

Brief on The Particular Judgment and the General Judgment¹

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¹ RJMI's Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

The Particular Judgment

As soon as men die, Jesus judges them according to their faith and works

As soon as men die and God is not going to bring them back to life again, their souls without their bodies go immediately to their Particular Judgment in which Jesus Christ judges them:

“It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27)

“For it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways.” (Eccus. 11:28)

Jesus judges dead men according to the faith they believed in and the works they did when they were alive in body and soul:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ [for our Particular Judgment] that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil.” (2 Cor. 5:10)

“For when the just shall depart from his justice and commit iniquities, he shall die in them [in damnation]. And when the wicked shall depart from his wickedness and shall do judgments and justice, he shall live in them [be saved].” (Ez. 33:18-19)

Hence the Bible teaches that the souls of men who died during the Old Testament era were either saved and thus in the Limbo of the Fathers or damned and thus in the hell of the damned. For example,

Sometime after the holy Prophet Samuel died, his soul came from the Limbo of the Fathers and appeared to King Saul:

“And the king [Saul] said to her: Fear not: what hast thou seen? ...And she said: An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul understood that it was Samuel, and he bowed himself with his face to the ground and adored him. And Samuel said to Saul: Why hast thou troubled me that I should be brought up [from the Limbo of the Fathers]?” (1 Ki. 28:13-15)

The souls of Moses and Elias came from the Limbo of the Fathers and appeared on Mount Tabor with Jesus during Jesus’ Transfiguration:

“And behold there appeared to them [the apostles] Moses and Elias talking with him [Jesus].” (Mt. 17:3)

The Book of Wisdom teaches that atheists are in the hell of the damned:

Atheists say: “ ‘So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: and have been able to shew no mark of virtue: but are consumed in our wickedness.’ Such things as these the sinners said in hell.” (Wis. 5:13-14)

And Jesus says that when the poor, sick Lazarus died, his soul went to the Limbo of the Fathers (also called Abraham’s Bosom); whereas, when the evil rich man died, his soul went to the hell of the damned:

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.” (Lk. 16:22-24)

The following verses say that the saints who died and are saved convict the wicked who are alive. And the wicked are convicted by their own sins when they die and go to their Particular Judgment:

“That the grace of God and his mercy is with his saints, and that he hath respect to his chosen. But the just that is dead condemneth the wicked that are living, and

youth soon ended, the long life of the unjust. For they shall see the end of the wise man, and shall not understand what God hath designed for him, and why the Lord hath set him in safety. They shall see him, and shall despise him: but the Lord shall laugh them to scorn. And they shall fall after this without honour, and be a reproach among the dead for ever: for he shall burst them puffed up and speechless, and shall shake them from the foundations, and they shall be utterly laid waste: they shall be in sorrow, and their memory shall perish. They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them.” (Wis. 4:15-20)

The Bible also teaches that the souls of men who died during the New Covenant era are either saved and in heaven or purgatory or damned and in the hell of the damned. For example,

The book of the Apocalypse tells us that saints reign in heaven with Christ. (See commentary on Apoc. 20:4.) The apostle St. John saw saints in heaven. (See Bible verse and commentary on Apoc. 19:10.) And St. Peter teaches that the heretics and apostates who bring in sects of perdition and die that way will be damned to hell during their Particular Judgment where they await the General Judgment:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction... For if God spared not the angels that sinned but delivered them drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell unto torments [during their Particular Judgment] to be reserved unto judgment [the General Judgment], [so you also will suffer the same fate]... [For] the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reserve the unjust [in the hell of the damned after their Particular Judgment] unto the day of judgment [the General Judgment] to be tormented.” (2 Pt. 2:1, 4, 9)

Hence we see that all the angels also underwent a Particular Judgment and will also undergo the General Judgment at the end of the world so that the goodness of the good angels and the evilness of the bad angels (devils) will be manifest and thus known to all.

During the New Covenant era, which began in AD 33 when Christ died on the cross, only those who die as good members of the Catholic Church will be saved. Hence the faith that men must believe in to be saved is the Catholic faith, the works they must do to be saved are the works necessary to be a good Catholic, and then they must die as good members of the Catholic Church. Therefore all men who die and go to their Particular Judgment as non-members of the Catholic Church are damned, and all members of the Catholic Church who die in mortal sin are damned.

The General Judgment

All of the dead bodies are resurrected just before the General Judgment

While men’s souls are either saved or damned during their Particular Judgment, their dead bodies are still in the grave waiting to be resurrected at the end of this world and just before the General Judgment, at which point all men will be judged in body and soul before the whole world. This is when the following prayers will be answered and prophecies fulfilled:

King David: “O hear my prayer, all flesh shall come to thee. (Ps. 64:3) The Lord remaineth for ever. He hath prepared his throne in judgment: And he shall judge the world in equity, he shall judge the people in justice. (Ps. 9:8-9) The rivers shall clap their hands, the mountains shall rejoice together at the presence of the Lord: because he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with equity. (Ps. 97:8-9)”

Jesus, son of Sirach: “And I said in my heart: God shall judge both the just and the wicked, and then shall be the time of every thing.” (Ectes. 3:17)

The purpose of the General Judgment is to make manifest to all men God's justice and mercy

The purpose of the General Judgment is to make manifest to all men the justice of God in saving this one while damning that one and to know the extent of the goodness of the elect or evilness of the reprobates. Hence God's perfect justice and perfect mercy will be manifest to all men, as well as to all angels, regarding each person and how it relates to persons in relation to one another:

“For there is not any thing secret that shall not be made manifest, nor hidden, that shall not be known and come abroad.” (Lk. 8:17)

Men who have not died cannot know the ultimate destiny of a soul unless it is mentioned in the Bible

“Therefore judge not before the time [the General Judgment]; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God.” (1 Cor. 4:5)

The judgment St. Paul warns about making in regards to men who have not died is the judgment regarding the ultimate disposition of a person; that is, if he be of the elect or a reprobate. As St. Paul says in Verse 4, even though he is not conscious of any sin he is guilty of, that does not mean that he is justified and of the elect:

“For I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.”

Even a Catholic who is in a state of grace can fall away and end up in hell, and a bad Catholic who is not in a state of grace can repent and end up in heaven. (Ez. 33:18-19) St. Paul is not teaching that Catholics cannot make any judgments whatsoever, since in other places he teaches that Catholics must judge sinners. (See commentary on Mt. 7:1.) Instead, he is teaching that they should not judge “before the time” (that is, before the General Judgment at the end of the world) the ultimate disposition or fate of a person if he be of the elect or a reprobate. Before the General Judgment, the only humans who are infallibly known to be saved or damned are those mentioned in the Bible. For example,

- Judas is a reprobate and thus damned: Jesus said, “Those whom thou gavest me have I kept; and none of them is lost but the son of perdition [Judas], that the scripture may be fulfilled. (Jn. 17:12) The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed: it were better for him if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it. (Mt. 26:24-25)” If Judas was saved, Jesus would not have called him the son of perdition nor said that it were better that he had not been born.
- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are of the elect and thus saved: “And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 8:11)
- Moses and Elias are of the elect and thus saved. See the above quote when they appeared on Mount Tabor during Jesus' Transfiguration. (Mt. 17:3)
- The twelve apostles (excluding Judas and including Matthias) are of the elect and thus saved: “And Jesus said to them: Amen, I say to you, that you [the apostles], who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mt. 19:28)

Hence not until the General Judgment will *all* men know for certain the fate of those who died who were not mentioned in the Bible as saved or damned.

However, Catholics who have not yet died are bound to presume that a man who has died is either saved or damned based upon the evidence available to them. Hence if there is no evidence that a man died as a member of the Catholic Church, then that man is presumed to be damned. And if there is evidence that a member of the Catholic Church who was guilty of mortal sin when he died and there is no evidence that he repented, then he is presumed to be in the hell of the damned. And if there is no evidence that a member of the Catholic Church was guilty of mortal sin when he died, then he is presumed to be saved.

Jesus will judge men again but this time publicly and on earth

After the second coming of Jesus Christ and after he has destroyed all the evildoers from the face of the earth, Jesus will resurrect the bodies of the dead and conduct the General Judgment in which he will publicly judge all men according to the faith they believed in and the works they did before they died. This is also known as the “Great White Throne Judgment”:

“And I saw a great white throne, and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire.” (Apoc. 20:11-15)

Just previous to the General Judgment, the elect and reprobates with their resurrected bodies will be taken up to the intermediate heaven before the throne of Jesus Christ; and Christ will then desolate the earth and the heaven above the earth. He will then create a new earth and new heaven. The elect and reprobates will then land upon the new earth with its new hell, and Christ will then conduct the General Judgment in Jerusalem.²

The General Judgment is also recorded in Matthew 25, which states that Jesus judges men again according to the faith they believed in and the works they did before they died. But this second judgment is public and before all rational creatures. The elect are referred to as sheep and placed at his right hand, and the reprobates are referred to as goats and placed at his left hand:

“And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Mt. 25:31-34, 41)

While the souls of the dead elect already possess the kingdom of God before the General Judgment, their resurrected glorified bodies will now also possess the kingdom of God. And while the souls of the reprobates are already in the hell of the damned before the General Judgment, their resurrected corrupted bodies will now be cast into the hell of the damned where the reprobates will suffer not only in soul but now also in body. Hence the following verses do not refer to the souls of the elect and reprobates that are alive either in heaven, purgatory, or the hell of the damned but rather to their dead bodies that will be resurrected just before the General Judgment:

² See Long Commentaries: The two raptures that occur at the end of the world.

“Wonder not at this; for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves [the dead bodies] shall hear the voice of the Son of God [and be resurrected]. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life [in body and soul]; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment [in body and soul].” (Jn. 5:28-29)

“And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works.” (Apoc. 20:13)

The sea symbolizes the places where the dead bodies of the elect are, as water is a symbol of grace, life, and purity. Death and hell symbolize the places where the dead bodies of the reprobates are, as death means the death of the soul and thus refers to reprobates, and hell is the place of damnation, the place their dead bodies are destined for.

The Prophet Isaias speaks of the new heaven and earth that Jesus will create after his second coming and of the corrupted bodies (carcasses) of the reprobates that will suffer in hell forever:

“For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make to stand before me, saith the Lord: so shall your seed stand, and your name. And there shall be month after month, and sabbath after sabbath: and all flesh shall come to adore before my face, saith the Lord. And they shall go out and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched: and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:22-24)

The Book of Daniel also speaks of the General Judgment:

“But at that time shall Michael rise up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of thy people: and a time shall come such as never was from the time that nations began even until that time. And at that time shall thy people be saved, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of those [bodies] that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always. But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.” (Dan. 12:1-3)

Before the New Covenant, the faithful believed
that the Messiah would save their bodies and souls during his first coming

Before the New Covenant era, God’s faithful chosen people believed that if they died faithful their souls would go to the Limbo of the Fathers, which is the highest level in hell, waiting for the day to be saved and thus enter heaven when the Messiah would come.³ And they believed that their bodies and souls would be saved at that time. Hence they believed that the Messiah would only come once and that it would mark the end of the world and thus the establishment of his everlasting kingdom on earth. For example,

Job: “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom.” (Job 19:25-27)

Martha: “Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him: I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day.” (Jn. 11:23-24)

Before Jesus’ resurrection, even the apostles believed that Jesus would bring his kingdom upon earth and thus save both souls and bodies during his first coming. For example, when Jesus told his disciples that he must die, they said the following:

³ See Long Commentaries: The heresy that souls of dead men are literally asleep or cease to exist.

“The multitude answered him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?” (Jn. 12:34)

And other followers of Jesus “thought that the kingdom of God should immediately be manifested.” (Lk. 19:11)

Hence they believed that the Messiah would not die and that his first coming would be the last coming when all things would be accomplished. And after Jesus’ resurrection, he met two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus but hid his identity. And they said the following to him:

“But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.” (Lk. 24:21)

After his resurrection, Jesus told his chosen people exactly how their souls and bodies would be saved. He told them that their souls are saved first and then their bodies. He told them that the resurrection of their bodies and the everlasting earthly kingdom will not come immediately but only after some time. And to keep them on guard and to wean them from the love of this world over the love of heaven and the everlasting earthly paradise to come, he stated it in such a way that each generation would expect his second coming in their lifetime. For example, regarding his second coming, Jesus said,

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works.” (Apoc. 22:12)

After all, when men die, their fate is sealed, be it the hell of the damned or heaven and the everlasting earthly paradise to come.

Hence after his resurrection, Jesus said that the souls of the elect would be taken to heaven first to see God face to face without their bodies. And then their bodies would be saved when he comes the second time at the end of the world and they would then see God face to face in body and soul. Thus while Christ’s death redeemed souls and bodies, the souls of the elect would benefit from the redemption and be saved first, as soon as they die, and then their bodies would benefit from the redemption and be saved during his second coming at the end of the world just previous to the General Judgment, at which point they would then see God face to face not only in the soul but also in their bodies.

In the same way, during Christ’s first coming and before his resurrection, God’s faithful chosen people, including his apostles, believed that when the Messiah comes he would not only bring the spiritual kingdom of God upon earth but also God’s everlasting material kingdom. But after his resurrection Christ told them that he first brought his spiritual kingdom upon earth in souls when he died on the cross but that he will not bring his *everlasting* earthly kingdom upon earth until his second coming at the end of the world.⁴

After the General Judgment there will be no more death and no more evil upon the face of the earth

Apocalypse 20:14 teaches that after the General Judgment there will be no more death and there will be no more hell (devils or evil humans) upon the face of the earth:

“Hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death.” (Apoc. 20:14)

The second death is the everlasting death of the corrupted bodies of the reprobates that will be resurrected just before the General Judgment and reunited to their corrupted souls. Their first death was the death of their souls when they died and their souls were cast into the hell of the damned. (See commentaries on Apoc. 20:5 and 6.) The Prophet Isaias describes the condition of

⁴ Christ will have kingdoms in this fallen world, as proved by the Holy Roman Empire, but they will not be everlasting and will only be in parts of the world.

the new earth Jesus creates after his second coming in which there will be no more death, pain, or sadness. (See Long Commentaries: The Everlasting Earthly Paradise.)

Jesus permits saints to judge in his name

Jesus permits some of his saints to judge men in his name. He permits them to judge not only men who have not yet died but also men who have died. And they judge them at their Particular Judgment and at the General Judgment. (See commentary on Apoc. 2:4. Judgment was given unto them.)

The place of the General Judgment

The elect and reprobates will be gathered in Kidron Valley; and Christ the King will judge them from Jerusalem, which overlooks Kidron Valley (also known as the Valley of Josaphat). The elect will be to the right of Jesus, and the reprobates to his left (Mt. 25:33):

“Let them arise, and let the nations come up into the valley of Josaphat: for there I will sit to judge all nations round about.” (Joel 3:12)

Josaphat means “the Lord Judges.” Hence this is the valley where the Lord conducts the General Judgment. Therefore it does not refer to the good King Josaphat, although his tomb is in Kidron Valley.⁵ In Verse 14 the prophet Joel also calls the Valley of Josaphat “the Valley of Destruction” because this is where all the reprobates will be gathered and killed previous to the General Judgment:

“Put ye in the sickles for the harvest is ripe; come and go down for the press is full, the fats run over, for their wickedness is multiplied. Nations, nations in the valley of destruction: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of destruction.” (Joel 3:13-14)

Faithful Jews during the Old Covenant era knew that the General Judgment will take place in Kidron Valley, and thus some were buried there so that their bodies would be in the same place where the General Judgment will occur⁶:

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Valley of Josaphat”: “Cedron (Kedron) takes the name of Valley of Josaphat... Christians, Jews, and, later, Mussulmans regard Cedron as the place of the last judgment. What has lent colour to this popular belief is the fact that since the time of the kings of Juda, Cedron has been the principal necropolis of Jerusalem. Josias scattered upon the tombs of the children of Israel the ashes of the idol of Astarte which he burned in Cedron (IV Kings, xxiii, 4). It was in Cedron that the hand of Absalom was set up, and the monument of St. James, and of Zachary. The ornamental facade of the tomb said to be that of Josaphat has been completely walled up by the Jews, who have their cemeteries on the flanks of the Valley of Cedron. They wish to stand in the first rank on the day when God shall appear in the Valley of Josaphat.”

Kidron Valley is east of Jerusalem and between the Temple and the Mount of Olives.

Catholic Commentary on Joel 3:2. **Josaphat:** “...the judgment of the Lord,’ marks the place...east of Jerusalem, between the temple and Olivet, whence our Lord ascended into heaven.”

Catholic Commentary on Lk. 7:12: “So the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, in which the body of Christ lay, was without Jerusalem. So also the valley of Jehoshaphat, the scene of the judgment to come and the general resurrection, is the

⁵ See Plate: Kidron Valley.

⁶ See Plate: Tombs in Kidron Valley.

common burial-place of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the exception of the kings, for whom David had provided a sepulchre in Zion. I Kings ii.”

Catholic Commentary on Lk. 9:26: “When he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels, i.e., at the day of judgment, when he shall sit as judge in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and in the presence of all, both men and angels, reward the just, and punish the evildoers.”

Venerable Bede, *Book of the Holy Places*, 8th century: “The city of Jerusalem is almost circular in its form... In the circumference of its walls, which is extensive, there are eighty-four towers and six gates. The first is David’s gate, to the west of Mount Sion... the fifth is the Postern or little gate, through which we go down by steps to the Valley of Jehoshaphat... The rain which falls runs in streams through the eastern gates, and carries with it all the filth of the streets into the brook Cedron, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat...⁷ Near Jerusalem and the wall of the temple is Gehennon, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat, extending from north to south, and through it flows the brook Cedron, when it is swelled by a fall of rain. This valley, forming a small level plain, is well watered and woody, and full of delightful things: formerly there was in it a place dedicated to Baal. Here was the tower of King Jehoshaphat, containing his tomb; on the right side of it was a separate chamber, cut out of the rock of Mount Olivet, containing two hollow sepulchres, one of the old Simeon, the other Joseph the husband of Saint Mary.^{8,9}

The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, 1173: “In Jerusalem, attached to the palace which belonged to Solomon, are the stables built by him... There is also visible up to this day the pool used by the priests before offering their sacrifices, and the Jews coming thither write their names upon the wall. The gate of Jehoshaphat leads to the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is the gathering-place of nations. Here is the pillar called Absalom’s Hand, and the sepulchre of King Uzziah.¹⁰

“In the neighbourhood is also a great spring, called the Waters of Siloam, connected with the brook of Kidron. Over the spring is a large structure dating from the time of our ancestors, but little water is found, and the people of Jerusalem for the most part drink the rain-water, which they collect in cisterns in their houses. From the valley of Jehoshaphat one ascends the Mount of Olives; it is the valley only which separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. From the Mount of Olives one sees the Sea of Sodom, and at a distance of two parasangs from the Sea of Sodom is the Pillar of Salt into which Lot’s wife was turned; the sheep lick it continually, but afterwards it regains its original shape. The whole land of the plain and the valley of Shittim as far as Mount Nebo are visible from here.”¹¹

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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⁷ c. 1, p. 405.

⁸ c. 5, pp. 415, 417.

⁹ *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, by Venerable Bede, translated by Rev. J. A. Giles, D.C.L. Historical Tracts, Vol. IV. Published by Whittaker and Co., Ave Maria Lane, London, 1843.

¹⁰ Footnote 2: “In memory of Absalom’s disobedience to his father, it is customary with the Jews to pelt this monument with stones to the present day. The adjoining tomb is traditionally known as that of Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. King Uzziah, otherwise Azariah, was buried on Mount Zion, close to the other kings of Judah, 2 Kings xv. 7. Cf. P. E. F., *Jerusalem*, as to identification of sites. Sir Charles Wilson, *Picturesque Palestine*, gives excellent illustrations of the holy places, and his work might be consulted with advantage.”

¹¹ Translation and commentary by Marcus Nathan Alder, M.A. Published by Philipp Feldheim, Inc., The House of the Jewish Book, New York, First Edition, 1907. Printed in Jerusalem Israel by S. Monson. Asia, Jerusalem, pp. 23-24.