

1 Corinthians 15:35-49 The Resurrection Giver Falls Ch. AM 8/11/2024

The ancient city of Corinth was close to Athens, Greece! Some in the church in Corinth had been influenced by the way the Greeks viewed things.

The Greeks did not believe the resurrection, and even mocked those who taught it. As evidence of that, over in Acts chapter 17, Paul was in Athens and Paul said in Acts 17:31-32, that God “...*has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.*” *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.*” Greeks mocked the resurrection, thinking that it was not possible.

The answer to how the bodily resurrection of the dead is possible is The Resurrection Giver.

1. Notice God’s patterns of botanical life out of death, and types of terrestrial bodies and celestial glories. (v.35-41)

The first word in verse 35 is “*but,*” which contrasts the previous passage with this passage. Here Paul addressed those who questioned whether any physical body can be brought to life again.

The doubters were asking - what exactly would be the make-up of a resurrection body? In verse 36, Paul wrote surprisingly, “You foolish person!”

Why did Paul respond so strongly? Because the doubters should have observed from the created world all around them about God’s power.

First example: from the realm of plants. We plant a seed, and what happens? There is a re-start of life anew from something old, with the same DNA, yet in a different form. We can say that the seed dies, and yet at the moment that the seed dies, the seed also gives new birth to a new life.

The error of the Greeks was to believe that the body is bad, and so dying must be a good thing because death finally frees us from the prison of our bad body. Consequently, the Greeks reacted to a resurrection as a person re-taking possession again of his own bad body, which had also become a rotting corpse! From the perspective of the Greeks, Paul was teaching something repulsive – even something that had the stench of death, literally and figuratively!

Paul adopted the same wise teaching point as Jesus that the observation of seeds, should have opened up the Greeks to the idea that also human beings who are buried may overcome their own burial by God’s supernatural power.

In verse 37, Paul continued this thought process when he next wrote, “*and what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.*” So, if you want to plant an Oak tree, do you plant a teeny, tiny oak tree? No. what you plant is not the full body that is to be. Instead, you plant the SEED of an oak tree, which we happen to call an acorn or acorn seed.

How does each corn kernel or acorn seed know how to become the correct

plant – one seed becomes a corn plant, and the other seed becomes an oak tree? Paul answered that in the next verse, when Paul wrote about the buried seed, now growing into a young plant, that, it is God who “...*gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.*” (v.38) Who tells each seed which plant to become, and who oversees the growth of each seed? God.

In verse 39, Paul left agriculture and switched to another example. “*not all flesh is the same...*” Here Paul listed various living creatures by which God demonstrates His ability to create different types of bodies – the flesh of human beings, land animals, birds and fish. God could create a resurrection body for us!

In verse 40, Paul switched to astronomy, showing that the sky has heavenly bodies, and the land has earthly bodies. Both types of bodies have glory from God, but the bodies are different from each other. God could create a resurrection body!

In verse 41, Paul referred to the sun, the moon, the stars, and that the various stars even differ from each other. Through all of this, what was Paul communicating? God is able to take a dead body and give it resurrection life, with a different sort of body! God had no difficulty coming up with shapes, sizes, and substances for each item in His universe, that God would have no difficulty causing resurrection, and giving us a resurrection body.

2. Understand the radical differences between the risen body and its earthly counterpart. (v.42-44a)

Verse 42, we read, “*So is it with the resurrection of the dead.*” What specifically is it about the resurrection of the dead that is similar to what Paul wrote about plants, creatures, and astronomical bodies? Our bodies now are radically different from how our new bodies will be after we are resurrected.

How or in what ways will our bodies be radically different? First, in verse 42, our mortal bodies are perishable. Like seeds, when we sow them, so also our bodies, when we bury them. Each seed and each corpse perishes and breaks down. A seed is no longer a seed. A body is no longer a body, but decomposing flesh.

But that is radically different from how it will be with our resurrected bodies. After we rise again, we get our same bodies back, but these same bodies of ours will be changed thoroughly and comprehensively. One of the ways that our bodies will be changed is that they will become, for the first time, imperishable. Listen to verse 42, “...*what is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.*” In other words, corpses that are buried are perishable; but what is raised is imperishable. So, after we are raised, we will have no more death, no more illness, no more aging or capacity to be injured or damaged or deteriorated at all!

There is a second way in which our raised bodies will be radically different from our earthly bodies, in verse 43. Our bodies already have dishonor now, and there will be even more dishonor whenever we die and are buried. But later, our bodies will be “*raised in glory.*” Even our dishonorable dead-and-buried bodies,

after our resurrection, will each become different – become a body *raised in glory* – which means that we will all have glorious and splendid bodies! How’s that for radically different from decomposing?

There is a third way in which our resurrected bodies will be radically different from our earthly bodies. The third is also found in verse 43, when our mortal bodies suffer weakness. We are right now weak and fragile – we are each subject to illness and even death from many sources. Disease, aging, car accidents, violence, and so on. In the resurrection, believers will join Christ in an existence that is radically different - no longer weak, no longer subject to illness and death from any source! Our strong bodies will join with Christ in an unassailable reign.

There is a fourth way in which our future risen bodies will be fundamentally different from our bodies now, in verse 44. Our mortal bodies are natural and will die but our bodies will be “*raised a spiritual body.*” (v.44). This is not a contrast between physical and nonphysical. This is a contrast between our current bodies and our resurrected bodies. We know that Jesus had a body like ours, but then after He rose again, He appeared to other people in His risen body. His resurrected body continued to be physical and material in some ways. For example, He broke bread, He cooked and distributed food, and our risen Lord Jesus ate fish. Jesus allowed Thomas to touch the hands and side of the resurrected Jesus, which is further proof that His body continued to be physical. However, the physical body of Jesus after the resurrection also had radically new and special characteristics. For example, Jesus could appear suddenly inside of a room that had locked doors.

So, here in verse 44, when Paul wrote the phrase spiritual body, what does the term “Spiritual” mean? It is a direct reference to the Spirit of God. We read in Romans 8:11, “*If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*” We will have Spiritual bodies, which means that we will be Spiritual, because our bodies will be renewed by the Holy Spirit.

The Spiritual body will be a body that has its life from the Spirit, and lives off of the Spirit and by the Spirit. Our resurrected bodies will not be dependent on food, in the same way we are now, but rather dependent on the Spirit. There will be some eating, such as Jesus after His resurrection ate a meal of fish, and there will be eating in heaven, such as when we enjoy the meal of the great feast of the Lamb, but in heaven our spiritual bodies will be fueled primarily by the Spirit.

3. Consider how Christ will bridge the earthly and the heavenly. (v.44b-49)

In Verse 44b, we read, “*If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*”

Paul supported this statement with a series of Adam-to-Christ comparisons that help us to understand how our earthly body is like Adam’s and our heavenly

body will be like Christ's.

In verse 45, "*Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.'*" What was true about the first man was that he became a living being, then what was it that was even greater that must be true about Christ, and Christ's body? What could be more than resurrected? Verse 45, Christ became "*a life-giving spirit.*" Christ is able to give resurrection life to those who had been dead!

In verse 46, since God could take a dust body for Adam, and give life, God could take a decomposing body, and give resurrection.

In verse 47, the origin of Adam is different from the origin of Christ. Verse 47 reads, "*The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.*" Adam reflected God's glory because Adam was made in God's image and Adam was a great man. But there remains something greater about Christ. Christ exceeded the glory that Adam had, because Christ was from heaven.

In verse 48, "*As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.*" We inherit Adam's natural physical nature. He is actually and literally our great-great... grandfather. Or simply, our first parent, from whom we all have been born. Since that is true about us in our earthly body, what will be true about us for our resurrected body? Those who are of heaven, or those who are born from above in our regeneration, become like the man of heaven. We become like Christ.

In verse 49, "*Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*" Human beings have a certain look about us. We are not half-horse, like a centaur from the world of make-believe, and we are not half-fish like a mermaid also from the world of make-believe. Rather, we are fully humans in the real world. Since it works this way on earth for our earthly body, it shows us something about how God will set up our resurrection body. The last words of our passage today are when Paul wrote that we will "*bear the image of the man of heaven.*" That is, we will bear the image of Christ. We will become conformed to the likeness of God's Son. We will become like Jesus.

God our Redeemer and Resurrection Giver, is able to give us a sort of resurrection body that is completely outside of our present experience and knowledge.

In order to save us, Christ the only imperishable one, became perishable on our behalf. The man of heaven took on a body of dust in order that we who are made of dust might take on a heavenly body. Jesus became like a grain of wheat – buried in the ground – but both Jesus and the wheat are counterintuitively transformed, in order to bear much fruit. The imperishable became perishable so that the perishable might become imperishable! Jesus, the glorious One, experienced dishonor so that the dishonorable might experience glory. His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. But that is not stated strongly enough. In

His resurrection, also our resurrection has already taken place!

Conclusion: Rejoice in the power of God, The Resurrection Giver.

This is an issue about whether or not our God has real power.

Jesus got into a debate with a religious group called the Sadducees. The Sadducees were well-known for scoffing at the idea of the body being raised. They came up with a resurrection riddle, a puzzle to try to show that Jesus did not have as much wisdom as the crowds thought. They wanted to trap and embarrass Jesus.

The riddle has to do with seven brothers who were grown men. The first brother married a woman, and then the man died. The Biblical law was that the brother would marry the woman to take care of her. The second brother died. Then the third married her and died. So it went, until all 7 brothers had been married to the same woman. This was their trick question to Jesus, recorded in Mark 12:23, *“In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.”*

The Sadducees thought that their question would stump Jesus.

But right away in the very next verse, *“Jesus said to them, ‘Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?’”*

The Sadducees had never thought that the God who created the moon and stars, and every plant and creature that exists, in the space of six days, is able to create a whole new order in which their trick questions, their difficulties, their supposed complexities of this life hold no sway.

As Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 32:17, *“Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.”*

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