that all of the physical details listed above 'in the appearance stories settles the question of seeing versus visualizing'. His only claim – until he examined the evidence critically – was that 'the natural way to read these stories … is in terms of seeing' (Davis 1997:128, 130).

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[346] Luke 24:39 and John 20:17, 27 do not state directly but imply that Jesus was touched with language such as 'Touch me and see' (Lk 24:39), 'Do not cling to me' (Jn 20:17), and 'Put your finger here … and put out your hand and place it in my side' (Jn 20:27). For this list, this researcher obtained information from Davis (1997:130).

Gerald, O'Collins, who also has a chapter in this volume in which Davis's chapter appears (O'Collins in Davis et al 1997:5-28), wrote that 'most New Testament scholars would be reluctant to assert that the risen Christ became present in such a way that neutral (or even hostile) spectators could have observed him in an ordinary "physical" fashion' (in Davis 1997:131). Davis's response was that 'unfortunately, arguments for this position are rarely given' (Davis 1997:131), so Davis proceeds to provide a few (Davis 1997:131-140; emphasis in original):

(1) '*The raised Jesus appeared only to believers*'. If this claim were true, it would be a powerful argument for the visualised possibility, but these are examples of unbelievers who encountered the risen Jesus: (a) Thomas was hardly a believer in the risen Lord when he encountered Jesus in the house with the shut doors (Jn 20:28). (b) It is possible that the Lord's brother, James, was not a believer when Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor 15:7) as he was a un-believer during Jesus' pre-crucifixion ministry (see Mk 3:21, 31-35; 6:3; Jn 7:5). (c) The most obvious example is Saul of Tarsus (Ac 9:3-12; 1 Cor 15:8-11).

(2) '*The resurrection of Jesus was not a resuscitation*'. This was examined and affirmed in §4.4.7.3. However, this is not an argument for visualising in contrast to seeing. That Jesus did not have a resuscitated body is not an objection to its being a material body as his resurrected body took up space, could be located and could be seen. The differences of this pre-resurrection and post-resurrection body will be examined in §4.4.8.4.

(3) '*The meaning of* ὤφθη', which is the aorist passive form of ὁράω in 1 Corinthians 15:5-7. See §4.4.7.8.1(c) for the exposition that concluded that the appearances of Jesus to witnesses, involved a corporeal resurrection. An exception was for the apostle Paul (1 Cor 15:8-10). 'The simple point is that *opthe* (sic) does not require the sense of visualizing as opposed to seeing, and in view of the examples like Acts 7:26 the argument that it does collapses. We must decide what is meant in each instance of its use by analysis of the context (among other things), not simply by lexical fiat. It is not possible to decide the nature of Jesus' resurrection appearances on the basis of a linguistic analysis of one verb' (Davis 1997:135).

(4) '*Doubt and failure of recognition*'. To favourably affirm visualisation as opposed to seeing, some point to (a) the failure to recognise Jesus (Lk 24:16, 31, 37; Jn 20:14-15; 21:4), and (b) doubt that it was Jesus (Mt 28:17; Lk 24:11; Jn 20:24-25). The argument is that those who are not blessed with an enhanced perceptive, objective vision will not recognise Jesus. Davis acknowledges that 'this is certainly a possible interpretation' but there is a circumstance that is often used to promote the objective vision that may actually 'argue against it'. He referred to the Emmaus Road incident (Lk 24:13-35) where Cleopas and the unnamed companion were kept from recognising Jesus (24:16) but later recognised him when their eyes were opened (24:31). His suggestion is that it seems like a special act of God to prevent the seeing and recognition of Jesus until the appropriate time.

Davis (1997:136-137) raised two sensible ways to explain the motifs of doubt and failure to recognise: (i) 'The disciples were convinced that Jesus had truly died' and 'they were as convinced as we are that dead people stay dead. They were definitely not expecting to encounter Jesus'. (ii) There are several layers of explanation, one of which (as already noted) was 'due to divine initiative' (Lk 24:13-33). In other circumstances there are more natural explanations like distance (Jn 21:4), a combination of confusion and lack of light (Jn 20:14-15), or suddenness of Jesus' appearing (Lk 24:36-37). The longer ending of Mark 16 confirms that 'he appeared in another form' (Mk 16:12). Therefore, Davis insists on 'the main point' that 'in every case of doubt and/or failure of recognition, the overriding factors were:

(1) ‘the fact that the disciples were in shock, dealing with their own anguish over losing Jesus and their fears for their own safety’, and (2) ‘the fact that seeing Jesus alive again was the last thing they expected’ (Davis 1997:137).

(5) ‘*Paul’s conversion*’. The story of Paul’s conversion is told three times in the Book of Acts (Ac 9:1-22; 22:-6-16; 25:12-16) and this has influenced some scholars to read Jesus’ post-resurrection accounts as objective visions as the appearance was intelligible to Paul but not to his companions. Paul does insist that he has seen the risen Jesus (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gl 1:12, 16). Most scholars, says Davis, read these ‘as references to his Damascus Road conversion experience’. However, ‘there is no good reason to interpret the resurrection appearances recounted in the Gospels and listed in 1 Corinthians 15:5-7 as experiences that were like Paul’s conversion experience. Indeed, there is every reason to deny this “Damascus Road” interpretation of them, because it requires complete rejection (perhaps as legendary accretions) of all the physical detail of the appearance stories’. Davis does not see Paul’s conversion experience ‘as a grid to be imposed on the other appearance accounts…. They simply do not fit it well’ (Davis 1997:138-139). Acts 1:3 limits the resurrection appearances to forty days after the resurrection (Ac 1:3). The appearances to Paul, Stephen (Ac 7:53-56) and John on Patmos (Rv 1:12-18) were in some ways different from those to Mary Magdalene and the others recorded in the closing chapters of the gospels. This distinction may be seen in the language Paul used, ‘Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me’ (1 Cor 15:8) and Paul’s language of ‘a heavenly vision’ (Ac 26:19). There are other visionary experiences, in or out of the body (probably not referring to his conversion), described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-7.

(6) ‘*The Pauline notion of “spiritual body”*’. While acknowledging that some theologians use 1 Corinthians 15 to argue for a resurrection body that is normally invisible to people on earth and that all perceptions of the risen Jesus were ‘objective visions’. In an earlier publication, Davis (1993:43-84) argued that Paul viewed the spiritual body as (a) involving corporeality, that is, a material object; (b) the spiritual body reconciles both physical (eating, being touched) and ethereal (appearing in a room despite locked doors) motifs; (c) offering a unified view of Jesus’ resurrection; (d) redactional attempts to argue that physical motifs are late and unreliable have failed, and[347] (e) The view of bodily resurrection (not resuscitation) ‘is the best way for Christians to understand and preach the Easter message’ (summary in Davis 1997:139). Davis questions his friend and co-host of the symposium, Gerald O’Collins, who was normally reliable on resurrectional matters, but he considered the resurrection to be ‘glorious (normally invisible?) matter’ (O’Collins 1978:46). Davis considers that he seems to ‘lose his way at this point’ and he asked, ‘What made O’Collins even questioningly suggest that a Pauline glorified body cannot be seen?’ Davis considers that it is possible to accept all that Paul said about resurrectional bodies (in 1 Cor 15) ‘and still hold that they are material objects that can be seen’. While Paul does insist that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Cor 15:50), Davis concluded that ‘this means that the old, earthly body cannot enter the kingdom of God as it is (this is one of the powerful theological arguments against resuscitation)’ because it needs to be transformed into a glorified body’ (Phlp 3:21) (Davis 1997:140). The glorified body (*sōma*) is a material object that can be seen, as

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[347] Davis added at this point, ‘In my opinion, no one has convincingly argued that there was ever a period in the history of the Church, let alone a document, in which the resurrection of Jesus was understood in non-physical terms. Note that 1 Cor. 15:3-7, probably the oldest datable Easter tradition in the NT, speaks of resurrection rather than exaltation’ (Davis 1997:139, n. 139).

has been convincingly argued by Robert Gundry (Gundry 1987:159-183). When Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, he affirmed the nature of his body, ‘See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have’ (Lk 24:39).

Therefore, Davis rightly concludes that the strongest argument in favour of seeing and opposed to visualising ‘is the massive physical detail of the appearance stories’. If the physical evidence is taken as the stories claim from the New Testament, they affirm that Jesus appeared in various settings, at various times of the day for various lengths of time to various people and groups of people. What did he do? He walked, talked, distributed food, performed signs, and allowed himself to be touched. Therefore, ‘it seems sensible to interpret the stories in the way that the Church and the Christian artists have traditionally understood them: namely, that the risen Jesus was physically present in the way that could, in a perfectly normal sense, be observed’ (Davis 1997:141). This is a radical contrast to Crossan’s apparitional view.

Even though Mary and other disciples saw Jesus and had some difficulty in recognising Jesus (Jn 20:14-15; 21:4, 7), eventually they acknowledged who he was. Jesus appeared in a locked door to show the disciples his hands and side, telling Thomas to put his hand in his side (Jn 20:19, 26).

Therefore, it is expected that the catechism of the Catholic Church would endorse this:

> By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm. For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith.

(The catechism of the Catholic Church 1997. S v He descended into hell 645)

The context of John 20:17 is Jesus responding to Mary Magdalene, which according to the KJV reads, ‘Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father’. The language, ‘Touch me not’ or a similar phrase using ‘touch’ is repeated in the Douay-Rheims, RV, ASV, and the NET Bible. However, most contemporary versions have language such as, ‘Do not hold on to me’ (RSV, NRSV, NIV, ISV, NAB) or ‘Do not cling to me’ (ESV, NLT, NJB, NASB, REB, HCSB). Why the variety of translations with negative commands, ‘touch’, ‘hold on’ or ‘cling to’? The Greek verb, ἅπτου, is second person singular, present imperative middle of ἅπτω. The meaning of ἅπτω was ‘touch, take hold of someone or something’ in the middle voice in Homer and Josephus, according to Arndt and Gingrich; however they give the meaning in John 20:17 as ‘*stop clinging to me*’ (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:102; emphasis in original). Rudolph Grob’s assessment was that ‘after his resurrection Jesus forbade Mary to touch him (Jn. 20:17). The RSV “do not hold me” and NEB “do not cling to me” are probably preferable’ (Grob 1978:860). No reason was given by Grob; however, the Arndt and Gingrich meaning of ‘cling’, combined with the present tense continuous action of the imperative verb, provide impetus for that kind of meaning. The emphasis here is on Mary Magdalene’s holding on to, clinging to

Jesus, which is not the kind of action of a person experiencing an apparition. This was continuous holding on to the person of Jesus by Mary in real time.

In Peter's proclamation to Cornelius, Acts 10:39-41 confirms the nature of the resurrection: 'We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and caused him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead'. These are critical verses in understanding the link between Jesus' bodily resurrection and their being witnesses of his post-resurrection appearances when they ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

How did the church after the close of the writing of the New Testament understand the nature of Jesus' resurrection? This will be a limited sample from the church fathers.

4.4.8.3 The early post-New Testament churches

How did the Church Fathers understand nature of Jesus' resurrection? These are only samples.[348]

Ignatius of Antioch, Syria (martyred about AD 110)[349] wrote in his letter to the Smyrnaeans, 'For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I 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. And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit…. After his resurrection He ate and drank with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father' (Ignatius 1885a:3).

Justin Martyr (ca 100-165)[350] in his fragment on the resurrection wrote, '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' (Martyr 1885c:2). He continued in his exposition of the resurrection:

> Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh? And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, You have not yet faith, see that it is I; [Luke 24:32, etc].[351] and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He ate honey-comb and fish.
>
> (Martyr 1885c:9)

Irenaeus (ca 120/140-200/203)[352] wrote: 'In the same manner, therefore, as Christ did rise in the substance of flesh, and pointed out to His disciples the mark of the nails and the opening in His side (now these are the tokens of that flesh which rose from the dead), so shall He also, it is said, raise us up by His own power'. At the end of this apologetic, *Against heresies*, he wrote that the Lord 'tarried until the third day in the lower parts of the earth; then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples' (Irenaeus 1885:5.7.1; 5.31.2).

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[348] The names of some of the Fathers to investigate were suggested by Wright (2003:500-527), Davis (1997:143-144), and Geisler (1989:51-65).
[349] The date is from Foakes-Jackson (1924:110).
[350] Lifespan dates are from Foakes-Jackson (1924:158).
[351] This verse was inserted in the online edition of Justin Martyr's text.
[352] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Saint Irenaeus).

Theophilus of Antioch (d 180)[353] in his writing to Autolycus stated that 'God will raise your flesh immortal with your soul' (Theophilus 1885:1.7). Wright noted that Theophilus 'does not use "resurrection" language metaphorically, whether with concrete or abstract referent, but always literally' (Wright 2003:508). His appeal to authors who had 'no means of knowing the truth' was that it was appropriate 'that they who wrote should themselves have been eye-witnesses of those things concerning which they made assertions, or should accurately have ascertained them from those who had seen them; for they who write of things unascertained beat the air' (Theophilus 1885:3.2).

Tertullian (ca 155-222),[354] in his exposition 'on the resurrection of the flesh', introduced it by dealing with the issue he faced: 'The resurrection of the dead is the Christian's trust. By it we are believers. To the belief of this (article of the faith) truth compels us – that truth which God reveals, but the crowd derides, which supposes that nothing will survive after death' (Tertullian 1885c:1). He laid 'a foundation for the defence of all the Scriptures which promise a resurrection of the flesh…. This destiny of the body the Lord also described, when, clothed as He was in its very substance, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" [John 2:19]' [355]…. even the Scripture informs us that "He spoke of His body [John 2:21]'[356] (Tertullian 1885c:18). He wrote that 'if the resurrection of the flesh be denied, that *prime article of the faith* is shaken…. He, therefore, will not be a Christian who shall deny this doctrine [the resurrection of the flesh – SDG] which is confessed by Christians'. In this treatise, Tertullian laid 'a foundation for the defence of all the Scriptures which promise a resurrection of the flesh', including, 'this destiny of the body the Lord also described, when, clothed as He was in its very substance, He said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again*" [John 2:19]'…. Even the Scripture informs us that "*He spoke of His body*" [John 2:21]'.[357] (Tertullian 1885c:2, 3, 18; emphasis in original). What is the nature of this resurrected body, whether for Jesus or for those in the communal resurrection?

Referring to Matthew 10:28, Tertullian stated that 'the resurrection of the dead is a resurrection of the flesh; for unless it were raised again, it would be impossible for the flesh to be killed in hell'. What is 'the meaning of the body (or the flesh)'? He was clear on his understanding that 'by the human body nothing else than that fabric of the flesh which, whatever be the kind of material of which it is constructed and modified, is seen and handled, and sometimes indeed killed, by men…. We are left to understand the body to be that which is tangible to us, that is, the flesh' (Tertullian 1885c:35).

What about the resurrection flesh of Christ? Tertullian was addressing 'the heretics, Marcion, Apelles, and Valentinus' who were wishing to Impugn the doctrine of the resurrection, deprive Christ of all capacity for such a change by denying his flesh'. This was promoted by Marcion (a 'heretic'), Apelles ('apostate' and 'the heretic of Pontus'), and Valentinus who ('on the strength of his heretical system, might consistently devise a spiritual flesh for Christ'). These three doubted or denied the resurrection of Jesus' flesh. Tertullian's contrary view was 'that flesh must by all means rise again, which has already risen in Christ' (Tertullian 1885a:1, 6, 15).

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[353] This date of his death was from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Theophilus of Antioch). The suggestion of the works of Athenagoras and Theophilus was by Wright (2003:503-508).
[354] Lifespan dates are from Latourette (1965:48).
[355] This verse was inserted in the online edition.
[356] This verse was inserted in the online edition.
[357] These inserted verses were in the online edition.

Apologist, Athenagoras (ca 101-200),[358] a convert from Athenian philosophy, in his article, 'on the resurrection of the dead', addressed an issue in his century where there was falsehood springing up that was 'invented on purpose by men'. This falsehood had a breadth where no truth was free 'from their calumnious attacks', including the being of God, his knowledge, and his operations. He proceeded to provide 'arguments in defence of the truth' before providing 'those concerning the truth'. These were 'the requirements of the case' in his situation in the second century. Some were 'utterly disbelieving, and some others doubting, and even among those who have accepted the first principles some who are as much at a loss what to believe as those who doubt' (Athenagoras 1885:1). That's as contemporary a statement as one could find in the twenty-first century.

He argued for the resurrection, based on the 'nature of man' as being composed of an immortal soul and body. Part of his reasoning is that a man 'who consists of the two parts, must continue for ever. But it is impossible for him to continue unless he rise again' (Athenagoras 1885:15). He called on those who doubt or disbelieve the resurrection to 'demonstrate that the resurrection is utterly unworthy of credit. This they will succeed in, if they are able to show that it is either impossible for God, or contrary to His will, to unite and gather together again bodies that are dead, or even entirely dissolved into their elements, so as to constitute the same persons. If they cannot do this, let them cease from this godless disbelief, and from this blasphemy against sacred things' (Athenagoras 1885:1, 2).

His conclusion was that 'it is absolutely necessary' that the end of a person's being involves 'some reconstitution' of body and soul and that of necessity, 'there must by all means be a resurrection of the bodies which are dead, or even entirely dissolved, and the same men must be formed anew…. It is impossible for the same men to be reconstituted unless the same bodies are restored to the same souls. But that the same soul should obtain the same body is impossible in any other way, and possible only by the resurrection; for if this takes place, an end befitting the nature of men follows also' (Athenagoras 1885:25).

He was particularly addressing the communal resurrection at the end of the age, but not specifically Jesus' resurrection. Athenagoras defends an embodied resurrection.

Eusebius (ca 265-339),[359] wrote, 'And the same man, writing to the Smyrnæans, used the following words concerning Christ, taken I know not whence;[360] "But I know and believe that he was in the flesh after the resurrection.

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[358] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Athenagoras)

[359] Lifespan dates are from Cairns (1981:143).

[360] The footnote in this English edition of Eusebius stated: '*Ep. ad Smyr.* chap. 3. Jerome, quoting this passage from Ignatius in his *de vir. ill.* 16, refers it to the gospel which had lately been translated by him (according to *de vir. ill.* 3), viz.: the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (or the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*). In his *Comment. in Isaiam*, Bk. XVIII. introd., Jerome quotes the same passage again, referring it to the same gospel (*Evangelium quod Hebræorum lectitant Nazaræi*). But in Origen *de prin.* præf. 8, the phrase is quoted as taken from the *Teaching of Peter* ("*qui Petri doctrina apellatur*"). Eusebius' various references to the Gospel according to the Hebrews show that he was personally acquainted with it (see above, chap. 25, note 24), and knowing his great thoroughness in going through the books which he had access to, it is impossible to suppose that if this passage quoted from Ignatius were in the Gospel according to the Hebrews he should not have known it. We seem then to be driven to the conclusion that the passage did not originally stand in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, but was later incorporated either from the *Teaching of Peter,* in which Origen found it, or from some common source or oral tradition (Eusebius n d:3:36.11, n. 920).

And when he came to Peter and his companions he said to them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit [see Luke 24:39 – SDG]. And immediately they touched him and believed"' (Eusebius n d:3.36.11).

Epiphanius (ca 315-403),[361] bishop of Salamis, Cyprus, wrote his expansion of the Nicene Creed in which he stated, 'For the Word became flesh, not undergoing any change, nor converting his Godhead into Manhood, [but] uniting into his own one holy perfection and Godhead, (for there is one Lord Jesus Christ and not two, the same God, the same Lord, the same King); the same suffered in the flesh; and rose again; and went up into heaven in the same body, sat down gloriously at the right hand of the Father; is coming in the same body in glory, to judge the quick and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end' (Epiphanius 1889).

Cyril of Jerusalem (ca 315-385)[362] wrote, 'Let no heretic ever persuade you to speak evil of the Resurrection. For to this day the Manichees say, that, the resurrection of the Saviour was phantom-wise, and not real, not heeding Paul who says, *Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*; and again, *By the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead*' (Cyril of Jerusalem 1895:14.21; emphasis in original).

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430)[363] in his magisterial, *The city of God*, has a brief chapter on 'the resurrection of the flesh', of which he stated that 'some refuse to believe, though the world at large believes it'. His claim was that

> the world has come to the belief that the earthly body of Christ was received up into heaven. Already both the learned and unlearned have believed in the resurrection of the flesh and its ascension to the heavenly places…. It is indubitable that the resurrection of Christ, and His ascension into heaven with the flesh in which He rose, is already preached and believed in the whole world. If it is not credible, how is it that it has already received credence in the whole world?... For they who had not seen Christ risen in the flesh, nor ascending into heaven with His risen body, believed those who related how they had seen these things, and who testified not only with words but wonderful signs.
>
> (Augustine 1887a:22.5)

Augustine continued, 'To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven?' (Augustine 1887a:22.9). He answers this question elsewhere in Letter 205,

> You ask whether the Lord's body has bones and blood or other marks of flesh…. When His disciples doubted His Resurrection, as we read in the Gospel, and thought that what they saw was not a body but a spirit, He said to them: "See my hands and my feet; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have." Thus He was felt by their hands while He was on earth.
>
> (Augustine 1956:9-10)

All of these examples from the church fathers – some prominent and others inconspicuous – confirm the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus (most citations) and the bodily communal resurrection at the end of the age. J A Schep summarised the evidence: 'We may say, therefore, that the entire early Church, in the West and in the East alike, publicly confessed belief in the resurrection of the flesh’. He noted that in the Western creeds, ‘this confessional formula has retained its place with hardly any exception. Up to the Reformation there is no exception at all’ (Schep 1964:221, 223).

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[361] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Saint Epiphanius of Constantia).
[362] Lifespan dates are from Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014. S v Saint Cyril of Jerusalem).
[363] Lifespan dates are from Fisher (1913:126-127).

Were there dissenters in the early history of the church? Theophilus addressed one such person in Autolycus to whom he wrote, ‘But you do not believe that the dead are raised. When the resurrection shall take place, then you will believe, whether you will or no; and your faith shall be reckoned for unbelief, unless you believe now (Theophilus 1885:1.8). However, Autolycus was not a church father.

There has been much discussion about Origen (ca 185-254)[364] of Alexandria’s teaching on Jesus’ resurrection. The debate is summarised carefully by Wright (2003:518-527). Celsus’ claim was that ‘the body of a god is not nourished with such food (as was that of Jesus)’ where the gospel narratives proved that Jesus partook of food, and food of a particular kind’. Origen’s brief response was: ‘It appears indubitable that after His resurrection He ate a piece of fish; for, according to our view, He assumed a (true) body, as one born of a woman’ (Origen 1885:1.70). Concerning Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, his conclusion was that ‘a clear and unmistakeable proof of the fact I hold to be the undertaking of His disciples, who devoted themselves to the teaching of a doctrine which was attended with danger to human life – a doctrine which they would not have taught with such courage had they invented the resurrection of Jesus from the dead’ (Origen 1885:2.56).

Origen, to Celsus, challenged the Greek stories of those ‘who pretended to have risen from the dead’ and addressed the Jewish converts to Christianity: ‘We reply to the Jew: What you adduce as myths, we regard also as such; but the statements of the Scriptures which are common to us both, in which not you only, but we also, take pride, we do not at all regard as myths’. The application to Jesus’ resurrection was that it ‘is more miraculous than that of the others in this respect, that they were raised by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, while He was raised by none of the prophets, but by His Father in heaven. And therefore His resurrection also produced greater results than theirs’. He asked the provocative question, ‘For what great good has accrued to the world from the resurrection of the children through the instrumentality of Elijah and Elisha, such as has resulted from the preaching of the resurrection of Jesus, accepted as an article of belief, and as effected through the agency of divine power’ (Origen 1885:2.58).

Origen regarded the doctrine of resurrection as fundamental to the essence of being Christian: ‘Let no one, however, suspect that, in speaking as we do, we belong to those who are indeed called Christians, but who set aside the doctrine of the resurrection as it is taught in Scripture’ (Origen 1885:5:22). As already indicated, this resurrection of Jesus refers to the fact that ‘he assumed a (true) body’ (Origen 1885:1.70). However, ‘we, therefore, do not maintain that the body which has undergone corruption resumes its original nature, any more than the grain of wheat which has decayed returns to its former condition. But we do maintain, that as above the grain of wheat there arises a stalk, so a certain power is implanted in the body, which is not destroyed, and from which the body is raised up in incorruption’ (Origen 1885:5.23). This relates to what will be examined in §4.4.8.4, that Jesus’ resurrected body and those who will be involved in the communal resurrection at the end of the age will be in ‘the same but different’ bodies.

Wright noted that even though Origen had a reputation of being a Platonist and allegorist (concerned with the spiritualised meaning), ‘Jesus’ resurrection was the resurrection, albeit also the transformation, of his actual body. The resurrection of

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[364] Lifespan dates are from Cairns (1981:111).

Christians will result in an actual physical body, albeit an incorruptible body…. When he affirms the resurrection, he means a real body, in both important continuity and important discontinuity with that which went before'. However, 'what Origen does not have, any more than the other writers we have surveyed, is any metaphorical use of resurrection to denote (as sometimes in the New Testament) the new life which believers have in the present in baptism and holiness' (Wright 2003:527).

The major dissenting group in the early church to the bodily resurrection of Jesus and bodily communal resurrection were the Docetists of Gnosticism. They were a particular bane to the progress of the early church and their teachings in opposition to the 'flesh' of Jesus were addressed by the early church fathers who were apologists.

Concerning Christ's passion-resurrection, the three ecumenical creeds address the specifics: The Apostles' Creed[365] states that Christ 'suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead' (The Apostles' Creed 1987). The Nicene Creed's[366] statement was that he 'was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures' (Evangelical Lutheran Synod 2015). According to The Athanasian Creed,[367] Christ 'suffered for our salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third day from the dead' (Sullivan 1907).

All three creeds affirm the importance of the empty tomb with their promotion of the fact that on the third day Christ rose from the dead. For such to happen, there had to remain an empty tomb. But this is contrary to the Borg and Crossan claim that 'an emphasis on the historical factuality of the Easter stories, as if they were reporting events that could have been photographed, gets in the way of understanding them'. Their claim is that 'it is a stumbling block for people who have difficulty believing that these stories are factual' (Borg & Crossan 2006:191). The facts are that the evidence provided to this point, including the affirmations from the three ecumenical creeds, affirms a position contrary to that of Borg and Crossan – Christ literally suffered under Pontius Pilate, was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day.

The catechism of the Catholic Church (1997. S v Christ 639) also affirms this position on the resurrection: 'The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness'. So Christ's resurrection was a 'real event' that can be 'historically verified' according to the Roman Catholic understanding. Thus, the Easter stories were reporting events that could be photographed. It is only a stumbling block to those who bring their *a priori* worldviews to the text and impose them in Crossan's type of reconstruction. The best alternative is to follow Crossan's paradoxical recommendation: 'Read the text'.

As already indicated in §4.3; §4.4.2; §4.4.3; §4.4.4; and §4.4.6, in Crossan's writings there is a postmodern application to post-resurrection events such as the empty tomb, other post-resurrection appearances, the post-resurrection narratives, and the meaning associated with the resurrection.

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[365] 'A written symbol, containing the most of the Apostles' Creed as we now have it, existed in the church at Rome, and was repeated by candidates for baptism, prior to the middle of the second century' (Fisher 1913:67). 'With the exception of two or three phrases it was known to Irenaeus and Tertullian' but its present form 'probably did not exist before the sixth century' (Latourette 1975:135).

[366] This Creed was framed at the Council of Nicea in 325 and then reaffirmed in its Council of Constantinople form of 381 (Fisher 1913:131-132).

[367] The 'precise date, author, and place of origin have not been indisputably determined, but it appears to have originated in the West, perhaps in Gaul, possibly as early as the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century' (Latourette 1975:208).

So, what was the nature of Jesus' resurrection body? The evidence gained in testing this hypothesis is that the tomb was empty on resurrection morning; Jesus body had been resurrected, but there is a further element to the resurrection body that needs clarification.

4.4.8.4 Jesus' resurrected body: The same but different[368]

The problem that faces historians is that the earthly Jesus' resurrected body had characteristics of his flesh and life up to and including the crucifixion. As already indicated in §4.4.7.4, Crossan's apparitional theory does not stack up with the biblical evidence.

The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus involved another dimension to the human Jesus. This conforms to the historical criterion of discontinuity (see §2.4.1). However, this led Kistemaker to state that 'we simply do not have answers for questions about Jesus' resurrected body. The Scriptures do not reveal this information' to satisfy inquiring minds (Kistemaker 1993:530). However, there are adequate indicators that demonstrate that the historical, literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus (as indicated above) 'could transcend history and may be rightly called "the beginning of a new history"' (Schep 1976:76). Ladd's encapsulated understanding was that 'the resurrection itself did not mean the revivification of a dead corpse: it meant the radical transformation of the body of Jesus from the world of nature to the world of God. Nature knows of no bodies like Jesus' resurrection body. It was utterly unique. History has no analogy for it. Its character beggars the imagination' (Ladd 1975:125).

Examples of the sameness of Jesus' resurrected body (contrary to the spiritualising, metaphorical and apparitional views), based on the plain teaching of Scripture, include:[369] (1) Jesus' followers could recognise his face and voice, including holding his feet and talking to him (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:32; Jn 20:16, 19-20; 21:12); (2) Some touched his body or were invited to (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:17, 27); the scar marks from crucifixion were visible (Lk 24:39; Jn 20:20). Marcus Loane's comment was that 'those marks were the infallible proof that His body risen was identical with His body buried' (Loane 1965:17). (3) He ate with them (Lk 24:30, 42-43; Jn 21:12-13; Ac 10:40-42); (4) Jesus was clear about the nature of his post-resurrection body: 'A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have' (Lk 24:39).

However, there were differences, changes in his body, through his resurrection from the dead. Schep's language is that 'there are mysterious elements in the appearance narratives' (Schep 1976:92) and these include, (1) His appearing and disappearing at will, like that which happened when he vanished from communication with the two people on the Emmaus road (Lk 24:31). In this verse, this is the only use of ἄφαντος in the New Testament and it means to 'vanish' from someone (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:124). Schep (1976:82) considered it to be 'a supernatural disappearance', while Howard Marshall explains the word as meaning 'he becomes invisible once he has been recognised…. It is as a supernatural visitor that the risen Jesus is portrayed’ in this verse (Marshall 1978:898). (2) A sudden and miraculous appearance is suggested in Luke 24:36 when ‘Jesus himself stood among them’. Could this account for the disciples being ‘startled and frightened’ as they ‘thought they saw a spirit’ (Lk 24:37)? When John recorded this event, he stated that ‘the doors being locked’ and that ‘Jesus came and stood among them’ (the disciples) (Jn 20:19). There are not indicators of how Jesus overcame the difficulties of how Jesus stood among them when the doors were locked. (3) There are Scriptures recording that Jesus was not recognised on first indications by those who saw him (see Mt 28:17; Lk 24:16-32); Jn 20:14-17). Schep’s perceptive analysis was that ‘all these mysterious and miraculous elements, together with the miraculous ascension, show that Jesus’ body, though consisting of flesh and bones, was now in a glorified condition and capable of acting independently of the laws of time and space. This does not imply that He Himself was beyond time and space, for this again would mean the annihilation of his true humanity. His body was what Paul called a “spiritual body,” (1 Cor 15:44; Phil 3:20. The word “spiritual” in this connection does not mean “immaterial”’ for Jesus’ body’ (Schep 1976:82).

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[368] The language, 'The same but different', was used by this researcher's pastor, Rev Paul Cornford (2015), in preaching on the 'the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:35-58)'. Since hearing the sermon, it was discovered that the language, 'Our resurrection bodies will be the same but different', was used by Robert Morgan in his exposition on 1 Corinthians 15:36-44 and 'our resurrection bodies will be patterned after Christ's' (1 Cor 15:45-57) (Morgan 2015). For the same theme, see Robin Ellis (2015).

[369] These examples of sameness and differences were suggested by Schep (1976:81-82).

Ladd summarised the ‘the same but different’ resurrected body of Jesus and its meaning: ‘*The resurrection body of Jesus was of the same order as the resurrection bodies of the saints at the end of the age*’ (Ladd 1975:123; emphasis in original).

4.4.8.5 How is meaning determined?

See §4.4.7.9.2(a) for an explanation of the uniqueness of Jesus’ resurrection, a view that is in opposition to that of Crossan.

The foundation of the early church, as recorded in the book of Acts, demonstrates the basic teaching of the resurrection of Jesus in the sermons and other proclamation, including Peter and Paul’s preaching to both Jews and Gentiles, as demonstrated in passages such as Acts 2:24, 31-32; 3:15; 4:2, 10, 33; 10:40; 13:33-34, 37; 17:18, 31-32; 23:6-8, and 24:21.

In testing this hypothesis, it has been resolved that: (1) Worldviews impact one’s understanding of meaning and Crossan’s *a priori* commitment to postmodern reconstruction has influenced his interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection. He imposed his worldview on the text in certain areas. (2) When determinateness is separated from meaning, there can be socio-pragmatic, self-affirming projections onto a text; (3) After the crucifixion, Jesus was dead; (4) There was an empty tomb on resurrection morning; (5) Evidence was discovered from the text to reject Crossan’s apparitional view of the resurrection appearances; (6) Evidence was provided to conclude that Jesus’ rose bodily from the grave and the metaphorical interpretation is rejected. Specifics of the resurrection story in the gospels, book of Acts, and 1 Corinthians were examined to lend support for this perspective.

As indicated in §4.4.4.5, when determinateness is separated from meaning (as in the meaning of the resurrection separated from an empty tomb) by Crossan, his socio-pragmatic hermeneutics overpower the text. The text is then dominated by his own imaginative, subjective, postmodern self-affirmations of what ‘it means to me’. He most often imposes his personal metaphorical meaning onto the text. This is a guaranteed way to get the text to say what a plain reading of the text does not state. As demonstrated in §4.4.8.1, Crossan’s approach to dealing with the biblical texts of the resurrection is to use his philosophy of conventionalism. This leads to a morass of relativistic free play in interpreting any text.

What is the way forward? Is there a better alternative to Crossan’s postmodern conventionalism?

4.4.9 Towards a solution

Seán Burke, a University of Durham English teacher, provided this assessment of postmodernism's predicament: 'The great crises of postmodernism are crises of authorship' (Burke 1995:xxix). One of his examples was that 'the discovery of a text like Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology" will modify psychoanalysis if and only if it is a text by Freud. Over and above the texts contents, the fact of attribution – in and of itself – is the primary factor in establishing its significance for the psychoanalytic field' (Burke 1998:93).

As indicated in §4.3.4.1, for Derrida 'différance' (with the 'a') is 'silent writing' because it 'remains purely graphic: it is written or read, but it is not heard' and the 'a' of 'différance' is to be regarded as 'silent, secret, and discreet, like a tomb' and, provided one knows how to decipher the legend of the writing, it 'is not far from signaling the death of the king' (Derrida 1973:129, 132; see Crossan 1982:36). The inference seems to be that this secret writing signals the death of the writer/author (the king).

How does Crossan or anyone obtain an understanding of meaning of any text heard or read? Crossan's strategy for obtaining meaning has been exposed as using the indeterminate to arrive at a subjective, 'it means for me' result. This approach has been exposed as a means to leading to the crisis of postmodernism as expressed in Crossan's reconstructive interpretations.

What will lead to a resolution of the difficulties created by some of Crossan's postmodern reconstructions concerning Jesus' empty tomb, the nature and meaning of the Jesus' resurrection? Before addressing some specifics, some hermeneutical essentials are a prerequisite. While twelve of these were raised in §4.4.7.3, the fundamentals were laid out in chapter one, §1.1.7.3.2, as the nine points of the antidote to counter theological subjectivism in hermeneutics as proposed by Lewis and Demarest (1987:29-31). These will not be repeated here, but it needs to be noted again that these foundational principles of hermeneutics are those used in reading a whole range of publications including Shakespeare, Charles Wesley's hymns, Captain James Cook's journals,[370] a local newspaper or television news, films, Plato, Calvin, Crossan, Scripture or any other writing or media presentation?

This analysis of Crossan's statement that it doesn't matter whether the tomb was empty or not and the primary issue being the meaning, raises some substantial issues with Crossan's approach. These relate to: (1) Unstable meaning of the text; (2) The nature of the author; (3) The author and historical credibility; (4) Worldviews of writers and the text; (5) Anti-supernaturalism; (6) Reconstructive mischief; (7) The New Testament documents regarded as unhistorical; and (8) What accounts for the emergence of a vibrant Christianity that began its spread throughout the region and eventually to the world, beginning with the Jesus' death and resurrection?

4.4.9.1 Fixed and stable meaning of the text

Crossan's call was a necessary and reasonable one: 'Anyone who wants to dramatize the death of Jesus in play or film should first read the text and get the story right'. He was complaining about the portrayal of Barabbas. He 'was not the loutish buffoon portrayed in *The Passion of the Christ* but simply the Jewish version of the Scottish anti-imperialist *Braveheart* or the American anti-imperialist *The*

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[370] Captain James Cook was the British discoverer of Australia in 1770: 'The *Endeavour* [his ship – SDG] circumnavigated and mapped New Zealand before travelling west, where on 19 April 1770 Cook spotted and claimed the east coast of Australia for the Crown. He named it New South Wales' (Swallow 2011).

Patriot' (Crossan 2007:138; emphasis in original). However, Crossan needs to apply the same standards to his own writings: Anyone who wants to dramatise the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus needs to read the text and not create a fictionalised version of Jesus where his body was 'left on the cross or in a shallow grave barely covered with dirt and stones, the dogs were waiting' (Crossan 1994a:154). 'Jesus' burial by his friends was totally fictional and unhistorical' (Crossan 1994a:159), and it 'is not (in a postmodern world) that we find once and for all who the historical Jesus was way back then. It is that each generation and century must redo that historical work and establish its best reconstruction, a reconstruction that will be and must be in some creative interaction with its own particular needs, visions, and programs' (Crossan 1995:217). These kinds of fictionalised readings of the New Testament are *not* based on Crossan's call, 'First read the text'. He reads the text and comes away with his redoing in postmodern reconstruction style what the plain reading of the text does not state.

This problem can be fixed by accepting the definiteness, the determinateness of the text. This is opposed to the teaching of Gadamer, Derrida and Crossan (see §4.4.4.5 for an explanation of what happens when determinateness is separated from meaning). In §4.3.4.1, the influence of seminal postmodern theorisers on Crossan's New Testament thinking was addressed. It was these thinkers, this research indicates, that drew him away from the understanding of the need for there to be determinateness in a text for accurate interpretation to be effected. It was Geisler who pointedly noted that 'deconstructionists do not blush to ask us to accept as a fixed meaning the claim that no meaning can be fixed' (Geisler 2002:168). Examples in Crossan include:

- 'When all else fails, read the text' (White & Crossan 2005:43), and some factives that indicate his presuppositions,
- 'This story is the metaphoric condensation of several years of early Christian thought into one parabolic afternoon' (Borg & Crossan 2006:201).
- The race to the empty tomb by Peter and the beloved disciple 'always looked to me like a calculated and deliberate parable intended to exalt the authority of the Beloved Disciple over that of Peter' (Crossan 2000:165).
- 'Matthew created the story of the apparition of Jesus to the women to change Mark's negative ending into a more positive one' (Crossan 1998a:552).
- 'It never occurs to Paul that Jesus' resurrection might be a special or unique privilege given to him because he is Messiah, Lord, and Son of God…. It was not, therefore, about the vision of a dead man but about the vision of a dead man *who begins the general resurrection*. It is an apparition with cosmically apocalyptic consequences' (Crossan 1999:29; emphasis in original).
- 'Yet the trinitarian or triadic structure of the Trinity did not seem to be as indeterminate as that. It was inviolable as three, no more, no less. It was a closed and interactive loop rather than an open and indeterminate list' (Crossan 2000:102).

These are only a few examples of how Crossan's ability to require a fixed meaning when it suits his agenda conflicts with the pervasive influence of his focus on indeterminate meaning of postmodern reconstruction.

4.4.9.2 The author as communicative agent[371]

Is there a mediating position on literary meaning between the extremes of, say, Crossan's postmodern reconstructionism and Hirsch's (1967) intentionalism? It could be easy to follow Stephen Wright's advice in stressing the importance that 'grasping a figure means perceiving intention, and seeing *beyond* the intentional to grasp the figure as a figure'. He pointed to some parabolic scholarship that stressed the need for an interpretative act, 'but not the fact that such response is necessarily first a construal of intention' (Wright 1997:22; emphasis in original). One of his examples was an early publication by Crossan on parables (Crossan 1973:14) who correctly wrote of 'the endless renewability of metaphor' (Wright's words) but did not mention 'that the very "meaning" of a metaphor as a trope' involves a 'crossing of the objective with the subjective' (Boucher in Wright 1977:27).

Gracia expressed the contrast as between textual meanings having no limits (Gadamer) and textual meanings having strict limits (Hirsch) (Gracia 2005:494). Is there a way to mediate between these extremes? Vanhoozer considers that it is necessary to avoid the intention/intentional fallacy, which is 'to mistake a *historical* inquiry about authors for a properly *interpretative* study of texts' (Vanhoozer 2005c:327). His mediating position between deconstructionism and intentionalism is to discover the 'what' of meaning by treating texts, whether written or verbal, as communicative acts. This 'action' model of meaning, he considers, provides 'both the possibility of stable meaning and of the transformative capacity of texts'. It gives primacy to the author as communicative agent, but 'to inquire into what the text means is to ask what the author has done in, with, and through the text. *The goal of understanding is to grasp what has been done, together with its effects; the possibility of attaining such understanding is the presupposition of communicative action*' (Vanhoozer 1998:219; emphasis in original).

So a text, as a communicative act, has three elements: (1) Matter (propositional content); (2) Energy (illocutionary[372] force); and (3) Purpose (perlocutionary[373] effect) (Vanhoozer 1998:228). Vanhoozer defends the thesis, contrary to poststructuralist literary theory, 'that the author and the sentence are basic particulars. Without these fundamental concepts we will simply be unable to talk about certain other things, such as speech acts and meaning' (Vanhoozer 1998:213). Therefore, for every speech act, the author determines the existence of the text (*that* it is) and its specific nature (*what* it is). So, '*what an act counts as is not a matter of how it is taken, but of how it was meant*'. The author is the one whose action determines the text and this includes its subject matter, literary form and communicative energy. How does one determine an author's meaning in a text? Vanhoozer does not consider this is done best through psychological intuition but through historical inference, which involves an analysis of an 'author's *public* communicative action' and for this, the context of the speech act must be considered (Vanhoozer 1998:229-230; emphasis in original).

When the author is accepted as communicative agent, these verses have especial meaning in relation to the resurrection: (a) Jesus said, 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live' (Jn 14:18-19). (b) When he was before Felix at Caesarea, Paul said, 'this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust' (Ac 24:14-15). (c) Paul taught the Christians when addressing those who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:12) that 'if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain…. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins' (1 Cor 15:14, 17). (d) 'So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power' (1 Cor 15:42-43). The communicative agent teaches that as a result of Jesus' living, believers shall live also and that their faith is not in vain, not futile, and there will be a future resurrection of both the just and unjust. This resurrection of the dead will be with an imperishable body of glory that is one of power.

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[371] This is the language of Vanhoozer (1998:213).

[372] 'Searle calls what one *does* with a proposition the illocutionary act. "The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken"' (Searle in Vanhoozer 1998:210; emphasis in original).

[373] The perlocutionary act deals with 'what we bring about by saying something (i.e. persuading, surprising)' (Austin in Vanhoozer 1998:209).

The illocutionary force – the energy – of these four speech acts did this in the life of resurrection researcher, Gary Habermas. It harkened back to 1995 in an interview with journalist, Lee Strobel, when the meaning of the resurrection was movingly demonstrated. At that time, his wife, Debbie, 'was upstairs dying' of stomach cancer and he confessed that 'this was the worst time that could possibly happen'. But he also disclosed, 'I knew if God were to come to me, I'd ask only one question: "Lord, why is Debbie up there in bed?" and I think God would respond by asking gently, "Gary, did I raise my Son from the dead?"' He indicated that he would say to God, 'Come on, Lord, I've written seven books on that topic! Of course he was raised from the dead. But I want to know about Debbie!' He reckoned God would continue to come back with the repeated question, 'Did I raise my Son from the dead?' until Habermas got the point that 'the resurrection says that if Jesus was raised two thousand years ago, there's an answer to Debbie's death in 1995. And do you know what? It worked for me while I was sitting on the porch, and it still works today'. Habermas admitted that this was a 'horribly emotional time' for him and he 'still wondered what I'd do raising four kids alone. But there wasn't a time when that truth didn't comfort me…. "That's not some sermon," he said quietly. "I believe it with all my heart. If there's a resurrection, there's a heaven. If Jesus was raised, Debbie was raised. And I will be someday too. Then I'll see them both"' (Habermas in Strobel 1998:241-242).

Habermas confirms the author of Scripture as being a communicative agent who provides matter with propositional content (the resurrection of the just), energy (faith in Christ is not vain or futile because of the resurrection), which has a purpose (with an imperishable body of glory and power. Because Jesus lives, believers will also live).

In this analysis of Crossan's reconstructive postmodernism and its impact on the meaning of the empty tomb, if one were to accept the author as communicative agent, this would involve examining the resurrection scriptural texts in light of 'one who means, one who puts a language system and literary form to work in a particular way for a particular purpose'. Meaning of a text is not determined by a subjective response to the text, but it is the author who initiates a speech act in a particular language and it is the author who determines meaning (Vanhoozer 1998:232). This procedure also involves reading Crossan's writings in the same light – which is a model contrary to that practised by Crossan on the resurrection data. So the author as communicative agent presents a model for a text in which:

- Meaning is not determined by a private or community reader-response or a system of signs;

- However, ‘there are social conventions that communicative agents must respect to perform certain actions (e.g. promising)’;
- An author activates a system of language;
- Then an author initiates a speech act of discourse;
- It is ‘the author who *means*’;
- The meaning of a speech act is fixed by the writing of a text;
- While not all forms of doing are considered as meaning, all forms of meaning are forms of doing;
- ‘Concepts of textual meaning and meaningful action stand or fall together’ (Vanhoozer 1998:232);
- Readers and listeners make inferences and applications from what is read and heard, but these do not form the meaning of the speech act.

4.4.9.3 Author, interpreter and historical credibility

Paul Eddy has pointed to one of the ways forward in dealing with Crossan’s presuppositions (Eddy 1997:280-281). Crossan stated: ‘I take it for granted that early Christianity knew nothing about the passion beyond the fact itself’; ‘the passion narratives are not history remembered but prophecy historicized’, and there is only one independent source for these narratives, a source that is ‘now lost but used by Mark, John, and Peter’ (Crossan 1991:387; 1995:10). Eddy’s assessment was that this presupposition of prophecy historicized instead of history remembered is that ‘of the fundamentally fictional (or, more euphemistically, “creative”), and thus historically unreliable, nature of the passion tradition that undergirds Crossan’s entire enterprise. Thus it is this presupposition that requires a focused analysis in any critique of Crossan’s work’. Eddy wrote of ‘how vulnerable Crossan’s speculative proposals can be to a careful scrutiny, when taken on an individual basis’ (Eddy 1997:280-281).

A detailed examination of the historical veracity of the New Testament gospels is beyond the scope of this project. However, a testing of the historical nature of the resurrection narratives was pursued in §4.2.

Craig Blomberg’s investigation of the historical reliability of the gospels did not lead him to a historiography of scepticism like that of Crossan. After exploring an extensive range of gospel material, his assessment was that

> the gospels may be accepted as trustworthy accounts of what Jesus did and said. One cannot hope to prove the accuracy of every detail on purely historical grounds alone; there is simply not enough data available for that. But as investigation proceeds, the evidence becomes sufficient for one to declare that what can be checked is accurate, so that it is entirely proper to believe that what cannot be checked is probably accurate as well. Other conclusions, widespread though they are, seem not to stem from even-handed historical analysis but from religious or philosophical prejudice. As the Roman historian, A. N. Sherwin-White, once marvelled, “It is astonishing that while Graeco-Roman historians have been growing in confidence, the twentieth-century study of the Gospel narratives, *starting from no less promising material*, has taken so gloomy a turn.”[374] Such gloom should be replaced by a radiant endorsement of the historical reliability of the four gospels, and there are some encouraging signs that in places this is in fact beginning to occur
>
> (Blomberg 1987:254; emphasis in original)

Blomberg argued from the perspective that when the gospels are ‘subjected to the same type of historical scrutiny given to other writings of antiquity … they can stand up to such scrutiny admirably' but he admitted that 'this conclusion represents a "minority report" among biblical scholars worldwide' (Blomberg 1987:255). Barnett's more recent assessment was that 'N. T. Wright has demonstrated the importance and sustainability of arguments for the historical truth of the resurrection[375]…. The "rules of evidence" that apply to the study of the Greeks and the Romans must apply with equal rigor to the study of Christian origins' (Barnett 2005:180). Blomberg's review of Wright (2003) led him to the salutary view that 'the Thomas narrative in John 20 points a way forward for the skeptic who doesn't currently have room for a resurrection in his or her worldview. There are times when historical evidence is so strong that one must allow one's worldview to be challenged or admit that what one writes in the name of doing history is sheer presupposition or even prejudice' (Blomberg n d). This has particular application to Crossan's postmodern, reconstructive interactivism and its promotion of Jesus' resurrection being interpreted as a metaphor-parable.

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[374] This is from Sherwin-White (1963:187).

Regarding the criteria of historicity, Craig Evans (2007:48-51) considers the best criteria to be: (1) multiple attestation; (2) embarrassment; (3) dissimilarity; (4) Semiticisms and Palestinian background; and (5) coherence or consistency, while the latter 'functions in some ways as a catch-all' because it relates to 'material that is consistent with data already judged authentic on the basis of the other criteria' (Evans 2007:51). While Evans acknowledged that the criteria of historicity have made and can make 'useful contributions to the scholarly study of the historical Jesus', this is because it enables historians to provide 'good reasons for judging' whether a saying or deed attributed to Jesus was authentic. But he sees a problem 'in assuming that everything that is attributed to Jesus that does not enjoy support from one or more of the criteria should be regarded as inauthentic'. His view is that lack of support from these criteria 'does not necessarily mean that the saying or deed in question cannot derive from Jesus' (Evans 2007:51).

He understands that this is a 'problem' where 'many sceptical scholars, especially among the prominent members of the Jesus Seminar, go wrong'. When they misapply some of the criteria, such as dissimilarity and ignore or misunderstand others, such as 'Semiticisms and Palestinian background, they tend to assume that sayings and deeds not supported by the criteria must be judged as inauthentic. This severe, skeptical method leads to limited results, results that can be badly skewed', especially 'if the starting points themselves are off-base and wrong-headed'. An example of this is when there is misapplication of criteria to the New Testament gospels and the extra-canonical gospels, and sources are 'treated as though they were as ancient and as reliable as the canonical Gospels'. He considers that it is then that 'the problem of distortion is taken to new levels' (Evans 2007:51).

Part of this investigation has been to discern whether or not there has been a revisionist adaptation of the meaning and intention of Jesus' resurrection that is designed to negate any prospects of an interpretation that is supportive of Jesus' bodily resurrection.

Wright noted that the presence of women at the empty tomb (evidence in Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-10; Jn 20:1) made it 'frankly impossible to imagine that they were inserted in the tradition after Paul's day' because 'the tradition which Paul is quoting, precisely for evangelistic and apologetic use, has carefully taken the women out of it'. He claimed 'the underlying point is more ruthlessly historical' and it is not satisfactory to have Mark or anyone else 'making up a would-be apologetic legend about an empty tomb *and having women be the ones who find it*. The point has been repeated over and over in scholarship, but its full impact has not always been felt: women were simply not acceptable as legal witnesses'. He raised the example of the debate between Origen and Celsus to demonstrate that the critics of Christianity could seize on and scoff at a tale about the women being witnesses if they were invented and they could create 'stories of fine, upstanding, reliable male witnesses being first at the tomb'. One would expect 'stories of women running to the tomb in the half-light would quietly be dropped' and a list of 'solid witnesses' to replace them. But that was not done. The women as unreliable and unacceptable legal witnesses were retained in all four gospel accounts (Wright 2003:607-608; emphasis in original).

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[375] Here he refers to Wright (2003:3-10).

The criterion of embarrassment helps to establish the historicity with its application to women who were the first witnesses of the empty tomb (see Wright 2003:607). It would have been an embarrassment to the Jewish leaders who regarded them as unreliable witnesses.

> The stories about Jesus which comprise the written Gospel are uninventable. Had the Gospel writers sought to "invent" a Jesus acceptable to the church and the world at the time of writing, they would scarcely have written about a man of dubious parentage, a lowly tradesman from unheard-of Nazareth in obscure Galilee who finished his life disgraced on a Roman cross for treason against the Emperor. The improbability of the details supports their veracity.
>
> (Barnett 1994:84)

Crossan's case for the innocuous empty tomb and postmodern meaning could have been established on a firmer foundation if he had dealt with the credibility of the New Testament writers and the historicity or otherwise of these documents. This dimension was deliberately missing from his discourse. This was exposed in the abduction of §4.2.1.2.4 where Crossan could not be consistent in implementing his own postmodern definition of history. When he used some examples from history, he applied the traditional model and not his announced postmodern reconstructive perspective. Examples are given in §4.3.1.2.3.

Crossan's solution to the resurrection dilemma could have been in enhanced by:

4.4.9.4 Refusal to accept impositions on the texts

Some of Crossan's main impositions on the text include: (a) Failure to read the text of Scripture as a linguistic, semantic, contextual document (thus promoting an anti-hermeneutical paradigm); (b) Anti-supernaturalism; (c) Postmodern, reconstructive interactivism which amounts to subjective free play with the texts, allowing Crossan and anyone else to impose their wills on the hermeneutics of the text, and (d) Failure to treat the New Testament documents as historical.

A brief examination reveals:

4.4.9.4.1 Failure to read the text for its plain meaning

Throughout the testing of this hypothesis, examples from Crossan's writings have been given of how he failed to read the gospel texts according to their common, plain, semantic understanding. Ladd's insights were that something had to have happened to create faith in 'disheartened, unbelieving disciples'. He rejected Willi Marxsen's view that belief in the resurrection 'was an inference derived from personal faith'. To the contrary, the evidence from the gospels is that for these dejected, unbelieving disciples, something had to happen to create faith. 'That something was nothing less than appearances of the risen Jesus to the disciples. Faith did not beget faith. Bornkamm has seen this clearly. He states, "It is just as certain that the appearances of the risen Christ and the word of his witnesses have in the first place given rise to this faith"' (Ladd 1975:100).

If Crossan had read the text for its plain meaning and not for an imposed meaning, he would have concluded similar to Bornkamm, Ladd and N T Wright.

4.4.9.4.2 An invalid anti-supernaturalist presupposition

Crossan's acceptance of the plain meaning of the biblical text on the resurrection is doomed before he starts because his *a priori* worldview refuses to accept the supernatural evidence related in the text. See §3.2 for an explanation of his anti-supernaturalism. Geisler's summation of resurrection issues was that the 'overwhelming evidence' supports the position that Jesus died physically on the cross and 'rose from the grave in that same physical body'. While acknowledging that the classic attempts to avoid this conclusion are without foundation, his assessment was that 'they are all based on a faulty anti-supernaturalistic assumption that what happens only once is implausible, or on the unjustified assertion that the New Testament documents or witnesses are unreliable' (Geisler 1989:86). There is an added factor with Crossan that will be addressed next – his addition of a postmodern reconstructive sting to his hermeneutics of the gospel texts that deal with Jesus' resurrection.

Thus Crossan's presuppositional anti-supernaturalism is antithetical to a biblical statement such as that expressed in Mark 9:9 that the Son of Man ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ (had risen from the dead).[376] The preposition, ἐκ, used here and also in Luke 24:46; John 2:22; Acts 3:15; Romans 4:24 and 1 Corinthians 15:12, indicates that Jesus' resurrection involved supernatural action from among dead bodies. While Mark 9:9 indicates that Jesus' resurrection body was material in nature, the use of ἐκ affirms that he rose 'from out of' corpses in the grave. Acts 13:29-30 affirms that the supernatural action was that 'God raised him from the tomb' (13:30), that is, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, out from the dead (ἐκ νεκρῶν).

Crossan perpetrates a begging the question (circular reasoning) logical fallacy[377] in which his premises are included in his conclusion. The premises are that God does not operate by performing supernatural miracles in the physical world (Crossan in Copan 1998:61). The conclusion is that 'maybe resurrection is simply a word-picture of Jesus' continuing presence among his followers' (Crossan & Watts 1996:156). However, for Crossan 'it has nothing to do, literally, with a body coming out of a tomb, or a tomb being found empty, or visions, or anything else. All these are dramatic ways of expressing the faith' and for him 'the heart of resurrection … is that the power of God is now available through Jesus, unconfined by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). This is fallacious reasoning 'because simply assuming that the conclusion is true (directly or indirectly) in the premises does not constitute evidence for that conclusion' (Labossiere 1995).

Crossan has demonstrated his presuppositional, anti-supernatural bias but he has not allowed the resurrection texts from the New Testament gospels to speak for themselves. The clearest way forward is to allow the biblical text to speak for itself and to follow Crossan's literal request, 'Read the text and get the story right' (Crossan 2007:138) or 'when all else fails, read the text' (Borg & Crossan 2009:159).

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[376] This insight is based on Geisler (1989:47).

[377] This fallacy is based on the definition and explanations provided by LaBossiere (1995).

4.4.9.4.3 Postmodern reconstructive capers

The failure of postmodern, reconstructive interactivism was exposed in Hypothesis 9 in §4.3. There it was demonstrated how this inventive hermeneutic is shipwrecked on the 'rocks' of contradiction, inconsistency and a self-defeating methodology. Are 'capers' too strong an assessment for postmodern reconstruction? Hardly, when one observes the inventive, creativity that Crossan has used to generate new meaning for a text where such a meaning does not exist. Reader-response action was shown to castrate the author's meaning for Crossan's (or any reader's) imposition on the text.

Marcus Borg adopts a similar perspective to Crossan: 'It seems to me that whether something happened to the corpse of Jesus is irrelevant to the truth of Easter'. However, there are elements of wavering in his view by agreeing with and also imposing on the data: 'To be sure, resurrection could involve something happening to a corpse, namely the transformation of a corpse; but it need not. Thus, as a Christian I am very comfortable not knowing whether the tomb was empty. Indeed, the discovery of Jesus' skeletal remains would not be a problem. It doesn't matter, because Easter is about resurrection, not resuscitation' (Borg 1998b:122-123).

To say that the corpse of Jesus is irrelevant to the truth of Easter because it is not resuscitation, is like saying that the car smash on the freeway is irrelevant to the truth of a traffic jam because the smash is not a wreck but a broken down vehicle. Redefining or reconstructing an incident does not alter the fact that a car smash was responsible for the traffic jam on the freeway. No amount of creative invention (fiction) changes what happened. The greater problem is that for Crossan, Borg and this writer who invented the freeway crash, the writers are playing with factuality to serve their own *a priori* agendas. Postmodern reconstruction flounders on its own principles. It is impossible to have a constructive discussion with those who want to subjectively change the content of what has happened or was written.

4.4.9.4.4 Unhistorical New Testament documents

Crossan does not treat the New Testament as containing reliable, historical documents. A critique of this perspective has been covered in Hypothesis 10 in §4.2. 'The resurrection narratives in the New Testament are not historical' was the hypothesis that was falsified. Crossan's case for the resurrection would be enhanced if he addressed historical issues surrounding the nature of the biblical documents that contain the resurrection evidence.

4.4.9.5 The emergence of triumphal Christianity

The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ launched a worldwide movement of immense proportions, for which the Pew Research Center (2015) has provided these data:

> A comprehensive demographic study of more than 200 countries finds that there are 2.18 billion Christians of all ages around the world, representing nearly a third of the estimated 2010 global population of 6.9 billion. Christians are also geographically widespread – so far-flung, in fact, that no single continent or region can indisputably claim to be the center of global Christianity. A century ago, this was not the case. In 1910, about two-thirds of the world's Christians lived in Europe, where the bulk of Christians had been for a millennium, according to historical estimates by the Center

> for the Study of Global Christianity.[378] Today, only about a quarter of all Christians live in Europe (26%). A plurality – more than a third – now are in the Americas (37%). About one in every four Christians lives in sub-Saharan Africa (24%), and about one-in-eight is found in Asia and the Pacific (13%).
>
> (Pew Research Center 2011)

This research indicates that there has been exceptional growth of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa where the percentage has ‘climbed from 9% in 1910 to 63% in 2010, while in the Asia-Pacific region it rose from 3% to 7%’ (Pew Research Center 2011).

How could this situation develop if the crucified Jesus was buried in a shallow grave to be eaten by scavenging dogs? How would it be possible for a metaphorical, parabolic resurrection with apparitional appearances to unleash such a worldwide phenomenon that has grown to encompass approximately one-third of the world’s population?

J I Packer captured it succinctly as to what led to the emergence of a triumphal and expanding Christianity: ‘The case for the historical reality of Jesus’ bodily Resurrection’ is strengthened by dwelling on

> the sheer impossibility of accounting for the triumphant emergence of Christianity in Jerusalem, a faith based on acknowledging Jesus as crucified Messiah and risen Lord, without the supposition that his tomb was found mysteriously empty. If the authorities could have produced Jesus’ corpse, they would have exploded the Resurrection faith for good; the fact that it was not exploded indicates that they did not produce the corpse, and their failure to produce it, even without Matthew’s statement that they started a rumor that the disciples had stolen it, shows that they could not produce it. The idea that those who constantly risked their freedom and their lives proclaiming the Resurrection faith had in fact stolen the body, and therefore knew all along that their preaching was not true, is unbelievable…. Claims to have seen Jesus after his death could not have started such a faith had Jesus’ corpse been available for inspection.
>
> (Packer1987:149)

4.4.10 Summary of the evidence on meaning and the empty tomb

It was clarified that there generally are two understandings of meaning historically. They are determinate (defined, definite limits, conclusive and final) and indeterminate (not fixed in extent, indefinite, and vague). Crossan’s choice is indeterminate and this is explained by his definition of history. The influences on Crossan’s perspective came from Gadamer, Derrida and reader-response theories. This led to less prominence given to reading the content of a text by Crossan.

The impact on Crossan’s approach to the text was that he concluded that metaphor was the primary meaning; the author’s content died at the expense of textual free play, and there was an *a priori* imposition of his postmodern reconstructive worldview on the text. Thus, when determinateness is separated from meaning, it becomes impossible to affirm the literal, historical nature of the resurrection accounts, including that of the empty tomb. The result was that Crossan chose socio-pragmatic hermeneutics which became his projections of ‘Easter means for me’. Such an idiosyncratic, subjective approach becomes a self-defeating model because it was expected that this would not be the way Crossan would want his own publications read and interpreted.

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[378] A footnote at this point stated: ‘Historical figures throughout the executive summary are courtesy of Todd M. Johnson of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass. Johnson is co-editor of the *Atlas of Global Christianity,* Edinburgh University Press, 2009’.

An examination of the nature of Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that Crossan, the 'imaginative historian', needed to have his postmodern perspective weighed according to the available evidence. The evidence on the nature of Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was dead, his resurrection was not resuscitation, and the resurrection appearances were not apparitions similar to those in spiritism. The indications are that the tomb was empty. An examination was pursued of resurrection for the Greeks, Judaism and of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. The evidence supported a literal, bodily resurrection instead of a metaphorical conclusion and his body was σῶμα and σὰρξ (interchangeable words) both before and after the resurrection. This resurrection involved a supernatural intervention by God, which is contrary to Crossan's anti-supernaturalist worldview. His subjective, 'what Easter means for me' interpretation prevents him from objectively being able to 'read the text' (his language) and follow the hermeneutical principles necessary for a plain reading of the text.

Specific examples such as Emmaus and people seeing, eating and touching Jesus were pursued to demonstrate that this was a bodily resurrection of 'flesh and bone'. The early church fathers affirmed this position. It was concluded that Jesus' resurrected body was the same but different from that prior to the crucifixion.

So how is meaning determined? The evidence points to determinate meaning that is found in the text and not an indeterminate worldview imposed on the text. The meaning of the resurrection is salvific, as determined by a plain reading of the text. The evidence from the closing chapters of each gospel demonstrates that the tomb was empty. The evidence of the bodily resurrection infers the tomb was empty. Thus, it does matter that there is an empty tomb as that is what the text affirms.

Several suggestions were made towards a solution to challenge the crisis of postmodern reconstruction promoted by Crossan's hermeneutic.

How did Crossan's data on the nature of Jesus' resurrection compare when evaluated according to recommended standards? These standards included,

(1) Reading the text for the common meaning of the way things are in reality when determining the meaning of the text;
(2) Rejection of an anti-hermeneutical paradigm (his refusal to accept grammatical, semantic, contextual meanings of texts
(3) Rejection of postmodern reconstructive hermeneutics of the text;
(4) Dismissal of anti-supernaturalism;
(5) Acceptance of the New Testament resurrection documents as being historical in nature.

The author has not really died (and neither has God) but, to use Vanhoozer's words, in reader-response theories, 'the author is never really absent. The reader has simply taken his or her place' (Vanhoozer 1998:90). He explains further that in 'deconstructing dogma: undoing the idolatry of knowledge', the announcements of the deaths of God and of the author also 'declares the death of meaning (viz., determinate textual sense) and interpretation (viz., correct understanding)'. This is what Alvin Plantinga has called 'creative anti-realism' (in Vanhoozer 1998:183). For Crossan, there is free play with textuality, the Ten Commandments become parable and the gospels are considered mega-parables. Challenges to the free play methodology were presented.

Paul Barnett's conclusion concerning Crossan's understanding of the birth of Christianity was that 'Crossan's Christianity is an idealization based on his vision for social justice expressed in shared table fellowship. But it hardly throbs with the conviction that God's hour has struck in the coming of the Messiah, who died "for" others and whom God raised alive on the third day' (Barnett 2005:214).

An evaluation of this hypothesis highlights two different worldviews regarding the resurrection. It is an either/or challenge: Will it be a choice of biblical revelation interpreted according to literal-historical hermeneutics through a plain reading of the text or will the choice be that of postmodern hermeneutics, which involves polyvalent, free play, subjective interpretations?

4.4.11 Verification or falsification of Hypothesis 21

The evidence discussed in testing this hypothesis, indicates an imposition of a free play, relativistic, multivalent, postmodern, non-supernatural understanding of Jesus' resurrection on the text. This came in the form of Crossan's idiosyncratic meanings that have no basis for objective, hermeneutical testing from the text of Scripture. It has been found that it does matter what a person believes about the tomb of Jesus being empty or not and that evidence is gleaned from the text of Scripture and not from the mind of the reader. The tomb was empty on resurrection morning and Jesus' fleshly body was seen, touched and there was eating of food with him following the resurrection, prior to his ascension. Salvific meaning was obtained from the determinate understanding of the text.

Therefore, the hypothesis that it does not matter whether Jesus' tomb was empty or not and what is important is the meaning of the empty tomb – independent of factuality – was falsified.

Chapter 5

Conclusions reached

How are a scholar's conclusions affected by a worldview that considers that Jesus' burial was in a shallow grave to be eaten by scavenging dogs? What are the effects of the empty tomb being a created story by Mark and its reality or otherwise is not important to the meaning of the resurrection? If Jesus' resurrection appearances were apparitions on a parallel with spiritistic visions, trances and altered states of consciousness, what does that mean for the nature of Jesus' resurrection? What happens when there is no historical validity to the New Testament Gospels and they are regarded as mega-parables, that is, mega-fictitious creations? 'Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens', according to Crossan (2012:5). What do presuppositions of postmodern, reconstructive, interactivism do to Crossan's conclusions of this example of Jesus' resurrection appearance? These issues were explored in this study. As indicated in §1.5.1, the hypothesis to be tested in this research is: *J D Crossan's presuppositions and methods, in his study of the resurrection of Jesus, are not valid when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection is taken into consideration.*

A model by Beaver and Geurts (2011) to more objectively isolate presuppositions was chosen. However, identification of presuppositions could only be reached on the basis of probability instead of surety.

How did this research proceed?

5.1 ESTABLISHING THE NEED: CHAPTER 1

5.1.1 Introducing the need and terms used

As an introductory chapter, terms were defined for this study of the historical Jesus, including stratification, postmodern deconstruction and mythology. Some emphasis was placed on the primary focus of this research – the definition of the term presupposition, and why an examination of Crossan's presuppositions regarding Jesus' resurrection is worthy of research. The Beaver and Geurts (2011) model to be used was outlined as a more objective base for identification of presuppositions.

A presupposition is a phenomenon by which speakers or writers mark linguistically the information that is 'taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content of a speech act. Expressions and constructions carrying presuppositions are called "presupposition triggers", forming a large class including definites and factive verbs' (Beaver & Geurts 2011).

The presuppositional 'triggers' suggested by Beaver and Geurts (2011; emphasis added) include:

(1) **Factives**: A factive verb confirms the truth of the following statement or clause. For example, 'I *know* that Crossan's view of the Cross Gospel was not affected by the Jesus Seminar's assessment of his position'.[379] *Know* is a factive verb. This can also be expressed in this form, 'Crossan's view of the Cross Gospel was not affected by the Jesus Seminar's assessment of his position'.

(2) **Aspectual verbs** such as *stop* or *continue*. An example could be, 'Linnemann has *discontinued* her use of many of the premises of the historical-critical method after her conversion to Christ'. Here *discontinued* is an aspectual verb.

(3) **Temporal clauses** that begin with conjunctions such as *before*, *after or since*.

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[379] All examples in this series were developed by this researcher.

(4) **Manner adverbs:** An example could be: ‘Crossan uses language *deceptively*’. Here *deceptively* is the manner adverb which conveys *how* an action is or should be performed.

(5) **Sortally restricted predicates of various categories:** A sortal is something that takes a numerical modifier. Therefore something that is sortally restricted means that predicates (or complements after the verb to be) have restricted boundaries. An example would be: ‘John was a bachelor monk’. This restricts his description to being an adult male.

(6) **Cleft sentences**: An example is: ‘Jesus set me free’, meaning that someone set me free.

(7) **Quantifiers:** For example, ‘I have written to every headmaster in North Lakes’. This restricts the statement to headmasters in the North Lakes suburb of northern Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

(8) **Definite descriptions:** As an example, ‘The historical Jesus scholar, J D Crossan, wagged his finger at the people when he made his presentation’. Thus, Crossan is a Jesus’ scholar with an idiosyncratic gesture in public speaking.

(9) **Names:** An example would be, ‘The author was Burton Mack’. So, Burton Mack has existed.

(10) **Intonation** (focus, contrast): For example, ‘He set me FREE (emphasis)’. So, someone set me free.

5.1.2 Methodology and its impact

In choosing this examination of Crossan’s presuppositions, the challenge of his methodology was surveyed with its impact on his stratification model. An overview was given of pointers to his presuppositional understanding of Jesus’ resurrection tradition.

5.1.2.1 The need for a more objective method of uncovering presuppositions

What are presuppositions and how are they objectively identified in any speech act, whether verbal or written?

5.1.3 The research gap

A research gap was identified as the need to use a more objective model for identifying presuppositions. This inquiry researched which presuppositions are influencing Crossan’s conclusions on the resurrection of Jesus. He acknowledged his use of autobiographical, theological and historical presuppositions and these were noted along with other researchers’ views of the effects of presuppositions on any researcher’s data.

This researcher raised questions concerning Crossan’s stratification model and his conclusions concerning Jesus’ resurrection. Some initial indicators of presuppositions were noted which included (but not comprehensive): His regard for the literary level being the most difficult; commitment to postmodern reconstructionism; acceptance of views of most critical scholars who accept his worldview; a hermeneutic of suspicion applied to the resurrection texts; historical research regarded as ‘unsalvageable’ and a bias against historical models of assessment; his search for a parabolic, metaphoric Jesus in the Gospels that are mega-parables and consummate theological fictions; prominence given to some extra-canonical documents (including *GPet* being in the first stratum); and exhortation for others (including movie producers) to read the biblical text but his failure to engage in a plain reading of the text himself.

The research gap was identified as the need for a more comprehensive understanding of Crossan's assumptions, especially using an objective model of identification.

5.1.4 Hypothesis' testing methodology

The problem investigated was stated along with the proposed hypothesis to be tested with a verification-falsification method:

5.2 METHODOLOGY PURSUED: CHAPTER 2

5.2.1 Methodology explained

This chapter explained the methodological approach that was used in this research. In defining the limits of the project, the nature of the Gospels as historical or non-critical documents was examined, including an assessment of whether they include mythology. Since Crossan's works show signs of some postmodern influences, reader-response theories of interpretation were critically scrutinised.

The methodology involved defining the topic in examining Crossan's presuppositions that then led to his conclusions concerning Jesus' resurrection tradition. Influential alternate answers to these presuppositions were assessed from the scholarly literature. This led to the formulation of a comprehensive conclusion to verify or falsify the hypothesis. This was accomplished by defending it against alternatives.

The following chapters involved an inductive investigation of the presuppositions influencing Crossan's perspective on Jesus' resurrection. Abduction, as a logical inference from new constructs discovered, was used throughout the study. Deductions were drawn from all views. So there was sometimes a repeated interplay of induction, abduction and deduction in the verificational method used to support or reject a hypothesis.

5.2.1.1 History as inferential

In uncovering the facts of history, a model was pursued that regarded an examination of history as a search for knowledge, but that knowledge (because of the chronological distance and fragmentary documents available) had to be inferential. To discover this knowledge, hypotheses are developed that were tested for verification or falsification. Here a critical realist epistemology was used.

5.2.1.1.1 The hypothesis-verification/falsification model

An examination was made of: (a) various approaches to historical method, (b) Crossan's historical method, and (c) establishing the framework of a scientific verification method that was used in this project.

After assessment of methodological options, the method adopted for this project was a verification model that included definition of a topic, a survey of influential alternate answers in dealing with the data, garnering relevant biblical data in chronological development, and formulating a conclusion that was defended against competing alternatives. This verification method used 'interrelated criteria of truth' that included testing for logical contradiction and empirical adequacy. Hypotheses were accepted that were non-contradictory, supported by adequate evidence, and could be affirmed without hypocrisy (Lewis & Demarest 1987:25). The research followed Meyer's (2002:80) suggested sequence of question, hypothesis and verification/falsification, within the framework recommended by Lewis and Demarest (1987:21-40).

The application of this method to Crossan's data led to a definition of the topic in association with the presuppositions Crossan used to arrive at his conclusion about the resurrection tradition that involved research into whether the Gospel resurrection data are historical or not. Crossan's perspective, by way of example, involved replacing a rewritten resurrection apparition back into the earthy life of Jesus, based on the *Cross Gospel* from the *Gospel of Peter* (Crossan 1991:396). He accepted the Gospels as non-historical documents that included mythology.

To better understand Crossan's perspective, the method involved assessing influential alternative answers to his presuppositions from the scholarly literature. Weighing alternatives included examinations of FC, RC, SC, and reader-response theories of Gospel interpretation.

Potential problems with the hypothesis-verification model were investigated and these included: (a) What is considered inclusive evidence of the data when genre and Gospel intentions are included? Wright's comment was that 'in history, it is *getting in the data* that really counts', but there are questions over whether it is 'getting in the data' when the data is considered a creation of the early church by some researchers (Wright 1992:106; emphasis in the original). (b) The 'criterion of simplicity' often encounters historical data that are untidy and often 'unrepeatable and unlikely' (Wright 1992:107).

Using the hypothesis-verification model involved inductively accumulating data from Crossan's publications, interviews and mass media coverage in preparation for the construction of hypotheses to be tested by use of other data and reasoning for this research project.

5.2.1.1.2 Critical realist epistemology

How is one able to read Crossan's publications to obtain a knowledge of the content of his research without understanding that there is a difference between the thing known (the speech act) and the knower (the reader or hearer). While this seems to be a common sense approach to obtaining knowledge, it is being challenged by a postmodern epistemology in practice. It was discovered that critical realism is an epistemology in which, through the process of knowing, two aspects are acknowledged: (a) the thing known is distinct from the knower (hence 'realism'), and (b) the only access to this reality is through 'appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence "critical")'. This means that there will be a critical reflection on the objects or products of inquiry into reality (Wright 1992:35).

5.2.2 Indices of historicity examined

The various historical indices used to assist with establishing historicity of data were explained, along with objections to the criteria. These indices were: discontinuity or dissimilarity, irreducible personal idiom, resistive form, multiple and multiform attestations, Semiticisms and Palestinian background, embarrassment, coherence and plausibility. Overall, the priority of indices from various scholars included dissimilarity, multiple attestation, embarrassment, Semitisms and Palestinian environment, and coherence.

5.2.3 Divergent approaches to sources

There was an overview of two divergent approaches to sources in examining the historical Jesus. This included a history of the quests for the historical Jesus, from the *Old Quest* (Reimarus to Schweitzer), to the *No-Quest* period between Schweitzer and Schillibeeckx, and the *New* or *Second Quest* which is from Bornkamm (1960)[380] to the *Third Quest* which is dated from the 1980s to the present. Some characteristics of the *Third Quest* were identified. Within this *Third Quest*, Funk identified a *Renewed New Quest* in which he and the Jesus Seminar were involved from 1985.

The two contemporary divergent approaches are the *Third Quest* versus the *Renewed New Quest*. The latter *Quest* seeks to discriminate authentic from inauthentic materials using three tests that were outlined, while the *Third Quest's* emphasis has an historical edge.

5.2.4 Proforma summary for identification of presuppositions

The chapter concluded with a proforma summary of criteria to use in identifying presuppositions, based on the Beaver and Geurts model (2011) outlined in Chapter 2. What is discovered when these criteria of presuppositional identification are applied to Crossan's speech acts? This was pursued in Chapter 3.

5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF RESURRECTION PRESUPPOSITIONS: CHAPTER 3

Here an extensive examination of Crossan's data was conducted in an endeavour to ascertain his prominent presuppositions on the resurrection tradition of Jesus. This assessment used the Beaver and Geurts model (2011; see §1.1.7.3.1 and §2.6). It was emphasised that these conclusions do not exceed the estimate of probability as identification of presuppositions is not irrefutable. This is because the evidence was in indicators (pointers) that were pursued of how presuppositions may be exposed in an author's writings. In this project, particular emphasis was placed on attempting to identify key presuppositions that may lead to the discovery of a *crux presupposition* that may have flow-on effects to other presuppositions in Crossan's speech acts.

5.3.1 Application of an inductive method to isolate Crossan's presuppositions

An inductive methodology was used, using the Beaver and Geurts model (2011), for identification of presuppositions in Crossan's publications. He claimed no spurious objectivity for his method but he acknowledged the support of those who represented his intellectual debts.

5.3.2 Literary problems with the Gospels

Crossan's literary problems with the Gospels were acknowledged by him as relating to discrepancies (or contradictions) when Gospel accounts are compared horizontally, which he claimed were caused by deliberate theological interpretations by the Gospel writers.

5.3.2.1 The controversial Cross Gospel as original source

Crossan's controversial use of the *Cross Gospel* contained in the *Gospel of Peter* as the original source of the passion-resurrection story that was adopted and adapted by the canonical Gospel writers led to his view being rejected by his colleagues, the fellows, in the Jesus Seminar. His working hypothesis was that the original stratum, the *Cross Gospel*, 'had only the guards at the tomb and nothing whatsoever about the women at the tomb. It was Mark himself who created the empty tomb story and its failed anointing'. Crossan's claim was that it was 'a fitting climax to the literary and theological motifs of his gospel' (Crossan 1995:185).

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[380] The original date for this publication in German was in 1956 (Witherington 1997:11).

5.3.3 Crossan's anti-supernaturalism

Several presuppositions were examined concerning Crossan's anti-supernaturalism. For him, miracles were taken symbolically and were not literal, supernatural interventions in the world by God. Although they operate through the screen of the natural, they are associated with social changes and can be interpreted as metaphor. Nature miracles of Jesus are regarded by Crossan as creedal statements.

5.3.4 Crossan's own formulation of the resurrection data

Twenty-three presuppositions were identified with Crossan's interpretation of Jesus' resurrection. These were preparation for the development of eighteen hypotheses to be tested relating to the resurrection in Chapter 4. These were to be tested for verification or falsification.

His interpretation of Jesus' resurrection is based on his own formulation from the data and does not use a literal-factual reading of the text. His resurrectional conclusions were:

(1) There was no literal, historical or supernatural bodily resurrection of Jesus;
(2) The appearances of Jesus after his resurrection were apparitions, visions or trances with parallels in spiritistic literature;
(3) The writings about Jesus' resurrection were not factual history but were literary fiction, metaphor and parable, some of it being created by the Gospel authors. There was no resuscitated body;
(4) The passion-resurrection events were not unique to Jesus in order to grant a special privilege to Christianity;
(5) In the description of Jesus' resurrection, metaphors were used to express Jesus' continuing presence of empowerment for the first Christians;
(6) The primary emphasis was to assign meaning to Jesus' resurrection, which was that the general resurrection had begun. Jesus' resurrection does not deal with the afterlife, but Jesus' post-Easter appearances were literary fiction to tell of the struggles over power and authority in the early church. It deals with personal and political transformations that are not exclusivist, but are pluralist in application;
(7) The appearance stories after the resurrection are reflections of Jesus' followers after his death; and
(8) Historical reconstruction, interpreted for a postmodern world, is how to present the divine manifestation of Christianity, including the resurrection. It is not done, once for all, but has to be redone for the different needs to be reinterpreted in each generation, based on the issues of that era.

This research converted the twenty-seven presuppositions (§3.3) into eighteen hypotheses to be tested (see §4.1).

5.4 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 10: THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE NOT HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

5.4.1 From presupposition to hypotheses

Space limitations demanded that only three hypotheses could be tested as these represented some of Crossan's major emphases: (a) The non-historical nature of the New Testament documents, (b) the New Testament documents promoted a postmodern, reconstructive, interactive paradigm, and (c) an example of the application of this paradigm was that it was irrelevant whether Jesus' tomb was empty or not. The importance lay in the tomb's meaning.

5.4.2 Why the resurrection narratives are not historical for Crossan

The testing of this hypothesis revealed that Crossan had redefined the nature of history to include his own perception and presuppositions: '*History is the past reconstructed interactively by the present through argued evidence in public discourse*' (Crossan 1999:3; emphasis in original). Therefore, it could not be expected for Crossan to affirm a traditional approach to historical investigation.

The primary explanation given for his assessment for why the resurrection narratives could not be ratified as historical documents by Crossan was because historical, in the traditional sense (see §2.5.2; §4.2.1.1), had been redefined by him to confirm a postmodern, deconstructionist paradigm that was not amicable with the elements of historiography affirmed by historians; whether Christian or non-Christian, throughout human history.[381] Crossan has thus engaged in a question begging logical fallacy by which the conclusion is a restatement of the beginning presupposition.

This created a perplexing anomaly for Crossan with his,

(1) Self-contradictions when he failed to apply exclusively his postmodern approach to history by lapsing into a traditional interpretation of history (see the abduction §4.2.1.2). He was inconsistent in the application of his own definition of history, thus creating philosophical crushers – contradictions.

(2) He imposed *a priori* premises on some of the data (see §4.2.1.2.5). These impositions included: (a) Postmodern reconstruction where the object and subject challenge and change each other; (b) Lack of systematic consistency. This is seen in his application of postmodern reconstruction of historical paradigms. It is also seen in his claim that he spends 'no time citing other scholars to show how wrong they are. Those who are cited represent my intellectual debt' (Crossan 1991:xxxiv). This inconsistency is uncovered in §4.2.1.2.5 (i). (c) He rejected the supernatural as intervention and accepted it as process, which is metaphorical interpretation by which deprived people take back control over their own bodies, hopes, and destinies. (d) Support for the *Cross Gospel* of the *Gospel of Peter* in the first stratum (a premise rejected by the Jesus Seminar); (e) Independence of the *Gospel of Thomas*; (f) His support for plural attestation of a source in the first stratum (see Crossan 1991:xxxii-xxxiii) is abdicated when he promotes his own agenda. This was seen in his approach to the Lord's Prayer, two as one, and Supper and Eucharist (see §4.2.1.2.5(g) for details). (g) Commitment to FC and RC principles for changing three major layers for retention, development and creation of material. (h) Metaphorical interpretation of the Gospels and the Gospels treated as mega-parables; (i) Jesus as hero and not 'god' or 'spirit'. He was half-god and half-human, thus supporting the sacrophilia and not the sacrophobic view (see §4.2.1.2.6 (a)). (j) The historical Jesus was located at the intersection of three independent vectors, which were cross-cultural anthropology, Graeco-Roman

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[381] This has been investigated in §4.2.1.1

and especially Jewish history, and the literary or textual vector. (k) Prophecy is historicised rather than history remembered in historical understanding.
But there is more! Crossan's own interpretations (including speculation and opinion) were observed with language such as, 'I understand'; 'I consider that'; 'I presume that'; 'in my view'; 'maybe'; 'I determine that sequence'; and 'it is quite likely, it seems to me' (see §4.2.1.2.7).

(3) Evidence was uncovered in this chapter which discovered that Crossan did not inductively accept the plain meaning of the biblical text for his interpretations.

(4) Evidence was provided to expose how he engaged in the imposition of his opinionated reason on some of the biblical material associated with the historical Jesus and Jesus' resurrection. Richard R Niebuhr was addressing metaphysical issues of a previous generation and unmasked one of Crossan's major difficulties with the Gospel evidence on the resurrection narratives and Crossan's postmodern *a priori* interpretation. Niebuhr's assessment was that 'when history is dissolved by meta-history, the questions of the historians have been begged, not answered'. Niebuhr exposed the fact 'that it forgets that we do not have the option of thinking either historically or metaphysically. We have only the option to think historically about historical events, or historically about the metaphysical implications of such events'. While he wrote in 1957, Niebuhr understood that 'neither the *a priori* metaphysical approach nor the historical critical method as hitherto encountered has shown itself adequate to the peculiar problems raised by the necessity of interpreting the resurrection of Jesus' (Niebuhr 1957:22, 23).

5.4.3 Crossan's failure

By extension, with Crossan's definition of history as postmodern, reconstructive and interactive, on too many occasions he commits the logical fallacy of begging the question. He does not answer the historical issue of whether Jesus' resurrection was an historical resurrection in the traditional sense. Instead, he applies his postmodern views of history (but not consistently).

Question begging is an argument that professor of philosophy, Michael LaBossiere, explained 'as a fallacy in which the premises include the claim that the conclusion is true or (directly or indirectly) assume that the conclusion is true' (LaBossiere 1995). It is fallacious reasoning and logical discussions about the historical Jesus are inhibited severely when Crossan uses this philosophy. 'It is a circular argument, where the conclusion actually becomes the premise' and 'if you start out with the conclusion as the first premise, it really doesn't matter what the second premise is, you can still reach the conclusion you want'. The application to Crossan is that the nature of the resurrection cannot be answered, based on the historical evidence, because 'the question being asked is given the desired answer before any reasoning is done' (Geisler & Brooks 1990:100).

In much of this researcher's reading of Crossan's literature, his presumptive acceptance of a postmodern definition of history overflows his conclusions with many postmodern examples but this postmodern reconstruction is not consistently applied. Readers of Crossan are exposed to his premise as conclusion: Instead of reading an historical text inductively, as one would with the local newspaper or Crossan's actual publications, and allowing the text to provide the definition of the nature of history or contemporary issues for itself, readers have his postmodern epistemology of history foisted on the evidence and conclusion by Crossan.

Evidence was provided (§4.3.1.2.5; §4.4) that an *a priori* postmodern approach and the historical critical method of applying postmodernism to the data show themselves to have peculiar epistemological problems when applied to the events of Jesus' resurrection.

Richard R Niebuhr's assessment of the resurrection and history applies to Crossan's understanding when Niebuhr stated that if theologians wanted 'to abandon the realm of ordinary history when they speak of the resurrection of Jesus', then 'they must also abandon these narratives of recognition, for non-historical revelation can make no use of historical signs'. He acknowledged that for some, the bodily resurrection has questions because the meaning of resurrection faith was associated with Jesus' resurrection appearances being 'independently and tangibly present to the disciples'. His response was: 'Apart from that, common sense argues, the resurrection is meaningless' and he then stated that if his argument is valid, 'that the narratives are about encounters centered in recognition and identification – then we can affirm that the resurrection appearances shared in the same kind of independence as all historical events' (Niebuhr 1957:174).

N T Wright, while recognising the various works of 'the brilliant writer J. Dominic Crossan', affirmed Stephen Moore's assessment that Crossan's 'work subverts itself through his insistence on trying, at the same time as he is deconstructing the texts, to discover the historical Jesus through and behind them'. Therefore, Wright's judgement is that 'the way is hard that leads to genuine deconstructionism, and those who follow it consistently are few' (Wright 1992:60). This research has demonstrated this with Crossan's example of his inability to apply his own definition of history consistently in his publications. Wright asks: 'Can one, as a good deconstructionist, ever hope to find *any* historical referent, even another deconstructionist (as Crossan supposes Jesus to have been)' (Wright 1992:60, n. 34; emphasis in original)?

Therefore, hypothesis 10 was falsified, based on the demonstrated evidence that Crossan used a question begging logical fallacy in defining history and thus skewing the evidence to support his own point of view.

5.5 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 9: THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION FOR CHRISTIANITY IS INTERPRETED BY RECONSTRUCTION FOR A POSTMODERN WORLD. IT IS NOT DONE ONCE FOR ALL BUT IS REINTERPRETED FOR EACH GENERATION'S ISSUES

A critique of Crossan's postmodern philosophy that determines his understanding of history, was provided in §4.3 with the testing of Hypothesis 9. How then, does the evidence stack up for a postmodern, reconstructive interpretation for Jesus' resurrection? What are the implications if it has to be reinterpreted for each contemporary generation?

This analysis included an examination of the hermeneutics of reconstruction, which involved differentiating between the knower and the known and discerning semiotic influences. The study was delimited to history and linguistics. Seminal postmodern thinkers were explored to discern their impact on contemporary emphases. Meaning and reader-response were pursued in an environment of deconstruction and relativism with their impact on the death of the author and the death of God. This revealed Crossan's creative understanding of the resurrection where the biblical text cannot have factual content.

The damage of linguistic and historical reconstruction was examined and it was demonstrated from Crossan's examples how it unravels text and history. Evidence was provided to challenge his understanding of resurrection myth and miracle and to expose his reconstructive dogmatism.

In appraising the core of this hypothesis, verification or falsification of postmodern reconstruction, it was found that: (a) there needs to be a subject-object distinction; (b) reconstruction 'castrates the text' and thus (c) mutilates the voice of the author; (d) *a priori* metaphorical interpretation imposes on the text; (e) it comes with its own dogmatism; (f) it does not allow the text to speak for itself by imposing on the text an unwarranted redefinition of history; and (g) reconstructed history trumps exegesis of the text (Vanhoozer 2005c:20). Thus, Crossan comes to Scripture with an *a priori* postmodern, reconstructive presupposition of the pluralism of meanings for the text. He does not allow the text to speak for itself and provide its plain meaning.

Thus, hypothesis 9 tests Crossan's divine manifestation of Christianity through a postmodern hermeneutic of reconstruction by which Christianity is redone over and over, reinterpreted for each generation, based on the contemporary issues.

In the seven points of §4.3.6, a summary of the evidence used to test this hypothesis was provided. It demonstrated how a postmodern, reconstructive, interactive hermeneutic is shipwrecked on the 'rocks' of contradiction, inconsistency and a self-defeating methodology.

Therefore Hypothesis 9 was falsified, based on the evidence examined.

5.6 TESTING HYPOTHESIS 12: IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT A PERSON BELIEVES ABOUT JESUS' TOMB, WHETHER IT WAS EMPTY OR NOT. THE IMPORTANCE IS THE MEANING OF THE EMPTY TOMB, WHICH IS INDEPENDENT OF ITS FACTUALITY

After examining Crossan's own statements about the independence of meaning of the empty tomb from its factuality, some emerging issues included: the meaning of 'meaning'; how are semiotics and semantics and meaning associated? The impacts of determinate and indeterminate understandings on meaning were investigated along with the association of meaning with objectivity and worldview.

Other influences on Crossan's understanding of reconstructive meaning included the philosophies of Gadamer, Derrida and other reader-response theorists. The impact of these views on Crossan's analysis of Jesus is seen in this kind of question and answer about his postmodern reconstructive Jesus: 'What if "Jesus" had been as deliberately and honestly invented as was, say, the "Good Samaritan" or the "Prodigal Son"? What – if anything – would have been lost to Christianity?' He answered: 'Nothing more or less *than an actual life* of nonviolent distributive justice as the revelation of the character of God. But could you not get that just as well from a nonhistorical figure in a magnificent parable? Not really. But why? What is at stake?' (Crossan 2012:251; emphasis in original). The issue at stake concerns the actual life, death, and resurrection of the person of Jesus, but that issue is camouflaged with his making the entire gospels into mega-parables. For him a parable is 'a fictional story invented for moral or theological purposes' (Crossan 2012:3).

In testing this hypothesis, it was clarified that there generally are two primary understandings of meaning historically. They are determinate (defined, definite limits, conclusive and final) and indeterminate (not fixed in extent, indefinite, and vague). Crossan chose indeterminate meaning and this harmonised with his definition of history. Here the influences of Gadamer, Derrida and reader-response theorists can be seen. This led to a demise of acceptance of the content of a speech act by Crossan.

What impact did this approach have on Crossan's conclusions? Metaphor was the primary meaning, thus causing an author's content to die. In its place there was development of textual free play and an *a priori* imposition of his postmodern reconstructive worldview on the text. Thus, when determinate, fixed meaning is separated from understanding, there is no interest in affirming the literal, historical nature of the resurrection accounts, including that of the empty tomb. New outcomes emerged for Crossan and these included socio-pragmatic hermeneutics which included his personal projections of 'Easter means for me' (Crossan & Watts 1996:161). Such an idiosyncratic, subjective approach became a self-defeating model because it destroys objective content in a document. Surely that would not be the way Crossan would want his own publications read and interpreted so that the reader understood what Crossan wanted to convey.

This researcher's examination of the nature of Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that Crossan's 'imaginative' historical creativity needed to have his postmodern perspective weighed according to the available evidence. The evidence on the nature of Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was dead; the resurrection was not resuscitation; and the resurrection appearances were not apparitions similar to those in spiritism. The indications are that the tomb was empty and Jesus was seen, was touch by, and had a meal with others. An examination was pursued of resurrection for the Greeks, Judaism, and of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. The evidence supported a literal, bodily resurrection instead of a metaphorical, parabolic, fictitious conclusion and Jesus' resurrected body was σῶμα and σὰρξ (interchangeable words) both before and after the resurrection. The evidence indicated that Jesus' resurrection involved a supernatural intervention by God, something that was contrary to Crossan's anti-supernaturalist worldview. His subjective, 'what Easter means for me' interpretation prevented him from objectively being able to 'read the text' (his language) and follow the hermeneutical principles necessary for a plain reading of the text.

Specific examples were examined, including Emmaus and people seeing, eating and touching Jesus, to demonstrate that this was a bodily resurrection of 'flesh and bone'. This position was confirmed by the early church fathers. Therefore, it was concluded that Jesus' resurrected body was the same (but different) from that prior to the crucifixion.

So what is the meaning of Jesus' resurrection? The evidence supports determinate meaning that is found in the fixed text and not Crossan's indeterminate worldview of meaning imposed on the text. The meaning of the resurrection is salvific (see Ac 17:30b-32; Rm 4:25; 1 Cor 15:1-4, 14, 17), as determined by a plain reading of the text. The evidence discovered from the closing chapters of each Gospel demonstrates that the tomb was empty. The affirmation of the bodily resurrection infers the tomb was empty. Thus, it does matter that there is an empty tomb as that is what the text affirms and it is associated with salvation, justification and repentance which are core dimensions to the Christian understanding of soteriology.

How did Crossan's data on the nature of Jesus' resurrection stack up when evaluated according to recommended standards of hermeneutics? These standards are used for reading any document (for more detailed lists see §2.3.1 and §4.4.7.3):

(1) Read the text for the common meaning of the way things are in reality when determining the significance of the text;

(2) Reject any superimposed anti-hermeneutical paradigm (an example was Crossan' refusal to accept grammatical, semantic, contextual meanings of many texts);

(3) Reject postmodern reconstructive hermeneutics of the text;
(4) Dismiss presuppositional anti-supernaturalism, and
(5) Accept the New Testament resurrection documents as describing historical events.

This chapter concluded that the author of a speech act (spoken or written) was necessary for there to be such an event. She or he had not died (and neither has God) but, to use Vanhoozer's words, in reader-response theories, 'the author is never really absent. The reader has simply taken his or her place'. Vanhoozer's appraisal is pertinent in assessing Crossan's material: The announcement of the death of God and of the author also 'declares the death of meaning (viz., determinate textual sense) and interpretation (viz., correct understanding)' (Vanhoozer 1998:90, 183).

The testing of this hypothesis exposed an outworking of Crossan's postmodern reconstruction which was his free play with textuality. For example, the Ten Commandments become parable and the Gospels are considered mega-parables of fiction (but with historical characters). Challenges to the free play methodology were presented.

Barnett's conclusion of Crossan's understanding of the birth of Christianity was precise and pointed: Crossan's Christianity 'hardly throbs with the conviction that God's hour has struck in the coming of the Messiah, who died "for" others and whom God raised alive on the third day' (Barnett 2005:214).

The testing of this hypothesis exposed two different worldviews regarding Jesus' resurrection. It is an either/or challenge: Will it be a choice of biblical revelation interpreted according to literal-historical hermeneutics through a plain reading of the text or will the choice be that of postmodern hermeneutics, which involves polyvalent, free play, subjective interpretations?

It was concluded that Crossan imposed his own understanding of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection through his use of free play, relativistic, multivalent, postmodern, non-supernatural stratagem on the text. Thus, Crossan's idiosyncratic meanings replaced objective, hermeneutical testing of the text of Scripture.

This researcher concluded that it does matter what a person believes about the tomb of Jesus being empty or not and that evidence is obtained from the determinate text of Scripture and not from the indeterminate thoughts of the writer and reader. The direct evidence from the concluding chapters of the four Gospels is that Jesus' tomb was empty on resurrection morning and his body of flesh and blood (not a spirit) was seen, touched and people ate food with him in the forty days until his ascension. Salvific meaning was obtained from the determinate understanding of the Gospel texts.

Therefore, the hypothesis that it does not matter whether Jesus' tomb was empty or not and what is important is the meaning of the empty tomb – independent of factuality – was falsified in testing hypothesis 12.

5.7 CONCLUSION OF STUDY

After investigating the presuppositions and methods of historical methodology as evident in the Gospel texts, when compared with Crossan's presuppositions and methodology, this study's hypothesis was pursued: '*Crossan's presuppositions and methods, in his study of the resurrection of Jesus, are not valid when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection is taken into consideration'.*

It was concluded that John Dominic Crossan's postmodern, reconstructive presuppositions and methods vitiate against the Gospel evidence of the resurrection in the New Testament Gospels. This was tested in three areas:

(a) The nature of the New Testament documents. Crossan's views were that the emphasis on Jesus' resurrection did not deal with its factuality but with its meaning and his post-resurrection appearances were apparitions that reflected the beliefs of his followers. When Crossan defined history as postmodern, reconstructed, interactivism and reached a postmodern conclusion, he committed the logical fallacy of begging the question. He did not answer the historical issue: Was Jesus' resurrection a historical resurrection in the traditional sense? In contradistinction, it was found from the New Testament and early Christian evidence were dealing with historical method and the Gospel documents were providing historically factual information according to the principles of historicity used by most historians (see §4.2.1).

(b) Acceptance of a postmodern, reconstructive redefinition of history. This was shown to be a Crossan masterpiece of redefinition of history that disintegrated because of its question begging logical fallacy (see §4.2). Most historians throughout history have not adopted Crossan's historiography. It was found that the reconstructive hermeneutical model was marooned by contradiction, inconsistency and a self-defeating methodology of circular reasoning. There was a failure to meet the standards of fundamentals for linguistic and historical investigation of the data and consistency in application by Crossan. This resulted from the imposition of an *a priori* postmodern, reconstructive methodology on the scriptural and other data. It was shipwrecked on its own presuppositional bias.

(c) Importance of meaning over factuality. The practical application related to Crossan's interpretation of Jesus' resurrection, which was an application of his philosophy of postmodern reconstruction of history. By separating the meaning of the empty tomb of Jesus from its factuality, Crossan imposed his postmodern, reconstructive model onto the biblical data. He did this through his imposition of free play, relativistic and multivalent meanings of Jesus' resurrection data. Crossan's distinctive, personal meanings of Jesus' resurrection were divorced from the textual data. The evidence from the Gospel texts on the empty tomb, Jesus' post-resurrection fleshly body that was seen, touched and shared food in the forty days after the resurrection and before the ascension, contradicted Crossan's imposed views. Crossan's indeterminate meaning was wrecked on the evidence of determinate meaning from the Gospel texts. It was concluded that Jesus' tomb was empty (on a probability basis) and that salvific meaning was reached from a determinate understanding of the text.

Therefore this study's hypothesis was verified: Crossan's presuppositions and methods, in his study of the resurrection of Jesus, are not valid when the Gospel evidence on the resurrection is considered.

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[395] LITS3303 is a course in ‘Modern critical theory’ taught at the University of the West Indies by Richard L W Clarke, senior lecturer in literary theory (Clarke 2013).

[396] Only part of this article is by Coenen (1978:275-278). The remainder is by C Brown.

[397] Only part of this article is by Coenen (1978:279-281). The remainder is by C Brown.

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[399] This online edition has no pagination.
[400] The debate was conducted at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts, United States – March 28, 2006 (Craig & Ehrman 2006).

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[404] The first edition was published in 1971, but de Man stated that his essay on the New Criticism (chapter 2) in the 1983 revised edition goes back to 1954 (de Man 1983:xi).
[405] This article is based on a lecture given on 21 October 1966 at The Johns Hopkins University (Crossan 1982:40).
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[407] This was first published in French in 1967 as *De la Grammatologie*, Paris: Minuit. The first English translation was in 1974 (Derrida 1974:ix).

[408] This audio was uploaded to Youtube on 26 January, 2007. As identification for this audio, it was stated that it involved a dialogue with Derrida 'at the 2002 Toronto "Other Testaments" conference, Derrida responds in audio format to a question about his supposed atheism' (Derrida 2002).

[409] This was originally published in French in 1987 (Derrida 2007:vi).

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[413] Beverly Gaventa's exposition, before Crossan's reply, has the sub-title, 'He comes as one unknown'. Crossan's exposition, before Gaventa's reply, used the sub-title, 'A tale of two gods' (Gaventa & Crossan 1993:1270).

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[420] See Heidegger (2000) for a more recent translation of this publication that also is available online.

[421] The original was published in German in 1957.

[422] The original was published in German in 1961.

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[435] 'Dr. Michael C. Labossiere, the author of a Macintosh tutorial named Fallacy Tutorial Pro 3.0, has kindly agreed to allow the text of his work to appear on the Nizkor site, as a Nizkor Feature. It remains © Copyright 1995 Michael C. Labossiere, with distribution restrictions' (Labossiere 1995).

[436] This is an extract, taken with permission, from Ladd (1968a:13-40). The online edition of this article is without pagination.

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[439] 'This article is a revision of a paper given in the Early Christian and Jewish Studies Seminar of the University of Cambridge in 1993 (Levinskaya 1993:117, n. 1).
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[452] This essay was adapted from a lecture given by Schlesinger at Brown University on the occasion of Vartan Gregorian's inauguration as president. At the time of writing this article, Schlesinger was professor of humanities at the City University of New York (Schlesinger 1989). Chuck Colson, a graduate of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, noted that Schlesinger's lecture was published in Brown University's *Brown alumni monthly*, May 1989 (Colson & Vaughn 1992:428, n. 11).

[453] This 1936 publication states that the first English edition was published in March 1910 (Schweitzer 1936:iv).

[454] This is the first USA edition, but its initial publication was in 1987 by 'Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell' (Shanks & Tilley 1988:iv).

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[457] This article also was published in 1979 by *Themelios* 5(1), 8-12, and is available online, with the permission of the author, through biblicalstudies.org.uk, at: http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_tomb_stein.html (Accessed 27 February 2015).

[458] This work was originally published in German by D F Strauss (AD 1808-1874) in 1835 as *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* when Strauss was 27 years of age (Borg 1991; Cairns 1981:413).

[459] Svennevig (n d:1, n. 1) noted that this article was 'a slightly revised version of my trial lecture for the *doctor artium* degree, originally presented at the University of Oslo in October 1997. This also explains why it is written in English'.

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[466] The original publication was in 1973. London: Collins (Wright 1996:701).

[467] An English translation of this publication is by von Harnack (1908).

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