

# A Real Resurrection

Isaiah 26:19

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2018-04-01

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## **Text**

Isaiah 26:19 Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

## **I. Clues on the first century context of the resurrection of verse 19**

We all know that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of our Christian faith. And most you are familiar with the way this doctrine has come under attack from many sources: from Muslims, atheists, and Theological Liberals. But in recent years this doctrine has surprisingly been muddied in Evangelical circles as well. And though I don't usually preach on controversies on Resurrection Day, I felt that I must today. But in the process, it is my hope that you will find Isaiah 26:19 an encouraging verse.

This is one of the little known passages on the resurrection of Jesus. And if you want a nuclear weapon for debating Full Preterists on the subject of the resurrection, this verse would be it. Initially it may not seem like much because of its obscurity, but it is a powerful rebuttal of every variety of views on the resurrection that have been held by Full Preterists. Some of you have friends who are Full Preterists, and you know exactly what I am talking about. For others, you may have never heard of this false doctrine that more and more Evangelicals are embracing. So let me define the problem before I show how this passage answers the problem.

Every Christian is a Preterist on some passages. Preterist refers to what is in the past. So if you believe that Jesus was born and died for our sins, you are a partial Preterist on at least some prophecies because you believe those prophecies were already fulfilled; they are in the past. But Full Preterism goes way beyond that. Full Preterism is a rather new teaching that every prophecy in the whole Bible has already been fulfilled including the Final Coming of Christ, the final judgment, and the final resurrection. They believe that there is no resurrection in our future and that there is no future day of judgment. According to them, that already happened in AD 70 when Jesus supposedly separated the sheep from the goats and handed His kingdom over to the Father.

And this verse contradicts their faulty views of the resurrection. All Full Preterists deny that these bodies we have right now will ever be resurrected and changed. John Bray, an Evangelical Baptist writer, worded it this way: “We are not interested in this old body surviving.”<sup>1</sup> Or as John Noe said it, “Our emotional attachment to them [our bodies] will be no different than our attachment to those body parts we cut off and discarded last week – hair, fingernails, etc.”<sup>2</sup> He says that we will be glad to get rid of our bodies. Now, I can understand not wanting our sin scarred and frail bodies to continue as they are. Nobody believes that will happen. But these Full Preterists don’t even want these bodies to be redeemed. Noe says that we will discard this body; we do not want to resurrect it. On another page he said, “That [physical life] wasn’t lost in Adam, therefore, it’s not restored in Christ, nor will it be.”<sup>3</sup> You see the pattern here; there is a denial of any resurrection of these bodies that we can touch and feel. As Kelly Birks (a recently deceased pastor in Omaha) said about Romans 8:23, “Here, Paul is referring to eagerly awaiting to be set free from our bodies!”<sup>4</sup> The early church said that was the doctrine of Gnostics - to be set free from the physical world and to go to a non-physical heaven with non-physical bodies. But that is also what Full Preterists believe. They say that we don’t want these bodies resurrected; we want something non-material. And for that matter, they say that they want to escape from this physical earth and to remain in the non-physical heaven forever.

When you bring up passages like Job 19:26 where Job spoke of the skin, sinews, flesh, and bones that would die and rot - that very flesh being resurrected and seeing Christ in the flesh, they will sometimes say that Job’s body probably disappeared within a thousand years and that there was no body which could be resurrected. Instead, they say that Job received a spiritual body that might have similarities based on a blueprint, but which has no physical connection. And they will use various techniques to prove that there can be no physical connection, and to discredit the traditional view of the resurrection as being absolutely impossible. For example, Evangelical writer, David Curtis, starts by quoting M.C. Tenney with this problem:

When the body of Roger Williams, founder of the Rhode Island colony, was exhumed for reburial, it was found that the root of an apple tree had penetrated the head of the coffin and had followed down Williams’ spine, dividing into a fork at the legs. The tree had absorbed the chemicals of the decaying body and had transmuted them into its wood and

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1 John L. Bray, *The Rapture of Christians* (John L. Bray Ministry, Inc.: Lakeland, FL, 1998), p. 24.

2 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 73

3 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 43

4 Dr. Kelly Birks, in an e-mail to the Chairman of Care of Churches Committee of the Siouxlands Presbytery of the PCA. Feb. 12, 1999.

fruit. The apples, in turn, had been eaten by people, quite unconscious of the fact that they were indirectly taking into their systems part of the long-dead Williams. The objection may therefore be raised: How, out of the complex sequence of decay, absorption, and new formation, will it be possible to resurrect believers of past ages, and to reconstitute them as separate entities?<sup>5</sup>

Curtis goes on to amplify on that problem:

This problem of joint ownership of atoms and molecules is a big problem. After death, various body particles returned to dust, reentered the food chain, got assimilated into plants, eaten by animals, and digested into countless other human bodies. At the resurrection, who gets which atoms and molecules back? As you can see, it can get quite complicated. Another thing that bothered me was why does God raise our dead decayed bodies, put them all back together just to change them into immortal spiritual bodies?<sup>6</sup> Well, I will admit that is a puzzle, but if God says He will do it, He will do it. If God made Adam from the dust (that didn't look at all like his body) and if God made Eve from a piece of Adam's rib (which didn't look at all like her body), He can make some connection with a part of the old body and the new. After all, He is all-wise, all-powerful, and has governed every molecule of this world from the beginning of time. He can preserve some essence of the old into the new. Though the vision of the scattered dry bones in Ezekiel 37 is treated by many Premils, Amils, and Postmils as a metaphor of Israel's restoration based on the belief in the resurrection, for the resurrection to even be used as a metaphor in that passage assumes God's ability to gather parts of bodies that are hopelessly scattered.

Compared to the myriad problems and contradictions we find in Full Preterism, that problem is really nothing. If you are weighing the doctrinal contradictions of Full Preterism on one side of the scale against the problem of how God can possibly reconstitute someone who has been cremated, I say it is God's omnipotence being questioned on one side of the scale and Biblical doctrines being discarded on the other side. I'm willing to side with God's omnipotence.

So how do Full Preterists handle the many resurrection passages? Some just outright deny a physical resurrection ever happened or ever will happen (they hold to a corporate body view), while others claim that God raised our bodies in the first century as non-material bodies and will plop those bodies onto your soul the moment you die. In other words, they claim that your resurrection body is already in heaven. It was not made out of anything in your current body since your current body wasn't around yet. They absolutely insist that flesh and bones cannot get into heaven, so our resurrection bodies absolutely cannot have flesh and bones. And we will

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5 [https://www.preteristarchive.com/Hyper/1999\\_curtis\\_resurrection.html](https://www.preteristarchive.com/Hyper/1999_curtis_resurrection.html)

6 Ibid.

look at their proof text in a bit.

Well, the problem is that Philippians 3:21 says that our resurrection body will be identical in form to Christ's resurrection body. It is the Greek word *σύμμορφος*, which the dictionary defines as "having the same form"<sup>7</sup> How do they explain that? Well, some like Harden deny that Christ's body was a flesh and bones body; in other words, they claim that Christ's body was a non-flesh-and-bones body just like they claim ours will be. So he takes Philippians 3:21 seriously. But he doesn't take other passages seriously.

When you appeal to Luke 24:38, where Jesus said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have," I have heard men like Harden say that the flesh and bones they handled was not His resurrection body. Curtis disagrees and simply denies that Philippians 3:21 says that our bodies will be identical with Christ's. But Harden says that Christ's resurrection spirit-body was given to Him the moment He came out of Hades and He later temporarily reanimated his dead body to give His disciples faith, but that this reanimated body was not His resurrection body; that body would be discarded. So he holds a very similar interpretation of that passage to Jehovah's Witnesses. There are some serious exegetical gymnastics going on with all Full Preterists.

In any case, it's like a long line of dominoes. Once you tip over the first domino doctrine, a whole series of other doctrines begin to be questioned so that a huge number of Full Preterists today deny that Genesis 1 is talking about the creation of the physical universe. They say it is using apocalyptic language to speak of the setting up of the Mosaic covenant. I predicted twenty years ago that they would be forced to do that because they take 2 Peter 3's prediction of the heavens and the earth melting with a fervent heat as apocalyptic language of the AD 70 destruction of the Mosaic covenant. Since the same language is used, if 2 Peter 3 is apocalyptic then Genesis 3 must be apocalyptic. Well, this morning I won't deal with those other doctrines and how they are tightly inter-related. Instead, I want to use this verse to focus on why Christ's body coming out of the tomb was a real resurrection and why all Christian resurrections will be identical with that resurrection body, and what difference it makes. It makes a huge difference. It's a very encouraging doctrine.

But before I dig into verse 19, let me give you some clues from the context that help to nail this specific resurrection down to AD 30. It cannot be earlier

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<sup>7</sup> Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament Volumes 1-3 ,” EDNT, paragraph 1.

and it cannot be later. I was tempted to dive straight into verse 19 because some of these clues are a little bit technical, but if you don't see the specific historical event that is being identified, it would be easy for a Full Preterist to escape its implications or to claim that this happened in AD 70. Of course, even on that claim this verse contradicts their theories on the body. But let's look at some clues.

### **A. *This is not the time when the non-elect are raised (v. 14)***

The first clue is in verses 13-14. Isaiah says,  
13 O LORD our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. 14 They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

The tyrants who had persecuted God's people had already died, but verse 14 says that whatever resurrection he is going to be talking about in verse 19, it will not include those dead unbelievers. It says, "They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise." So, unless you are willing to accept contradictions in Scripture (which I am not), this cannot be a reference to the resurrection at the end of history, which definitely includes unbelievers. Nor can it refer to the resurrection in AD 70 (as some people interpret it), which Daniel 12:2-3 explicitly says included at least some non-elect. In fact, Acts 24:15 uses the same language when it says, "there is about to be [it is the Greek word μέλλω, which refers to something about to happen very soon] a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." And that was a reference to an AD 70 resurrection.

In contrast, whatever resurrection verse 19 is talking about, it will contain no unbelievers. That leaves only one other resurrection time that could be possible - the firstfruits of the first-century barley harvest that Matthew 27 speaks about. Keep your finger in Isaiah 26, and flip over to Matthew 27. We will begin reading at verse 50, where Jesus dies on the cross. Matthew 27, beginning to read at verse 50:

Matt. 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Many full preterists deny that this was a true resurrection into resurrection bodies. They think that these were recently dead people who got temporarily resuscitated, but who would eventually die again just like Lazarus did. But this is the only resurrection that Isaiah 26 could possibly be referring to. It has to be a resurrection of bodies that are in the ground, and it has to be a

resurrection that occurs at a time when no unbelievers rise from the grave. And there are three things I want you to notice about Matthew 27:52-53. First, this is a resurrection of saints, not unbelievers. Second, though the graves opened up on the day Jesus died, the saints didn't get resurrected till the third day when Jesus rose. They weren't sitting alive in the tombs for three days. Acts 26:23 makes clear that Jesus was "the first to rise from the dead," so they could not have been raised before Him. So on day three, He rose, and then there were saints who rose with Him on that same day. In Isaiah 26:19 Jesus will be saying, "Together with my dead body they will rise." And later in the sermon I will show how a quotation in Hebrews 10 proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that it was Jesus speaking. Third, their resurrection bodies are described in parallel with Christ's resurrection body. There is no hint that they have different resurrection bodies than Jesus had. I believe that this is the only resurrection period that fits the evidence of Isaiah 26. And I will be pulling together all of the strands of evidence.

***B. There has not yet been any resurrection of believers (v. 18)***

But let's go back to Isaiah 26 and we will look at a second clue. The second clue is found in verse 18, which says, "We have been with child, we have been in pain; we have, as it were, brought forth wind; [and here comes the phrase I want to emphasize] we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen."

The last phrase again shows that it is not the end of history. But the second to last phrase shows that the believers who are being described by the "we" have not yet been delivered from the earth. The word for "delivered" is yeshua (יְשׁוּעָה) which refers to redemption.<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:23 speaks of the resurrection as being the redemption of the body. No redemption of any person had happened prior to verse 19. So verse 19 can't be referring to our future. And verse 19 must be before AD 30, since Scripture speaks of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as the ultimate redemption. But more to the point of Full Preterism, the bodies of all saints are still inside the earth at the point of verse 18. So before verse 19 happens in history there will be no deliverance from the earth; no resurrection from the earth.

This shows that whatever resurrection is going to be described in verse 19 must be more than a mere resuscitation. How do I know that? Because many people had been resuscitated from death prior to Christ's resurrection, yet He is still said to be the "first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23). Simple logic

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<sup>8</sup> See the discussion in Sawyer, "ישע הושיע ישועה ישע ישע מושעות תְּשׁוּעָה," TDOT, 6:445.

tells us that if this redemption from the earth had not yet happened prior to verse 19, then Matthew 27 cannot be referring to a mere resuscitation. That would just be a repeat of things that had already happened.

Let me list those who had already been raised from the dead into temporary bodies. In 1 Kings 16 Elijah raised the widow's son from the dead. In 2 Kings 4 Elisha raised another boy from the dead. In 2 Kings 13:21 a dead man was thrown into the cave where Elisha was buried, and as soon as the man touched Elisha's bones, he came back to life. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. But none of those resurrections were resurrections to immortality. They were not permanent deliverance from the task-master death. They were not yeshua or redemption of the body. In other words, they were not the kind of resurrection that verse 19 will talk about. That's a huge clue.

***C. What will follow this resurrection is 1) the remnant hiding themselves (v. 20) 2) from God's wrath against Israel (v. 21) 3) and the full harvest of the first resurrection (v. 21b), 4) at which time Satan will be punished 27:1), 5) and the true Israel will encompass all nations (27:6), 6) leaving the old Israel and temple abandoned and in ruins (27:7-11), with only a remnant of Jews being saved (v. 12)***

The third clue is to look at the events that happen after verse 19. They too rule out any resurrection other than the one given in Matthew 27. Let's start reading at verse 20 and we will see that 26:20 through chapter 27:12 deal with events going from AD 66-74. First of all, verse 20.

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.

Just as Jesus had told the disciples to flee as soon as they saw Jerusalem's desolation drawing nigh, this calls upon God's people to hide until God's seven years of wrath against Israel were over. So verse 20 is AD 66. This means the resurrection of the previous verse (verse 19) must happen before AD 66. There is only one resurrection that happens before AD 66 - the one when Jesus rose. So that's a very strong argument against Full Preterist interpretations.

Then verse 21 shows the first half of the seven years of wrath that followed. In other words, verse 21 goes from AD 67-70, when Jerusalem was sacked and Israel defeated. It says,

21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.



Notice the last clause we just read. After Israel is punished it says, “The earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.” This is a reference to the main portion of the barley-harvest-resurrection that happened in AD 70. No longer would the dead martyrs be covered in the ground. They would be raised. Some were raised in AD 30 in the small firstfruits, but the bulk first-resurrection harvest were raised in AD 70.

The next verse is chapter 27:1. What happens at the time that Jerusalem and the temple is destroyed and at the time of that AD 70 resurrection? We have seen in our Revelation series that Satan was cast into the pit. So you can put AD 70 beside verse 1. It says,

1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

Leviathan is a reference to Satan, and we have seen that he was defeated and cast into the pit in AD 70. Other demons and demon princes continue to function in the earth, but not Satan. Then verses 2-6 promise that with the destruction of the Old Jerusalem, the New Israel (which is the first-century Jewish church) would be destined to be protected by God and to fill the world. Look especially at the summary statement of the promise to this Jewish first-century church composed of the 144,000 and other early believers. Verse 6 says,

6 Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.

That’s the new Israel’s destiny. So you can put AD 70-74 beside verses 2-6, and maybe the words believing remnant or 144,000. They re-start this process of world-wide conquest via the Great Commission.

Next section: Verses 7-11 show what the state of Jerusalem, Israel, and the Jews would be after AD 74. The Old Israel and temple will be abandoned and in absolute desolate ruins. So I wrote AD 74ff beside verses 7-11.

Then verse 12 shows that following that period only a tiny remnant of Jews would be saved in the subsequent years. Verse 12 says,

12 And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel.

And then, finally, verse 13 shows a subsequent regathering of Jews to Israel that happens later. You don’t need to know all the details of the chapter to appreciate how the general sequence at least overturns the Full Preterist interpretation. Verse 19 must occur sometime before AD 66.

***D. So verse 19 deals with the firstfruits barley resurrection of Jesus and many Old Testament saints in AD 30 and 26:21-27:1 deals with the remainder of the first barley resurrection in AD 70. The Second Coming and second resurrection is not in view.***

So verse 19 deals with the AD 30 firstfruits of the first resurrection (what I call the barley harvest), while the main part of that barley harvest happens in AD 70. It's all one harvest; it's all one resurrection, but it is in two parts. The wheat harvest or the second resurrection happens at the end of history.

***E. This is Jesus prophetically speaking in a similar way to Hosea 6:1-2***

If you turn with me to Hosea 6, I will show you one other passage that has the same sequence. 1 Corinthians 15:4 says that there are Scriptures (plural) that predict that Jesus would rise from the dead on the third day. This is one of the two passages that make that prediction. Hosea comes immediately after Daniel. And I will be reading from Hosea 6:1-3.

Hos. 6:1 Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

Paul is quite explicit that more than one Old Testament passage predicted that Jesus would rise on the third day. Commentators point out that this is the only passage that explicitly mentions a resurrection on the third day, though Jonah does so by symbolism. But notice the "we." There are other dead saints who would be raised on that third day in AD 30. It wouldn't just be Jesus. Then in verse 3 comes a prediction of the age of the kingdom that we live in. Now, I've spent all that time so that Full Preterists can weasel out of the implications of Isaiah 26:19 by saying that it must have occurred in AD 70. The context absolutely mandates that it occur in AD 30. So let's look at the verse.

## **II. Contrary to full preterism, Christ's resurrection was identical to the resurrection of saints (v. 19a-b)**

The first thing I want you to notice is that there is not a lick of difference between the resurrection body of Jesus and the resurrection body of those who rose with Him. In the first half of verse 19 Jesus prophetically says, "Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise."

But an immediate objection that might come to your minds is, "How do we know that this is Jesus speaking and not simply Isaiah speaking?" Good

question. And there are actually a number of factors that necessitate this being Jesus.<sup>9</sup> For example, commentators show that in context it is Jehovah speaking.<sup>10</sup> This has made some puzzled because Jehovah doesn't have a body. How could Jehovah have a body that rises from the dead? Well, Jesus is Jehovah. So if you are arguing with Jehovah's witnesses, this is a great proof text.

But the most slam-dunk proof (and by far the easiest proof for you to follow) is that commentators agree that Hebrews 10:37-38 quotes the next verse (quotes Isaiah 26:20) together with Habakkuk and puts the words of verse 20 in the mouth of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> If the word "My" of Hebrews 10 is capitalized (which it is in the NKJV) and is Jesus speaking, then consistency would dictate that the "My" of Isaiah 26 verse 20 should be capitalized and refer to Jesus. And if the "My" of verse 20 is by divine inspiration put onto the lips of Jesus (which it is), then the "My" of verse 19 must also be on the lips of Jesus.

Keep in mind that whether you capitalize a word or not is an interpretation of the translator. It's not in the Hebrew. So there are times when translators

- 9 One of the most obvious is that if it is not Jesus speaking, then the "my" and "your" language does not make sense. Here is one commentary who agrees that God needs to be speaking, yet also agrees that a prophet seems to be speaking. Rather than seeing this as the God-Man Prophet, Jesus, he wants to emend the text: "The task of determining the speaker throughout the verse is not easy, particularly in view of the change in persons in the first line (your dead ... my corpses). Presumably these words could have been said by God, the people, or the prophet. The people are the easiest to dismiss in the light of v. 20, where they are directly addressed. It appears that v. 19, like v. 20, is intended as a consolation to the people and an encouragement to their faith. The other two choices are more difficult to decide between. If God is the speaker, then he answers the questions and speaks the imperative to the "dwellers in the dust." This is attractive and logically correct, since, as Young says, only God can command the dead to rise. At the same time, there is no indication of a change of speaker from the previous verses where God was being addressed. Thus, it seems that the prophet remains the speaker. In that case "your dead" could refer to God or to the people. If it is to God, it is reminiscent of Ps. 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (cf. also Ps. 97:10; Rev. 14:13). The dead are not abandoned, they still belong to God. This interpretation would be consistent with the MT "my corpses" (collective) in which the reference would be to the prophet speaking as a member of the nation. If the people are addressed in "your dead," however, then "my corpses" makes no sense and needs to be emended to "their." John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 486. Taking it as Jesus speaking solves the problem beautifully.
- 10 For example, JFB says, "Jehovah's "dead" and "my dead" are one and the same." Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 459.
- 11 F. F. Bruce points out, "The clause with which he introduces the quotation ('for yet a very little while') is not taken from any otherwise attested text of Hab. 2:3, but it may be a reminiscence of the Septuagint version of Isa. 26:20 ('a little moment'). Then the identity of the expected deliverer is made clearer. In the Septuagint "he will surely come" is literally 'coming he will come' (an imitation in Greek of a common Hebrew idiom). Our author places the definite article before the participle 'coming' so as to yield the messianic title "The Coming One"—the title used, for example, by John the Baptist when he sent his disciples to Jesus with the question: 'Are you the Coming One, or are we to expect someone else?' (Matt. 11:3//Luke 7:19). 'The Coming One will come; he will not delay.'"

aren't sure whether to capitalize a pronoun or not and they might put in the margin, "Maybe it is a capital My." They didn't do so here. But the cool thing is that Hebrews 10:37-38 has already infallibly interpreted it for us. Commentators give pages of complicated information wrestling with the text to prove the connection, but that is my simple and easy proof that it is Jesus saying these words.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's commentary says, "Christ's dead body being raised again is the source of Jehovah's people (all, and especially believers, the spiritual Israelites) also being raised (1 Co 15:20-22)."<sup>12</sup>

But it is a first century context. Moses Stuart puts verse 20 as a reference to the judgment on Jerusalem in AD 66-70. In his commentary on Hebrews he says,

...however, yet a very little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not delay. That is, the Messiah ... will speedily come, and, by destroying the Jewish power, put an end to the sufferings which your persecutors inflict upon you.<sup>13</sup>

I know this first part has been technical and tough, so let me summarize here: if verse 20 is Jesus giving a warning of an imminent judgment that would fall in AD 66 (which it is; Hebrews 10 says it is), then again, verse 19 must come before AD 66. And if the "My" of verse 20 is said by Hebrews 10 to be Jesus speaking (which it clearly is), then the "My" of verse 19 must be Jesus speaking. So both should be capitalized.

So with that in mind, I want to read verse 19 again and make a few more comments. The Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, says, "Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise." Let me show how this passage definitively rules out every possible Full Preterist interpretation.

### **A. Christ's dead body is called a corpse or carcass (נְבִילָה - *nebaylah*)**

First of all, Christ dead body is called a corpse or a carcase in the Hebrew. It's not a metaphorical reference to the church being Christ's body (as some Full Preterists say). That would be a totally different Hebrew word. The Hebrew word here is *nebaylah* (נְבִילָה), and it refers to the meat of our bodies when they die. It's a corpse. The fact that Jesus has a corpse shows that He was truly dead. But His deadness and their deadness correspond. He is talking about corpses being raised out of the ground. That is the first point

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12 Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 459.

13 M. Stuart, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 2 (Andover: Mark Newman, 1828), 250.

that should give any Full Preterist a headache.

### ***B. The dead bodies of saints will rise together with the dead corpse of Christ***

Second, Jesus' rising and their rising correspond. What rises? Corpses rise. The Hebrew is *nebaylah*. Yet many Full Preterists have insisted that Christ's resurrected corpse was not His resurrection body and that our bodies will not have flesh and bones. They claim that 1 Corinthians 15 completely rules out our old bodies being changed. Daniel Harden says that these bodies are a shell that will be discarded, not changed.<sup>14</sup> John Bray says, "It is not the physical body which is raptured. It is the Christian himself who is raptured as he leaves his body behind and takes on a new body forever."<sup>15</sup> Like other Full Preterists, he appeals to 1 Corinthians 15 to prove that the old body is forever abandoned and we are given a new body from heaven; a spiritual body, which for him means a non-material body. He claims that our bodies won't come from the earth; they will come from heaven. John Noe also appeals to 1 Corinthians 15 to prove that there can be zero connection between our physical body (or anything else on earth) and our resurrection spiritual body. He says, "His work of resurrection has nothing to do with reconstituting decomposed or alive human bodies at some unscriptural 'end of time.' This tradition of men, like others before, has made the word of God of little or no effect..."<sup>16</sup>

Well, I would say the opposite. His words a complete contradiction of this. He says, "resurrection has nothing to do with reconstituting decomposed or alive human bodies." Well, what's a corpse? There are corpses raised here. I'll deal with their false claim that Paul speaks of a "spirit body" in a moment, but notice that the same corpses that are in the ground are raised. Did Jesus have a corpse that came out of the tomb? Yes. Were there other tombs that were opened in AD 30 and other dead people who came out of those tombs and let people examine them? Yes. I don't know how they can get around that, but they do attempt to get around that.

Daniel Harden claims that Jesus' resurrection happened before his old body got resuscitated and that this spiritual body temporarily inhabited his old body, but that the old body was not permanent. It got discarded once the disciples were convinced He was raised. For example, he says,

Christ was resurrected not so much by the act of reanimating His earthly body, but by escaping Death and Hades... [Now wait a shake - what escaped from Hades? Not a body,

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14 Daniel E. Harden, *Overcoming Sproul's Resurrection Objections*, p. 38

15 John L. Bray, *The Rapture of Christians*, p. 32

16 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 74.

but a soul. Yet He calls that the resurrection. He says,] Christ's reanimation of His earthly form wasn't the resurrection itself; it was the byproduct – and proof – of His resurrection. And even Christ was not raised to be 'in the flesh'.<sup>17</sup>

He was raised into the same body He used before He died. This was done to prove to the disciples that He had kept His word... He now appeared to His followers at need, having the same properties as the angels.<sup>18</sup>

No, no, no, no. The early church condemned exactly that teaching as Gnosticism. What gets raised in this verse? Corpses. What came out of Christ's tomb? His corpse. Though Christ's resurrection body was glorified flesh, it was still flesh and bones. How do we know that it was glorified? He could walk right through walls. How do we know that what walked through walls was flesh and bones? He said so. After walking through walls He had them touch his body and described His body as having flesh and bones. Certainly, it was a glorified flesh and bones, but it was still flesh and bones. I want you to flip to a few passages to see this. Turn first to Luke 24:39-43. Verse 39 says, "'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.'" He is in effect saying, "I am not fooling you. It is I Myself." What is the "I Myself"? It included what He told them to touch. It included His body with hands, feet, bones, and flesh. Let's keep reading.

'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.'" When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. (Luke 24:39-43).

To claim that this was not Christ's resurrection body involves Christ in deception. He was having them handle his flesh and bones to prove that He had been raised. Why? Because the Old Testament over and over spoke of resurrections as involving flesh and bones; real corpses. For example, Job speaks in Job 10:11 as having been knit in his mother's womb with skin, flesh, bones, and sinews. Yet in Job 19:26 Job speaks of dying in the future and his skin and flesh rotting, yet in the future that very flesh that has rotted getting resurrected and seeing God in the flesh. He is very explicit on that point. He says, "this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" and he goes on to yearn for that day. Jesus explicitly says that He had flesh and bones in His glorified resurrection body. Anything that denies this is desperation. Turn next to John 2:19-21.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:19-21).

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17 Daniel E. Harden, *Overcoming Sproul's Resurrection Objections: The First-Century Fulfillment of the Parousia of Christ and the Resurrection of the Dead* (Kingdom Publications: Bradford, PA, 1999), p. 32.

18 Harden, p. 36.

What was raised? Not a new and totally unconnected body. It was “this temple” that He was living in; the very body He was speaking to them in that would be raised; the temple of His body. Turn to Romans 8:11.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Rom. 8:11).

He’s not going to give life to a body that never was mortal. Most Full Preterists believe that our resurrection bodies were created for us in AD 70 and are waiting for us to die. Well, such bodies were never mortal. No, He is going to give life to our mortal bodies that we live in right now. Note the “also.” Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, our mortal bodies will also be given life. The “also” indicates that Christ’s mortal body was the thing that was given life, not something else and therefore our mortal bodies will be given life. That’s different than having a body floating in heaven right now ready to be popped onto our souls when we die. That’s not our mortal bodies being given life. Now I don’t deny that God might clothe us with a temporary body from heaven when we die (there is much debate on that), but that possible interpretation of our house from heaven in 2 Cor. 5:1 happens before the resurrection that Full Preterists talk about. It was said to happen the moment any believer died even before AD 70. So that house from heaven (if it is a temporary body) is clearly different from the resurrection body.

So I think all of that is fairly clear. But how do we deal with their nuclear weapon from 1 Corinthians 15:44? They think this verse completely rules out any possibility of a physical body. It says of our bodies,

It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

And then in verse 50 he says, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.” They put those two verses together to say that Jesus’ true resurrection body did not have flesh and bones and that ours also can’t. We will have spiritual bodies.

Let’s deal with the phrase, “spiritual body” first. Their interpretation of “spiritual body” is that it is a body made of spirit, not a body made of flesh and bones. Apart from that being a definitional fallacy, it fails to fit the context at all. Let me deal with the definitional fallacy. A spiritual body and a spirit body are quite different. To speak of a spiritual body as being a spirit body would be as illogical as speaking of a square circle, or non-material material, or bodiless body. It is a violation of the law of non-contradiction. The very definitions of spirit and body preclude identification.

So what does it mean? Well, think of it this way: A steam engine is not an

engine made of steam or a non-metallic engine. No, a steam engine is an engine powered by steam, characterized by steam, and built for steam. In the same way, a spiritual body is a body empowered by the Holy Spirit, characterized by the Holy Spirit, and built to fully function in obedience to the Holy Spirit. But it is still a body, not a spirit. Spirit and body are two quite different things. So that is the first problem; their concept of spiritual body contradicts the law of non-contradiction.

And of course, the whole context of the chapter shows this to be the case. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:4. Speaking of Jesus it says, “and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” According to Harden’s view, He wasn’t buried. That corpse was not the real Him. That was something he would later discard. The real Him (according to Harden) was His spirit. But according to Paul He was buried, and the same He that was buried was raised. Verses 5-6:

and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present...

What was the proof that He was raised? They saw the body that could be handled and felt and that Jesus said had flesh and bones. How important is it to get this right? Verses 12-19 tell us:

1Cor. 15:12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Then he goes on to show that Christ was the firstfruits. In the barley harvest the firstfruits was identical kind of grain to what was later harvested. To posit a difference between Christ’s body and our resurrection body does not fit. Then he goes on to show that Christ must remain at the right hand of the Father until all enemies are subdued under His feet, the last enemy being death. Well, if other enemies have not yet been destroyed, we have to assume that the last enemy death will be destroyed in a future resurrection. But they deny that. Full preterists claim that all enemies were destroyed in AD 70 and from 30-70 AD was the thousand year reign. That’s ridiculous. All enemies have not been defeated. But in any case, the word “firstfruits” necessitates a resurrection of the same kind of metaphorical grain later.

Then in verses 35 and following Paul tells us that the relationship of these bodies to our resurrection bodies will be different in some ways. In fact, it



will be as vastly different as the difference between seed sown in the ground and the full plant that grows up from that seed. Different, yet connected. One flows from the other. You cannot have the plant (our resurrected bodies) without the seed (our mortal bodies). The one is changed into the other; not simply replaced by something different. Verse 36 says, “Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.” What is made alive? The very thing that dies. Verse 37 says you don’t sow the full plant; you sow the seed. So with that context, let’s read verses 42-44.

1Cor. 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

What is raised in incorruption? The very body that died or was sown. It’s the same “it” all the way through. Verse 43:

43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Can you see that it is our old body that is transformed and made to be fit for the Holy Spirit. He is not saying the old body is discarded and we get a non-body-body. The steam engine is not made of steam; it is characterized and controlled and empowered by steam. Praise God, there is a time when our bodies will be resurrected and will be so fine-tuned with the Holy Spirit that our bodies will perfectly do the Spirit’s will and the Holy Spirit will enable our bodies to perfectly serve His purposes. It is only the old “flesh and blood” of fallen humanity (what Paul calls the “natural” body) that verse 50 says cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The natural body must be changed. Verse 51 doesn’t say that our bodies will be discarded, but will be changed. The Full Preterist version of resurrection bodies made in AD 70 can’t account for that word “changed.”

Jesus had flesh and bones in His resurrection, yet He inherited the kingdom of God, but it was a transformed flesh and bones. And again in verse 52, it says the old body will be changed. In verses 53-54 corruption will put on incorruption, but there is some connection with the corruption and the incorruption or it would not say that the one will be changed into the other. The mortal puts on immortality. It is then and only then that death is swallowed up in victory.

The bottom line is that there is absolutely no contradiction between 1 Corinthians 15 and Isaiah 26:19. It is corpses that will put on immortality. And just because we do not understand how that can happen with cremated people does not mean we can dismiss the clear wording. We can trust that God can make enough connection of transformed molecules that what he starts with will be a seed and the resurrection will be a full-grown plant. And

anyway, isn't that about the difference between the dust and Adam's body, or the small rib-bone and Eve's body? God wouldn't have to preserve much of our old body to be able to do it. And God can certainly do it.

### **III. Contrary to full preterism, both Christ's resurrection and the saints' resurrection was a literal resurrection of physical substance from the ground (v. 19)**

Well, let me make another point from Isaiah 26:19. Contrary to full preterism, both Christ's resurrection and the saint's resurrection was a literal resurrection of physical substance up out of the ground. This was already implied by the word for "corpse," but there is more evidence in this verse.

#### ***A. Your dead shall live; together with my dead body shall arise***

First, living in this verse is explained by arising. There is not a body from heaven being put upon these people. That would be bodies descending rather than arising.

#### ***B. Something is said to "awake" - souls do not need to awake; only bodies lack consciousness ("awake and sing")***

Second, something is said to awake in this verse. Souls do not need to awake. The last phrase will deal with spirits, but spirits are quite conscious and talking with each other in paradise or hell, wherever they may be. Only bodies lack consciousness and can fulfill the command to "Awake and sing." We do not believe in soul sleep.<sup>19</sup> The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus

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<sup>19</sup> My position is that in the Old Testament period all (both righteous and wicked) went to a subterranean place for souls. This place had two compartments divided by a great gulf which could not be passed over (Luke 16:26), and with gates (Job 17:16). Torment Sheol/Hades (my name for it) is called in the Bible the "lowest part of Sheol" (Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13) or "the depths of Sheol" (Prov. (9:18). Notice that the rich man "lifted up his eyes" in Luke 16:23 even though Lazarus was also in Sheol/Hades. Torment Sheol/Hades is a place of torment (Luke 16:23-31), pain (Psalm 116:3), "sorrows" (2 Sam. 22:6) and burning fire (Deut. 32:22; Luke 16:23-24). This has led many people to translate these passages as "hell," but notice that in Revelation 20:14 Sheol/Hades is clearly distinguished from the lake of fire: "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." Torment Sheol is also a place where the dead communicate with each other (Isaiah 14:9,10; Ezekiel 32:21-33; cf. Luke 16:19-31). Paradise Sheol/Hades was also called "Abraham's bosom" by the Jews (cf. Luke 16:22) because at death a believer is said to be "gathered unto his people" (Gen. 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33) or to have "rested with his fathers" (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20; etc.). The Paradise portion of Sheol/Hades was "afar off" (Luke 16:23) from Torment Sheol/Hades, and was elevated far above the place of torment (cf. Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13; Prov. 9:18 with Luke 16:23). It was a place of comfort (Luke 16:25), rest and freedom (Job 3:11-19). Compared to Sheol/Hades, earthly existence was disturbing (1 Sam. 28:15). This was the place Christ was referring to when He said to the thief on the cross "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." (More on this in a moment, but first an objection.)

makes it clear that both those in hell and those in paradise are very much awake. And I will put into my footnotes other Scriptures which speak of people talking in Sheol/Hades.

### **C. *Something that resides in the “dust” shall arise***

Third, in verse 19, who awakes and sings? It is something that resides in the dust; not in Sheol, but in the dust. “Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust.” Full Preterists might respond that the souls of saints prior to the resurrection were in the heart of the earth in a place called Sheol, so in a sense they are in the dust. But Scripture does not speak of Sheol as dwelling in dust. What

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Now some may object and say that the thief on the cross went to heaven. But if Christ was in heaven with the thief, how could he say after His resurrection, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17) Indeed, how could Ephesians 4:8-10 say that Christ had to “first descend into the lower parts of the earth” before He could “ascend” to heaven? For three days and three nights Christ’s “soul” was in Sheol/Hades (Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Acts 2:31-32). Each of those passages distinguish between Christ’s soul and His body. His soul was released from Sheol and His body was preserved from corruption. Romans 10:7 makes it clear that when Christ came up from the dead, He ascended from “the abyss.” The abyss (translated “the pit”) was the prison place of certain viscous demons (Rev. 9; 11:7; 17:8; Luke 8:31; Matt. 8:29; cf also Tartarus 2 Pet. 2:4) and is where evil men are cast (Rev. 20:3). Isaiah 14:15 uses Sheol and Abyss as synonyms. Speaking of Satan it says, “Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.” Notice the use of the phrase “lowest depths of the pit.” The only part of the pit; the only part of Sheol/Hades that Satan had access to was the “lowest part.” Thus, according to Romans 10:7, the abyss was the place where Christ was for three days. Thus, the thief joined Christ in Paradise Sheol/Hades. The truth of the matter is that heaven was not yet prepared to receive the Old Testament saints and be made into the glorious New Testament paradise. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:1-4). Until the resurrection, no one had been to the highest heaven (though some had been caught away in the atmospheric heaven to be buried in another place - like Elijah and Moses). (See footnote 1.) Christ made this very clear when He said, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13). No one but the pre-incarnate Christ had been to heaven. All Old Testament saints went “down into Sheol” (Gen. 37:35)

The following is some confirming evidence that Sheol/Hades is always the subteranean place of the dead. Consider Genesis 37:31-35. Jacob says, “I will go down into the grave to my son in mourning” (v. 35). The Hebrew word for “grave” is Sheol. Jacob thought Joseph had been eaten by animals, so surely he could not mean that he would join Joseph in a grave, or even in a grave like Joseph. Joseph simply was not in a grave. He was in the subteranean place of the dead. Likewise, when Samuel was brought back from the dead, he did not come down from heaven, but came “up out of the earth.” (1 Sam. 28:11-16). And “Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Interestingly, Samuel told Saul, “Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.” (v. 19). Those who believe in soul sleep might try to say that he just meant that they would join him in the grave. But in chapter 31 we read that Saul didn’t make it to the grave. He was hung on a wall for a day and then burned. Clearly Samuel was referring to the souls of these men. Lest it be thought that Saul was a believer, it should be pointed out that Samuel called Saul God’s enemy (v. 16). Again, this is further proof that both the righteous and the wicked went to Sheol/Hades, and though there was a great gulf fixed between the righteous and the wicked, they were in the same place, and were no doubt able to converse to some extent like Abraham and the rich man did in Luke 16. Jonah actually died when he was in the belly of the fish. He begins his prayer in the belly of the fish, but finishes it “in the hollow of Sheol.” (2:1-2). Though it is possible that this is figurative, 2:6-7 seem to indicate that he actually died: “I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.” If it be thought strange that Jonah could talk out of Sheol to God, consider the three other times when that happened (Ezekiel 32:21; Isaiah 14:9-20; Luke 16:19-31).

returns to dust? Bodies return to dust. That was part of the curse spoken to Adam in Genesis 3 - “to dust you will return.”

### **Note context of pagans being brought down to dust (25:12; 26:5)**

And the context shows that. Look at chapter 25:12. “The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, down to the dust.” There the “dust” is literal dust. It is in parallel with ground. The city fortress will be brought “down to the dust” means down to the ground. Let’s let Isaiah define His terms. Likewise, look at chapter 26:5. “For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust.” There “ground” and “dust” are parallel, and interpreters are clear that it is the dust immediately under our feet. Sheol was far deeper than that.

#### ***D. The earth casts out the spirits that are in it***

Fifth, look at the last clause, which says, “and the earth shall cast out the dead.” That may seem like it is referring to exactly the same thing - bodies being raised. And some people take it that way. But it is a different word that refers to conscious spirits in Sheol. And some translations actually translated it as, “the earth shall cast out the departed spirits.” So there are two things that God preserves: corpses and spirits. One is physical and the other is non-physical.

Well, just as this passage distinguishes between two things that come out of the earth in AD 30, bodies and spirits, Acts 2:27 quotes Psalm 16 as applying to Jesus and it has Jesus saying, “For You will not leave My soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” Souls don’t see corruption. Only bodies can see corruption or rotting; but only souls go to Hades. So Jesus’s immaterial soul was not left in Hades but came up out of Hades and His material body was not allowed to rot in the grave but was preserved and resurrected. So again there is a perfect parallel with other passages on Christ’s three days of death. The soul went to Hades; the body went into the grave; but both were raised.

### **IV. Contrary to full preterism, the body is an essential part of us that God expects us to long to have redeemed and restored**

But another point that needs to be made from this passage is that the body is so essential to who we are that God expects us to long to have that body redeemed and restored. And here is where we get into the practicality of this

passage. He wants us to value the physical creation. In verse 18 the corporate Israel had not yet been redeemed or delivered from the earth. According to Romans 8, the redemption of the body is simply one part of the redemption of the entire planet that will happen when God makes a new heavens and new earth in the future (after the Second Coming). Full Preterists sometimes sound like they want to escape from their bodies and escape from this physical world into a spiritual world.

But God's plan is the reverse; it is heaven invading earth and transforming earth. God's plan is to make redemption reverse all the effects of the Fall far as the curse is found. So, far from discarding this body (as Daniel Harden words it), Scripture promises to redeem it. Actually, it is interesting how many Full Preterists are forced to teach (because of the domino effect on doctrines) that the death of our bodies did not become possible through Adam and Eve's sin, but was natural, and so they say that redemption of the body is not needed. John Noe says, "Adam and Eve would have physically died even if they hadn't sinned and been cast out of the garden."<sup>20</sup> "That [physical life] wasn't lost in Adam, therefore, it's not restored in Christ, nor will it be."<sup>21</sup> "Physical death of the old physical body remains the natural consequence of being created human."<sup>22</sup> In other words, he is saying that death is part of a good creation before the fall into sin. He says that that isn't part of the curse; it is natural and would have been present whether or not Adam sinned. That's astonishingly bad theology.

But more importantly, they do not see any aspect of this physical creation as being redeemed by Jesus. Remember, they believe all prophecy has been fulfilled. According to them, forever and ever throughout all eternity there will always be people being born on planet earth and sinning and dying in this same physical world,<sup>23</sup> and our goal is to escape from it into heaven.<sup>24</sup>

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20 John Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 2

21 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 43

22 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 71

23 For example, Noe says, "... the world, the universe, the kingdom, the Church age, biblically have no end.... Therefore, they have no last day, last hour, last minute, last second, or last anything in which to place a resurrection." Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 37. Ed Stevens says, "I believe there is a long future ahead of us on this planet...Millions or billions of generations (or even eternity) may be more like it." Ed Stevens. *Stevens Response to Gentry*, (Kingdom Publications: Bradford, PA, 1997), p. 47.

24 As Dr. Kelly Birks worded it, "Look carefully at what the resurrection of the body is called in Rom. 8:23b. '...also we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly expecting adoption, the redemption of our body.' The Greek word for 'redemption' is APOLUTRO. It means 'to be set free from.' Here, Paul is referring to eagerly awaiting to be set free from our bodies! Sounds like a new creation to me." Dr. Kelly Birks, in an e-mail to the Chairman of Care of Churches Committee on Feb. 12, 1999. Daniel Harden says, "This [Luke 20:34-36] shows that after the resurrection at A.D. 70 in the afterlife, the state of man is like that of the angels. Angels are spiritual creatures, members of the heavenly realm. Can they be seen, touched, handled? Not under normal conditions." Daniel E. Harden, *Overcoming Sproul's*

It's an escapist theology. According to them, we want to escape from this world and live in heaven forever, and not to live in a redeemed world.<sup>25</sup> And the best answer to that bad theology is Randy Alcorn's wonderful book, *Heaven*. He shows how heaven and earth will be merged and how we were made for this physical creation and that the physical creation will be redeemed. He's premil, so he has a slightly different take at places, but it is a great book.

So my question to them is this: "Did Abraham receive the promises of the land?" God promised to give him the land of Canaan. If Abraham didn't inherit the land while he was alive and if he will not ever live on planet earth in the future (which they also claim), then how can he be said to inherit the land or how can Romans 4:13 say that Abraham will inherit the world? If Abraham will forever be in heaven and never be on a restored earth (which they clearly say),<sup>26</sup> then did God break His promise? It seems to me that that interpretation forces God to have broken His promise. Hebrews 11:39 is quite explicit about the fact that Abraham did not yet receive what he had been promised. But if there is an end to history (as we affirm), and if planet earth which is groaning from the curse is itself redeemed one day (as we affirm), and if heaven fully invades and is merged with earth (as we affirm), then Abraham will indeed inherit the promises because he will indeed be on planet earth. Romans 4:13 says, "For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

The point is that redemption is comprehensive. As the hymn, "Joy to the World" words it, redemption goes "far as the curse is found." To deny the resurrection of our bodies is to deny that the curse impacted our bodies, which of course, we have already seen that they do.

### ***A. Jesus speaks of "my dead body"***

But back to the main point, what are some evidences that the body itself is a part of us and is important to the definition of who we are? First, Jesus speaks of his corpse, dead as it is, as "My body" or "My corpse." It belonged to Him. It was a part of who He was.

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Resurrection Objections, p. 42.

25 John Noe says, "The Scriptures state we 'shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever' (Ps 23:6b). That's in Heaven, not on a renovated New Earth 2." Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 63

26 For example, John Noe says, "The Scriptures state we 'shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever' (Ps 23:6b). That's in Heaven, not on a renovated New Earth 2." Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 63

### **B. “your dead [plural] shall live”**

Second, he speaks of their corpses as belonging to them - “your dead bodies.” It’s the plural for dead. Their bodies were a part of who they were.

### **C. It is in some sense “you” who dwell in the dust when you are dead**

Third, it is in some sense “you” who dwell in the dust. Verse 19 says, “Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust.” The bodies that are in the dust are in some way a part of the real “you.” We are not Gnostics who try to escape from the body and from all of physical creation. Your body is an essential part of you. You are incomplete without the resurrection.

### **D. God wants believers to rejoice (“sing”) over this resurrection since it is a reversal of the curse (no longer “to the dust you shall return”; refreshing “dew of herbs” or “dew of lights”)**

Fourth, God wants believers to rejoice or to “sing” over this resurrection. It is to be something celebrated. It truly is the reversal of the curse, since the curse on Adam was stated this way: “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” All these corpses had returned to the dust, so the body itself was cursed. Genesis 3 is quite clear on that.

Well, this verse promises to reverse that curse and therefore the resurrection should be rejoiced in and anticipated with joy. We should not have the attitude of one Full Preterist who said, “We are not interested in this old body surviving.”<sup>27</sup> And we should not have the attitude of another Full Preterist who said, “Our emotional attachment to them [our bodies] will be no different than our attachment to those body parts we cut off and discarded last week – hair, fingernails, etc.”<sup>28</sup> I would say God’s command here is the exact opposite. We should be emotionally engaged with this marvelous aspect of redemption. It should make us rejoice and sing. Even the physical universe will have every aspect of the curse removed, including thorns and thistles and blood-sucking mosquitoes.

Psalm 133:3 identifies the image of dew as an image of the blessing of heaven coming upon the earth. So this passage uses an image of heaven’s blessing impacting the physical earth when he speaks of the reason for joy being, “for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” John Oswalt in his commentary rightly said, “God’s dew will rest

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27 John L. Bray, *The Rapture of Christians* (John L. Bray Ministry, Inc.: Lakeland, FL, 1998), p. 24.

28 Noe, *Your Resurrection Body and Life*, p. 73

upon the dead as he will force earth to give them up to life in his presence forever.”<sup>29</sup> You might think that the dead are lost in the earth - their molecules being spread out, but God will force the earth to give back those bodies as only He in His omnipotence can do. But again, the image of a blessing replacing a curse shows that death was not a natural part of creation. Death is called an enemy by the Bible, and Jesus conquered that enemy in His resurrection and He promises to conquer the enemy death in our future resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. And by the way, if the only death that resulted from the curse was the death of our spirit, then that death was reversed the moment Paul was regenerated. But in Romans 8 Paul says there is more to redemption than simply the regeneration of our soul. Paul speaks of the redemption of our bodies and of this creation as something future to him.

Alec Motyer<sup>30</sup> in his commentary says that there is absolutely no way of getting around the fact that this passage speaks of a literal resurrection of literal corpses out of literal ground as a reversal of the literal curse. And 1 Corinthians 15 promises that we will have a literal resurrection of the same kind at the end of history. Revelation 20 speaks of a first resurrection from the dead and says that the rest of the dead will not be raised till the thousand years are finished. There will be a resurrection at the end of history.

## V. Applications

OK, so that’s the meaning of the passage. Let me quickly end with five more applications. First, value this physical creation. God made it and Jesus plans to redeem it.

Second, don’t be pessimistic about the reach of Christ’s atonement. 1 Corinthians 15 says that His grace will eventually subdue all enemies and put all things under Christ’s feet, with only one enemy remaining to be swallowed up in victory prior to the Second Coming - death. And that

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29 John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 488.

30 “If we view 26:19 in its context in this way (as indeed we must), then its terms go beyond any figurative significance to the literal sense of a full resurrection. The call to wake up to joy is illustrated by the two figures of dew and morning or ‘full light’. Dew is symbolic of heaven’s contribution to earthly well-being (Gen. 27:28, 39; Deut. 33:13, 28), royal favour (Prov. 19:12) and divine blessing (Hos. 14:5). It is linked with the manna in Exodus 16:13–14 (cf. Num. 11:19), the divine gift which cancelled the threat of death (Exod. 16:3). Morning: literally ‘lights’, a plural of amplitude, ‘full light’. Death is darkness; light is life (Job 3:16; Pss 49:19; 56:13) and salvation (Ps. 27:1; cf. 2 Sam. 23:4; Ps. 104:2; Isa. 9:2; 59:9; 60:1, 3). In the parallel oracle (18:4), the Lord’s presence is dew and light. As the dew descends, so he will come to the dead he is concerned with, bringing vitality, salvation. Her dead: ‘its shadowy ones’ (see 14).” J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 200.



enemy will be swallowed up while He is coming back when we are caught up to meet Him in the air. Well, the implications of every other enemy being subdued before that time are enormous. It means that we can have confidence that even the physical creation will more and more enter into the blessings of the covenant as the Gospel moves forward. As nations become fully Christian, less and less of the curse will impact planet earth. In fact, people will live longer and animals will start being vegetarian and be tamer.

Third, don't fear your own death. You can plan for it. In fact, Rodney gave a great sermon on why we should ordinarily insist on burial for our bodies rather than cremation. Can God resurrect cremated bodies? Well, obviously I believe He can. But cremation is a kind of disregard for the body and a disregard for the resurrection. Plan for death as a part of this world's curse, but don't fear it. And for sure, honor the dead bodies of your relatives with a burial.

Fourth, remember that Christ's resurrection guarantee's ours. If His resurrection was important, so is ours. 1 Corinthians 15 shows that a belief in the resurrection is a critical doctrine. To deny it is to deny the faith.

And finally, if God values the physical creation, we should increasingly seek to take dominion over it. God is restoring man more and more to the Dominion Mandate He gave to Adam. What Adam failed in can be succeeded in by the Church. Value the study of science - true science, creationist science. Value medicine's advancements. Exercise, eat well, and take good care of your body. Be a good steward of God's creation. God values the whole creation, and so should we. Amen.

F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 273–274.