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Our Resurrection Bodies
15: 35-49

Our resurrection bodies DIG: Who are the two Adams mentioned here? How are they alike? How are they different? What do they have to do with the resurrection? How does Paul make it clear that he is talking about our having bodies, not about being dismembered souls?

REFLECT: What do you learn from these verses about what a resurrected body might be like? How does the hope of resurrection affect your view of death? How does your hope of resurrection affect how you use your current body? And to tell others about Messiah?

If you want a glimpse of what our new, resurrected bodies will be like, take a look at Yeshua. He was raised with the same kind of body that we will be given when we are raised to life.

Having proved the necessity of **the resurrection**, **Paul** can go on to discuss **his** readers' concern about the practical details. **But someone will ask, "In what manner are the dead raised? What sort of body do they have" (15:35)?** Those in **Corinth** who denied **the resurrection** did so primarily because of the influence of Gnostic philosophy, which considered **the body** to be inherently evil and only the spirit to be good. They asked, "How can people possibly rise from the dead when their **bodies** have completely rotted away?" These verses, therefore, are absolutely crucial to the argument of this entire chapter (**to see link click Dq – The Resurrection of the Dead**), since it responds to the real issue that led to **their** denial of **the resurrection**.

Paul was convinced that **the resurrection** was not some **resurrection** of a corpse, but, like **Messiah**, **the firstfruits** (see **Dt – Messiah: The Firstfruits of Those Who Have Fallen Asleep**), would be transformed into **a heavenly body**. As **he** would later write to **the Philippians, "Messiah will change the bodies we have in this humble state and make them like His glorious body, using the power which enables Him to bring everything under His control"**

(Philippians 3:21). Because **the Corinthians** could not fathom *how* **this** was possible, **they** had given up any hope that *it was* possible. **They** believed that **resurrected bodies** would be unfit for **heavenly** existence. So **the skeptics** concluded that there is no **resurrection**.

But why would anyone who acknowledges **God** as **Creator** think **His** restoring **bodies**, in whatever way, would be any more difficult for **Him** than making **them** in the first place? As **Paul** asked when he was before King Agrippa: **Why do you people consider it incredible that God raises the dead (Acts 26:8)?** Why do people still today, including some believers, become confused and bothered about how **God** could restore **bodies** of those who have been lost at sea, blown up in an explosion, or cremated? Why is **His** restoring **bodies** more miraculous and unbelievably than **His** creating the universe? And besides, every **dead body**, no matter how well embalmed, eventually disintegrates.[496] **Paul** answers the questions: **In what manner are the dead raised? What sort of body do they have? in four ways:**

1. An illustration of resurrection (15:36-38): Paul first counters the **Corinthian** objection by pointing to the miracle of the harvest. **Yeshua** used the same **seed-sowing** illustration: **I tell you that unless a grain of wheat that falls to the ground dies, it stays just a grain; but if it dies, it produces a big harvest (John 12:24).** But because **the resurrection** seemed impossible from a Gnostic point of view, **Paul** responded accordingly: **You fool (15:36a)!** The **fool** is the opposite of the wise (see **Ax – A Faulty View of God's Gifts**). Everyone knows that a **seed's life** springs from **its death**. The harsh description of a **fool** has deeper biblical roots, however. **Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). The fool** does not suffer from an intellectual deficiency, but fails to take **God** into account.[497]

The main teaching of the illustration from nature is that **death** and **resurrection** are transitions to a higher life. Nothing in the background of either the Greek or Jewish members of the **Corinthian** church would have prepared them for the idea that the life beyond the grave would be superior to this life. The Greek culture looked upon the best position in the land of **the dead** as inferior to the lowest position in the world. Even the TaNaKh painted a very unattractive picture of the land beyond **death**. At best, it was some kind of shadowy existence. The lament of the psalmist that **in death there is no remembrance of You (Ps 6:5),** and **the dead do not praise ADONAI, nor any who go down into silence (Ps 115:17)** stands in stark contrast to the statement that **Paul** would later give to **the**

Philippians, "For me, life is the Messiah, and death is gain" (Phil 1:21).



Thus, the questions posed here in **15:35** were not those of someone who wanted to know, but were mocking taunts of someone who thought they already knew. As with most of the questions put to **Yeshua** by the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, the purpose was to entrap and embarrass, not discover truth. To point out the **foolishness** of **their** objection, **Paul** gives a common illustration from nature. **When you sow a seed, it doesn't come alive unless it first dies (15:36b).** Before **Messiah** could bear the fruit of salvation for us, **He** had to **die**. Likewise, before we can participate in the fruit of **His resurrection**, we too must **die**. Just as with crops, there had to be an end to the old before there could be a beginning of the new.

Also, in both the growing of crops and in **the resurrection** of **bodies** there is a difference between the original and final forms. **What you sow is not the body that will be, but a bare seed of, say, wheat or something else (15:37).** When **Yeshua** was **raised** from **the dead His glorified bod**y was radically different from the one which **He died**, so much so that **Mary** didn't even recognize **Him** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Me – Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**). **Resurrection** had changed **Messiah's body** in marvelous and radical ways, and at **His** Second Coming *all* **resurrection bodies** will be changed marvelously and radically.

But in spite of the differences, there is nevertheless a continuity between the old and the new. **God gives it the body He intended for it; and to each kind of seed He gives its own body (15:38).** The seed changed radically, but it was still a seed. A wheat seed does not become barley, and a flax seed does not become corn. After **Yeshua** was **raised**, no one recognized **Him** unless **He** revealed **Himself** to them. But once revealed, **He** was recognizable. The disciples knew **His**

face, and they recognized **His** wounds. In a similar way, our **resurrected bodies** as believers will have a continuity with **the bodies** we have now. Our **bodies** will **die** and change form, but **they** will still be our **bodies**. Surely it is not too hard to believe that the **God** who has worked this process daily through the centuries in **His** creation of plants, can do the same for us.[498]

2. The form of resurrected bodies (15:39-42a): From grain and plants, **Paul** turns to **flesh**. **All flesh is not the same** kind of **flesh**. The variety in creation reflects the will of **the Maker**. And **God** provides each of **the animals**, **fish**, and **birds** with **bodies** that are perfectly suited to **their** environments. So, **there is one kind of flesh for human beings, another kind of flesh for animals, another for birds and another for fish (15:39). Paul** wanted to correct **the Corinthians** of the mistaken impression that **all flesh** is **the same** so that **they** can begin to appreciate that **the resurrection body** is not identical with the **earthly body**.[499]

Further, there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; but the beauty of heavenly bodies is one thing, while the beauty of earthly bodies is something else. Listed in descending order of their radiance, **the** blazing **sun has one kind of beauty, the** soft glow of **the moon another,** and **the** twinkling of **the stars yet another**. **Indeed, each star has its own individual kind of beauty (15:40-41).** Although **their** structure is the same, **their** appearance is vastly different. Although the substance of our **earthly bodies** is the same whether **they** are lying in the grave or **beautiful** in **resurrection**, **their** appearance in these two is vastly different.[500] The point is that each has its own **beauty**, so that in **his** argument, **Paul** contends that even though **the** earthly **body** must **die**, **the resurrection body** is not without its own **beauty**. Since **the Corinthians** recognized that **heavenly bodies** were different from **earthly bodies**, **they** should not expect **the resurrected body** to be a recycled **earthly body**. **The body** that is **raised** will be transformed into something entirely different from what is known on **the earth** and something entirely appropriate for a **heavenly** existence.[501]

So it is with the resurrection of the dead (15:42a). Resurrection bodies will differ from **earthly bodies** just as radically as **heavenly bodies** differ from **earthly**. And **resurrection bodies** will be as individual and unique as are all the other forms of **God's** creation. Every **star** is different, just as every **plant** is different, every **animal** is different and every **human** is different. Why would

anyone think it too hard for **Him** to re-create and **resurrect earthly bodies**, no matter what the form might be?[502]

3. The contrasts of the resurrection (15:42a-44): **Paul** points to a number of differences between **the body** now and **the body raised**, and begins with **decay**. The chief objection the typical Greek had to any doctrine of **resurrection** was that by its very nature **the body decays**. He looked for an existence when the soul would no longer be handicapped by his **decaying body**. **Paul** connects this very state with **the resurrected body**.[503] **He** acknowledges that **the earthly body decays**, **dies**, and is put into the grave. A day is coming, however, when like a grain of **wheat**, our **bodies** will **die (Ecclesiastes 3:20; Psalm 103:14-16)**. **When the body is "sown,"** that is, born, **it decays; when it is raised, it cannot decay (15:42b).** But **he** insists that **the body** that will be taken from the grave at **the resurrection** will be a transformed **body**. **When sown, it is without dignity; when raised, it will be beautiful. Paul's** point is that **the resurrected body** is not a spruced-up version of **the physical body**. The two **bodies** are completely different.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** mighty power that raises to new life those who **love** and worship **You** as **Lord and Savior**. Praise **Your** wisdom and powerful design that changes a creeping caterpillar into a beautiful flying butterfly. As heaven is totally new and different from the earth **You** created, so also will be the fantastic new and amazing body that **You** create for those who **love You**. Just as an old house is torn down and a new one is built in its place, so **Your** mighty power will give those who **love You** new **bodies**.*

*It's not possible to be without pain or crying in our earthly body now. What a joy to think of our new body that will not feel pain nor cry **(Revelation 21:4)**. Just as a baby in the womb of its mother cannot even begin to comprehend how life will be outside of the womb; so neither can we as we live on earth, comprehend how awesome our **resurrected bodies** will be. I praise **You** for **Your love** and attention to every detail to give us new **bodies** and a new life with no crying, dying, sadness nor pain. How absolutely wonderful! Thank **You**! Thank **You**! Thank **You**!*

*I will live my life here on earth to show my thanks. There are many problems now, but I keep my eyes focused on living with **You** for all eternity. **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** I follow **You** and trust in **Your steadfast love. Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your***

faithfulness to the clouds (Psalms 36:5). *I bow in worship and thanks for how great and loving* ***You*** *are! In* ***Your Son's*** *holy name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

Paul continues to pick out those features of **bodily** life that seemed to the Greek to demonstrate the foolishness of the idea of **the resurrection**, and to show that they have no relevance to **the resurrection**. **When sown, it is weak.** Our present **bodies** are characterized by **weakness**. We are not only weak in our physical strength and endurance but also resistant to disease and harm. But not so our new **bodies, when raised, it will be strong, raised** to life by the same power that **raised Yeshua** from the grave **(15:43).** We are not told what our strength will entail, but it will be immeasurable compared to what we now possess. We will no longer have to say that **the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41).** Anything our heavenly **spirits** determine to do our heavenly **bodies** will be able to accomplish.[504]

When sown, it is an ordinary human body; when raised, it will be a spiritual, not in the sense of being composed of **spirit,** but **a body controlled by the Spirit,** perfectly suited for the **spiritual** realm in which we will be living forever and ever **(15:44).** In **Second Corinthians 5:1, Paul** contrasts this **earthly body** to **a tent that** is to be **torn down** and replaced by an eternal **house** waiting **in the heavens** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bb – Going Home**). **The spiritual body** is **a body that eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered the human mind (2:9),** that is **transformed into the likeness of Messiah (Second Corinthians 3:18).**[505] In our present **earthly** existence **the body** simply "is" – neither to be admired (or lavishly decked out), nor put down (as we are the temple of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**). Since **it** serves as the present vehicle of our life on this planet, one should properly care for **it** as the gift that **it** is; but "care" should not also lead to worship, just as it should not lead to hatred.[506]

4. The prototype of the resurrection (15:45-49): The contrast between our **earthly** and **resurrected bodies** is perhaps most clearly seen by placing **Adam** and **Yeshua** side by side. **In fact, the TaNaKh says so: Adam, the first man, became a living human being** and a prototype of our **earthly bodies.** We received this **body** from our first parent, **Adam**. **He** was **made of dust**, and so are we **(Genesis 2:7)**. **But the last "Adam" has become a life-giving Spirit** and a prototype of our **heavenly bodies (15:45).** But **the resurrection body** is suited

to a spiritual environment. In **His resurrection body, Yeshua** was able to move quickly from place to place, and even walk through locked doors; yet **He** was also able to eat food, and **His apostles** were able to **touch** and **feel Him (Luke 24:33; John 20:19-29)**. Through **Adam** we have inherited our **earthly bodies**; through **Messiah** we will inherit **spiritual bodies** in **the resurrection**.

Paul points out the obvious: **Note, however, that the body from the Spirit did not come first, but the ordinary human one; the one from the Spirit comes afterwards. The first man (Adam) is from the earth, made of dust; the second man (Messiah) is from heaven. People born of dust are like the man of dust, and people born from heaven are like the man from heaven; and just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so also we will bear the image of the man from heaven (15:46-49).** Just as we will exchange **Adam's ordinary human body** for **Messiah's spiritual body**, we will exchange **Adam's image** for **Messiah's image**.

Our **new body** comes at death. Whatever happens to our present **bodies** – whether they are healthy or unhealthy, beautiful or plain, short-lived or long-lived, or whether they are indulged or tortured – they are not our permanent **bodies**, and we should not hold them too dearly. Our blessed hope is that these created **ordinary human bodies** will one day be recreated into **spiritual bodies**. Although we only have a glimpse of what those new **bodies** will be like, it should be enough to know that **we shall be like Him (First John 3:2c).**[507]