

In my previous post I discussed the beginnings of the Jewish idea of the “resurrection of the dead.” This view is a pretty much commonplace today: in every Christian church that recites a creed today, and in many conservative churches that do not use creeds, it is believed that at the end of time there will be some kind of judgment and people will be raised from the dead.

At the same time, I have to be frank and say that it seems to me that most Christians – at least the ones I know (not just scholars, but most Christians) – don’t actually *believe* in a future resurrection. They think they die and go to heaven in their souls. Their souls may have some kind of physical attributes: they have all their sense of hearing, seeing, etc., and they can be recognized as who they were so you’ll be able to see your grandmother there. It’s true, even this has always caused problems for people who hold the idea. Which of my many bodies will I have in heaven? The one I had when I was at my prime? The one I died with? What about wounds, injuries? What about birth defects and disabilities? I don’t even know what my grandmother *looked* like when she was 23; how will I recognize her? People who have thought about such things have solutions of course – the solutions go way back to the early centuries of the church. But they are problems.

Even so, my point is that most people, even (especially?) deeply committed Christians who think they are standing within the traditional Christian tradition, think you die and your soul goes one place or the other, and your body just rots away (or is cremated, etc.), even if the soul retains the bodily attributes of the now disintegrated body. And that is NOT, let me reiterate, it is NOT, the understanding of the “resurrection of the dead.”

That is to say, it is not the view that Jesus ...

Only members of the blog can see what I say next. Including a massively controversial tangent that is not meant to be controversial. (Involving abortion.) If you don’t belong to the blog, now would be a good time to join.

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