

Discuss: What do you think of when I mention the following event: the resurrection of God's people?

We have a great hope in store as God's people. I'm not sure we really grasp that. I'm not sure we *can* grasp that! But we're going to try this evening to obtain a fuller understanding of the incredible hope of the life to come.

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul Paul addresses three aspects related to the subject of the resurrection: the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of Christ's people, and the nature of the resurrection body. We looked at the first two aspects last week...

Review:

I. We must believe in the resurrection of Christ (1-11).

- A. The gospel is what Paul preached (1-2).**
- B. The gospel is what Paul received (3-8).**
- C. The gospel is what Paul cherished (9-11).**

II. We must believe in the resurrection of Christ's people (12-34).

A. Some deny it (12-19).

If there is no resurrection...seven things are true.

1. *Christ hasn't been raised (13).*
2. *Our preaching is useless (14a).*
3. *Your faith is useless (14b).*
4. *We are false witnesses (15).*
5. *We are still in our sins (16-17).*
6. *The dead in Christ are lost (18).*
7. *We are to be pitied (19).*

B. Paul affirmed it (20-28).

1. *Christ has been raised (20).*
2. *Christ's people will be raised (21-23).*
3. *Christ will hand the kingdom over to the Father (24-28).*
 - ⇒Christ will reign (25a).
 - ⇒Christ will subdue all enemies (25b).
 - ⇒Christ will destroy death (26).
 - ⇒Christ will be made subject to the Father (27-28).

C. Paul reemphasized its necessity (29-34).

1. *If it's not true, why are people baptized (29)?*
2. *If it's not true, why do we endanger ourselves (30-32)?*
3. *Since it is true, beware of those who say it's not (33-34).*

New Material...

What exactly will the resurrection body be like? That's the subject Paul addresses next. He gives us some comparisons, contrasts, and final conclusions.

I. Paul gives some comparisons regarding the resurrection body (35-41).

Paul begins by posing a couple of questions we might raise. Read verse 35.

Q: What response did Paul give to the very asking of those questions? V 36 “How foolish!” Why are the questions foolish? Because we don’t have the mental capacity to fathom life in the age to come. We could better help a stone age person grasp what life in New York City is like than try to fathom the resurrection life. We don’t have the categories to even begin to describe it. But to help us, Paul makes some comparisons.

A. There are different kinds of seed (36-37).

Read v 37. What’s the relationship between a seed and the plant which grows from it?

1. *The seed doesn’t resemble the plant.*
2. *The seed is related to the plant.*

If I held a wheat seed up right now and asked you, “What kind of plant will this produce? Draw it.” You probably could give me a decent picture. But why? Because you have seen a wheat plant! There is no way you could ever deduce from the seed what the plant would look like.

So it is with the resurrection body. Will that future body be related to our present one? Yes. But that’s where the similarities stop. There is no way we can look at what we are now and fathom what we will be.

Here’s another comparison from life around us...

B. There are different kinds of flesh (38-39).

Read verses 38-39. From a physiological point of view, there are differences...

1. *There is human flesh.*
2. *There is animal flesh.*
3. *There is bird flesh.*

The point? We can’t look at the flesh we have now and figure out what kind of “stuff” we’ll be made of in the resurrection. It will be a different kind of “flesh” or material (again, human vocabulary fails us in this description).

C. There are different kinds of splendor (40-41).

Read verses 40-41. Look at the heavens and you’ll see some wonder objects, each possessing great splendor. And then look at the creation around us on earth, again you’ll see great splendor. But the splendor differs.

1. *Heavenly bodies have one type.*
2. *Earthly bodies have another type.*

Discuss: What’s Paul’s point with these three comparisons?

II. Paul gives some contrasts regarding the resurrection body (42-49).

A. Here is a contrast regarding its nature (42-44).

Read verses 42-44. Notice the contrast...

<i>Current Body</i>	<i>Resurrection Body</i>
Perishable	Imperishable
Sown in dishonor	Raised in glory
Sown in weakness	Raised in power
Sown a natural body	Raised a spiritual body
From the first Adam	From the last Adam

The contrast is striking. There's a huge difference between what we have now in these flesh bodies and what we will have in the coming age, our resurrection bodies.

Discuss: Why doesn't God's Word give us more information about the coming age? What difference should the information we do have make on our lives?

B. Here is a contrast regarding its origin (45-49).

Where did human bodies come from anyway? And what's different about the origin of our resurrected bodies? Notice the contrast...

<i>Adam</i>	<i>Last Adam</i>
Was given life	Gives life (45)
Natural	Spiritual (46)
Came first	Came afterwards
From the dust of the earth	From heaven (47)
His offspring are like him	His offspring will be like Him (48-49)

Q: What do we learn about our resurrected bodies from verse 49?

Follow-up Q: What is true of Christ's resurrection body?

Discuss: How does this encourage you?

III. Paul gives some conclusions regarding the resurrection body (50-58).

A. Flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God (50).

Q: What does Paul mean by "flesh and blood?" Flesh and blood are not bad, just inadequate. Remember, God made human beings to begin with, as flesh and blood creatures. But these bodies aren't suited for what He has in store for us.

B. We know a mystery (51-57).

The "mystery" involves six truths which we now know which were previously unknown.

1. *Not all believers will die (51).*

That is, not all will die before Christ returns. Some will still be living when He comes back. But what about those who died? Have they ceased to exist? No. Those still living as well as those who have died will be changed...

2. *All believers will be changed (51b-52).*

Read verses 51-52.

The term "changed" is *allasso* in the Greek. It means "to cause a difference by altering the character or nature of something - 'to change, to alter, to make different.' και ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθνη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς 'and he will alter the customs which Moses handed down to us' Ac 6.14."1

Notice some characteristics of this coming change, first how, then when:

--It will happen suddenly.

--It will happen at the last trumpet.

3. *We will put on the imperishable and immortality (53).*

1Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989.

4. *Death will be removed forever (54-55).*

Paul quotes from two OT prophets. Which ones? Isaiah and Hosea.

5. *Death exists because of sin (56).*

Never forget why death exists in the world. It's not normal (as evolution says; in fact, evolutionary theory says the universe is getting better through the survival of the fittest). Not so. Death entered the world as the consequence of man's sin.

Q: Why does Paul say that the "power of sin" is the law? See *NIVsb*

6. *God gives victory to us through Jesus Christ (57).*

The gospel is our only hope—and it is a sure hope. Notice the present tense, "God *gives* us the victory."

Discuss: What's the significance of this tense? We already have it!

C. We have a job to do now (58).

1. *Stand.*

Q: What does Paul mean by "stand?" Notice how our future hope has tremendous implications for how we live now.

2. *Do the Lord's work.*

Q: What's our incentive for serving the Lord in this life?