

JOEL B. GREEN**Eschatology and the Nature of Humans: A Reconsideration of Pertinent Biblical Evidence¹**

Among persons holding to some form of anthropological dualism, a crucial piece of evidence has been the presumption of the centrality to biblical eschatology of a disembodied intermediate state. The question posed in this essay is whether the biblical materials do in fact anticipate a waiting period of disembodied existence, experienced by the dead person, between death and resurrection. Focusing on three strands of evidence typically viewed as pivotal in the discussion – the concept of Sheol and the nature of the ‘shades’ that inhabit Sheol, the significance of the Lukan Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus and account of Jesus’ exchange with the criminal on the cross, and Paul’s concerns in 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 – I demonstrate the fallacy of this presumption and suggest that an eschatology, in which a disembodied, intermediate state plays a central role is poorly supported by the biblical evidence.

Keywords: intermediate state, human nature, soul, dualism.

Writing of embodied selfhood, Nancey Murphy notes that ‘...all of the human capacities once attributed to the immaterial mind or soul are now yielding to the insights of neurobiology.’² For some, not least in the Christian tradition, this will be a disturbing statement, since personal identity has long been tied to the existence of an ontological entity known as the soul, separate from the body, and identified with the person’s genuine ‘self’. The tightening of the mind-brain link in neuroscience renders more and more improbable the need for such an ontologically separate entity, and the reality that human self-consciousness is neurobiologically generated is an inescapable datum for Christian anthropology. As Wolfhart Pannenberg has recognized, recent advances with regard to the close mutual interrelations of physical and psychological occurrences have robbed of their credibility traditional ideas of a soul distinct from the body that is detached from it in death. ‘When the life of the soul is conditioned in every detail by bodily organs and processes, how can it be detached

1 This essay grows out of conversations at a symposium on ‘Mind, Brain, and Personhood’, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation under its Humble Approach Initiative (January 2001).

2 Nancey Murphy, ‘Science and Society’, in *Systematic Theology*, vol 3: *Witness*, by James Wm. McClendon Jr., with Nancey Murphy (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000) 99–131 (126).

from the body and survive without it?³

Not all Christians are convinced, however. In his recent proposal of *The Emergent Self*, for example, William Hasker suggests that a physicalist account of human nature finds some strong measure of support from biblical conceptions of the human person as ‘a single, integrated whole’, but that considerations such as this ‘...do not justify a blanket rejection of dualism as a model for biblical anthropology’. Instead, he says, biblical visions of survival of death disallow an ‘ontological holism’ in favour of some form of disembodied personal existence after death, however temporary. Hasker even goes so far as to affirm that ‘the general pattern of New Testament eschatology (a pattern already well established in first-century Judaism) involves a three-stage progression: death, followed by a temporary state of disembodied existence, followed by the resurrection and judgment on the last day’. On the basis of this New Testament eschatology he concludes, ‘Clearly, this involves dualism of a sort, though not necessarily one defined in philosophical categories.’⁴ In fact, Hasker himself rejects those forms of dualism commonly associated with Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, and Descartes, opting instead for an ‘emergent dualism’ that is strikingly similar to the forms of materialism emerging among certain neuroscientists concerned with explicating the neural generation of human consciousness.⁵

For purposes of this essay, what seems crucial about Hasker’s presentation is that, for his argument, a trail that at most points would lead to a physicalist account of the human person is rerouted in the direction of dualism on account of concerns with Christian eschatology, and more particularly with the notion of the intermediate state. Of interest, too, is that, for the teaching of the Bible on this matter, Hasker is apparently dependent, *en toto*, on the earlier work of the philosophical theologian John W. Cooper.⁶ This hints at the surprising role Cooper’s study of *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* has had in this discussion irrespective of the fact that Cooper’s ‘biblical anthropology’ would represent at best a minority report among biblical scholars of the last century or so.⁷

3 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1994) 182. Pannenberg anticipated this position in his earlier work, *What Is Man? Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970) 45-53.

4 William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1999) 206-07.

5 Cf., e.g., Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1999); Todd E. Feinberg, *Altered Egos: How the Brain Creates the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

6 John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1989). Similarly, in their attempt to insist that the Bible supports substance dualism, J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae (*Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* [Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2000] 23-40) focus on the intermediate state as a key piece of evidence, and build their case above all on Cooper’s survey of the biblical (especially New Testament, see p. 347 n.28) materials.

7 This is true in spite of Cooper’s repeated claims to represent the *opinio communis*. As J. Knox Chamblin admits in his own dualistic interpretation of Pauline anthropology, for example, contemporary scholars generally describe Paul’s anthropology as monist in orientation (‘Psychology’, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald H. Hawthorne et al. [Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1993] 765-74).

Given this state of affairs, my agenda in this essay is focused on a critical review of the possibility of biblical warrants for the intermediate state. By 'intermediate state', I refer particularly to the temporary, disembodied existence of the human self, from the time of one's death to the time of resurrection. By 'intermediate state', I do not refer (as Murray J. Harris does) to '...the period that elapses (*from an earthly viewpoint*) between the death of the individual believer and the parousia of Christ or the consummation of all things.'⁸ This latter notion of 'intermediate state' may be granted without requiring of a human self any temporary, disembodied existence experienced for the duration of the period that elapses as time is experienced 'from an earthly viewpoint'. The question is whether the biblical materials anticipate a waiting period, experienced by the dead person, between death and resurrection, or whether the biblical materials anticipate for the dead an immediate resurrection, irrespective of how persons bound to time and space as we know it mark the progression of the clock.⁹ In addressing this issue, I will focus on three pieces of evidence generally regarded as central to the discussion – the concept of Sheol and the related question of the nature of the 'shades' that inhabit Sheol in Israel's Scriptures; the significance of two Lukan texts, Luke 16:19-31; 23:39-43; and the all-important Pauline discussion in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

'Shades' in Sheol: Disembodied Existence in Death?

John Cooper's dualistic interpretation of Old Testament anthropology begins with his examination of 'the Old Testament view of existence after death', and specifically with his claim that, from the perspective of the Old Testament, 'personal existence is separable from earthly, bodily life.'¹⁰ According to his analysis, the ancient Israelites shared a belief in the afterlife, but had their own term for 'the departed' – namely, '*rephaim*', often translated as 'shades.' These dwelt in Sheol in a kind of lethargic mode of existence marked by continuity of personal identity and the capacity for being awakened and engaging in interpersonal discourse. His survey of the relevant Old Testament texts leads Cooper to the conclusion that Old Testament teaching regarding existence in Sheol supports the affirmation that '...persons are not merely distinguishable from their earthly bodies, they are separable from them and can continue to exist without them.'¹¹

Those who are privy to research in the last two decades on the mind-brain

8 Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1983) 133; emphasis added.

9 As F.F. Bruce has observed, 'The tension created by the postulated interval between death and resurrection might be relieved today if it were suggested that in the consciousness of the departed believer there is no interval between dissolution and investiture, however long an interval might be measured by the calendar of earth-bound human history' (*Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1977] 312 n.40).

10 Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* 58-80 (citation from p. 59).

11 Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 77.

link undoubtedly will raise an eyebrow upon reading this last claim. However, my basic concern here is not first to inquire into how one might work at the interface of Old Testament scholarship and neurobiology, but rather to inquire into whether the Old Testament texts themselves can support the weight of the conclusions Cooper has placed on them. What does the Old Testament evidence bring to the dialogue?

Readers of Cooper's analysis might be forgiven for imagining that the Old Testament concerned itself pervasively with death and shaped a rather generous pattern of what happens after death. It is common, however mistaken, to imagine that the ancient Hebrews (as well as those persons who populated the first-century world of the Roman Mediterranean) were occupied with conversation around the question, What happens after we die? In fact, death is not a major topic of Old Testament theology, which deals only incidentally with the subject. When death is mentioned, it is generally treated with little more profundity than as a reference to the cessation of life. As a whole, the Old Testament is largely uninterested in the fate of the dead.¹² To speak of an Old Testament *interest* in the 'afterlife' thus raises important questions about how one might understand the nature of 'life' and the character of 'death', from within the Hebrew Scriptures.

Though the books of the Old Testament provide some variation in their perspectives on death, we may nonetheless speak of common threads. These would include at least three affirmations – first, human existence is marked by finitude; second, death is absolute; and third, death is regarded as the sphere within which fellowship with Yahweh is lost. As Stanley B. Marrow has recently emphasized, in the Old Testament death is the common destiny of all living creatures; it allows no survivors – neither any persons nor any parts of persons.¹³ Scripture underscores the inescapable fact of death itself ('We must all die'), and denies that death itself can be revoked ('We are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered again') (citing 2 Samuel 14:14). Thus does Joshua announce his death, 'I am about to go the way of all the earth...' (Joshua 23:14; cp. 1 Kings 2:2). If later it appears that Jesus cheats death through raising up the dead (e.g., Luke 7:22), it should not be forgotten that stories of resuscitation in the Gospels leave no room for thinking that death has been finally overcome. Paradoxically, Jesus himself dies – the very person

12 Cf. the helpful, summary remarks in Philip S. Johnston, 'Death and Resurrection', in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T.D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2000) 443-47 (443-45); Kent Harold Richards, 'Death: Old Testament', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 2:108-10. More lengthy treatments are available in Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960); Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, *Biblica et Orientalia* 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969); and Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, forthcoming).

13 Cf. Stanley B. Marrow, 'ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑ/ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ: The Road Not Taken', *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999) 571-86.

who brought the dead back to life. Death is the cessation of life in all of its aspects, and especially the severance of all relationships – relationships with God and with every person and with everything in the cosmos.

One of those areas in which the world of the Bible is alien to the modern world of the West is precisely here, for one looks in vain for accounts in Israel's Scriptures that allow a person's body to be discussed in ways that neglect larger socioreligious realities. By extension, then, death is never a question merely of biological cessation, and attempts at segregating death into its 'aspects' (physiological versus spiritual, for example), even for heuristic purposes, tame the concept and experience of death, from an Old Testament perspective. And this allows reflection on death to devolve into questions of biomedical functioning grounded in analytical judgments related to 'indicators of personhood' and the putative 'quality' attributed to a human life. This is why Ray Anderson can helpfully observe that 'death is a threat to personhood, not merely a fact of natural life.'¹⁴

It is important to note, then, that Sheol is only very rarely deployed in the Old Testament as the common location of the dead. Rather, in most instances the term is used with reference to that human fate to which the ungodly are consigned and to which the godly declare their aversion; it is the antithesis of heaven. That is, the subterranean world of the dead is associated especially with the wicked, and this underscores the Old Testament distinction between life (lived in this world, before and in relation to Yahweh) and death (in the underworld, separate from Yahweh).¹⁵ This evidence coheres well with Israel's speech about human experience 'in Sheol/in the Pit' and 'out of Sheol/out of the Pit', which Walter Brueggemann suggests has been informed by Israel's own life-story in and out of bondage in Egypt.¹⁶ Israel's sense of the drama of human life is articulated in terms of death – that is, separation from Yahweh.

14 Ray S. Anderson, *Theology, Death and Dying* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 46. Cf. John Goldingay, 'Death and Afterlife in the Psalms,' in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, part 4: *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity*, eds. Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner, *Handbook of Oriental Studies – 1: The Near and Middle East* 49 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000) 61-85; Roland E. Murphy, 'Death and Afterlife in the Wisdom Literature,' in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection, and the World-to-Come*, 101-16.

15 Cf. e.g., Pss 9:18; 16:10; 30:4; 31:18; 49:16; 55:16; 86:13; 88:6; Isa 5:14; Job 24:19; et al.; also Desmond Alexander, 'The Old Testament View of Life after Death,' *Themelios* 11 (1986) 41-46 (43-44); Philip Johnston, 'The Underworld and the Dead in the Old Testament,' *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994) 415-19 (416); *idem*, *Shades of Sheol*, forthcoming. In his essay, 'Beyond the Grave: Ezekiel's Vision of Death and Afterlife' (*Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2 [1992] 113-41), Daniel I. Block provides an extensive analysis of Ezekiel's vision of the netherworld. Although the term רֶפְאִים (see below) does not occur, he nevertheless notes with interest that Ezekiel speaks only of wicked persons and wicked nations as inhabiting Sheol, never of the state of the righteous in death (esp. pp. 127-28).

16 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 483-85; cp. Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1974) 106-07; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962/65) 2:349-50; Brevard Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 245-46.

As John Jarick observes, the general view of the Hebrew Bible is that Sheol is not only that 'post-mortem realm devoid of all that pertains to life and hope', but also that 'this realm is devoid of God as well.'¹⁷ Those who worshipped Yahweh, then, could hardly venerate the dead or ascribe ancestral powers to the dead, since they were cut off from him (cf. Psalm 30:9; 115:17). Indeed, corpse impurity was a major contagion within the socioreligious economy of the people of God.¹⁸ Life beyond death, then, refers above all to restoration to Yahweh, and, then, to the reach of Yahweh's sovereignty even beyond that most potent of barriers to life, death itself.

Even in those texts that speak of those who dwell in Sheol, we find no suggestion that some essential part of the human being (whether a soul or a spirit, or some other) has survived death.¹⁹ Rather, death is envisaged as ongoing persistence in a woeful, obscure state, cut off from one's own people and from community with Yahweh. This isolated, shadowy state constitutes death. This is a reminder that the Hebrew Bible as a whole does not define the human person in essentialist terms. Hence, its witness to the nature of human life and death is at once naive and profound. It is naive not in the sense of gullibility or primitiveness, but because it has not worked out in what we may regard as a philosophically satisfying way the nature of physical existence in life, death, and afterlife. It is profound in its presentation of the human person fundamentally in relational terms, and its assessment of the human being as genuinely human and alive only within the family of humans brought into being by Yahweh and in relation to the God who gives life-giving breath.²⁰ This crucial, biblical insight is being recovered in contemporary discussion – e.g., by John Polkinghorne and Warren Brown, each of whom have suggested that the notion of 'soul' be recast

17 John Jarick, 'Questioning Sheol', in *Resurrection*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes, and David Tombs, Journal for the Study of the New Testament 186, Roehampton Institute London Papers 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 22-32 (30). George E. Mendenhall comments that Sheol '...can only be defined as the place where the dead are dead' ('From Witchcraft to Justice: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament', in *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, ed. Hiroshi Obayashi, Contributions to the Study of Religion 33 [New York: Greenwood, 1992] 67-81 [68]).

18 Cf. Wolff, *Anthropology*, 102-05.

19 Cf. Richard Bauckham, 'Life, Death, and the Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism', in *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker, McMaster New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1998) 80-95. Bauckham observes that the older Jewish tradition portrays human beings as a 'psychosomatic whole' whose 'bodiliness is intrinsic to nature'. Hence, there is no 'soul' or 'spirit' to survive death, and 'existence in death is not the eternal life *beyond death* for which later Judaism hopes. That can only be conceived as a fully embodied life' (87).

20 I have developed this further in Joel B. Green, 'Restoring the Human Person: New Testament Voices for a Wholistic and Social Anthropology', in *Neuroscience and the Person*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy, Theo C. Meyering, and Michael A. Arbib, Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action 4 (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1999) 3-22. See now Robert A. Di Vito, 'Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1999) 217-38.

in relational terms.²¹ Similarly, in his important study of *Altered Egos: How the Brain Creates the Self*, without recourse to language more at home in the biblical or Christian tradition, Todd Feinberg has written of human ‘states of mutual identification’ as ‘a new nested relationship of minds.’²²

Before departing these more global comments on the issue of death and the afterlife, I should draw attention to alternative formulations of an ‘afterlife’ found in the Old Testament, even if they are never generalized to the whole of God’s people. God ‘took’ Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah ‘ascended in a whirlwind into heaven’ on a chariot (2 Kings 2:11), for example. These brief accounts provide no fodder for the notion of an intermediate state.

The term of more immediate interest, *reṣpā’im* (‘shades’, often brought over into English as *rephaim* rather than translated), appears only eight times in the Hebrew Bible in the sense of ‘the dead’²³. Although the etymology and historical development of this term are both problematic²⁴, its usage in the Old Testament is more straightforward. *Rephaim* refers to those whose abode is Sheol, the place of the dead. Found in the Old Testament only in poetic texts the ‘shades’ are portrayed through simple parallelism as ‘the dead’. In Isaiah 26:14, 19; and Psalm 88:11, the *rephaim* are associated with ‘the dead’; in Proverbs 2:18 the term occurs in parallel with ‘death’ (see the similar idea in Proverbs 21:16); and in Isaiah 14:9; Proverbs 9:18 they appear in ‘the grave’. That is, the *rephaim* are simply the human dead whose place is the grave. For the Proverbs, references to the *rephaim* are used to dramatize the end of a way of life set in opposition to the righteous paths of God. Here the *rephaim* are associated with the place of the dead, Sheol or, simply, ‘death’ (as ‘sphere of death’), in a manner characteristic of the teaching of the Two Ways found in the wisdom tradition.²⁵ In the single usage among the Old Testament Psalms, the

21 John Polkinghorne, ‘Eschatology: Some Questions and Some Insights from Science’, in *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*, ed. John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000) 29-41 (39): ‘The pattern that is me must include those human relationships that do so much to make me what I am, and also it must express the nature of my unique creaturely relationship with God’. Speaking of ‘soulishness’, Warren S. Brown prefers the language of ‘personal relatedness’ (‘Cognitive Contributions to Soul’, in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancy Murphy, and H. Newton Maloney [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998] 99-125).

22 Feinberg, *Altered Egos*, 150-52.

23 It is thus surprising to hear, then, that ‘the dead in Sheol are called *rephaim*, or shades’ (Moreland and Rae, *Body and Soul*, 31). The dead are referred to as *reṣpā’im* only eight times, and as *’elōhīm* only twice. The typical term used to denote the dead is a participial form of *mw̄t* (‘the dead’); cf. Heinz-Josef Fabry, K.-J. Illman, and Helmer Ringgren, ‘•••’ in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 8, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997) 185-209 (204-05). *reṣpā’im* is also used as an indicator of ethnic identity, with reference to the ancient inhabitants of the northern Transjordan – e.g., Gen 14:5; 15:20; et al.

24 Cf. Michael L. Brown, ‘מִצְלָחַיִם’, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997) 3:1173-80 (1174-76). Cf. the earlier Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death*, 176-80.

25 Cf. Proverbs 5:5; 8:35-36; 11:19; 12:28; 13:14; 14:27; 16:14-15; 18:21. See also Deuteronomy 30:15, 19, where a similar choice is set before the people of Israel.

psalmist pleas for divine intervention, realizing that, if he dies, he will not be able to offer praise to God. Job 26:5 locates the *rephaim* under the waters, a portrait that plays on the mythological identification of the waters as a hostile, chaotic power (note the association with Sheol in 26:6). Isaiah 26:14, 19, taken together, contrast the fate of the wicked, who will be overtaken by death, and the righteous, whose death will be overturned by Yahweh. This reading takes Isaiah 26:19 as a prayer to Yahweh, so that 'your dead' refers to Yahweh's dead, and capitalizes on the portrait of Yahweh in Isaiah 25:7 as the one who would 'swallow up death forever'. Old Testament scholars have puzzled over whether this reference to resurrection is best interpreted as a graphic metaphor for Israel's return from Exile (cp. Ezekiel 37:1-14) or as perhaps the earliest reference in Israel's Scriptures to the notion of the physical resurrection of the righteous. Increasingly, however, this is regarded as a false choice, since the latter comprises one of the means by which Yahweh accomplishes the former.²⁶

These instances of the term *rephaim* (*rephaim*) cohere well with the more general comments on the fate of the dead (above), and help to particularize those observations. No suggestion is found in any of these texts that the *rephaim* might be regarded as 'alive' or 'living' or otherwise as having some form of 'personal existence'.²⁷ Nor do we find in these texts any speculation regarding what transpires between this life and the life to come, or with regard to what transpires between death and resurrection. Instead, we find that the *rephaim* are cut off from Yahweh.

26 So, e.g., Kevin L. Anderson, 'The Resurrection of Jesus in Luke-Acts' (Ph.D. diss., Brunel University/London Bible College, 2001) 55-57; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, Old Testament Library (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 191-92; Ben C. Ollenburger, 'If Mortals Die, Will They Live Again? The Old Testament and Resurrection', *Ex Auditu* 9 (1993) 29-44 (38-40).

27 Moreland and Rae's claim, 'For a number of reasons Old Testament teaching about life after death is best understood in terms of a diminished though conscious form of disembodied person survival in an intermediate state' (*Body and Soul*, 32), rests on four lines of argumentation: (1) 'life in Sheol is often depicted as lethargic, inactive and resembling an unconscious coma'; (2) 'the practice of necromancy... is understood as a real possibility'; (3) *nephesh* refers to 'a conscious person without flesh and bone', which 'departs to God upon death'; and (4) 'the Old Testament clearly teaches the hope of resurrection beyond the grave'. None of these lines of argument find warrant in texts dealing with the *rephaim*, only (3) requires an intermediate state, and only (3) suggests 'disembodied personal survival'. (Communication with the dead [2] requires existence beyond death, but neither an intermediate state nor a disembodied person.) With regard to (3), not even James Barr's recent attempt to rehabilitate a rendering of *nephesh* as 'soul' (in the sense of a separate metaphysical entity, distinct and separable from the body; in *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992] 36-47) convinces. As Di Vito summarizes, 'However, with few unambiguous data to support Barr's analysis and numerous biblical texts that, on his admission, speak of the death of the נֶפֶשׁ , one is unlikely to infer the meaning 'immortal soul' from the use of נֶפֶשׁ in the OT without a predisposition to find it' ('Old Testament Anthropology', 218; see more fully the impressive survey in H. Seebass, ' נֶפֶשׁ ', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 9, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1998] 497-519 [including an excursus, 'The Translation 'Soul', pp. 508-10).

The Gospel of Luke and the Intermediate State

Among the New Testament texts called upon to provide warrant for the concept of the intermediate state, two in the Gospel of Luke have become primary, Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and the words of exchange between Jesus and the criminal at the crucifixion (Luke 23:40-43). Regarding the former, Cooper puts forward three reasons for his view that Jesus' parable provides a picture of the intermediate state: (1) the final resurrection, as Luke understands this event, has not yet taken place, since the rich man's brothers are still alive on earth; (2) Jesus' account has the rich man in Hades, an intermediate point on the way to Gehenna, in Luke's view; and (3) Jesus' depiction of the rich man as suffering bodily torment and thirst is consistent with the Second-Temple Jewish representation of the intermediate state. Cooper also notes, however, that, just because this parable uses popular images that signify an intermediate state does not mean that Jesus or Luke themselves actually affirmed the doctrine of the intermediate state.²⁸ More consequential for Cooper are Jesus' words to the criminal in Luke 23:42-43, 'Today you will be with me in paradise': 'He promised this repentant sinner the fellowship of paradise, the dwelling place of the faithful dead even before the resurrection, that very day'. Because this text speaks so straightforwardly of the intermediate state, Cooper avers, we can presume that the eschatological imagery of Luke 16:19-31 is theologically relevant as well.²⁹

More broadly, Cooper's treatment of the Lukan texts is shaped by two, inter-related and far-reaching presumptions. The first is that, in the intertestamental period (more properly known as the period of Second Temple Judaism), testimony to an intermediate state was ubiquitous. The second is that this intermediate state was conceived in a common way across Jewish literature of this era. Cooper also imagines that the belief system regarding life after death that is explicit in Second Temple Jewish writing draws out what was already latent in the Old Testament itself.

In fact, upon moving from the Scriptures of Israel into a New Testament text like the Gospel of Luke, we find ourselves following new trails, blazed within Second Temple Judaism. However, Cooper erroneously supposes that Jewish thought as it developed in this period simply draws out the message present in embryonic form in the Hebrew Bible, and on this shaky foundation rests his assertion that these later Jewish texts provide us with faithful commentaries on Old Testament perspectives. Although it is self-evident that Second Temple Jewish literature reflects back on the Scriptures, whether we regard their interpretations as 'faithful' will depend on our hermeneutical theory. Irrespective of how this is adjudicated, we would be mistaken were we to argue that a direct or simple line can be drawn from Old Testament texts to Second Temple Jewish interpretation. Rather, with the onset of the fourth century BCE,

28 Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 136-39.

29 Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 139-42 (citation on p. 141).

Hebrew understandings of death and the afterlife were transformed under Greek and later Roman influence. Ben Sira (second century BCE) held to a classical Hebrew position – affirming the creation of human beings from the earth and their return to the earth upon death (Sirach 16:30; 17:1; 40:1, 11; 41:10), highlighting the inevitability of death (14:12-19), and denying human immortality (17:30; 44:9) – but, under the influence of hellenization, a position such as his would be pulled in multiple directions. What can safely be said about this period of theological development is that it spawned a variety of eschatological beliefs – some related more to the immortality of the soul, or the resurrection of the spirit, or the resurrection of the person understood as a unity, or to no afterlife whatsoever.³⁰ It is during this period that ideas of the intermediate state come into full bloom, and an intermediate state of some sort would certainly have had a place in popular conceptions of the afterlife among Luke's audience.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Within its narrative context, the parable of Luke 16:19-31 is told to Pharisees who have called into question Jesus' fidelity to the law (16:14-18). In this setting, the parable serves as a counterchallenge, indicating both Jesus' faithfulness before the law and Pharisaic duplicity. In one sense, the parable is concerned with wealth and its manifestations: a wealthy man engages in conspicuous consumption without regard for a poor man, in spite of the fact that this beggar who resides at his gate is quite literally his 'neighbor' (vv 19-21; cf. 10:29-37); and the rich and poor experience the eschatological reversal forecast in 6:20-24 (v 25). In another sense, it is focused on the law (and, more broadly, the Scriptures) which, the parable informs us, is very much concerned with the state of the poor. In this case, a wealthy man comes to realize too late that he has ignored the words of Moses and the prophets concerning the poor. Our concerns here are more focused, however, on the eschatological picture painted by the parable – especially what it might say about an intermediate state and individual eschatology.

The stage is set by the extravagant parallelism resident in the depictions of the two main characters. The social distance between the two is continued through to the end, symbolized first by the gate, then by the 'distance' ('far away', v 23) and the 'great chasm' fixed between them (v 26). The rich man is depicted in outrageously affluent terms, while Lazarus is numbered among

30 Anderson, 'Resurrection of Jesus', 61; see, more broadly, pp. 47-90; also Baukham, 'Life, Death, and the Afterlife'; John J. Collins, 'The Afterlife in Apocalyptic Literature', in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come*, 119-39; George W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Judgment, Life-after-Death, and Resurrection in the Apocrypha and the Non-Apocalyptic Pseudepigrapha', in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection, and the World to Come*, 141-62; Philip R. Davies, 'Death, Resurrection, and Life after Death in the Qumran Scrolls,' in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection, and the World to Come*, 189-211; Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000) 257-70.

society's 'expendables', a man who had fallen prey to the ease with which, even in an advanced agrarian society, persons without secure land holdings might experience devastating downward mobility. Jesus' comparison of these two characters in life continues in death. The unnamed rich man appears in Hades, Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Thus, while Lazarus is in a blissful state, the wealthy man experiences torment and agony in Hades.

Whether Luke's parable envisions an intermediate state depends on how one defines 'state', whether in temporal or spatial terms, or both. If one presumes time as experienced from an earthly point of view, then it makes sense to speak of an intermediate state – i.e., a period that passes between the death of the individual and the consummation of all things, as we experience time. What is not obvious, is that Lazarus (for example) experiences the afterlife in this parable as a kind of waiting room between death and final judgment. Although it is common to read the Lukan parable against the backdrop of *1 Enoch 22* (as Cooper does), this is an erroneous exegetical move. Material from *1 Enoch* is of interest insofar as it portrays Sheol with four different chambers, one for each class of the dead, but irrelevant in that it imagines Sheol as a place of detention, where people await their punishment at the Judgment. Luke's parable (as well as additional Jewish texts from the Second Temple Period) has no period of detention, but has the righteous already participating in rewards, the wicked already suffering punishment.³¹ Already present in Abraham's bosom, where '...there is no toil, no grief, no mourning, but peace, exultation and endless life,'³² Lazarus already shares in Abraham's celebrated hospitality and participates in the heavenly banquet (see Luke 11:22-30). Similarly, the rich man is now suffering in Hades. Also unclear is why this parable must be read as referring to a disembodied soul. Continuity of personal identity is obvious, the relationship between the character of one's earthly life and the nature of one's experience in the afterlife is highlighted, but these characters act as human agents with corporeal existence (who can thirst, speak, and, presumably, fetch water).

Here, the perspective of the *Jewish Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (probably from the early first century CE) is of relevance. Hades is portrayed as the place of punishment for the wicked, visible from heaven, with the two, heaven and Hades, separated by a river. In 10:12-14, during his tour of heaven under the guidance of the great angel, the seer notes, 'And I saw others with their hair on them. I said, "Then there is hair and body in this place?" He said, "Yes, the Lord gives body and hair to them as he desires"'³³. This not only provides an inter-

31 See the discussion in Bauckham, 'Visiting Places of the Dead in the Extra-Canonical Apocalypses', in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 81-96 (86-90).

32 *Testament of Abraham* 20:14; English translation in E.P. Sanders, 'Testament of Abraham: A New Translation and Introduction,' in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: New York, 1983/85) 1:871-902 (895).

33 Translation from O.S. Wintermute, 'Apocalypse of Zephaniah: A New Translation and Introduction', in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:497-515 (515).

esting analog to the portrait painted in the Lukan parable, but points to a larger issue – namely, the impossibility of speaking of *the* concept of Hades in Second Temple Judaism, except in the broadest terms. Luke himself uses ᾠδης (*hadēs*) only four times; in addition to Luke 16:23, we find it twice in explicit dependence on the Greek version of the Old Testament (Acts 2:27, 31) and once in implicit dependence (Luke 10:15; cp. Isa 14:13-15). This way of accounting for the evidence gives us little assurance that the Lukan narrative speaks of Hades always in the same way, since it is at least as likely, if not more so, that the intertextual use of the Greek Old Testament constrains the meaning of Hades to its usage in the Scriptures of Israel (i.e., as the general abode of the dead) while leaving open how Hades might best be read in Jesus' parable in Luke 16:19-31. Evidence from the wider world of Luke would allow for readings of Hades as the general abode of the dead; the intermediate abode for all of the dead prior to the Final Judgment; the intermediate abode of the wicked and the righteous prior to the Final Judgment, during which time punishments and rewards are already being assessed; and exclusively the place of punishment for the wicked.³⁴

More obvious is how this text demonstrates a larger concern for Luke with what Jacques Dupont referred to as 'individual eschatology'³⁵ – i.e., the fate of the individual immediately upon death – even if Luke's interest here neither overshadows nor interferes with his more thoroughgoing, corporate eschatology.³⁶ A similar perspective is found in the *Testament of Abraham*, usually dated to the first century CE. In ch. 11 of the *Testament* we read of two gates, one for the righteous who enter Paradise (or heaven, 20:12), the other for sinners destined for destruction and eternal punishment, with judgment occurring at the moment of death and not at the End.

Given the pervasiveness of references to the intermediate state in contemporary Jewish literature, we should not be surprised to discover parallel ideas in a Lukan parable. However, given the diverse ways in which the intermedi-

34 Cf. the helpful summary in Richard Bauckham, 'Hades, Hell', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 3:14-15; and especially, idem, 'Descents to the Underworld', in *The Fate of the Dead*, 9-48; 'Early Jewish Visions of Hell', in *The Fate of the Dead*, 49-80; and 'Visiting Places of the Dead'. Bauckham notes that Hades and paradise are within sight of each other in such texts as 4 Ezra 7:85, 93, just as Gehenna and paradise appear within sight of each other (4 Ezra 7:36-38; 1 Enoch 108:14-15. Moreland and Rae (*Body and Soul*, 34) grossly oversimplify the evidence when they assert that 'in intertestamental Judaism, the intermediate state was widely understood' to include (1) the belief that the dead were comprised of disembodied souls or spirits, (2) the dead were regarded as conscious and active during the intermediate state, and (3) 'resurrection was depicted as the reunion of soul and body'. This is due, apparently, to their overdependence on Cooper (see Moreland and Rae, *Body and Soul*, 347 n.27).

35 Jacques Dupont, 'Die individuelle Eschatologie im Lukasevangelium und in der Apostelgeschichte', in *Orientierung an Jesus: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker*, ed. Paul Hoffman (Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 37-47. Cf. Luke 12:4-5, 16-21; 23:43; Acts 7:55-60; 14:22.

36 See the discussion in John T. Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 92 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars, 1988) 60-71; Walter Radl, *Das Lukas-Evangelium*, Erträge der Forschung 261 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988) 135-37.

ate state might be represented (in terms of temporality and spatiality, as well as with regard to the nature of human existence in this abode), we would be ill-advised to imagine that Jesus speaks in this account of disembodied existence in a place and time that stands between this life and the next. In fact, the evidence of the parable and of relevant parallels in Jewish literature actually moves in another direction, away from Cooper's reading of this material.

Jesus and the Criminal at the Crucifixion (Luke 23:40-43)

Luke alone records the exchange between the two criminals and Jesus at the scene of their crucifixion. The first criminal blasphemes Jesus while at the same time identifying himself with Jesus ('Save yourself, *and us!*'), whereas the second demonstrates astounding insight into Jesus' identity and status as God's agent of salvation. His plea, 'Remember me!', is reminiscent of those words repeatedly spoken to Yahweh, whose memory is a source of divine blessing in keeping with his covenant.³⁷ Of particular interest here is Jesus' reply, 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise', and especially the two words 'today' and 'Paradise'. Although it is grammatically possible that 'today' could be read with 'Truly I tell you', its function as an adverb to denote when the criminal will join Jesus in Paradise is assured by the consistency with which Luke emphasizes the immediacy of salvation (e.g. Luke 4:21; 19:9). The point at issue, then, is Cooper's contention that 'Paradise' denotes the intermediate resting place of the dead. The term itself, *παρᾶδεισος* (*paradeisos*), originally referring to a 'park' or 'nobleman's estate', is used in the Greek versions of Genesis 2 for Eden; given the idea in apocalyptic thought that the End would recapitulate the Beginning, the term came to be employed for the final, paradisaical state enjoyed in the new creation. Is the referent of 'paradise' the intermediate state enjoyed by the righteous, or is it the final reward? 'Paradise' appears only three times in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7); though we cannot assume that its usage in Luke should be measured in relation to other New Testament usage, it is of interest that, in Revelation, the term connotes the end-time consummation of God's purpose with its image of the restoration of divine presence and provision: 'To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God'. Paul's description in 2 Corinthians 12 of being 'caught up to the third heaven...caught up into Paradise' associates Paradise with the third heaven in a way that is reminiscent of several texts from Jewish apocalyptic, both in terms of the notion of a heavenly journey and with regard to the numbering of the heavens; this language is at home in a thought-world that presumes that the first Eden (= Paradise) has been kept sealed in anticipation of

37 Cf. Psalm 115:12; Judges 16:28; et al. On this text, see Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1997) 822-23.

the End, and, again, signifies life in the presence of God.³⁸ In the literature of Second Temple Judaism, Paradise could be used with reference simply to heaven, the divine abode and place of bliss, without temporal indicators.³⁹ It might refer to an intermediate abode of the righteous,⁴⁰ though most often it refers to the end-time dwelling of the righteous with God.⁴¹ Interestingly, in the text outside of Luke's Gospel that contains the only known reference to the 'bosom of Abraham' (see Luke 16:19-31), 'Paradise' is also found, and is used with reference to dwelling in heaven immediately upon death (*Testament of Abraham* 20:14). This, together with what we have seen already with reference to Luke's 'individual eschatology', undermines any suggestion that Jesus' promise to the criminal at his execution might provide the basis for a doctrine of the intermediate state.

In short, attempts to locate in the Gospel of Luke an eschatological pattern that requires or includes an intermediate state cannot be sustained. The reasons for this are several, and include: (1) a definition of 'intermediate state' that presumes that time experienced by the dead and by those still living is identical, (2) failure to take seriously Luke's own concern to include in his eschatological portrait an emphasis on what happens to the individual upon death, and (3) lack of sufficient nuance with regard to the nature and diversity of perspectives on death and the afterlife represented within the literature of Second Temple Judaism. As we have seen, Luke 16:19-31 self-evidently refers to an intermediate state insofar as *'intermediate' refers to the linear marking of time from the perspective of the rich man's brothers still alive in this world.* Whether the rich man and Lazarus experience their existence beyond death as 'intermediate' is an altogether different question, however. A more nuanced reading of the evidence of the Second Temple period than Cooper has provided reveals the variety of ways in which Hades can be envisaged, and associates Jesus' parable most closely with an image of Hades as the immediate (not intermediate) abode of the wicked and the righteous who already experience the assessment of punishments and rewards. Similarly, Cooper's reading of Luke 23:40-43 presumes an insufficiently nuanced description of Jewish speculation concerning Paradise in the world of Luke's Gospel. In the thought-world of Luke, Cooper's position is possible, but neither required nor favored. Indeed, Luke's texts find their closest parallels in that literature wherein the dead experience neither a period nor a place of waiting but enter their eternal reward immediately upon death.

38 See Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 77-84.

39 Cf. 2 Esdras 4:7-8; *Testament of Abraham* (B) 10:3.

40 Cf. 1 *Enoch* 37-71 (which most scholars now date to the late first century CE).

41 E.g., 2 Esdras 7:36; 8:52; 2 *Apocalypse of Baruch* 51:11; *Testament of Levi* 18:10-11. See the helpful summary of the evidence in James H. Charlesworth, 'Paradise', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:154-55.

Paul and the Intermediate State (2 Corinthians 5:1-10)

Within the Pauline corpus, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 is usually regarded as providing the most pressing evidence in Paul for a body-soul dualism realized in an intermediate state. Attention often focuses on vv 1-3: 'For we know that if our earthly tent is dismantled, we have a house from God – a dwelling not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens. In view of this we sigh, longing to put on our heavenly house, assuming, of course, that when we take it off we will not be found naked.' According to many interpreters, Paul presents here a thanatology concerned with freeing the soul from the body for a higher destiny. According to Ben Witherington, 'Paul speaks of three states: the present condition in the tent-like frame, the intermediate state of nakedness, which he does not find desirable, and the future condition in which a further frame will have been put on, hopefully, over the present one.'⁴² In their defense of substance dualism, J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae view this passage similarly, observing that Paul addresses the question 'What sort of hope do we have if the body itself is destroyed?' by 'teaching about the intermediate state and its relationship to the future resurrection' – an interpretation that 'has obvious dualistic implications.'⁴³ Can such a reading be sustained?

It is worth noticing at the outset how distant Paul's perspective is from an eschatology grounded in a Greek dualism. A Greek dualist might look forward to death, which allowed for soul-flight to the desirable goal of immortality, but this is not Paul's understanding here. Even if we were to imagine that Paul writes of a bodiless, interim period, he looks upon the possibility of this 'nakedness' (γυμνός, *gymnos*) with abhorrence. This attitude reflects a wider, Jewish perspective, wherein to be found 'naked' was to suffer humiliation, and to lose one's status as a human.⁴⁴

Paul's opening comment in 2 Corinthians 5:1, 'For we know that...', reminds us that Paul is not trail-blazing here, but calling to mind former instruction given in 1 Corinthians 15. It is there that Paul had defended belief in the future resurrection by (1) appeal to what had already become Christian tradition (vv 1-11), (2) observing that a denial of the future resurrection was tantamount to denying the resurrection of Christ, and moving on to an affirmation of Christ's resurrection as 'first fruits' of the future resurrection (vv 12-34), and (3) sketching how one might plausibly conceive of the resurrection of the dead (vv 35-58). Crucial for our purposes in this chapter is Paul's central affirmation of the import of the body (σῶμα, *sōma*) to human existence and identity, and, then, of God's provision of a body well-suited to the form of existence envisioned. Victor Paul Furnish observes,

42 Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995) 391.

43 Moreland and Rae, *Body and Soul*, 38-39.

44 Cf. Gladys Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 73-75.

Indeed, each of the forms he mentions (vv. 37, 39-41) is named as well in the creation account of Genesis 1 (plants yielding seeds, Gen. 1.11-12; human beings, Gen. 1.26-27; animals, birds, and fish, Gen. 1.20-25; the sun, moon, and stars, Gen. 1.14-18). Paul's comments here, like his earlier statements about God's providential arrangements of the parts of the body (12.18, 24b) reflect an understanding of God as both the Creator of all that is and as being concerned that all things flourish.⁴⁵

In fact, Paul's perspective creates a problem for the apostle, which he must address in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 – namely, the fragility of present life (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). This problem is not lost on the Corinthians even in this context, however, since the notion of resurrection of the (this!) body has presented (some of) them with an incredulous prospect. Paul addresses this issue in 1 Corinthians 15 by introducing a distinction between the σῶμα ψυχικόν (*sōma psychikon*) and the σῶμα πνευματικόν (*sōma pneumatikon*). The first expression is drawn from Genesis 2:7, which has it that Adam was created a living ψυχή (*psychē*, often translated as 'soul'; note that Adam thus *is* a ψυχή, not that he *has* a ψυχή); hence, the first Adam was a ψυχικός body. However, as is manifestly evident, this body was subject to death and decay on account of sin and, therefore, was ill-suited to eternal life with God. What is needed, then, is a different form of existence, which is given us by the last Adam, Christ, who does not simply receive life (as in the first Adam), but actually gives it. As a consequence, the σῶμα ψυχικόν is a body for this age, the σῶμα πνευματικόν for the age to come.

Hence, Paul affirms a profound continuity between life in this world and life everlasting with God, a continuity that focuses on bodily existence. Present humanity, however, is marked by frailty, deterioration, weakness, so that, in order for Christians to share in eternal life, their bodies must be transformed. Paul does not here think of 'immortality of the soul'. Neither does he proclaim a resuscitation of dead bodies that might serve as receptacles for souls that had escaped the body in death. Instead, he sets before his audience the promise of the transformation of their bodies into glorified bodies (cf. Phil 3:21).

Returning to 2 Corinthians 5, Paul has just admitted that present existence is marked by suffering, dying, and death – not a very promising reality for persons anticipating bodily, heavenly existence.⁴⁶ Paul's response is that death is

45 Victor Paul Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 113.

46 On the contrast between the 'inner' and 'outer human being' (2 Corinthians 4:16), see Hans Dieter Betz, 'The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἑσὸ ἀνθρώπος) in the Anthropology of Paul', *New Testament Studies* 46 (2000) 315-41. Although Betz disagrees with Theo K. Heckel (*Der innere Mensch: Die paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2:53 [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993]) as to the source of Paul's language, both agree that Paul distances his usage from Platonic categories that portray an immortal soul entombed in a material body. See also Heckel, 'Body and Soul in Saint Paul', in *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment*, ed. John P. Wright and Paul Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 117-31.

not the end of hope but a transition, and to make this point he employs two seemingly incongruous metaphors – the tent-like house ('earthly tent...dismantled', 'a house from God', and 'our heavenly house') and 'being clothed' ('longing to be clothed', 'when we have taken it off we will not be found naked', 'we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed'). The metaphor of 'tent' is reminiscent of Israel's past, in which the 'tent' or tabernacle gave way to a temple, which was itself destroyed and replaced; indeed, for Paul's audience, the temple had been replaced yet again, this time by the Christian community itself, a temple 'not made with human hands'. In its present context, though, the 'tent' that is 'falling apart' is associated with the 'outer human being' that is 'wasting away' (2 Corinthians 4:16) – that is, with bodily existence. What Paul anticipates, then, is a new form of bodily existence, one that is well-suited to eternity with God in heaven. This language is then correlated with another metaphor, 'putting on' or 'being clothed', the opposite of 'nakedness'. Given that nakedness functions metaphorically for moral shame (cf., e.g., Isaiah 20:2-4; 47:3; Ezekiel 23:28-29; Matthew 22:11; note Paul's references to baptism as being clothed in Christ – e.g., Romans 13:11-14; Galatians 3:23-29; Colossians 3:9-10), we can see Paul operating on two fronts at once. On the one hand, he categorically rejects the notion that the answer to human frailty is escape from bodily life. On the other, he anticipates the new form of bodily existence that God will provide – not to be traded for the old (which, after all, is for Christians a 'being clothed in Christ'), but to subsume the old.⁴⁷ Thus, Paul's language is indeed dualistic but not in an anthropological sense. He thinks of an eschatological dualism, contrasting the now and the not-yet: Having put on Christ in baptism, we now yearn for a life that conforms to his. In this case, our hope that we not be found naked refers to the time of the final judgment (see v 10), when we will experience the consummation of our new life in Christ rather than the 'exposure' that comes in condemnation.⁴⁸

In short, Paul's focal concern is not with thanatology, but with resurrection hope. Both in 1 Corinthians 15 and in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, he affirms that transformation and immortality are the consequence of (and not preparation for) resurrection. That is, nothing in the created human being is intrinsically immortal.⁴⁹ Although often read against the backdrop of body-soul dualism, and thus taken as further support for body-soul dualism, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 actually points in a different direction. The dualism with which it is concerned is eschatological rather than anthropological. When read in relation to Paul's earlier teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 (an interpretive move invited by the text itself), this passage thus provides no warrant for disembodied, human existence in an intermediate state.

47 ἐπιενδύομαι (*ependuomai*): 'to put one garment over another'.

48 Cf. A.E. Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996) 66-69.

49 See further, Murray J. Harris, 'Resurrection and Immortality in the Pauline Corpus', in *Life in the Face of Death*, 147-70; Richard N. Longenecker, 'Is There Development in Paul's Resurrection Thought?', in *Life in the Face of Death*, 171-202.

Conclusion

From the theological side of the argument, one of the primary pillars in the argument for some form of dualistic portrayal of the human person has been the presumption of the centrality to biblical eschatology of a disembodied intermediate state. The question posed in this essay is whether the biblical materials do in fact anticipate a waiting period of disembodied existence, experienced by the dead person, between death and resurrection. Focusing on three strands of evidence typically viewed as pivotal in the discussion – the concept of Sheol and the nature of the ‘shades’ that inhabit Sheol, the significance of the Lukan Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus and account of Jesus’ exchange with the criminal on the cross, and Paul’s concerns in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 – I have demonstrated the fallacy of this presumption. One might wish to argue that other texts could be brought to bear on this issue, texts that would mitigate the results of this exploration, but, in the face of the data already surveyed, at some point one would have to face the reality that a coherent, ‘biblical’ eschatology, in which a disembodied, intermediate state plays a central role, is actually an extra-biblical construct against which the biblical evidence must be set.⁵⁰ Without the support of these crucial strands of evidence, it is no longer possible to insist on a pattern of biblical eschatology requiring an intermediate state, much less one in which disembodied personal existence is integral.

Questions remain, of course. One of the more important has to do with the nature of space and time, and specifically with the relation of time and eternity. A further, perhaps more urgent issue concerns the bridge by which human identity crosses from this life into the next.⁵¹ This is an agenda for another study, however, one to which biblical writers will have little of a specific nature to offer. Paul himself speaks of the transformation from a body fit for this world to one fit for the world to come as a mystery (μυστήριον, *mysterion*; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

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50 Although he has not been able to conduct an in-depth study, on the basis of his broad survey of relevant texts, Charles E. Hill has concluded that ‘...we find in the [New Testament] no reason to think that any of its authors believed, as did many of their Jewish contemporaries, that a detainment in Hades awaited the Christian after death.... The data left to us on the subject, on the contrary, favor only an immediate presence with Christ in heaven’ (*Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2001] 211-27 [211]).

51 Interestingly, although he apparently defends Cooper’s understanding of the general pattern of New Testament eschatology – death, intermediate state, resurrection – Hasker later admits that the timing of the resurrection vis-à-vis one’s death is not a philosophically significant issue (*Emergent Self*, 216). In the end, what is crucial for Hasker is to explain the survival of personal identity.