

2. THE BODY YOU WILL HAVE IN THE RESURRECTION

We are looking at the topic of 'Life after Death' from the Bible's perspective. So far in this series we have seen that people's spirits live on after death, and go to either heaven or hell. The popular belief is that everybody goes to heaven. This is not true; I wish it was, but it isn't.

The reason Jesus came to the earth was to make it possible for us to go to heaven but if we reject him then there is the alternative. However, I love what Reinhard Bonnke, one of today's leading evangelists, says. *"I believe there will be more people in heaven than there will be in hell. If there will be more in hell then the devil has won, and that can't be right."* While Jesus talked about the broad way to destruction and many who travel on it, and the narrow way to life and few who travel on it, Bonnke feels that's just a statement of fact, not a statement of inevitability. Today we are seeing the Gospel spread around the earth at an unprecedented rate.

There is a mighty movement of God in the earth because Jesus is getting ready to come back again and does not want anybody to lose their soul. That is why Jesus taught much about heaven and hell.

John 5:28 says, *"The time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to eternal life and those who have continued in evil will rise to judgment."*

Jesus stated there would be a resurrection of all people. There will be two resurrections: we either rise to life or to everlasting shame. The Bible does not describe unbelievers' resurrection bodies, but they will be suited to hell. However, it does detail the believer's resurrection body. So what it is it like?

1 Corinthians 15:35 -36 says, *“Someone may ask how will the dead be raised, what kind of bodies will they have? What a foolish question!”*

It was a foolish question because these people, the Corinthians, could not conceive of a body being raised from the dead. They were Greeks. Ancient Greek culture believed that the spirit passed into the afterlife and that was it. They thought the body was a wretched thing anyway, so who would want to take that into the afterlife? They could not conceive of the body being raised from the grave. They were asking sceptically about the kind of bodies they would have if they were to be raised. So the apostle Paul explained that in the afterlife we will not be spirits without bodies, but we will be spirits that will have new bodies. For those who do not believe in God, they will be bodies suited to hell, and for those who believe in the Lord, bodies suited to live forever with him.

2 Corinthians 5:2-3 says *“We grow weary in our present bodies and we long for the day when we will put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will not be spirits without bodies but we will put on new heavenly bodies.”*

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

See 1 Corinthians 15: 36b – 42a (NLT)

The bible uses three illustrations of the resurrection body:

1. Botanical v.37, 38

“When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow unless it dies first. And what you put into the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a dry little seed of wheat or whatever it is you are planting. Then God gives it a new body – just the kind he wants it to have. A different kind of plant grows from each kind of seed.”



Your resurrection body will be related to the body that goes into the grave –it is like a seed. It will be still you. The corn plant, for example, is different to the seed planted, but the DNA and the genetic information is the same. The seed ‘dies’ and becomes a plant that bears fruit. In the same way, the resurrection body is not a totally new creation but the same body raised, recreated, and greatly changed. In other words, there is an interconnection between your present body and your resurrection body.

I will not look like you and you will not look like me in the resurrection for which you will be very thankful. Our bodies will be very different but we will be recognizable. You may ask how God can raise a body from the dead when it has been cremated and the ashes scattered on the ocean for example. What is there left to raise? Well God knows the position of every atom in the universe. He would not be God otherwise. I don’t think it’s a problem for him to bring all those atoms and molecules back together again. He knows our DNA code; it is no problem for him to raise the body that is now dust back to life. God is a mighty God.

2. Zoological v. 39

“And just as there are different kinds of seeds and plants, so also there are different kinds of flesh – whether of humans, animals, birds, or fish.”



There are different kinds of bodies for different kinds of living:

- a) Fish body - for swimming.
- b) Bird body - for flying.
- c) Animal body - for living on land.
- d) Human body - for living on land and ruling.

As there are different bodies suited to different realms, so the resurrection body is going to be suited to a new dimension. At the end of time, God will create a new heaven and earth and the people who live in that realm will not die, get sick, or have any pain or sorrow. They will have bodies suited to that new realm.

3. Celestial v. 40, 41

“There are bodies in the heavens, and there are bodies on earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the beauty of the earthly bodies. The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their beauty and brightness.”

Creation is incredible. Earthly bodies like trees, lakes, and mountains are glorious, but heavenly bodies like stars, planets, comets, and galaxies are more glorious:



As glorious as mountains, rivers, seas, the lakes, and trees are, the glory of stellar systems is greater. In the same way, our present body is wonderfully made, but the body we will have in the resurrection will be far more glorious. Also, heavenly bodies are all different in glory. There will be different orders of glory in the resurrection.

Daniel 12: 2, 3 (NIV) *“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life (believers), others to shame and everlasting contempt (non-believers). Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever.”*

Those who rise will shine like stars and we know that stars shine with differing degrees of glory. There are small stars, there are big stars. There are bright stars; there are faint stars. There are differing degrees of glory in the universe. It will be like this when we rise from the dead. There are different levels of rewards and we will talk more about that in the next message. For example, the twelve apostles will sit on twelve thrones around the throne of God. They will have a high level of reward in eternity.

Jesus also said *“the first will be last and the last will be first.”*

Some who have no visibility on earth, who serve God faithfully but are unknown, except to heaven, will be highly visible in eternity. In reality, there will be no jealousy in eternity. We will not mind who gets what rewards and the great thing is that while there may be different levels of glory, ALL believers' resurrection bodies will have certain things in common.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ALL RESURRECTION BODIES

See 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44 (NLT)

1. Imperishable v. 42

“Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die.”

Our resurrection bodies will be imperishable. Our present bodies are subject to sickness, aging, and death. The resurrection body will live forever free of all those things. There will be no crippled, deformed, sick, underweight or overweight bodies in the resurrection. If you die with one leg, you will be raised with two. If you die blind, you will be raised seeing. God has a plan to restore everything to the way it was when he created the earth. In fact, it will be better.

People ask what age we will be when we are raised from the dead? Well, age is not a factor in eternity because there is no time. Eternity is for ever but I think we will be like Adam and Eve when they were created. They were fully mature adults in the prime of their lives. However, there will be no sense of age or aging just that we will be fully mature. Our sexuality will be preserved - there will be male and female, but there will be no marriage. There is one marriage in eternity and that is the Bride of Christ to Jesus.

See Matthew 22: 30 *“For when the dead rise, they won't be married. They will be like the angels in heaven.”* Jesus said we will not be angels, but like angels. Angels do not marry. Relationships in the

resurrection will be on a level unknown in this present age. Family will still be special, but on a different level than today.

2. Glorious v.43a

“Our bodies now disappoint us, but when they are raised, they will be full of glory.”

Due to the fallen nature and the curse of death and decay inherited from Adam and Eve, our current bodies disappoint us. There is fading strength and memory. Youth is fleeting. No matter how great men or women become, the limitations of their weakening bodies finally bring them low. We groan now. Our bodies disappoint us but when they are raised they will be full of glory.

I wish it wasn't like this because God never designed us to die. He created us to live forever, but because we sinned, death came into the world. In every human being there is this sense of resistance: we shouldn't be aging, growing old, or having to face death. That is programmed into us from the creation of the first man and woman; because God made us to live forever. But wherever there is rebellion against God's rule we cut ourselves off from the source of Life. We are simply waiting for the day when God will give us eternal life again. Eternal life is knowing God. The moment you received Christ you are on a journey to live forever, and though at some point your body will die, there will come a day when God will raise it up again and you will live with him forever. We groan now, but we don't moan because of what is coming.

2 Corinthians 5:2, 4 *“We grow weary in our present bodies and we long for the day when we will put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh...we want to slip into our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life.”*

The resurrection body will be glorious and not subject to death, decay, aging or any weakness.

3. Powerful v. 43b

“They are weak now, but when they are raised, they will be full of power.”

The resurrection body will be able to do things this body cannot do. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection. He is first and every other body that is raised from the dead will have characteristics similar to his. When he was raised from the dead, he could do amazing things. He could walk through walls. The disciples were shut in a locked room and then Jesus came and stood in their midst. He just walked right through the wall, he just appeared right there. And then at other times he just disappeared from their sight.

I like to think that our resurrection bodies will be able to travel at the speed of thought. Where ever you want to be you will be there. This new body will be amazing, powerful, won't grow old, and won't get tired.

4. Spiritual v. 44

“They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies.”

Currently our regenerated spirits are trapped in bodies that wage war against the desires of the spirit. The Christian journey is one of allowing our spirits to rule our bodies so that we walk in holiness and purity. Your resurrection body will not have that battle. The resurrection body is not a spirit but a spiritual body – the body and soul will be totally ruled over by the spirit and subject to God. It will be perfect and incapable of sin.

In the resurrection you and I will have no capacity to sin. We will have bodies like Jesus. Was he sinless? Yes. And because he died for us and paid the price for us, he will also give us sinless bodies like his. That is why when we get to heaven, and later in the new heaven and the new earth, there will never be another fall. There never will be an event like losing the Garden of Eden again. That is good news; that gives us hope.

The resurrection body will also allow us to see totally into the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm. The resurrection body will be suited to life in the new heaven and earth God will create. Our earthly bodies are like Adam and Eve's. Our resurrection body will be like Christ's after he rose from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15: 48-49 *“Every human being has an earthly body just like Adam's, but our heavenly bodies will be just like Christ. Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven.”*

Philippians 3: 21 *“He will take these weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own...”*

1 Corinthians 15: 51-53 *“But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we all will be transformed. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die. For our perishable bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die.”*

Even living believers at Christ's return will receive the same glorious resurrection body.

Verses 54, 55 *“When this happens – when our perishable earthly bodies have been transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die- then at last the Scriptures will come true: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is your victory? O death where is your sting?’”*

Death has no sting because of this great hope of the resurrection.

OUR GREAT HOPE

Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me, though he dies yet will he live forever.”*

John the Apostle said *“All who believed in him and who received him, he gave them power to become children of God.”*

You need power to become a child of God. I did not become a child of God by my own efforts. God got hold of my life and told me about Jesus through some people I met. When I finally decided to give my life to Christ, he changed me! I did not do it myself; he gave me power to become a child of God. You will never become a child of God by being religious.

Who wants religion? It is boring, it is dead, it is ritualized, it's men and women trying to keep laws to get right with God and the whole reason Jesus came was to declare, *“I have come that they may have a life and have it abundantly”*. He explained, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

1 John 3:2-3 *“Dear Friends now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like Him.”*

These are some of the greatest words in the bible. *When he appears we shall be like him.*

All who have this hope fixed on him purify themselves. It's worth giving your life for Christ and it is worth going the whole distance because we have a glorious hope. This earth will not be the way it is forever. And as wonderful as life is now, and as good as all the blessings of God are now, something more glorious is ahead. This is not escapism; we should live responsibly and we should live so as to produce fruit and bless God. There is a day coming when Jesus will return and we need to make sure that we will stand before him with incredible joy not shame. I love what Jude says:

Jude 24 *“Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

He is able. One day these weak bodies, these perishable bodies, these bodies that grow old and tired and sick - we will put them off and like a new suit of clothes, our spirit will be clothed with a new resurrection body. Therefore, we will live with Jesus forever. That is Good News!