

Reason Serving Faith: The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*

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In Christianity, the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ are a fact of history. If his resurrection is a miracle to be accepted by faith, no rational demonstration of it is needed, although the Apostle Paul argues by analogy for the resurrection in 1 Corinthians. Being a realist and using Latin, Aquinas holds that human reason can contribute to an understanding of faith; he has no strict distinction between *hades* and *hell*. He uses *logos* to emphasize reason and instrumental causality in explaining the relationship between humanity and divinity for Jesus. Arguing for the resurrection of Jesus, Aquinas should be consistent with his principle of the individualization of a soul through a body, and a separate soul being a substance, but he is inconsistent. Considering Jesus' soul before his resurrection, Aquinas supports the Apostles' Creed, but he develops the notion of purgatory, where departed souls sojourn temporarily. This paper argues that Aquinas, in discussing the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, obscures the distinction he draws between faith and reason.

Keywords: reason, faith, the passion, resurrection

It is a core creed in Christianity to accept the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and Christians also hold that the divine and human nature of Jesus are inseparably related. In *Summa Theologica*, his most representative work, Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274) discusses these issues. At the beginning of *Summa Contra Gentiles*, an earlier representative work, Aquinas concedes that some beliefs of Christianity are beyond human reason and thus should be accepted by faith, such as God the Trinity, the Word becoming flesh, and the final judgment (Aquinas, 1975a, 3[2]). In fact, the conception of the Trinity is an achievement of reason serving faith because the term "trinity" does not appear in the Bible. In the 13th century, after the long influence of Augustine (354-430) and neo-Platonism on the Latin church, some theologians became keen on the Aristotelian philosophy that had recently been brought back to the West through the Islamic world, since it offered a new approach to reason serving faith. To develop such a principle thoroughly, Aquinas uses and develops some notions of Aristotle (384-322BC), whose more works had been translated into Latin.

In Christianity, a soul separated from its previous body exists; while for Aristotle, soul and body are respectively form and matter for a person, so the soul cannot exist independently when the person dies. Obviously, there is a distinction between the Christian notion of soul and the Aristotelian one. Since the Word became flesh

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(John 1:14),¹ Jesus had his human nature with body and soul, and his resurrection demonstrates his divinity. Can Christianity offer any new insights for rational argument about this issue? Insofar as there is faith beyond reason, faith would suffer somewhat when philosophy is developed or perfected. Regarding the Passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Aquinas gives us a concrete endeavor of handling the relationship between faith and reason. We can understand that the medieval times when Aquinas worked were rather different from the apostolic times when Paul (died c. 68)² argued for truth, since the intellectual reception of Aristotelian ideas was raising the status of reason.

Soul and Its Individualization

In *On Being and Essence*, Aquinas' fundamental book of metaphysics, on which his conception of soul is based, he agrees with Aristotle that a person has a body and soul, while the soul is form, and the body is matter, and there is no separate world for forms. Human nature is related to both soul and body in that it is the essence of a person (Aquinas, 1968, II[11-12]). For Aquinas, the soul of a person is made not by parents but by God, although each person was born of parents.

Plato (424-344BC) holds that a person is a soul using the body. Plotinus (204-270), whose thought was infused by Augustine in interpreting Christianity, further raises the status of soul since it is metaphysically emanated from the One via the Intellect (Plotinus, 2018, 5.2.1).

The Virgin Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-22), and Aquinas agrees that this was a miracle and above reason. Although Mary is with the child by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is not the son of the Holy Spirit but the one and only Son of God. Since in his view, the male is higher than female in gender, Aquinas concludes that Jesus had to be male when the Word became flesh, and he was from the female so that the female should not be despised (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 31, A. 4). In ancient times, women suffered painfully or often died in childbirth. Aquinas maintains that Mary had no suffering in giving birth to Jesus, but there is no Biblical evidence for this assertion. The human nature of Jesus began at the moment when Mary received the Holy Spirit, although his divine nature existed from eternity. Therefore, it had no previous existence since the body of Mary prepared the matter for the human body of Jesus.

Aquinas argues that Mary offered her purest blood for the body of Jesus, and for Mary, blood is different from her flesh and bones (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 31, A. 5). The Holy Spirit instantaneously gave a form to the matter from Mary, without a medium of prime matter: pure matter without form, as defined by Aristotle (Aristotle, 1973, 1042a27-28). In contrast, God formed the first woman with a rib of the first man (Genesis 2:21-22), not from blood, while God formed the body of Adam from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). Aquinas views that for Jesus, his human nature is an instrument of his divine nature (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 48, A. 6). In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas explains more about such an instrumental causality that unlike an axe being an external instrument of a hand, a hand is an instrument of the soul united to it, and the human nature of Christ is compared to God as the hand is compared to the soul (Aquinas, 1975c, 41[10-12]). This means that regarding Jesus being born of a virgin, Aquinas unwittingly or inconsistently explicates the miracle with reason although his other teaching indicates that such a miracle should be accepted by faith (Aquinas, 1975a, 3[2]).

¹ All Biblical references or quotations follow in brackets the book name with chapter and verse numbers.

² All Biblical dates refer to The NIV Study Bible, Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, U.S.A., 1985.

For Aquinas, a soul is not a person since it is only the form of a person. If physical death means the departure of a soul from the body and the soul is created but immortal, Aquinas has to confess that the form of a certain material object continues to exist even if the object with which it was once united does not exist. Since Aquinas believes that a separate soul is a substance (Aquinas, 1968, IV[10]), although metaphysically lower than angels (Hebrews 1:14), he has to concede that the soul of a person is individualized even when no matter is involved. Speaking about the simplicity of God, Aquinas has his theory on form and matter that a form is individualized through the form in the matter (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. I, Q. 3, A. 2, ad. 3), just as matter individualizes form; this is consistent with his opinion in *On Being and Essence* (Aquinas, 1968, II[4]).

Regarding the individualization of the soul, Aquinas states that it needs the body in the beginning, but later, without a body, the individualized soul retains its identity. Once a soul becomes the form of a certain body, and thus is individualized, it keeps its individualization (Aquinas, 1968, V[5]). Therefore, for the body that individualizes a certain soul, there is designated matter. Aquinas transcends Aristotle who holds the soul perishes when the body dies (Aristotle, 1991, 413a4-9) since the remaining active intellect is not a personal identity (413b25-28). Not only is the soul the form of a body, but also the form of the body which it first activated; once separated from bodies, different souls would not lose their distinct identities since they are related to different bodies even when the bodies cease to exist (Aquinas, 1975b, 80-81[8]).

Aquinas develops Aristotelian theory on substance, arguing that God, angels, and separate souls are all intellectual substances, although God is the Creator (Genesis 1:1). He concluded that if the virgin Mary offered the matter for the Word of God to become flesh and Jesus was born without sin, we can deduce that the body of Mary was without the original sin or she was also born without sin. Aquinas holds that Jesus was sinless both when conceived and when born, while Mary was conceived with original sin but was not born with original sin (Aquinas, 2000, 2.XII.B.1.a). Even though God cursed the woman who sinned in the garden of Eden that she would suffer in pregnancy and childbirth (Genesis 3:16), Aquinas believes that Mary was immune from it since she would conceive the immortal body of Jesus. The Immaculate Conception would be accepted as an official doctrine of Catholicism later in 1854, and it goes a step further than Aquinas did for the veneration of Mary. Although it may be an achievement in reason serving faith, Aquinas is inconsistent with the Biblical teaching that Mary accepted the unborn Jesus as her Savior, confessing she was a sinner whose soul needed to be saved. This is seen in her words, “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant” (Luke 1:46-47). The *soul* is translated from *psuchē* in Greek, meaning self and inner self. For Aquinas, Mary never sins but was not born sinless (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 27, A. 4), since there is no distinction between her bodily matter and that of other females. Mary was conceived with original sin, but that was erased by the sanctifying grace of God since she was more privileged than the prophet Jeremiah and John the Baptist (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 27, A. 1).

The soul leaves the body when a person dies. Although a separate soul is not a person, it is an identifiable individual. This is consistent with the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus told by Jesus (Luke 16:19-31). When both the rich man and Lazarus died, the rich man in *hades*³ saw Lazarus was with Abraham. Not only did the rich man feel sensations, but he also had intellect in that he wished his five brothers who had survived him would not suffer after their death; he still remembered what he had experienced in his former life. Aquinas gives the opinion that a separate soul has complete knowledge of other souls (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. I, Q. 89, A. 2), and it

³ Both the King James Version and the NIV translate *hades* into hell in English.

retains its former knowledge (Pt. I, Q. 89, A. 5). Nevertheless, Aquinas includes memory in passive intellect. In a view more consistent with the Scriptures (Romans 2:14-15), Augustine holds that men were born with innate ideas, and he places memory as a self-identification faculty of the soul. In *Confessions*, he tries to search for God in his memory (Augustine, 1991, X.viii[12]).

When a person dies, the body retains the former physical appearance for some time although it is soulless. When Jesus died on the cross, his soul left the body (Luke 23:46); the same view of the soul leaving the body was held by Israelites since patriarchal times (Genesis 35:18). If we follow Aquinas, the body of Jesus then was matter without form since the soul is the form of the body. When he discusses the transubstantiation of the Eucharist (Matthew 26:26-29), Aquinas refuses to consider the prime matter as a means of transformation (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 75, A. 3); there is nothing in common between the formless body in the tomb and the living body of Jesus (Pt. III, Q. 50, A. 5), if the identity is not provided by the Word of God (Wawrykow, 2005, pp. 36-37). By the Jewish calendar, there were three days from Jesus' death to his resurrection. During this period, Jesus was dead by his human nature; the problem is to identify where his soul was.

Due to the original sin committed by Adam, all his descendants were born sinful with mortal bodies. However, Jesus was not afflicted with the original sin, and he committed no sin during his lifetime (1 John 3:5). Hence, for the body which individualizes the soul, there is a distinction between sinless Jesus and others. The body of Jesus would suffer no decay (Acts 2:31) while all the others would decompose. The resurrected Jesus was recognized by his disciples when he appeared to and spoke to them; three of his closest disciples who had experienced the transfiguration of Jesus recognized him (Matthew 17:1-2). He still seemed to have physical needs since he ate a piece of boiled fish handed to him by his disciple (Luke 24:36-43). His glorious figure was very similar to what he was before the crucifixion, since he had bones and flesh. This demonstrates that his departed soul had been returned to the body in which the soul had been individualized, since otherwise he could not have been identified even by his disciples.

For Aquinas, a soul merely needs a body only at the beginning of its individualization, and then it keeps the correspondence with the body, although that body later grows, matures, and declines. His view is inconsistent since he holds that the resurrected Jesus was bodily individualized again (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 53, A. 4). Although Aquinas is original in his viewpoint of the body as matter individualizing a soul, he cannot discuss whether matter is sinful or sinless as does Aristotelian philosophy; it is obvious that there are limits to reason serving faith. However, for Plato, or more clearly Plotinus, matter is evil (Plotinus, 2018, 1.8.10) since all forms are the cause of good and matter is the cause of evil (Aquinas, 1961, I.L. 10:C 170). Plato only admits form and matter by the standard of the four causes developed later by Aristotle.

In the *Summa*, Aquinas studies how similar the body of Jesus was after death to what it was before. He deems that the body of Jesus is immortal although he suffered death on the cross (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 50, A. 5). Being the Word of God, Jesus came to flesh through the human nature of Mary and thus had body and soul. A new person is conceived when there is a union of soul and body. Did the separation of the Word from his human nature occur when Jesus died with his soul departing the body? Aquinas holds that the human nature of Christ subsists in the divine person of the Word, and accordingly, he follows the Form of Human Being supposed by Plato and ascertained by Plotinus to Ideas of individuals (Plotinus, 2018, 5.7.1).⁴ Definitely, the Word of God

⁴ Plotinus also uses the Form of an individual human being (Plotinus, 2018, 5.9.12).

did not become flesh for a second time when Jesus was resurrected from death, but the resurrected Jesus had a glorious body.

Insights can be obtained by comparing two cases with the resurrection of Jesus: the creation of Adam and the regeneration of Christians through the Holy Spirit. Adam had no parents but was created by God according to his image (Genesis 2:7). The body of Adam was made from the dust of the ground; this indicates that the body and blood of Adam were of the same substance. In the transubstantiation with which he interprets the Eucharist (Matthew 26:26-29), Aquinas makes a distinction between “body” and “blood”. Regarding the body of Jesus, Aquinas views that it was initially from the blood of Mary (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 31, A. 5). The spirit of Adam came from God, and it was individualized through entering into a formerly lifeless body. Thus, it is not that the Spirit of God became a bodily Adam but that the Spirit gave the body of Adam life. God did not make the body of Adam with prime matter. In transubstantiation, Aquinas also holds that the blessed bread and wine instantly change into the body and blood of Jesus, respectively, without the medium of prime matter, which lacks form (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 75, A. 3).

All Christians were born from parents and thus are bodily descendants of Adam. With faith in Jesus as their Savior, they can be regenerated so that their body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). Since the Holy Spirit is the eternal God, Christians begin the eternal life in this physical life. When sinners are unsaved, they live with a human nature inherited from Adam. Due to the indwelling Holy Spirit, a Christian has a new self and healed human nature in Jesus (Ephesians 4:22-23). It is impossible to explain philosophically how the Spirit of God or Jesus Christ lives in a Christian (John 3:5-8), but it is a mystery that can be testified to and ascertained (Romans 8:16).

Regarding an individualized soul, there is no physical difference for a saved sinner before and after salvation. For Aquinas, however, the old self was individualized in the mother’s womb as soon as one was conceived. The Holy Spirit enters the old self when the sinner is miraculously changed with a new life; the process is similar to the first man beginning to have life when God breathed into him a breath (Genesis 2:7). Therefore, being regenerated is to individualize a new self with the body owned by the old self, and for both the new and old self, there is the same body (Ephesians 4:22-24); how can the new and old be distinguished? Even for a saved sinner, there is still physical death ahead, although there is no judgment (Romans 8:1). Following Aquinas’s thought which treats spirituality rationally, when a saved sinner dies, both the new self and the old self would go into purgatory temporarily to become a refined new self after due suffering. This viewpoint contradicts the salvation of the gospel. For a saved sinner, there is an old self belonging to Adam and a new self belonging to Jesus. In one’s will, the new self and old self are at war against each other, but being a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), a Christian can obey the indwelling Holy Spirit to grow spiritually, overcoming the old way of life, and sin less and less (Romans 7:18-25).

Jesus Between Death and Resurrection

In the *Summa*, Aquinas uses one question to discuss the death of Jesus, within which there is one sub-question: Was Christ a man during the three days of his death (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 50, A. 4)? He holds that Jesus was a dead man in the three days, since death is the body without the soul and a soul is not a man. Before that, Aquinas says the soul of Jesus gives being to the body and animates it (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 17, A. 2, ad. 4). Is a dead man still a man? Aquinas’s argument is unpersuasive because the dead man has no soul (James 2:26). Nevertheless, since Jesus is without sin, Aquinas argues that his death is exceptional: His divinity was a

grace from God and the grace of God is irrevocable even when the grace recipient dies. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born without the original sin. He committed no sin in his lifetime, so when he died, divinity was not lost from his body. Accordingly, a problem is engendered: Does the body of Jesus still have divinity when it has no soul, or does the body of Jesus without human nature still have a divine nature?

Grace is a gift from God to be received by people who are unworthy and whose efforts are in vain (Ephesians 2:8). The divine nature of Jesus comes from eternity (Colossians 1:15-17), so how can it be a grace from God since Jesus himself is God from God (Hebrews 1:3)? Aquinas argues that although the body of Jesus was without soul, it was united with the Word of God which is a personal God and which offers a hypostatic union for the divine and human nature of Jesus when he came into the flesh. Two natures have been united in the person of the Word. The consistency of his body between death and resurrection is due to the working of the Word of God (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 50, A. 5). For Aquinas, the Word of God is not a synonym for divine essence since the latter serves as the form of the three persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. I, Q. 39, A. 2). According to historical fact, Jesus in his human nature suffered greatly during his sacrifice that he endured being forsaken by God (Matthew 27:46). How can Jesus be united with the Word of God after such a death? In contrast, the apostle John uses *the Word, Logos* in Greek, the Stoic conception of rational principle which is less ontological than *nous*, the Intellect, merely to express the divine nature of Jesus to readers who might be influenced by the then-popular Stoicism philosophy (John 1:1-4).

The problem that Aquinas' view causes is obvious. Since a formed body is required to identify a person, death is interpreted as a body losing its substantial form to gain another; a living body is essentially different from its corpse. In fact, most scholars of the late 13th and early 14th century adopted a different method from that of Aquinas, who divides forms into substantial and accidental. Scotus (1265-1308) holds that we must posit at least two substantial forms in any animate composite, such as a bodily form and an animating soul. The former explains the identity of the body and its basic bodily structure, while the latter explains the fact that the body is alive (Cross, 2006, p. 272).

Another puzzling question is where the soul of Jesus was during the three days. The New Testament gives no exposition since Jesus, after his resurrection, did not explain this to his disciples. Aquinas gives us an answer that the soul of Jesus descended to hell. Since he writes in Latin and reads the Bible in Latin translation, Aquinas actually has a realistic understanding of *hades*, a Greek term used by apostles to denote *Sheol*, its Hebrew equivalent. While also being a realist as Aquinas is, I use *hades* in English, although Chinese is my native language. In patriarchal times, Jacob sadly believed that the soul of Joseph, his beloved son, would go to *Sheol*, a Hebrew term for the realm of the dead, if Joseph had been mauled and killed by a ferocious animal (Genesis 37:34-35). *Sheol* seems to be a resting place for all without partiality (Job 3:13-19). The life of Jacob was recorded by Moses (1526-1406BC), who was seen by three disciples during the transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-3) even though Moses was buried at an unknown location in Moab (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). What God had created was good (Genesis 1:31), so *Sheol* was not created by God but was prepared due to the sin of Adam that led to death (Genesis 2:16-17).

Hades is an invisible place where the souls of the unrighteous are detained while waiting for judgment (Hebrew 9:27). If people die, their departed souls cannot change their status (Ecclesiastes 9:10). In a vision, John saw the final judgment: The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and *Hades* gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done (Revelation 20:13-15).

The righteous person accredited by God would not descend into *hades*, such as Abraham (Genesis 15:6), who is at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:11). In the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus describes explicitly how in *hades*, a place of no escape, the rich man still has sight and feelings, “he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side”. So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire” (Luke 16:23-24). For Aquinas, if the soul suffers itself, its agony surpasses the greatest agony of bodily life (Aquinas, 1981, App. 1, Q. 2, A. 1). The bodily senses communicate through the soul, and what is suffered in *hades* is the suffering of the soul itself. Regarding human nature, Jesus is sinless; regarding divine nature, he is eternal life, and his soul could descend into *hades* to defeat death. His soul could not be detained in *hades*, if so, that would contradict his divinity.

Jesus teaches that there is hell (Matthew 5:22), *gehenna* in Greek, which derives its name from the Valley of Ben Hinnom (Joshua 15:8), where the wicked kings of Israel offered child sacrifices in fire to false gods (2 Kings 23:10). Being a place for punishment, hell is definitely different from *hades* because hell involves eternal torment in fire, as it goes: “It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown in the fire of hell” (Matthew 18:9). Although Sodom was destroyed by burning sulfur (Genesis 19:24), some would be more accountable than Sodom (Luke 10:12), and the place of that accountability can be pictured as the Valley of Ben Hinnom where false gods were worshiped (Jeremiah 7:31). Before the final judgement, *hades* can be understood as a temporary form of hell because in Greek context prior to the New Testament, *hades* represented a world for the dead (Homer, 2002, 11.260-280) and *Hades* was the god of the dead world (Hesiod, 2008, Lines 431-461). In Latin, *inferi* with *inferus* as single, from which *inferno* in Italian and English is derived, has a mixed meaning of *hades* and *hell*. Aquinas, nevertheless, deems that after his crucifixion, Jesus descended into hell so that he could rescue the lost souls detained there by Satan (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 52, A. 1). In his opinion, the resurrected Jesus defeated the power of death, but he has not yet destroyed hell (Aquinas, 2000, 1.V.A.4).

Aquinas divides hell into four layers, in which purgatory is the one next to the top, so he treats *hades* as a part of hell. Before Jesus fulfilled his redemptive work on the cross, there were many men of faith in the Old Testament, such as the patriarchs Abraham (2166-1991BC), Isaac (2066-1886BC), and Jacob (2006-1859BC). Aquinas believes that after they died, their souls entered the top layer of hell where they have no lack of grace and no penalty, although they cannot face God (Farthing, 1988, pp. 42-43). Aquinas is sure of the existence of purgatory since it represents the justice of God (Aquinas, 1981, App. 2, Q. 1, A. 1). The layer below purgatory is for unbaptized infants who died prematurely; the bottom layer is for the cursed sinners.

Jesus died a sacrificial death to cover the sins of people so they could be forgiven by God and saved through faith in his gospel, but it is wrong to think that unbelieving people who died before him would have no chance of salvation. It is also reasonable that Jesus suffered on the cross an agony *comparable to that in hades* since he foretold that he would go to paradise, not hell or *hades*, when he made a promise to the crucified criminal who trusted him (Luke 23:39-43). Soon he would commit his soul to God (Luke 23:46). Paradise is a spiritually blessed realm, and it is *paradeisos* in Greek, a term also used by John (Revelation 2:7) in relation to the fruits of the tree of life. From his words on the cross, we know that on the same day, the soul of Jesus went to paradise. Inconsistent with common knowledge about paradise and also the prayer of Jesus (Matthew 26:39), Aquinas interprets that to take on our sins, Jesus willed his body to be in the tomb while his soul went into hell, more specifically, the highest level of hell (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 52, A. 4).

For Judaism, which has no conception of purgatory, anyone who breaks one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) is burdened with grave sin. However, for Aquinas, venial sins prevent a Christian from going immediately to heaven after death, and this view is suitable to support his teaching on purgatory (Aquinas, 1981, Suppl., Q. 69, A. 2). Having venial sins at death means one is not good enough in deeds; if one's soul is purified in purgatory, one would change one's will and love God more (McLaughlin, 1949, p. 1157). In this way, the existence of purgatory accords with salvation from works or faith plus works, not faith alone. This is inconsistent with what Jesus promised: entry to paradise for the robber who was crucified with him when that man merely believed Jesus could be his Savior (Luke 23:43). Although the robber had mortal sin punishable by death (Luke 23:40), Jesus said he would enter paradise directly.

Paul writes that God would test the work done by Christians in Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:13-14), and this passage is used by the Catholic church as a Biblical proof for purgatory (p. 1167). Similarly, on fruits of faith, Jesus says there are differences (Matthew 13:23). If *purgatorium* (*purgatory*) is a concept serving faith with reason in the Latin context, reason does too much work, although by realism which Aquinas develops in great synthesis (Wild, 1948, pp. 25-27), purgatory can have conceptual being even it does not actually exist (Aquinas, 1968, I[2]).

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8). Between his death and resurrection, there was a Sabbath day. He was raised to life on the first day of the week (Sunday in modern calendar), the day *after* the Sabbath, when the Creator rested from his work (Genesis 2:1-2). The Sabbath prefigures salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, not through works (Hebrews 4:4-6). If Jesus had descended into *hades*, which is timeless for people living in this world, did he spend the Sabbath there and work there? What Peter writes seems to say that Jesus, after his death, did not immediately ascend to paradise: He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:18-19).

Plato treats people as souls descended into bodies as their prison, and accordingly, Peter states that Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, preached to the people of Noah's time who were born sinful with a prison-like body. The Greek for prison is *philakee*, which means detention house. It is difficult to estimate how much writers of the New Testament books were influenced by Platonism since they were not philosophers. The two worlds defined by Plato as real and empirical, respectively, have a similar contrast since the author of the Hebrews mentions "*a copy of the true one*" (Hebrew 9:24) and contrasts "*shadows*" with "*realities themselves*" (Hebrews 10:1). At the moment when Jesus gave up his spirit, the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the temple was torn in two (Matthew 27:51), since Jesus as high priest went through a more perfect tabernacle by his own blood (Hebrews 9:11-12). Symbolically, a more perfect tabernacle should be close in meaning to paradise since by Mosaic Law, sacrificial animals should be slaughtered outside the Holy Place. The Orthodox Church has no belief in purgatory, and the Protestant churches since the Reformation also reject it. Literally, Peter states that the ascended Jesus is not in paradise but in heaven, which is *ouranos* in Greek (1 Peter 3:22).

Heaven is more abstract than paradise because heaven is beyond the heavens, which were created with the earth in the beginning (Genesis 1:1). Heaven is the throne of God (Matthew 5:34), but God is spirit (John 4:24). It is universally agreed that the Nicene Creed issued in 325 is a great achievement in serving faith with reason because it adopted substance, originally a Greek term coined by Aristotle, to study being, in defining the Triune God of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Unlike the current version of the Apostles'

Creed,⁵ which became popular in the Latin church, the Nicene Creed does not mention that Jesus, after his death, descended into *hades*. With Creed for the Apostle's Creed, Aquinas states that descending into hell, Jesus had no suffering of punishment; this freedom from suffering shows him to be the liberator of the living and the dead (Aquinas, 2009, I.235).

Aquinas takes it for granted that the Latin church headed by the Pope in the Vatican inherited and represents the authority and teachings of the apostles. Since Latin is not a Biblical language like Hebrew and Greek, the Latin church has developed faith seeking understanding much more than the Greek church. This was first due to Augustine, who comprehensively infused neo-Platonism in interpreting Christianity without causing heresies. Unlike Paul and most believers of the apostolic church, both Aquinas and Augustine were not speakers of Greek, and they had no barrier from Judaism in accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God since they had no Jewish ancestry.

Paul

Although Paul was not one of the 12 chosen by Jesus (Matthew 10:2-4), and he was once so loyal to the Mosaic Law that he even persecuted the early church, he repented after the ascended Jesus appeared to him in a vision; he obeyed the calling of Jesus and became the apostle for the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-19). Some Christians believe that after Judas Iscariot shamefully hanged himself after Jesus, whom he betrayed, was condemned, he should have been replaced by Paul, whom Jesus added to the apostles, so what Peter decided, based on casting lots, about Judas' replacement was not of the will of God (Acts 1:23-26). Even he was once blamed by Paul (Galatians 2:11), Peter later recognized and recommended the authority of the letters by Paul (2 Peter 3:15-16). Although he was an apostle, unlike Matthew, Paul did not have a chance to hear Jesus' teaching on souls' destruction in hell (Matthew 10:28), but it is reasonable to assume that Paul learned from other people.

Paul also uses the term *logos*, not metaphysically as John does, but merely for the gospel as the word of truth (Ephesians 1:13), as does Peter (1 Peter 1:23). Since the term gospel (Matthew 4:23), which is *euangelion* in Greek, was used by John only once in his last writing (Revelation 14:6), Paul was more evangelical than John. Regarding the resurrection, Paul uses not *hades* but *abussos*, which means the deep, when he quotes, "Who will descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)" (Romans 9:8). In the Chinese Union Bible (1919), *abussos* is translated into 阴间 (*yinjian*), the same as *hades*. Paul mentions baptism for the dead, which was a custom in the Corinthian church at that time (1 Corinthians 15:29). Even if receiving baptism was a requirement for a sinner to be saved, it does not mean that praying for the dead entails the actual existence of purgatory. The most likely case is that a living believer would be baptized for someone who died without baptism. In this context, Paul further argues for the resurrection of Jesus, although he was not among the first witnesses of Jesus having defeated the reign of death.

At the beginning of his epistle to the Romans, Paul focuses on the resurrection of Jesus (Romans 1:4). He uses the Greek term of *anastasis* for resurrection, a conception that the Greeks did not have, and even the Sadducee sect of the Jews denied (Matthew 22:23). Similarly, the ancient Chinese had no conception of transmigration before Buddhism entered their land during late Western Han Dynasty (202BC-8) from India, but more than that, they also had no conception of resurrection. The prophet Elisha performed a miracle in Shunem that a boy was awakened to life from death (2 Kings 4:18-37), similar to the New Testament case of Tabitha in

⁵ The Apostles' Creed, a. 5, <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Credo>.

Joppa (Acts 9:36-43). Nevertheless, those who returned to life in such cases would die again. The majority of Jews believe that the dead will be resurrected in the end times (Daniel 12:1-3), and their resurrection would not be a purely spiritual one (Ezekiel 37:1-4).

Although *Theos* in Greek, as used by Aristotle (Aristotle, 1973, 1072b20-35), does not mean breath like the Hebrew term *ruach*, Aristotle's spirit and soul can be distinct from *pneuma* and *psuchē*, respectively, which Paul lists as combining with the body to form a whole person (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The ontological notion of *nous*, coined by Anaxagoras (500-428 BC), is used to state the mind, for both God (Romans 11:34) and man (1 Corinthians 1:10). To win a wider readership, Paul wrote directly in Greek, even though he could speak Hebrew (Acts 21:40). In Rome, the center for the Latin world, there were Greek-speaking groups, including on which a Jewish couple established as their household church (Romans 16:3-5).

During his second ministry journey, Paul stayed in Corinth for more than one year (Acts 18:1-18). At first, he entered the synagogue to persuade the local Jews, but later he preached more to the Greeks. In contrast with his explanation of the gospel and the resurrection of Jesus in the prologue of Romans (Romans 1:1-4), Paul sums up the gospel rationally in his earlier epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, with a focus on the resurrection and its witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:3-5) after solutions to or advice about many other problems were given. For the Greeks who search for wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:22), *sophia* is true knowledge that never changes with time or senses, such as that of the eternal Forms by Plato. Borrowing *sophia*, a rational knowledge pursued by Greek philosophers, Paul argues faithfully for the transcendental spiritual wisdom which is beyond reason: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9), since with his own vision he develops prophetic verses (Isaiah 52:15, 64:4). Paul wrote less than 30 years after Jesus' resurrection, and some witnesses were still alive when his epistles were written, but people did not know how the dead would be raised to life at the end of the time, when Jesus returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Serving faith merely with common sense, Paul explains to the Corinthians his grasp on resurrection, which none of them had ever experienced. Since Jesus, the Messiah spoke Aramaic and Hebrew; Paul supports realism while writing on faith to the Corinthians based on Jewish roots, because he quotes verses from the Septuagint,⁶ the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Not only does he express facts and notions in Greek, but he supports a universally spiritual church since his epistle is similarly effective for the Romans, the English, the Chinese, and all peoples. A seed is motionless and usually gives no impression of life: "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else" (1 Corinthians 36-37). For the Greeks influenced by Platonism, they believed that since the soul is not created, it is immortal and there would be transmigration after death. For Aristotle, the soul is inseparable from the body. For Christians, each soul was created but is immortal. The resurrection of the dead is analogous to what is raised imperishable: "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). God has fatherhood since he is called Father of all (Ephesians 4:6), but he is also likened to motherhood (Isaiah 49:15), since male and female were made after his image (Genesis 1:27). A spiritual body does not mean to be with gender since Jesus teaches: "At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30), but they will be identified since angels are named, such as Gabriel (Luke 1:26) and Michael (Jude 9). The former union of married couples does not connect them when they are resurrected with a heavenly transformation (Mark 12:25).

⁶ For instance, the partly usage of Isaiah 22:13 in 1 Corinthians 15:32, also Genesis 2:7 in 1 Corinthians 15:45.

Accordingly, Paul argues further for resurrection. How can Paul have such wisdom? Earlier in the epistle, Paul testifies to having wisdom from God (1 Corinthians 1:30), and thus *sophia* gains a spiritual meaning unknown to the Greeks who did not have the conception of angels (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

When Jesus was recognized by his disciples after the resurrection, he had a glorious body that was not barred by doors (John 20:19), and in which he would ascend into heaven (Acts 1:9). Paul holds that Adam was a pattern of Jesus (Romans 5:14). Certainly, Paul means by human nature, since before the Fall, Adam had not sinned, and he did not ask God for a woman before God set up monogamy with a woman created for his partner (Genesis 2:21-24). Similarly, Jesus did not sin by breaking the law even in his heart (Matthew 5:29). Although pre-Fall Adam and the resurrected Jesus both had no sin, Adam did not have a glorious body like the resurrected Jesus had.

What the resurrected Jesus taught disciples was not to inform them about *hades* or to save the souls in *hades*, but to persuade people to trust him as being the Son of God, the Messiah whom the prophets prophesied (John 21:34). Before his crucifixion, Jesus predicted how it would be when he returns at the end of the time (Matthew 24:40-41). Before his ascension, he also taught how he would come back again (Acts 1:11). The first recorded martyr who died for his faith in Jesus was Steven (Acts 6:5, 7:59), a Jewish man with a Greek name, and then James, the brother of John (Acts 12:1-2), one of the Twelve (Matthew 4:21). In order, those who have fallen asleep in Christ will be raised to life first (1 Corinthians 15:18) before the ascension of believers so that they can have a vision of what Jesus had promised. Many died with faith in God before Stephen, and they would be made perfect with those who believe in Jesus (Hebrew 11:39-40). For example, Abraham unknowingly had faith in Jesus (John 8:56-58). Later, in the book of Romans, Paul further strengthens the relationship between saved sinners and the resurrection of Jesus: "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). Paul exhorts saved sinners to live a saintly life since their situation is like having been resurrected from the reign of sin which leads to death, and they will be united with Jesus at his second coming.

Conclusions

Indubitably, Aquinas believes in the historical fact of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his fifth reasoning about evil and good, Aquinas quotes the arguments of Paul, and the justification of sinners is viewed as a good thing due to Christ's resurrection (Aquinas, 1981, Pt. III, Q. 53, A. 1). In fact, Jesus has defeated death through his resurrection, so he can deliver those from death if they believe him and so have credited to them righteousness through faith. Paul mentions the struggle against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 6:12), and this passage contains the only usage of the noun *poneeria* standing for evil, which in its adjective form *poneeros* is hard to distinguish from *kakos* (Romans 7:19) (Urmson, 1990, p. 139), which is often used in the New Testament. Moral evil is sin; death is not sin but comes from original sin (Romans 5:12). For Aquinas, good or evil cannot exist independently but only as attributes of a subject; he follows Aristotle in refusing the Good of Plato, and thus he is somewhat inconsistent. Jesus predicted that he would be raised to life three days after his death (Matthew 20:17-19), and Aquinas has no focus on the prediction but argues why Jesus would be raised to life in three days (Aquinas, 2000, 1.VI.B.4).

Arguing for the resurrection of Jesus, Paul is different from Aquinas in that, without unnecessary academic reasoning, Paul follows Jesus in teaching faith with parables from everyday life, using situations that are easily neglected but understood. What Paul obeys is a reasoning illuminated by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13)

since he contends for the gospel by which God saves sinners. In Aquinas' *Summa*, there is no theme set aside to discuss the gospel. The Latin church for which Aquinas was working had changed substantially from the apostolic church, in that one's own testimony and experience of saving faith were not as important; a nominal reverence for the church authorities had higher priority. Although within the Latin church, he has opponents who holds reason as the traditional role of being a handmaid to faith, Aquinas promotes faith with reason where faith is above reason.

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