

# The Resurrection - Part II

## 1 Corinthians 15:35–58 (ESV)

**MENTION** [Municipal Election on December 13. They all matter, but this one really matters, there is an ungodly agenda leveled against this city, and this is no secret. For an article covering the local election visit [citizensjournal.net](http://citizensjournal.net)]

**INTRODUCTION:** When I pastored my first church in Kentucky, the only place to go for a walk was on the paved track that circled the city cemetery. So each evening dozens of people could be found walking or jogging through the grave yard. From time to time, I would read something interesting on a tombstone and mention it in a sermon. Members of our church started bringing me epitaphs they found in various place. Here are a few...

### **Silver City, Nevada**

*Here lies a man named Zeke.  
Second fastest draw in Cripple Creek.*

### **In memory of Anna Hopewell**

*Here lies the body of our Anna  
Done to death by a banana  
It wasn't the fruit that laid her low  
But the skin of the thing that made her go.*

### **On an Auctioneer:**

*Jedediah Goodwin  
Auctioneer  
Born 1828  
Going!  
Going!!  
Gone!!!*

### **I think this is my favorite**

**Effie Jean Robinson 1897-1922**  
*Come blooming youths, as you pass by ,  
And on these lines do cast an eye.  
As you are now, so once was I;  
As I am now, so must you be;  
Prepare for death and follow me.*

### **Which is not funny at all. But underneath, someone had added:**

*To follow you  
I am not content,  
Until I know  
Which way you went.*

**Well we talked last week about this date with death that we all have. Today Paul is going to teach us about what comes after death...**

**INTRODUCTION:** Consider for a moment the great, and some would say, extreme lengths that some will take in order to slow down the aging process.

- The global anti-aging market size was valued at \$60.42 billion in 2021. That includes
- In the US alone an additional \$47.7 Billion is spent in the Beauty industry this year.

We live amid a nation of Ponce De Leon's in an obsessive quest for the elusive fountain of youth.

We invest in creams, syrums, makeup, surgical procedures... when that doesn't work we download apps that can smooth our skin prior to posting to social media. We join gyms and fight the aging process tooth and nail.. and the older we get the harder we have to fight.

Nevertheless, lines form, hair turns grey then falls out, teeth fall out, in spite of our efforts to the contrary.

Then we die... and what happens when we die? The body that we have invested so heavily in during life, is suddenly tossed aside and we look for the cheapest burial option we can find.

***That hasn't always been the case.***

As Anthropologists survey human history they learn a great deal about the beliefs of a people by studying their burial customs.

- The **Egyptians** buried their dead in an elaborate, expensive sarcophagi which was entombed with treasures of silver and gold and everything a person might in the afterlife.
- The **Greeks** and **Romans** had a similar process of preparing the body for the afterlife. Complete with money to pay the barge toll to the other side.
- **Hindu** and **Buddhist** cultures on the other hand placed no value on the body, so they practiced cremation. They believed that the body served very little use in life, and none in death.
- **Jewish** customs were interesting - As soon as death was certain, the deceased's eyes were closed; the corpse was washed with perfumes, spices and ointments, and then wrapped and bound. A procession was made to the place of internment, which was typically a cave. Rituals of death continued for several days thereafter. For the first seven days, the immediate family remained at home in mourning. If mourners left the house during this time, it was presumed that they would go to the tomb. After a full year had elapsed, the remains were exhumed for a second burial in an ossuary. The remains would be marked with an inscription etched in stone that spoke of the life of the person and the hope of a future resurrection.

**MY POINT:** I point all of that out simply to illustrate that a person's beliefs about the **afterlife** has bearings on their **burial customs**... and the burial customs of Americans have changed significantly in recent days... that pragmatic shift may be indicative of a theological shift.

**There was a day when burial customs, at least in the South included:**

- Funeral attendance being mandatory for friends and family.
- Large expensive floral arrangements would fill the chapel.
- Local police would escort a procession to be place of burial.
- Pedestrians would stop what they were doing and pay respects as the procession passed. Vehicles would politely pull off the road.
- Large tombstones would be erected to mark the place of burial.
- Each year there would be a decoration where new flowers would be placed on the grave.

Something has shifted. **Today we spend trillions of dollars taking care of the body while we live. Then discard it like the peel of a banana once a person dies.**

What do you expect Anthropologists would conclude about us in the years ahead? I would suggest that this shift MAY BE evidence of an unhealthy obsession with **pragmatism** as well as a **drifting away from a belief in resurrection**.

**CONTEXT:** Here in 1st Corinthians, Paul recognizes that our beliefs about **life after death**, effects not only our burial customs... but it has a strong bearing on **life before death**. Last week we saw how Paul focused on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Today he shifts his focus to our future resurrection.

**TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:35–58 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

This is the sort of question that one has when he is confronted with a reality that doesn't fit into his world view.

**EXAMPLE:** Remember in **John 3** as Jesus taught Nicodemus about the new birth? Immediately, Nicodemus objects by asking, "how can a man be born when he is old, he cannot enter again into his mother's womb can he?" You see, a new spiritual truth requires a shift in worldview. So it is with the question in our text, "How are the dead raised" is similar... how can this be? Are we talking about zombies? Are we talking about a spiritual resurrection? Paul explains by teaching them first about...

*Paul begins his answer by reminding us of...*

## **1. The Prerequisite of the Resurrection Body**

"<sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

Before one can experience a resurrection body, he or she must die.

There is one generation that will be an exception. They will metamorphosize. That generation or believers that is alive when Christ returns will not die, they will be changed immediately into their resurrection bodies. But even then, Paul teaches the dead will rise first. Why? They have 6 feet further to go. haha

Paul compares death to the dying of a SEED. You sow a fresh living kernel of corn into the ground, it will likely decay and rot. But if you allow it to die and dry, then sow it - it will produce something entirely different - a stalk that gives life.

That is something in the natural world we can observe, that Paul says has some similarities to our our experience of death and resurrection.

<sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. <sup>39</sup> For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup> There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. <sup>41</sup> 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.

So in the same way, the body we will one day have is in some ways similar and in some ways very different from the body we currently inhabit. The best way you can understand it is to look at the Resurrected body of Jesus.

Here are a few of the questions we can answer by looking to the resurrection of Jesus:

- a. **We be recognizable.** The disciples recognized Jesus. He didn't look radically different that he did before. I'm always amazed that people will assume we will not know each other in heaven. Why would we be less intelligent there than here?

Remember when Moses and Elijah showed up at the Mt. Of Transfiguration? Peter had never seen them, but as he sat in the glow of the shikyna glory of Jesus he recognized them.

Earlier in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV) <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

- b. **We will eat and drink.** Jesus ate broiled fish and honeycomb.
- c. **We will have supernatural abilities.** We see that the disciples were hiding in a private room and Jesus passed through the walls and appeared in their midst.
- d. **How old will we be?** Or what they are really asking is how old will we look? It seems if you look at Jesus after the resurrection, he looked as he did before, then

as you look at John vision in the Revelation, Jesus has hair white like snow. So it's hard to say, but I imagine there will be some type of maturing that continues. BTW, white hair was not considered a bad thing in the Bible, but a crown of the aged.

A good way to think of the resurrection body is by comparing it to the New Earth. It will have continuity and discontinuity. Some things will be very familiar and it will feel and be home... but somethings will be better than anything we can imagine.

**Benjamin Franklin, who was a Publisher prior to his career in Politics, captured the essence of the resurrection body in his epitaph of which he said,** "here lies the body of B. Franklin, it lies in the grave like the cover of an old book with its contents torn out, stripped of its lettering. But it will not be totally lost, it will appear once again in a new and more eloquent edition, revised and corrected and amended by the author"

One day, you and I will receive a new more eloquent cover and our contents will be revised and corrected and amended by the author of life.

*But for any of that to happen, we must meet the prerequisite - death.*

## **2. The Power of the Resurrection Body**

<sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is **perishable**; what is raised is **imperishable**.

That word **perishable** means, that we break down, corrupt... If you don't believe it look at your high school annual. You are a living proof that the Bible is true.

I am told that every 7 years our body complete regenerates, but none of you look like your 7 year old selves.

Will when you have your resurrected body - no more breaking down, no more bad eyes, no more hair loss, no more loss of hearing. No more CPAP machines. No more walking sticks. You won't have to take 20 pills a day and 4 cups of coffee just to wake up.

<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

<sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

The phrase spiritual body does not mean that it lacks material substance, but rather, it means that this body you currently inhabit is **tuned to earth**, that body will be **tuned for heaven** and new earth.

Think about it, if you were taken into heaven physically in the body you are currently in, it would be like descending into the sun itself. You would not survive.

**JOKE:** BTW, I heard of a group of scientists at Auburn University that heard about people trying to go to the moon, they decided to fly to the sun. Someone said, “you fool you can’t land on the sun it’s too hot”, they said, “that’s why we are going at night”.

Well if you go to heaven apart from resurrection you better to at night because the Bible says, “no mortal man can see God and live”.

<sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. <sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> 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 shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

### 3. The Promise of the Resurrection Body

<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” <sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

That word sting is literally the word that means poison. It typically referred to the poison stings of the scorpion which was deadly. Death can seem that way. It can seem like something final, irreversible.

That’s why we do everything to avoid it. And we should. It is called an enemy in the text. But Paul says, “there will come a day when people will experience death and they will be strongly surprised that it wasn’t as they expected”.

They will ask, “Where is the sting?”

How can that happen?

<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus died on the cross, He absorbed the sting of death on your behalf.

**CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

**BEE STING ILLUSTRATION:**The story is told of a man who was taking his two sons for a ride in a 1957 Chevrolet hardtop. The car didn't have air conditioning so the windows were down. Apparently, a bee flew inside the open window and began swarming around the car. The bee landed on the arm of the older boy sinking his stinger deep into his flesh. Then it began to swarm again. Seeing the pain endured by the older brother, the younger brother became ecstatic. The father told the younger son - there is no need to cry now. The stinger has been planted in your older brother, and a bee only has one stinger... so now it can frighten you, but it can no longer harm you.

What is the practical result of believing what Paul says here in the text?

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Give greater energy to serving Christ. Maybe some of you are wondering if it's worth it. Is anyone listening?

Listen friend, the day will come when you die. It will appear to the eyes of the world that all of your work and labor have come to an end. But it's just a matter of time, until the same power that invaded the borrowed tomb of Nicodemus will evade your grave. Glory will overtake your corpse and you will arise more alive than ever before.

I've always had trouble decided how to put something into words that cannot be edited. That's why I don't have a tattoo. But one day something will have to be written on my tombstone... I've thought a lot about what to have them write. I think I've decided... ***"To be continued..."***.

For a follower of Jesus Christ death is not the period, but rather the comma.

If you don't know Jesus today... the grave is just the beginning of misery. If you know Christ, resurrection is in your DNA.