In 2003, a voluminous book was published entitled *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, written by Tom Wright, who fervently defends the thesis that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and that his resurrection is not merely a religious metaphor. No, his tomb was empty and his followers saw him several times, alive and well.\(^1\) With these assertions he turns against what he calls “a broadly dominant paradigm for understanding Jesus’ resurrection, a paradigm which, despite numerous dissenting voices, is widely accepted in the worlds both of scholarship and of many mainline churches”.\(^2\) According to Wright, that paradigm comprises among other things a view of Jesus’ resurrection as a product of subjective visions and collective hallucinations\(^3\) which imply that his resurrection must not be considered to be a corporeal reality but a highly symbolic image for the revival of his disciples after his shameful crucifixion.

That Jesus’ body was involved in his resurrection has recently been called into question on the basis of an archaeological discovery that was already made in 1980. In that year, a large tomb containing ten ossuaries was found in the Talpiot neighbourhood five kilometres south of the Old City of Jerusalem.

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Many years later, in 2007, Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino published a book in which they claimed that this is the tomb of Jesus and several of his family members. Many Christians were shocked by this breaking news. But was there a reason to be stunned? Would it really be a devastating blow for the New Testament teaching regarding Jesus’ resurrection if this was indeed the tomb of Jesus? Is the belief in his resurrection refuted when it can be proven that his remains were once put into the ossuary found in Talpiot with the name of Yeshua bar Yosef inscribed upon it?

In this chapter, these problems will not be discussed on the basis of all the available sources. I will restrict myself to just one biblical writing, Matthew’s Gospel. What does this Gospel say about life beyond death, and is that life described as a bodily reality by Matthew?

This chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I will discuss Jesus’ burial and resurrection by making a literary analysis of the lengthy narrative unit with which Matthew concludes his Gospel (27:55–28:20). In the second section, I will broaden the perspective by discussing the resurrection of many saints after Jesus’ death and the eschatological fate of Jesus’ followers: does Matthew expect that they too can hope for a life beyond death? In both sections, I will explicitly go into the question of whether resurrection is depicted as a reality in which also the human body is involved and, if it is, what Matthew means with corporeality and how we—in the light of present day assumptions—can interpret his statements about this subject.

1 Matthew’s Stories of Jesus’ Burial and Resurrection (27:55–28:20)

1.1 Demarcation
According to Charles Giblin, this narrative unit does not start until 27:57, the two verses on the women from Galilee (27:55–56) belonging to the preceding passage, in which Jesus’ death is described (27:45–54). He has two arguments for this: a) 27:57–28:20 often mentions Jesus’ disciples; b) the text shows an

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