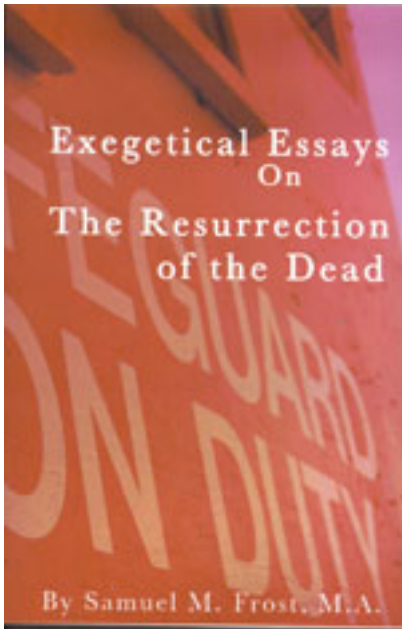


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**Frost, Samuel M.**

***Exegetical Essays on the Resurrection of the Dead***

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This book is a collection of five essays by Samuel Frost that defend a preterist understanding of eschatology, which holds that the parousia has already occurred. Accordingly, the resurrection of the dead is an event that should now be regarded in the past tense. Frost describes his opponents as evangelicals who do not regard the second coming as having fully occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In contrast to the recent trend among scholars to understand “resurrection” in Second Temple Judaism as something that occurred to the corpse, Frost contends that preterists must “deny the *nature* of the event as traditionally taught” (10). “[S]ince the creeds state that the resurrection of the dead is future, then there must be a separation between A.D. 70 and the end of the world. Preterists think that this is impossible to do and stay faithful to the texts of the NT” (10). The five essays by Frost provide a preterist exegesis of three key passages (1 Cor 15, Sadducees on the resurrection, Mark 13), a description of the preterist view, and a defense of his exegesis as evangelical.

In the first essay, “The ‘Resurrection of the Dead’ in 1 Corinthians 15,” Frost takes on N. T. Wright and R. T. France as he offers an exegesis of this premiere passage on resurrection. He contends that both Wright and France agree that the end of the age occurred in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. However, since the resurrection of

the dead is usually associated with the end of the age, they are inconsistent in believing that it is a future event. Their interpretation fails because they understand the resurrection of the dead to be a literal and physical event that occurs to the corpses of individuals. Since skeletal remains of believers are in the ground, we know the resurrection of the dead has not occurred. In order to solve the tension, Frost reinterprets Paul as saying that it is the risen corpse of Jesus with which dead Israel is reunited (27, 73–75, 89-92). Thus, Paul says that at the resurrection of the dead, that which is sown and raised is Israel (94).

In his next essay, “Sadducees on the Resurrection,” Frost challenges traditional interpretations of Jesus’ controversy with the Sadducees. Scholars holding that Jesus thought of the resurrection of the dead as an event after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 are “laboring under a presupposed understanding of the terms involved” (99). Instead, the debate “centers in on two things: marriage and the application of the law at the resurrection” (102). The law that required brothers to raise a family through his childless widow is laid aside, since “*marriage is no longer how one becomes a Son of God or raises up sons in that age*. God, by the Spirit, raises up sons himself” (115; emphasis original). The Evangelists use the present tense regarding marrying and being given in marriage rather than the future tense, which one would expect to find if the event were in the future. Moreover, “God is the God of the living, and the Spirit is already raising up sons” (119).

In his third essay, “Does Mark 13 Include the Resurrection of the Dead?” Frost interacts with Wright and France. France maintains the traditional separation between realized eschatology and that which is to come. Wright does not. However, Wright does not see the “end of the space-time universe” in Mark 13 (129). Frost assumes that John’s apocalypse was penned prior to A.D. 70 (130). Since John and Mark are writing of the same event, that is, the tribulation period of A.D. 70 (141), “[h]ow can you have an inaugurated kingdom [which Wright grants] in an age to come and yet have no resurrection of the dead which John clearly states happens when that very kingdom and age begins [Rev 21]?” (143). For Frost, that John’s revelation was fulfilled in the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 is so certain that it “is beyond dispute” (143). Many scholars reject this interpretation because it “smacks of overturning the traditions of the ‘self-same body’ resurrection” (144). However, “if the drift of scholarship is heading in the direction of Preterism, then you cannot assert what Wright and France do and yet hang on to those same old same old [*sic*] self-same bodies” (144). Thus, Mark 13 includes the resurrection of the dead, but not in the traditional sense of the resurrection of the corpse.

Frost begins his next essay, “The Preterist Framework in a Nutshell,” in Genesis. The death Adam suffered as a result of his disobedience was not a physical death, since he did

not physically die on the day he ate the forbidden fruit (150). Rather, he came under the reign of sin and death. Moving to the law, Frost proposes that God's restoration of his relationship with humanity like it was "*before* the transgression of Adam" is the resurrection of the dead (154–55). Scholars have debated Paul's intended meaning behind Rom 7:7–25. Was he referring to his present life or his pre-Christian life (the latter has been largely abandoned today)? Frost contends that he meant neither. Instead, Paul was delivered at conversion from the body of death, which is Israel (155). Frost ends with the new covenant. God was "*transforming* Gentiles into fellow citizens of Israel, thereby transforming Israel itself" (158). This encompassed a "*spiritual change* [not a physical one] in the *spiritual body* of Christ, which was brought about through the death and resurrection of the one body, Jesus Christ" (158).

In his final essay, "Evangelical Exegesis: Close, But No Cigar," Frost defends his position as evangelical: the "resurrection of the dead" is not a physical event. The traditional understanding of Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 15:16, 20 is as follows: if believers will not be raised, then Christ has not been raised; Christ has been raised, so the dead will be raised. Frost contends that the traditional interpretation is poor logic, since "[t]he resurrection of one physical body does not guarantee the resurrection of many physical bodies, logically speaking" (171). But if the dead are part of the body of Christ, as Frost proposes in his first essay, Paul's logic is preserved. The dead and Jesus are tied together. Thus, to deny the resurrection of the dead is likewise to deny the resurrection of Jesus.

Frost is innovative in his attempts to ease the tension of the dominant "already but not yet" eschatology. His exegesis reflects that he has wrestled through the issues. However, it is doubtful that many will find his arguments convincing. Frost's commitment to full preterist eschatology dominates his thinking. As a result, he is forced to strain his exegesis at times, adopting new interpretations in order to accommodate full preterism. For example, in the creedal material in 1 Cor 15:3–7, most exegetes understand that Paul is either providing an official list of the appearances in a chronological order or that he is listing the figures in order to legitimate their authority. Frost interprets Paul as listing the figures in the order of their positions of importance (33). As noted above, he interprets the contrast between the old and new body as referring, not to individuals, but to Israel (73–75, 94). For Frost, the term "flesh and blood" refers to the physical body of flesh (78–81), a view that has been largely abandoned by most modern exegetes who favor understanding the term as a Semitism denoting the weakness of mortality. He notes that the raising of the dead in 1 Cor 15:15, 16 is stated in the present tense. Thus, the event is occurring in the present (47). (He makes the same point regarding the resurrection in Jesus' discussion with the Sadducees [116].) However, most contemporary commentators recognize this as a future present, common in the New Testament and consistent with Paul's use of the future tense in 15:22 that "all will be made alive." It would be

interesting to know how Frost would reply to 2 Tim 2:18, “concerning those who have wandered from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred,” but he does not address it.

Frost may be too sanguine in thinking that “the drift of scholarship is heading in the direction of Preterism” (144). It is a very small movement within evangelical circles, both on the academic and lay levels. For example, in a recent blog, one Christian wrote, “I have yet to see any other full preterists. Am I the only one?” (<http://bibleforums.org/forum/showthread.php?t=15629>).

Finally, the bibliography is not alphabetized, and more typographical errors appear than is usually expected.