

# The Resurrection Body

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you could turn with me in the second half of the Bible in the New Testament to one of the Apostle Paul's letters in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and we'll be reading from verse 35 to verse 49.

For the sake of any who may not have been to our evening services, let me remind you briefly of what we've been up to. We've been going through this first century letter to one of the earliest Christian churches located in Corinth, Greece, founded by the Apostle Paul.

Some believers in the congregation were saying there is no resurrection of the dead. We read that in verse 12 of this chapter.

Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you, not everyone, some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Paul responds by reminding them of their confession regarding the resurrection at the time of their conversion.

[ 1 : 22 ] He secondly reminds them of the consequences of its denial. If I could just maybe say it's a lesson that we can learn if we're engaged in debate or discussion with someone.

We don't need to keep promoting our own point of view. We can ask and explore the consequences of their point of view.

And this is precisely what Paul did here. And then he spoke about the critical importance and convincing evidence of the resurrection.

Now, why might some early Corinthian believers think, any of them think, that there's no resurrection of the dead?

And the answer to that question is cultural influence in their current society, something that we need to watch out for in our society.

[ 2 : 33 ] You see, in their society, you've got to realize how Greek and how Hellenistic populated with its ideas, for example, on the immortality of the soul and the uselessness and lowness of the body.

And you've got to realize that they didn't think there would be any other body available in the universe except the body that they felt they were imprisoned in.

And you've got to understand a wee bit of that culture to get what's coming through, what Paul has got to offer.

So, we'll be looking at two further answers that Paul raises himself, anticipates, if you like.

Because after he's said everything, we get to that verse 35, and I'll just start reading it just now anyway, where Paul says, Now, it's these two questions.

[ 4 : 01 ] Some people think there's only one, but anyway, don't worry about that just now. It's these two questions that Paul is responding to right up to verse 49. And we've got here in the ESV, you foolish person, but in the original Greek, there's only one word, fool.

So, Paul, if you like, responds. His first response is, it can either be translated, it depends if it's a noun or an adjective. It can either be translated as fool or foolish.

That's all that's there. What you sow doesn't come to life unless it dies. And what you sow isn't the body that is to be, but a bare seed.

Perhaps of wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen. And to each kind of seed, its own body.

For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind.

[ 5 : 20 ] And the glory of the earthly is of another. I hope you can see through some of these verses what they're thinking in their culture that I've just mentioned. There is one glory of the sun and

another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars.

For star differs from star in glory. Then he says, so it is with the resurrection of the dead. Just like the seed, what is sown is perishable.

What is raised is imperishable. What is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body.

It is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus, it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being.

The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust.

[ 6 : 33 ] The second man from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust. And as was the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man from heaven.

Now, this part here is about something that is momentous.

And in a sense, we should be doing cartwheels for joy. Because it's about our resurrected bodies that you and I, if we're Christians, if we're in Christ, if we're followers of Christ, are going to have in the new humanity and the new heavens and earth of God's redemption.

So, although I'm going to go through this argument of Paul's, I hope, I'll try my best, that I don't lose that awareness that there's something phenomenal that is being talked about here in relation to our salvation.

I'm going to explore this through two headings. First heading is the analogies from the book of nature.

[ 8 : 11 ] And the second heading is analogies from the book of Scripture. There were old divines and old Puritans who always spoke, I'm sure Colin will know this at least anyway, and others, no doubt, the two books, the book of nature and the book of Scripture.

Well, Paul is exploring the book of nature in the first part of this, and let's explore it with him.

Before I do that, just why did Paul say fool? Now, the word fool in the Greek there, it means unwise, insensitive, unconsidered.

What is really, I think, saying as he uses that word fool? You're spouting out, there's no resurrection of the dead. Have you not stopped and paused for a moment, obviously about the consequences of what you're saying for your own faith and for your own saviour, but also, have you not paused and thought about the nature, the creation?

I think that's something that might be behind that outburst, if you could call it an outburst, fool or foolish. So, in verse 36, Paul says, what you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

[ 10 : 01 ] In other words, he's saying there's a principle or process of death and resurrection right before your eyes in nature.

Surely, you know, this is something that's common knowledge, is it not? That the seed that you sow is buried in the ground and undergoes to all intents and purposes a process like death.

As the necessary condition or prelude to the resurrected plant. So, I think, as I say, Paul is confronting here their cavalier dismissal without any consideration or thought even from the book of nature.

They also thought that there were, that the resurrection entailed the raised body the resurrected body being the same as the present body and because of this it made no sense to them.

You can understand that. You can understand if they thought, well, is this my body that I'm going to be resurrected again? Perishable? Weak? And perhaps prone to death, if you like, again?

[ 11 : 21 ] verse 37. What you sow, says Paul, isn't the body that is to be.

It's not the same body. It's a different body. What you sow, that kernel, that bare kernel, that seed, that is not what is to be.

God gives it, he said, a body as he has chosen. That's, that's the mysterious part, if you like, because it is a mystery anyway and it's a mystery that we can't unravel and fathom.

but Paul is simply saying, God gives it a body as he has chosen. And notice what he says, to each its own body and is already hinting, I believe, at the continuity as well as the discontinuity of the new resurrected body.

He's already hinting at the identity of, of, of the new body. notice the pronoun it. God gives it a body.

[ 12 : 52 ] It's that entity of the seed that he gives the body to. That's why there's continuity and identity. Each of us, do we not, have a distinct fingerprint DNA.

God will give each one of us what we will be able to describe as our own body, clothed in different attributes, and yet it will be our body, continuous with the body planted in death. earth. In verses 39 to 40a, Paul continues to disabuse them from the idea that resurrection bodies must necessarily be the same as our natural bodies by referring them both to the biosphere and the cosmos.

because he tells them, for not all flesh is the same. There is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, another for fish.

Indeed, there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies and the glory of the earthly is of one kind and the glory of the heavenly is of another kind.

[ 14 : 23 ] He keeps disabusing them of those ideas.

And then verses 40b, he talks about the splendor of these bodies, the degrees of splendor.

And it's interesting that the word that he's always using is the Greek word, you know it, doxa, from which we get the idea of doxology.

Jesus, in John's gospel, in chapter 17, when he was praying for his bride, the church, the people of God, you and I, he said, I pray that like me, they might have that glory.

and this here is the pinnacle, the peak, the summit of what these resurrection bodies are going to be like.

[ 15 : 43 ] They will be reflecting the glory of Christ's body, of Christ's resurrection body. So, in 42a, Paul says, so it is with the resurrection of the dead.

So, what he's been doing up to this point, he's using this book of nature, he's using these analogies, and he's wanting to say, while I'm using those analogies, I'm using them to demonstrate, so is it, with the resurrection of the body.

What is sown in death, perishable, but raised, it's imperishable. No longer, when we get that final capstone, or whatever you want to call it, of our salvation, which is future, at the coming of Christ, then our salvation will be complete.

It's not complete just now, because we don't have that resurrection body that is fitted and adapted to the new humanity, and I also want you, I want you to see something of the grandeur.

Being saved is more than being justified. That's the entry, the door of entry. God is planning a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

[ 17 : 27 ] God is planning and purposing to give us new bodies that are adapted to that new heavens and earth. And God will leave no stone unturned until he completes his redemptive purpose.

yes, here is its nature. It will be imperishable.

And notice again, it will be raised, there's that word again, doxa. It will be raised in glory. It will have a splendor and a glory that we cannot, I don't think, imagine just now.

Somebody said to me recently, and I think they're right, when we read about those things that are future for us, known as eschatology by theologians because the Greek word eschatos means last, we're going to come to that word in a second.

Yes, so we are going to have these wonderful new bodies. That's the significance of the physical and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[ 18 : 55 ] It will be a body that will have incredible powers. It will be a body that is honorable. It will not be prone to decay or corruption.

It will not need renewed food. Yeah, as I say, somebody said it's hard for us to get our brain around these things and that's absolutely true.

How can we get our brains around these things when we're living on this planet and we're living in this body and we know what's happening with this body? And sometimes I think, maybe you don't, but, yeah, you know that I've worked in a children's hospice for five years.

You know that I worked in an adult hospice for three years. You know that I worked in a children's hospital for three years. I've done many, many funerals.

I've been around many people who have died and their loved ones. And, you know, it's like the enemy sniggers every time and says, hey, that's it, isn't it?

[ 20 : 16 ] Paul is wanting to encourage us. Paul is wanting to try and get into our brains by drawing all that analogy from the book of nature.

But, secondly, Paul has another analogy from the book of Scripture having addressed some of these questions.

By the way, this word how that they mentioned at the beginning, how are the dead raised? It may not be a how that is saying, what is the process?

Or, surely this is inconceivable and incomprehensible. You know, there's different meanings can be put on the expression how.

So, it may not mean that. it may simply mean what is, what happens, how does it come about, or whatever.

[ 21 : 33 ] Anyway, Paul goes to these analogies from the book of Scripture, and before he goes into those analogies, I believe that he makes this statement, it's almost like a proposition, but if it was a proposition, it would be extremely weak.

He says in verse 44b, if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Now, if you were just looking at that bare proposition, I had to note this, I had to see it, because I read as my major philosophy at university, it's neither valid nor accurate, in other words, the second clause does not issue logically from the first clause, but of course, Paul is not into logic, and he's not into philosophy, although I'm not so sure about that, I think there are hints through his epistles, I don't mean he's into philosophy, he's very aware of it, he didn't go to Athens for nothing, and he didn't stop at the Areopagus for nothing.

Anyway, be that as it may, and he quotes philosophers in some of his letters as well, be that as it may, Paul is very able to say that, if you like, to use a phrase that Colin is once used to be based on his epistemology, in other words, based on his idea of reality from scripture, and from what God has revealed to us, and Paul believes he's said enough to justify there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body to those detractors, but he wants to substantiate it and strengthen it more so he comes to the book of scripture.

And what Paul does here is he makes use of the two Adams or the Adam-Christ model which he had used before in this chapter at verses 21 and 22.

[ 24 : 14 ] You see, in verses 21, he said of this chapter, for as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead, for or because, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

now, the word, the Hebrew word Adam, which is probably how you're meant to pronounce it, the Hebrew word Adam is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament and it's for, well, first of all, it is a collective noun, that's the first thing that you have to realise, and the second thing that you have to realise, that it's translated humanity or human being hundreds of times in the Old Testament and an example that all of you will know is Genesis 1.26.

The word is, let us make Adam in our image and after our likeness. The context determines the meaning.

Of course, when he calls for Adam, Adam, that is an individual. So, it's like anything else in languages, context determines the meaning.

So, he explores, he uses what I want to call the Adam Christ model. He uses that as an explanatory model to explain different things about our salvation and our redemption.

[ 26 : 05 ] And this is exactly what he's doing right now. You see, he says, if there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body, thus it is written.

That's why I'm saying that 44b is a statement moving into thus it is written. Now, let me just check exactly where I am.

Yeah, I think I see where I am. So, what he begins to say in verse 45, thus it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being.

Now, it's clear to me, it might not be clear to you, that he's saying he had a natural body, a natural nature, a nature of this earth, a nature of dust, as we will see later on.

And you might turn around and say to me, but was Adam not created immortal? Now, listen, no preacher is infallible, and definitely I'm not.

[ 27 : 34 ] But no preacher is infallible, and we may be wrong, and we should never be afraid to say I'm not sure. Okay? But I would put it this way, Adam was not created immortal, but he was created for immortality.

In other words, that tree of life, that symbol, remember after he muffed it, if you like, remember that God said, hey, we better protect that tree of life in case he also goes for that and becomes immortal.

So it seems to me that Adam had the potentiality that he had a kind of incipient immortality that was conditional on his obedience and probation, shall we say.

And just as in a moment, in an instant, in the snap of a finger, as Paul tells us at the last day when Christ comes, he will transform our bodies, no problem for God to do that for Adam.

Adam man. And I want you to notice the word man that's used eight times by Paul here for both Adam and Christ.

[ 28 : 59 ] I say it often enough and I have no apologies for saying it again. if Jesus Christ wasn't true man, 110%, we don't have salvation.

yes, he's created in the image of God.

And I want you to notice in this verse that Paul calls Jesus here the last Adam. I love that. I absolutely love it.

That's your word eschatos. So, that's just a word, don't worry about it, eschatos, it means last. And theologians build something called eschatology, meaning the ideas about the things that are still to happen.

And I don't think Paul has used this phrase carelessly. I think he's used it to say, we're talking here about the eschaton, we're talking here about the last days, we're talking here about the coming of Christ.

[ 30 : 25 ] Indeed, earlier in the letter, he's explored that coming of Christ when he gives up the kingdom of God. perhaps we don't think about this often enough, he's coming again.

He really is coming again. Well, says Paul, the first man, Adam's creational status was a living being, having a non-spiritual body, a natural body, but Christ in verse 45 is called a life giving spirit. A life giving spirit. Is that not wonderful? In other words, connected to him, inseparable from him, is this new life, this life of the spirit, that this new humanity, this capacity that he has to give life a new creation, is actually contrasting, I believe, implicitly, the old creation of Adam and the new creation and new humanity headed up by our great head of humanity, Christ, or the second head of humanity.

In verse 46, Paul also, notice what Paul does here in verse 46, he's spoken about the natural first and then the spiritual and that's exactly what he was exploring in the book of nature.

Now he says in verse 46, it's not the spiritual that's first but the natural and then the spiritual. and notice again what he says in verse 47, he contrasts the origins of the two men.

[ 32 : 36 ] Now we're coming into potentially territory that issues in a lot of questions but verse 47, he contrasts the origins of the two great seminal heads of humanity.

Adam, as in Adam, all die. You know, sometimes they say it depends who your connections are as to how well you might get on. Well, let me tell you something, it depends for all of us on whether we're connected to Adam still or connected to Christ.

Christ. He says in verse 47, the first man was from the earth, a man of dust.

Apparently, the rabbis, some rabbis have this legend that God gathered the dust from all, bits of dust all over the entire planet in the making of Adam, humanity.

Because it was all, talk about incipient, it was all emergent humanity in Adam. He spoke for you and he spoke for me.

[ 34 : 09 ] By the way, when I first heard these things in the theology class way back in 1992 and so on, I was the very first to get my hands up and oppose on the basis of free will and the basis of free choice and etc, etc, etc.

They were the great influencers of humanity. Adam's influence was tragic, wasn't it? And there's people opening their mouths today in our world who think they're great influencers and I think they'll be as tragic as Adam.

Adam. I hope Christ is your influencer.

Yes, now, when in verse 47, we need to just rattle through it now, sorry about that, but when in verse 47 he says the second man is from heaven, right, I cannot spend a lot of time in this, but there is, some people have wondered is that confusing language, meaning that Christ did not have, he wasn't made of dust, the contrast almost looked at it in isolation, does that mean that he wasn't made of dust, he was a man from heaven?

And I believe the answer is no, and I can't go into the argument for that because we have no time left. so let's go to verse 49 where I'm meant to be finishing tonight as we have run out of time.

[ 36 : 28 ] Paul finishes this debate and this response to those people with these words, and it's a summary, it's a summing up of everything that he's been trying to prosecute and put across and prove.

With regard to our resurrection and our resurrection bodies, and listen to what he says, verse 49, just, I'll put surely in there, as surely as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Notice that word we, just as we, just as we. Who are the we?

The we are those who are disconnected now from Adam, and they're found connected and associated to Christ, the last Adam, the great representative of the redeemed people of God.

They severed their connection with Adam, those of us who follow Christ. Because so long as we kept our connection with Adam, we still had our problem of guilt and sin.

[ 38 : 13 ] We still had our problem of no resurrection body for us, reflecting the glory of God. What about you?

Who are you connected with? Who are you aligned with? The first Adam or the last Adam? Christ, the heavenly man. This is mega important as it affects our eternal destiny.

There are two humanities right now. Although people don't see them, they're unseen by the world. But believe me, there's two humanities.

There's the old humanity under its original head, Adam, and there's the new humanity under its exalted head. That's why he's called the heavenly man, exalted at the right hand of God.

This is a wonderful promise given to those who have changed their allegiance and connection to Jesus Christ. just as we have shared in the image of the man of dust and all that that suggests participating in that kind of weakness and that kind of perishability and that kind of dishonor and everything that that suggests, so we will fully participate in the man from heaven at his second coming already mentioned earlier in this chapter.

[ 39 : 57 ] Are you ready for that coming? Take heart, Christian friends, from this great promise of assurance.

This is the pinnacle of our resurrection bodies and this is what we have to look for. I want to finish giving Paul the final words in this sermon this evening from Romans chapter 8 verse 18.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Note that word glory again. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Amen.

May the Lord bless these words to us for his glory and for our eternal good. Amen. Amen.