

Chapter 5

Ἡγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν (Mt 28:7):

A textual evidence on the separation of Judaism and Christianity

Historical investigation quite naturally has the interest of drawing the wonder of the absolute beginning into historical context and, as far as possible, to break it up into its natural parts.

(Baur 1860:1; translation from German)

[H]istorical inquiry is a limited endeavor of probabilities and hypotheses linking its evidence together in intelligible patterns.

(Perkins 1983:23)

1. A TRANSPARENT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1.1 A historical problem: causes and conditions

The resurrection report in the Gospel of Matthew should be read as a transparent historical narrative. But the historical 'facts' in a historical narrative cannot directly be deduced from the transformed events in the *histoire* (Genette 1980), or *geschiedenis* (Bal 1978), which is abstracted from the transformed chronological events in the narrated discourse (*récit* - Genette). A construction of an 'imagined' chain of causalities in a story, without a social context in which such a chain coherently makes sense, can hardly lay claim to authenticity.

Mandelbaum (1967:417) formulates this type of *genetic fallacy* as follows: '...it appears to me that those who look upon history as narrative mistakenly draw a sharp line between "causes" and "conditions", and mistakenly believe that the historian's primary concern is with what they look upon as causes, not conditions'. However, causality in context can only be construed, not reconstructed. In relation to the 'facts' of history we can probably say no more than 'God alone knows'.

It would appear to me that the confusion of historicity with causality, to which Mandelbaum objected, contributed to much of the foolishness written regarding whether or not Jesus was raised from the dead. F C Baur [1853] (1860) should perhaps be read again. When he submits the resurrection of Jesus to historical research, he does so with the question: why and with what results did the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus (similar reports, to my mind) at the birth of the church occur at that particular point in time (Baur 1860:1-2)? He states that the church, rooted in Israel's monotheism, appeared in the land of the Jews when the Roman Empire had already reached its zenith. Baur (1860:8) was particularly interested in the influence of the contemporary *Zeitgeist* of the political universality on the history of the earliest Christianity.

In this essay I am, however, interested in a different, perhaps more fundamental, historical quest: what was there in the narratives about Jesus' birth and those relating to his resurrection from the dead that contributed to the commencement of the church and the movement away from the synagogue? For the purpose of this study the focus will fall on the resurrection of Jesus and not on his birth. My argument is that the phrase 'Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν' in Matthew's narrative of the resurrection will help to provide an answer.

Recent studies of the Judaic-Tannaitic writings which had their origin in the post-70 AD reformed, official Judaism (cf Katz 1984:47) suggest that the belief in the divine birth of Jesus as well as in his resurrection caused Christendom to be a strange phenomenon in Judaism. Scholars who argue that the resurrection narrative in the Gospel of Matthew is textual evidence on the separation of Judaism and Christianity after AD 70, have, to my mind, a point. However, one should not be guilty of the 'naïve fundamentalism' with which Neusner (1984:273) refers, *inter alia*, to Katz's 'vulgar Jewish apologetics'. Of course, one can also, as Neusner correctly suggests, be guilty of 'vulgar Christian apologetics'.

To see Matthew's narrative of the resurrection as textual evidence of the clash between the synagogue and the church, to me, gives rise to at least two problems of historical nature. The one relates to the view that Matthew's narrative of the resurrection is a transparent 'history', and the other to what Neusner (1989a) calls the 'absoluteness of Christianity' and the 'uniqueness of Judaism'; he refers to the 'fundamental difference between the two religious traditions' (Neusner 1985:151).

1.2 Transparent 'facts': God knows

The words 'Ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν' in Matthew 28:7 are the narrator's version of the words which an angel asked the women at the empty grave to tell the disciples. My thesis is that these words are a transparency of a later historical situation,

namely the separation of Judaism and Christianity. Thus, the composition of Matthew's narrative of the resurrection is more complex than meets the eye.

Sometimes it is enlightening to try to understand an ancient complex text in the light of a similar present-day writing. An example of a present-day transparent historical narrative is the novel of Joseph Heller (1984), *God knows*. In this novel, the pre-Christian King David (tenth century BC) as a first-person narrator tells a story which the post-Christian Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) would understand (cf Heller 1984:36). For David, God died when He took the life of the child Bathsheba gave to him. 'I lost my God and my infant in the same instant' (Heller 1984:19). Retrospectively, David assesses himself in terms of the greatness and the fate of other biblical characters and thus the narration, in respect of time, moves to and fro between the time of David, the time of people such as Moses and Joseph, and the time of Nietzsche.

Moses and me - each of us faced death by stoning from followers soon to exalt us. With God yakking away at him from one side for forty years and the people groaning and threatening on the other, it's no wonder he looks so old in that statue in Rome and went to his grave at only a hundred and twenty.

(Heller 1984:24)

In this story, whose 'facts' God alone knows, when David tells about the multi-colored cloth of Joseph, the jewelry of the women and Saul's crown, he says:

Apart from helmets for battle, those crowns were just about the only headgear around. We had no hats in Palestine but had no problem about going into temple without them, because we had no temples either.

(Heller 1984:25)

Obviously, it would be fruitless to try to identify *logia* in the above extracts which are related to the twentieth century AD, the tenth century BC and even periods before and between these two epochs. The same applies to the *traditionsgeschichtliche* method of inquiry in Gospel research which tries to distinguish *logia* in the same manner. It is futile to try to identify *logia* which, as *logia*, could be the *ipsissima verba Jesu*, or which could rather be related to the Palestinian and the Hellenistic churches, or which could be ascribed to the Evangelists themselves. Likewise, the opinion that the transformation of episodes in the above extracts into the

chronological order of a, b, c, d, et cetera can be equated to *historical facts* is an obvious absurdity. Such an abstraction of the *histoire/geschiedenis* from the narrated discourse brings only the causality of episodes in the narrated story to light. Mandelbaum's dissatisfaction with 'historiographers' who confuse causality with facts is therefore relevant. What Neusner (1985:155) says about the Jews' perception of history applies to historiography in general: 'History was not merely "one damn thing after another".'

On the contrary, the historiography of any one of the periods mentioned depends on the identification of the *conditions* which are more authentically portrayed by *individual features* than by the order of episodes or even *logia*. Concerning the *Rückfrage nach Jesus*, Hahn (1974a:28-29) prefers to focus on *Einzelheiten* rather than on complete sayings: One should examine and determine accurately the relation between post-Easter and pre-Easter elements in the individual pieces of traditions.

Examples from Heller's novel illustrate this premise. God who avoids Moses and the people who grumble, on the one hand, and the reference to the statue of Moses in Rome on the other, are respectively features of one and the same logion which makes sense in different historical contexts. The reference to the crown of a king as the only adornment of the head in the monarchical period of Israel should, historically, clearly be distinguished from the reference in the same logion to the wearing of a hat by a woman in the twentieth century. Likewise, a similar remark by David on the present day custom of going to *church* without a hat is comically linked to going to the *temple*, which is a post-Davidic habit.

To construe a historical context and then interpret individual features of logia from first-century transparent historical narratives (like Matthew's narrative of the resurrection) in terms of a first-century social context should not be confused with the endeavor (see Van Aarde 1988) to describe an 'ideological narrative point of view' in terms of its communication in a first-century social context. In this article I am going to try to explain some of the historical conditions prevailing at the time the synagogue pushed the church aside. In order to do so I am going to concentrate on some features of Matthew's narrative of the resurrection.

This brings me to my second problem of a historical nature, namely the so-called 'absoluteness of Christianity' and the 'uniqueness of Judaism'. The question is: what implications does Neusner's (1985) conviction concerning the 'incomprehension between Judaism and Christianity' have for the understanding of the following features from Matthew's narrative of the passion and the resurrection: 'the lesser of two evils' (Mt 27:64), 'the raising of the saints' (Mt 27:52-53) and, in conclusion, 'He has risen from the dead' (Mt 28:7). I intend to argue that these

expressions, as individual features, could be interpreted against the backdrop of the conditions which gave rise to the so-called ἀποσυνάγωγος (cf also Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2).

2. THE SEPARATION OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

2.1 *Extra muros or intra muros*

I have deliberately referred to two scholars who differ in their views and who, recently, were outspoken on the essential issues in relation to the separation of Judaism and Christianity; they are Stephen Katz and Jacob Neusner. The disagreement hinges on what Bornkamm (1961), in the early years of the *redaktionsgeschichtliche* studies of the Gospel of Matthew, referred to as the question of the setting of the Matthean church: does the congregation already exist beyond the walls of Jewry or has the clash between the synagogue and the church not yet reached finality?

In a certain sense this question can be traced back to W D Davies (1966:290):

The engagement of Matthew with Judaism and the Old Israel needs no further comment. The one question which will not be silenced is whether this engagement took place *intra muros*, that is, as a dialogue, however crucial, within Judaism or *extra muros*, that is, an appeal or apologetic to the Synagogue from a church that was already outside it.

(Davies 1966:290)

Davies (1966:315) himself read the Gospel of Matthew against the back ground of the consolidation of 'orthodox Judaism' at the end of the first century AD. Related to this view, Hummel (1966) holds that while Matthew's congregation is engaged in a struggle with Judaism, and no longer participates in synagogue liturgy, it has not broken its ties with the synagogue. However, other scholars (cf inter alia Filson 1960; Blair 1967; Hare 1967) are of the opinion that the Gospel should be read as a theological reflection against the background of the already accomplished breach between Judaism and Matthew's congregation. On the other hand, Bornkamm (see also Barth 1961; Held 1961), like Davies, assumed that the Gospel of Matthew should be interpreted against the background of the conflict which was still continuing *intra muros*. This view was actually initiated in 1928 at the suggestion of Ernst von Dobschütz, and applied by Bacon (1930), in his epoch-making study of the 'five books' of Matthew against the Jews.

Later scholars saw this problem as much more complex. According to Kunzel (1978:163-164, 178, 258), for example, the congregation of Matthew experienced a *Vierfrontenkrieg* (four-fronted war): on one side the *doppelte Frontstellung* between the extra-congregational already accomplished breach between the *synagogue* and the *church*; on the other side the intra-congregational *doppelte Frontstellung* between the nomistic scribes and the proponents of charismatic antinomism. Schweizer (1974), in turn, is of the opinion that the Gospel of Matthew intends to support those in the congregation who were confused as the result of a false alternative between a strict nomism in Pharisaic Christendom and a charismatic Hellenistic Christendom. The opinion of Barth (1961:54-154; cf also Combrink 1980:72) is closely related to this view: the Gospel emphasizes the lasting authority of the Torah as opposed to the antinomism of the gentile Christians in the congregation; simultaneously the Gospel focuses on the universal implications of the Jesus events as opposed to the threatening 're-judaising' of the Pharisaic Christians in the congregation.

Without making a study of Matthean texts as such, Steven Katz's (cf, however, Neusner's sharp criticism on the way Katz used the sources) research of the arguments regarding the circulation of official anti-Christian pronouncements, the issuing of a prohibition against the 'reading' of 'heretical books' (*Sifre Minim*) and the promulgation of the *Birkat ha-Minim* (the blessing against heretics), has decisive implications for the above-mentioned speculation on the clash between the synagogue and the church. To my mind, Katz (1984:76) convincingly indicates that even the *Birkat ha-Minim* 'did not signal any decisive break between Jews and Jewish Christians'. By thoroughly checking the arguments upon which influential theories regarding the sharp separation of Judaism and Christianity up to AD 135 (the Bar Kochba revolt) have been built, Katz (1984:76) concludes:

If on closer examination this material turns out not to be the legitimate basis for such theorizing then the case for the obverse conclusion(s) is considerably, if not completely, vindicated. That is, there was no official anti-Christian policy at Yavneh or elsewhere before the Bar Kochba revolt and no total separation between Jews and Christians before (if immediately after?) the Bar Kochba revolt.

(Katz 1984:76)

If I interpret Katz correctly, he does not deny that a conflict existed between the leaders of Yavneh and the Jewish Christians *before* AD 135. In particular, he does not agree that the separation can be seen as already accomplished by the year AD

135 (cf also Stark 1986:314). On the other hand, it seems as if Neusner is strongly of the opinion that the religious symbols of the synagogue (that is, of 'the talmudic rabbis after AD 70' - Neusner 1985:158) and those of the Jesus-movement in the early first century should already be seen as a representation of 'different people talking about different things to different people, with no possibility of mutual comprehension, let alone dialogue' (Neusner 1989a:22; cf also Neusner 1985:148-158).

The implications for New Testament hermeneutics will prove self-evident. The blurring of the boundaries between the one and the other, the representation of Christianity as a kind of Judaism, the appeal to Judaism for validation and judgment of (a) Christianity - these familiar traits of contemporary biblical and theological studies obscure that simple fact. *Christianity began on the first Easter*. It is, therefore, absolute in its reading of its circumstance and context. It is not a kind of Judaism. It is wholly other. The absolute standing of Christianity finds expression in its view that the words incarnation and gospel can be spelled only with a capital I and a capital G, respectively. In all time and in eternity, there have been, and can be, *only one unique, absolute Incarnation, that of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead*, and only one Gospel of the salvation of Jesus Christ. To the Gospels Judaism in all forms is simply not much to the point.

(Neusner 1989a:22; italics mine)

Although one may go along with Neusner (1984:273) in regard to his complaint about Katz's Jewish apologetics, his simplistic framing of early Christendom as a unitarian movement and his fundamentalistic use of Jewish sources, I cannot accept that Neusner would allege that the church in its plurality broke all its relationships with Judaism (of whatever form) on the day of the resurrection. However, this does not detract from the fact that much can be learnt from what Neusner wrote about the difference in religious symbolic structures between the Pharisees and the Christians after AD 70 (see especially Neusner 1985:151-154; 1987:331-361). If one reads Neusner accurately and detaches *his* apologetics, one realizes that he also should make provision for a period of development during which the synagogue and the church were separating. However, it seems that he avoids the word 'conflict' totally in this regard. Furthermore, Neusner (see citation above) and Katz (1984:47), it seems to me, do not disagree with each other about the 'fact' that it was the belief in the divine conception and the miraculous birth of Jesus as well as his resurrection from the dead that gave rise to the uniqueness of the Jesus movement.

To me it seems as if Katz is more correct in regard to details. According to him the belief in Jesus' miraculous conception and his resurrection from the dead were the fundamental reasons why the Yavneh scribes regarded the Jewish Christians, together with others in Jewish Gnostic circles (cf also Pearson 1986:453), as a heretical phenomenon inside Judaism and therefore threatened them with excommunication. Moreover, I agree with Schmithals (1987:375-378; cf also aspects of the Matthean scholars whose viewpoints I generally refer to above) that the Gospel of Matthew, in particular, mirrors a situation where the *ἀποσυνάγωγος* has not been accomplished yet. On the contrary, there are indications that the author of the Gospel of Matthew experienced the separation with disappointment. Judaism still wields authority over the Jewish Christians and Matthew would prefer to avoid the final rupture with Judaism (cf also Hummel 1966).

2.2 'The lesser of two evils' (Mt 27:64)

According to Braaten (1983:12-13) the Gospels create the impression, on the one hand, that the earliest followers of Jesus (and Jesus himself) did not think that they had broken their ties with Jewry and, on the other hand, that their paths were separating. Lapidé & Kung (1976:21) see the cause of the break as the contradictory interpretations of the meaning of the cross and the resurrection. In their controversy with Jurgen Moltmann they say that 'Jews and Christians can walk together until Good Friday', and that they 'can remain together until Easter Monday and even conceive of the resurrection in Jewish terms', but the Jews cannot accept the belief that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection culminated in the immediate realization of the kingdom of God (Lapidé & Moltmann 1981:76; cf also Lapidé & Kung 1976:43).

The idea of the resurrection of an individual was commonly recognized in Talmudic Jewry and for a considerable time preceding it (cf Kaplan 1988:21 29), although we are faced with varied views and little unanimity (cf Kaplan 1988:105-112). In the rabbinic period the resurrection was one of the central doctrines of Judaism. Lapidé (1983:130), therefore, cannot understand theologians who do not accept the resurrection of Jesus, but do accept the incarnation - in which he, in turn, does not believe. In the relevant chapter entitled 'The lesser of two evils', in which he made this reference to the resurrection and the incarnation, he does not mention that the expression 'lesser of two evils' is derived from Matthew 27:64 (ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χείρων τῆς πρώτης) and presented conversely! It is clear that he interprets the 'two evils' as referring respectively to the incarnation (miraculous conception according to Matthew) and the resurrection of Jesus. According to Matthew the Jewish leaders thought that the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection was a worse heresy than the first.

Matthew does not explicitly say that the 'first' points to the miraculous conception of Jesus. Concerning this issue it seems as if Patte (1987:393) is of the opinion that the 'first' heresy ought to be related to the '*prophecy* [italics mine] of his resurrection' and the 'second' to the '*proclamation* [italics mine] of the resurrection by the disciples'. However, as far as the Gospel story goes there is no suggestion that Jesus ever made such a prediction in public, since the disciples do not appear in Matthew's passion narrative to remember that Jesus predicted that he would rise on the third day (cf Beare 1981:539). How could Patte suppose that the chief priests and the Pharisees knew of such a prediction? It is remarkable that the post-Easter opponents of Matthew's congregation, the Pharisees, appear as characters in the passion narrative at this point for the first time. Here it is the Pharisees who accompany the chief priests. Up to this point, the narrator has spoken of the elders of the people, or the scribes and the elders, as leading the action against Jesus. The repetition in Matthew 28:15 of the allegation of the chief priests and elders, as the Sanhedrin, that the disciples stole the corpse is explicitly mentioned as a report that was current in the time of the Evangelist - a clear indication that the Matthean resurrection narrative ought to be read as a transparent 'history'. (Justin, *ca* 150, and Tertullian, *ca* 200, also said that such a report was current among Jews in their time.) Gundry (1982) points to a possible ironical echo of the Jesus logion in Matthew 12:45: '...the end of this man is worse than his beginning; this is the way it will happen to this evil generation'. I consider that Gundry (1982:584) has a better explanation than Daniel Patte: 'The first deception apparently has to do with Jesus' messiahship and divine sonship'. The following more detailed remark by Schmithals (1985:337) therefore makes sense in the light of the separation of Judaism and Christianity:

The Matthean congregation lives in circumstances of persecution and distress, cast upon them by the synagogue. In Mt 1:18ff the evangelist rejects the reproach from the Jews that Jesus is a premarital or illegitimate child; in Mt 27:64ff, 28:11ff he rejects the claim by the synagogue that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body, under the pretense of his resurrection.

(Schmithals 1985:337; translation from the German)

2.3 'The raising of the saints' (Mt 27:52-53)

According to Witherup (1987:578), verses 51-54 form the climax of the literary structure of Matthew 27. The reference to the resurrection of the πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων in verse 53 forms the culminating point of these verses.

Although the Old Testament background and the apocalyptic imagery which underline this passage are well recognized (cf Kratz 1973; Riebl 1978), the reference to the 'raising of the saints' has made the passage a *crux interpretum* of Matthean studies. The usual supposition seems to be that *after Jesus' resurrection* the bodies of the 'saints' came out of the graves ('God's people who had died were raised to life' - NEB) and entered the holy city (cf Van Tilborg 1988:890).

It seems that the 'sleeping saints', according to verse 52, were revived on the day of the crucifixion in concert with the earthquake and the splitting open of the rock tombs. According to verse 53, however, the 'holy ones' did not enter the 'holy city' until after Jesus' resurrection, namely two days later. The somewhat fatuous question then arises: 'where did Matthew think the revived saints were during the interim from Friday afternoon until early Saturday morning?' (cf Hutton, quoted by Crossan 1988:392).

Some scholars have tried to show how this reference to the raising of the saints after Jesus' resurrection should be understood against the description of the death of the divine man (cf Fascher 1941), or the death of the cosmic deity (cf Kratz 1973). Crossan (1988) interprets it as a mythological descent into *hell to liberate* the holy ones.

Dunn (1985:67), to my mind, is on the right track in his contextual interpretation of the expression in chapter 27, while he also takes the context of Matthew's congregation into consideration. He interprets the reference in verses 52-53 (and Jn 5:28-29) to the resurrection from the dead as part of the accusation of the Jewish leaders that the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave (Mt 27:62-66; 28:11-15). Dunn points to archaeological evidence regarding burial customs which indicates that after a lapse of time the bones of the dead were placed in an ossuary in order that God could use them on the day of the resurrection to rebuild the body. (At a later stage, after dispute, the rabbis came to the conclusion that God did not need the whole skeleton, but that a single bone would suffice - cf Dunn 1985:66.) According to this custom and view, a grave had to be empty before the resurrection event could happen.

A claim made in Jerusalem within a few weeks of his crucifixion, that God had raised Jesus (that is, the body of Jesus) from the dead, would not have gained much credence had his tomb been undisturbed or the fate of his body known to be otherwise. The absence of any such counter claim in any available literature of the period (Christian or Jewish) is therefore important. The one exception, if 'exception' is the right word, is Mt 28:13-15 - the attempt of the Jewish authorities to

put the story about that 'Jesus' disciples came by night and stole him away'. Howfar back the account goes is debated. But at least it is clear that at the time of Matthew this explanation was current among the Jews (28:15). *The significance is clear: even a Jewish response to the Christian claim did not dispute the testimony about the tomb being empty; on the contrary, the emptiness of the tomb was not a point of controversy, only the explanation of why it was empty.*

(Dunn 1985:67; my italics)

The difference in the resurrection faith of the Pharisaic Yavneh leaders and the earliest followers of Jesus, according to Dunn (1985:72-73; cf also Kaplan 1988:127 and Wilckens 1974:118-119 by implication), existed in the view of the Pharisees that the resurrection *of the dead* (ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν) was expected only at the consummation of time, while the Christians were of the opinion that the 'general resurrection' had already begun at the time Jesus was resurrected. Kaplan (1988:127) formulates this difference as follows:

Although firmly based on Judaic concepts, resurrection in the New Testament is divorced from its originating context. The Christian image of resurrection, because a new age was seen as having begun with Jesus, initiated a metaphoric shift within the symbolic patterns of the apocalyptic code. Jewish apocalyptic locates divine victory over evil and the renewal of creation in the future. Christianity locates this in the transcendence of death by resurrection within the Christ event, therefore already accomplished, and at the same time sees it in the future at the parousia.

(Kaplan 1988:127)

The most elaborate development of resurrection symbolism in connection *with the present life* and the experience of the Christian occurs in the Pauline tradition (cf Perkins 1984:288a; Kaplan 1988:82-95). Dunn interprets the *Pauline formula* in Romans 1:4 (ἀναστάσις νεκρῶν - 'he rose *from* the dead' [NEB]), which differs from the Pharisaic *of the dead*, as an indication of the basic difference in the views of the Pharisees and the Christians. However, in Philippians 3:11 an unusual form is used by Paul (εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν - the resurrection *of the dead*). The only comparable expression in New Testament writings is found in Luke 20:35 (again ἐκ νεκρῶν - 'of the dead'). In both passages, there is a clear distinction between the resurrection of those who 'are counted worthy', and the masses of the

dead who have no part in the age to come. 'This resurrection is to take place at the Parousia of the Lord' (Beare 1973:127-128). Thus, in these two exceptional passages, although a traditional Jewish formula occurs, a difference in thought regarding the Jewish concept of a general resurrection emerges. Dunn is of the opinion that Paul's description of Jesus' resurrection as the ἀπαρχή ('first fruit') of the resurrection of all Christians *from* the dead (Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων - 1 Cor 15:20-23) reflects this same issue.

The first fruit was simply the beginning of the harvest. So the description of Jesus' resurrection as the 'first fruit' of the general resurrection could only have been coined by those who thought that with the resurrection of Jesus the final events of history had begun. *The same belief is almost certainly mirrored in the otherwise puzzling account of the dead coming out of the tombs and being seen in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 27:52-53).*

(Dunn 1985:73; italics mine)

Crossan (1988:392-393) may be correct that Matthew had traditions like those in 2 Maccabees 7, 1 Enoch 51:2 (now contained in 1 Enoch 37-71, the book usually called *The similitudes of Enoch*), and Ezekiel 37:7,12 as well as in the Gospel of Peter 9:35-10:42 which could assist him in the composition of Matthew 27:52-53. In 2 Maccabees 7 the martyrs repeatedly assert their resurrectional victory as a reward for their martyred fidelity. In 1 Enoch 51:1-2 we specifically read, 'In those days, Sheol will return all the deposits which she has received and hell will give back all that it owes. And he shall choose the righteous and the holy ones from among (the risen dead), for the day when they shall be selected and saved has arrived!' (Translation according to Crossan.) In Ezekiel 37:7,12, just as in Matthew 27:51b-53 (cf also Senior 1974:321), a sequence of earthquake, opening of the graves, and resurrection of the buried ones is mentioned. In the Gospel of Peter we have the description of the 'escorted and communal resurrection' (see especially the thorough analysis in Crossan's *The cross that spoke*, 1988).

Thus we can conclude that Matthew was either unaware of or unconcerned about the awkward conjunction of verse 52 and 53 in Matthew 27. 'He wanted to mention the resurrection of the saints, and this could only happen after the resurrection of Jesus' (Crossan 1988:392). What is at stake here is the Jewish Christians' faith in the communal resurrection.

3. 'Ηγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν (Mt 28:7): CONCLUSION

We have come to the conclusion that, among other things, it was the Jewish Christians' resurrection faith, elements of which appear in Matthew's narrative of the resurrection, which contributed to the breach between the Yavneh Pharisaic rabbis and the Jewish Christians during the period AD 70-135. On the grounds of the writings of the Talmudic scribes it seems as if the Pharisees were almost silent about the separating of Judaism and Christianity, while, on the grounds of elements in New Testament writings, the Christians existentially experienced it much more severely. Be it as it may, basic to the difference is the Christians' identification with Jesus in his death linked to the participation in his resurrection.

This resurrection faith is expressed by Matthew in the allegation that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and heretically said: 'Ηγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν: 'He has risen from the dead' (Mt 27:64-66). The 'heresy' lies in the preposition ἀπὸ which is used instead of ἐκ. On these grounds we can infer that the words of the women: 'Ηγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν (Mt 28:7) - an individual feature in a logion pretended to be said in a pre-70 AD situation - can only make sense when interpreted as a formula of the earliest Christians in a post-70 AD situation, expressing their resurrection faith as opposed to that of the Pharisees.

In conclusion, let us reconsider F C Baur's contribution again (see the citation at the beginning of the article).

The historical quest for the facts relating to the resurrection of Jesus ought to be an endeavor to integrate this miracle of the absolute beginning of the church, in so far as it is possible, with its natural elements.

But one should not forget that historical inquiry is a limited endeavor of probabilities and hypotheses linking its evidence together in intelligible patterns (Perkins 1983:23).