

## Introduction

In public speaking I was taught to tell the audience what you are going to say, then tell them, and then tell them what you have said. In the Introduction of a speech, we tell people where we are headed and what we are going to talk about. In the Body of a speech, we give them the message. In the Conclusion, we review what has been said. I was reminded of these principles as I read our passage this week. Paul starts with two questions. The first question is, “How are the dead raised?” His second question is, “And with what kind of body do they come?” In the remainder of the passage Paul answers these two questions.

### Our Resurrection Bodies (1 Cor 15:35-58)

1. How are the dead raised? (1 Cor 15:35-38)
2. What kind of body do they come? (1 Cor 15:35, 39-50)
3. Conclusion and Applications (1 Cor 15:51-58)

(1 Co 15:35–58) “But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” {36} You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; {37} and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. {38} But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. {39} All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. {40} There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. {41} 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. {42} So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; {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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. {45} So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. {46} However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. {47} The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. {48} As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. {49} Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. {50} Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. {51} Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, {52} in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. {53} For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. {54} But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. {55} “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” {56} The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; {57} but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {58} Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.”

#### 1. How are the dead raised? (1 Cor 15:35-38)

Paul’s first question is, “How are the dead raised?” Notice that Paul begins with, “But someone will say.” I believe this is a question that Paul has thought up to introduce the topic and open up the discussion.

(1 Co 15:35–36) “But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” {36} You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;”

This is not Paul’s first letter. In 1 Corinthians 5:9, Paul said, “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people.” This is at the minimum his second letter. There was a response to that first letter that he wrote, and the Corinthians had lots of questions. In chapter seven, in response to their questions, he addresses marriage and divorce. In chapter eight, in response to more of their questions, he wrote about their liberties.

(1 Co 5:9) “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;”

(1 Co 7:1) “Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

In addition to their questions, Paul has been informed about the state of affairs in Corinth. In chapter one, he was informed by Chloe’s people about the quarreling in the church, so he addressed that issue. In chapter five he was informed about the immorality in the church, and Paul addressed that issue. Many scholars believe that some of his feedback on the conditions of the church came from Stephanas, Fortunatas, and Achaicus. In chapter sixteen, Paul rejoices over their coming, and for whatever they supplied to him. They most likely briefed him on the state of the church.

(1 Co 1:11) “For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.”

(1 Co 5:1) “It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife.”

(1 Co 16:17–18) “I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. {18} For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.”

Paul has addressed all the issues that he has been made aware of, and also all of the questions that were sent to him by the letter from the Corinthians. We do not know whether the questions that he answers in the text today are direct questions, or whether he is addressing things that have been shared with him. I believe that this passage is from the reports that he has heard rather than specific questions. In this comprehensive discussion on the resurrection, Paul wrote, “how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” I believe this came from the reports, not their questions. Paul understood there was a need for understanding about the resurrection, just as they needed understanding about spiritual gifts and the use of gifts. I believe the questions that Paul answers in our text today are introductory questions to introduce his topics. When Paul begins his answer to the first question, he said, “You fool!” Paul would not call anyone a fool, and he would certainly not call someone a fool who has asked a question to get more understanding. This was just Paul’s style in writing in this discussion.

(1 Co 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?”

(1 Co 15:36) “You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;”

Paul uses this question to teach the principle that things sown must die before they come to life. Paul states, “That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies.” Then he gives the example of a bare grain, like wheat. We sow a grain of wheat that has dried up and died. If we took a fresh piece of corn and tried to cut a kernel off of it, it would smush and come apart. If we planted it, it would not produce anything. We have to let the corn mature and dry out before we plant it. Last fall, we had a good crop of green beans. Karen picked out some bushes to harvest seeds from. We let those beans grow big, dry out and turn yellow. Then, she put the dried-out beans in a container to plant this spring. If she had taken fresh beans that had not dried and died, and planted them, nothing would have grown. A seed must die before we sow it. Paul has used the sowing of grain to help us understand that our bodies are no different. Our bodies must die before the new resurrected body is given.

(1 Co 15:37–38) “and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. {38} But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.”

In John 12:24, Jesus taught the same principle. He said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” When Jesus said this, He was prophesying about His own upcoming death and resurrection. In the prior verse, He said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” For Him to be glorified, He had to die, be buried, and be raised up.

(Jn 12:24) “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

(Jn 12:23) “And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

When we plant a seed that has died, it will produce a new plant and body. We do not plant the body, but the bare grain. God creates the growth and gives it a body. How are the dead raised? They are raised like a grain of seed. They have to die before they are sown, and a new body is raised up from the seed that was sown.

## 2. **What kind of body do they come?** (1 Cor 15:35, 39-50)

The second question that Paul answers is, “And with what kind of body do they come?” A grain of seed dies and is planted, and a new plant grows. God gives a body to it. When our dead bodies are sown, we will have a resurrected body. What kind of body will that be? Paul gives a number of different characteristics of this resurrected body.

(1 Co 15:35) “But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”

### **A. Unique** (1 Cor 15:39)

The first characteristic of this body is that it is unique. “All flesh is not the same flesh. There is one flesh of men and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.” The flesh of birds is unique to birds. The flesh of beasts is unique to them. The flesh of fish is unique to fish. The flesh of men is unique to men. The point of all these examples is that the flesh of the resurrected body will be unique. It will not be like the flesh of any other being; it will be unique.

(1 Co 15:39) “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.”

## B. Heavenly (1 Cor 15:40)

The second characteristic of this resurrected body is that it is heavenly. Paul said, “There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.” Right now, we have an earthly body, and that is all that we know. But our resurrected body will be heavenly, not earthly. Our bodies will be similar, but they won’t be the same.

(1 Cor 15:40) “There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another.”

Our physical bodies have physical capabilities and limitations. In Luke 24, Jesus had risen from the dead and had His resurrected body. There were two men walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and Jesus joined them. Luke recorded that their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. He had a spiritual body, and if He had His physical body, they would certainly have recognized Him, but it was a different body. After walking with them, and explaining the Scriptures to them, He joined them for dinner. At the table, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He vanished from their sight. A physical body does not vanish from sight, but Jesus’ heavenly body vanished from their sight.

(Lk 24:15–16, 31) “While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. {16} But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.... {31} Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.”

We have another glimpse of this heavenly, resurrected body in Luke 24. After Jesus had been resurrected, He appeared to the apostles and stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace be to you.” They were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.” There was obviously a difference between the heavenly body and His earthly body, or they would not have been frightened at seeing Jesus in the flesh. Jesus then said, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” Then He showed them His hands and His feet. Finally, He gave them one more evidence that it was Him and not a spirit. He asked for something to eat, and they gave Him a broiled fish, and He took it and ate it before them. We gather from this that our resurrected bodies has flesh and bones, but not exactly like our earthly flesh. Our heavenly bodies will also be able to eat food.

(Lk 24:36–43) While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.” {37} But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. {38} And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? {39} “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” {40} And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. {41} While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” {42} They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; {43} and He took it and ate it before them.”

After telling them to remain in Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit and are clothed with power, Jesus blessed them, and parted from them and was carried up into heaven. The Greek word for carried is *anaphero* (Strong's G399), and means to be taken up, brought up, or led up. Our physical bodies do not have the ability to ascend or descend in the heavens, but our heavenly bodies have some additional capabilities.

(Lk 24:50–51) “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. {51} While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.”

### C. Different

The third characteristic of resurrected bodies are they are different. The glory of the heavenly body is one and the glory of the earthly body is another. The sun, moon, and stars all have different glories. Even the stars differ from star to star. The glory of the sun is different and much greater than the glory of the moon. The moon reflects the light of the sun, but the moon affects creation here on earth in many ways that the sun does not. They each have their own glory. As scientists have been able to study the stars with more powerful telescopes, they have discovered that each star is different, unique, and has its own glory. They are not the same.

(1 Cor 15:40-41) “There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. {41} 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.”

The Greek word that is translated as glory is *doxa* (Strong's G1391), which means praise, honor, glory, or dignity. We get our English word, *doxology*, from it, which means a hymn of praise. The praise, honor, and glory of every created thing is different. In the same way, the glory of the resurrected body will be different and much better than the glory of the earthly body.

The first way that it will be more glorious is that it will be imperishable. The resurrected body is sown with a perishable body, but it is raised as an imperishable body. To perish means to spoil or decay. Food has a window of time that it can be eaten, and then it begins to spoil. In the same way, our bodies spoil and decay. When we die, our bodies begin to spoil or decay and within a few days there is a strong smell of this decay. When Lazarus died, Jesus arrived four days later, and when he went to the tomb where he had been buried, Marth said to Jesus, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.” These earthly bodies are perishable and spoil and decay. Our resurrected bodies are imperishable and will never decay.

(1 Co 15:42) “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*.”

(Jn 11:39) “Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

The second way it is more glorious is that it will have honor and glory. Our earthly bodies are sown in dishonor, but they are raised in glory. Sin is what dishonors our lives. When someone is dishonorably discharged from the military, it is because they did something wrong. There will not be dishonorable conduct with our new resurrected bodies.

The third way they are more glorious is that they are raised in power. It is sown in weakness, but it is raised up in power. Here is another military example. Some of the men and women that join the military show up to boot camp very weak. But, after they go through boot camp, they are released as strong soldiers. They are sown in weakness and raised in power. In the same way, our bodies are sown in weaknesses. The Greek word for weaknesses is *astheneia*, which means diseased, infirmity, sick, or weak. The apostle Paul spoke of his own weaknesses and illnesses. In Galatians 4:13 he said that he had preached the gospel to them when he had a bodily illness. We do not know what that bodily condition was, but it was some sort of weakness.

(1 Cor 15:43) “it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;”

(Ga 4:13–14) “but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; {14} and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.”

Our resurrected bodies are sown with a natural body, but are raised a spiritual body. Since there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body, only it will be different and have a different glory. The first Adam represents the natural, and he became a living soul. Jesus is the last Adam, and He became a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first; Jesus did not come first. Adam, the natural man, came first, then came the spiritual. Adam was earthly and we are earthly. Jesus was heavenly, and we will also bear the image of the heavenly when we receive our resurrected, heavenly bodies.

(1 Cor 15:44-49) “it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. {45} So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. {46} However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. {47} The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. {48} As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. {49} Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.”

A spiritual body is necessary, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. In verse fifty, Paul tells us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Our earthly bodies must die and be resurrected to a heavenly body so that they can inherit the kingdom of God.

(1 Co 15:50) “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

### 3. Conclusion and Applications (1 Cor 15:51-58)

Paul concludes with a summary of the mystery of the resurrection. He said that not all will sleep, but all will be changed. Earlier he said that Christ was the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.” Everyone belonging to Christ will be changed and given a resurrected body at the coming of Christ. Those who are alive in Christ will not precede or come before those who are asleep. Christ will bring with Him those who are asleep and we will join them in the sky. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. We will receive these heavenly, resurrected bodies.

(1 Co 15:51–52) “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, {52} in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

(1 Co 15:23) “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming,”

The perishable must put on the imperishable, and the mortal must put on immortality. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, so this must take place. Furthermore, in verses twenty-five and twenty-six, Paul wrote that at the end, the last enemy that will be abolished is death.

(1 Cor 15:53-54) “For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. {54} But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

We must take on our immortal and imperishable bodies so that death can be abolished. Death will be swallowed up in victory. There will no longer be a sting of death. There will be no more sin. We will have been given victory over death through the Lord Jesus Christ. Because there is going to be a resurrection of the dead, and we are going to receive imperishable and immortal bodies, we should be full of thanksgiving. That is our first application from our passage. Understanding the resurrection should give each of us a heart full of gratitude and thanksgiving for what lies ahead. Jesus, the first fruits, has guaranteed that we will all be resurrected. We will have a body that is imperishable, raised in glory and power.

(1 Cor 15:55-57) “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” {56} The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; {57} but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(1 Co 15:25–26) “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. {26} The last enemy that will be abolished is death.”

The second application that Paul gives is an encouragement to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our toil is not in vain in the Lord. Earlier, he said that if the resurrection of the dead was not going to happen, our faith was in vain. But there will be a resurrection of the dead. Jesus is the first fruits, and we will be raised up at His coming. Since there is a resurrection, we need to be baptized for the dead. We saw that this meant that we should suffer for the gospel, so that those who are lost (dead) will place their faith in Christ and also be resurrected with Christ. This is a renewed focus on evangelism because of the resurrection.

(1 Cor 15:58) “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in* vain in the Lord.

We need to be steadfast, even if we are not seeing any movement or results. We need to keep on praying and reaching out to those who do not know Christ. We are to be immovable. We must not allow anything to move or deter us from reaching out to the lost. We must keep abounding in the work of the Lord because our toil is not in vain in the Lord. It is not in vain because there is a resurrection of the dead.

## Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for giving us an understanding of the resurrection of the dead. Thank You for the hope that we have. Thank You for all the witnesses and evidence that You gave us. Jesus, thank You for being the first fruits, and guaranteeing the rest of the harvest. We look forward to Your coming, when we will all join you and be given resurrection bodies. Help us to be thankful for what You have done, and what You are going to do. Help us suffer for the sake of the gospel. Give us opportunities to reach out to the lost, and help us be willing to suffer to see them saved. Lord, each one of us are a different part of the body, with differing gifts and callings. Give us clarity about what each of us have been called to do in this season that we are in. Help us to be faithful stewards of our gifts and calling. Help us to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

- How many of you have ever thought much about the resurrected body that you will receive?
- Why does Paul say that we must have a resurrected body?
- Why is the resurrection of the dead a key part of the gospel message?
- What was the witness of the resurrection of Christ by the apostles and others so important?
- What did the resurrection of Christ guarantee for us?



## **Our Resurrection Bodies**

### **Introduction** (1 Co 15:35–58)

1. **How are the dead raised?** (1 Cor 15:35-38, 1 Co 5:9, 7:1, 1:11, 5:1, 16:17-18, 15:12, Jn 12:23-24)
  - A. **Unique** (1 Cor 15:39)
  - B. **Heavenly** (1 Cor 15:40, Lk 24:15–16, 31, 36–43, 50-51)
  - C. **Different** (1 Cor 15:40-50, Jn 11:39)
3. **Conclusion and Applications** (1 Cor 15:51-58, 1 Co 15:23, 15:25–26)