

1 Cor. 15:35-49 “Heavenly Bodies”

For the Children: If you plant a seed and watch it germinate, you will notice that the seed is destroyed. What it was goes into making the new plant that grows out of it. We do not worry about that, because it is necessary for the plant to germinate – and the plant is better than the seed in many ways. When one of God’s people dies, we should look at it in a similar way: it is not simply the end of someone’s life; it is a necessary part of the change from weak, decaying bodies living under the Fall, to glorious, strong, resurrection bodies, that can never decay or die. **Questions:** Why did some people in Corinth ask Paul how the dead are raised? What arguments does the apostle use to answer them? How does he describe the resurrection-body?

Introduction:

First Point: How Can a Corpse Be Raised?

- 1) An Unimpressive Question: Paul’s response to the question, “How are the dead raised?” is “You fool!” (v. 36). For the underlying assumption behind the question is that a body must be raised in the same state as it has been in the grave.
- 2) An Answer by Analogy: Paul answers by referring to the growth of a seed – the plant can’t live unless the seed “dies.” Moreover, there is continuity between the seed and the plant – both are, for example, wheat. Similarly, the human body must die before it is raised, but the raised body is of the same human being as the dead body. There is also discontinuity – the seed and the plant differ. The resurrection body is not exactly the same as the present living body or the dead body.
- 3) An Argument from Creation: If we accept God’s power as Creator, why balk at His power to re-create or restore? (vss. 38-40). The Lord created diversity in the things of this world, giving them differing degrees of glory. On what basis would one deny that He can make a difference in glory between a dead body and a resurrected one?
- 4) An Argument from the Last Adam: The apostle argues that the resurrection of the body is inevitable, not just possible (v. 44). The first Adam guaranteed death of our bodies because of his sin as the head and representative of the human race. The Second Adam, Christ, passed on life to all those who are in Him. See Rom. 5:12f and 1 Cor. 15:21-22. The first man, Adam, became a living soul, or “person” (Gen. 2:7, quoted in 1 Cor. 15:45. However, Christ became a life-giving spirit i.e., by the work of the Holy Spirit He was raised with a “spiritual body.” That makes it inevitable that we will be given a resurrected, spiritual body. See Rom. 8:11.

Second Point: What Is a Raised Body Like?

- 1) More Glorious: Without going into details, the apostle tells us that the resurrected body will be more glorious than the one we have in this life – just as different aspects of creation vary in degrees of glory. By contrast, the “earthy” body is sown in “dishonor” – open to shame, degradation under the effects of the Fall
- 2) Imperishable Versus Corruptible: The resurrection-body cannot decay or die. It is imperishable and immortal.
- 3) Powerful Versus Weak: The present body is weak – if it does not receive food, drink, rest etc it breaks down. The resurrection-body will not be prone to pain, disease, starvation etc.
- 4) Spiritual Versus Earthy: The mortal body is adapted to this present earthly existence. The “spiritual body” will be adapted to a heavenly existence, raised and filled with the same power of the Holy Spirit that raised and glorified the body of the Lord Jesus.
- 5) A Principle Already Inside Us: Though the Spirit has not yet transformed our bodies in this way, we nevertheless have within us this life-giving power transforming us progressively into the likeness of Christ. We are even now becoming more like Him in character; eventually, our bodies will also be like His – though we should not speculate about the details of this change.

Conclusion: