

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 – “Steadfast and Secure”

15:35 - ***But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”***

Here was a question Paul was being confronted with. And it wasn't asked out of curiosity, but to challenge. There was some skepticism to the validity of a resurrected body. Are we going to be dealing with a zombie apocalypse?

- The Sadducees showed their skepticism with the resurrection when they quizzed Jesus about it: **Matthew 22:23–33**, *"The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, ²⁴ saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁵ Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all the woman died also. ²⁸ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.” ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. ³¹ But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” ³³ And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.”*

Many today have had questions regarding the resurrection and how it might work:

- What if a person is eaten by a wild lion?
- What about a person that is burned at the stake?
- What if a person was an organ transplant recipient? Do they keep it or have to give it back?

Paul comes at those with doubt over a bodily resurrection to straighten up their confusion. And basically, he calls them foolish. Not the best way to win them over. But he answers their first question (***How are the dead raised up?***) in vs. 36, and answers their second question (***And with what body do they come?***) in vs. 38.

15:36-38 - *Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.*

Paul points to the obvious observation of nature to see that a resurrected body is not something we should be surprised at. Every flower, plant, grain, etc. must die for it to continue to birth life.

My wife likes to garden. And now living where we do and having the ability to have more gardens, I've become a bit of a lobotomy expert. Is that the term? Botany expert, that's it. And I've been amazed to watch these plants grow, and then produce these seeds as they begin to die out. It just continues this awesome cycle of life. That particular plant must die for it to birth life.

Jesus used this same analogy in John 12:24 to speak of His own death and resurrection.

And the seed you plant will look very different than what comes forth.

- Take a tulip bulb for instance. It's not very pretty on its own, but what it produces is quite beautiful.
- We're presently a bunch of bulbs, but God will cause a beautiful transformation to take place into our resurrected bodies.
- Again, just so you're prepared, all those under 5'6" will have 6'8" bodies in heaven. All those over 6' in this lifetime will get to experience a smaller frame just to change things up a bit.

But the point through this passage is that our bodies presently are not designed for what is awaiting us. God must transform us and give us new bodies that will be equipped for eternity. He doesn't need to reassemble our old bodies as some might have been wondering. Our new bodies are going to be very different. These bodies must die and be put away with so that we can receive the body that God will give us.

Paul gives some more examples from nature to show how each part of God's creation was designed for its own environment.

15:39-40 - *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. ⁴⁰*

There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There are many fleshly bodies around, but they're not all the same. In other words, God is able to make them suitable for what they need. God has created great variety.

We see it in the celestial and terrestrial bodies too. They are all very different yet all have the commonality of being created by God and being designed for a particular environment.

15:41 - There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

There are different bodies in our universe and their glory is different from one another. So too, our body to come will be much more glorious than our present body. Why? Read on...

15:42-44 - So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Our new resurrected bodies will no longer be corrupt nor can they be corrupted! It will no longer experience sickness, or disease or decay. These are all things we go through now. But the greatest of all is that we will no longer deal with sin!! We will never be corrupted again!

A day is coming when our body will be raised up completely new. And it will have glory and power because it will be ***raised a spiritual body.***

- I am longing for this!
- This is what Paul spoke of in **2 Corinthians 5:1–4**, "*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*"

15:45 - And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

We've all stemmed from Adam. He was the prototype for our bodies. But Jesus, the last Adam, was the prototype for our resurrected bodies. He isn't just a living being, He is One that gives life!

15:46-48 - *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.*

Just as Adam died, so to we'll die. But as Christ rose again, so to we'll rise again. But again, this hope is directed to ***those who are heavenly***, which means you are in Christ, you've put your trust in Him. You know your home is not here in this world, but it's in heaven with our Lord and Savior.

15:49 - *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

When we rise again, we'll be like Jesus. He ate food, He moved about no longer bound by physical nature, yet He could be touched. We're going to have these new bodies that are going to be out of this world, because they'll be made for a different world. Eternity is going to be so amazing we can't even come close to comprehending what it will be like.

15:50 - *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

Our bodies, the way they are now, aren't made for heaven. They need to be altered. This is Paul's next point...

15:51-52 - *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

The famous verse to have over the nursery at church.

But notice, Paul calls this a ***mystery***. A mystery is something that was once concealed but is now revealed. There's always been a view of the resurrection after we die, but now Paul says, ***we shall not all sleep*** (or die). But rather ***we shall all be changed***. This is referencing the Rapture of the church. This is a concept that is new and is this mystery because some have never understood

before that they may be alive when these new bodies are given to us. This speaks of the rapture.

at the last trump... Trumpets were used in the Old Testament to:

- declare war
 - to announce special times and feast holidays
 - to gather God's people as they prepared to move
 - The Romans blew trumpets to announce the arrival of an important person
- This is not the trumpet of Revelation 11. "It is the last blast for the church because this appearance shall never end (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12). (There is no basis for posttribulationists equating this trumpet with the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11:15–19. The trumpets in Rev. pertain to judgments during the Tribulation, whereas the trumpet in 1 Cor. 15:52 is related to the church.)" ¹

And notice, this is an instantaneous transformation. In the **twinkling of an eye**. There's no other part of the body that can move more quickly.

15:53-54 - For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

These verses seem to allude to the two different groups of people that will be resurrected at the rapture – the corruptible are those that have died and whose bodies are decaying. The mortal are those who are still alive at the rapture but are prone to death.

But both groups will receive a new resurrected body, never to die again. Then we will realize in full the victory in which we stand. We will see on that day that this earthly tent, prone to sin, has been removed, and we've been fitted with a glorious body that is no longer going to fight against the flesh. It will no longer be corrupted, sin, or face death – it will be made for eternity!

- Paul quotes **Isaiah 25:8**, *"He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken."*

15:55 - "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 545–546). Victor Books.

Paul, so overcome with excitement is practically taunting death at this moment: *"Whatcha got for me death?! That's what I thought, you ain't got nothing!"* He loosely quotes from Hosea 13:14 as he sings out in victory because Jesus took the sting of death. It can't hurt us any longer (like a bee who loses its stinger).

15:56-57 - *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The real issue, or sting, is sin. As believers our sin is dealt with and we don't need to fear death. But it's a different story for those who haven't dealt with sin. Sin brings separation from God.

- And the law is an ally to sin. The law shows us we're sinners in need of a Saviour. We're not saved by the law for the law condemns. We're saved by seeing our need for Jesus and repenting of sin and asking for forgiveness. We need Jesus as our Saviour.
- It was through the law that Paul saw he was a sinner.
- The law is to lead us to Christ.
- **Revelation 12:11**, *"And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."*
- Our resurrection proves this.

Again, victory is only through Jesus, and victory is only for those who are in Jesus Christ.

- All will be resurrected, but not all will experience life everlasting with Jesus.

15:58 - *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

So with this great amazing hope and reality we have of being raised up again to live forever with Jesus, what kind of people ought we to be?

Steadfast – being firmly established in the faith; being faithful.

Immovable – being firmly established in the midst of trial and persecution.

Nothing can cause you to be taken off course.

- **Acts 20:24**, *"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."*

Our work and labour in the Lord and for the Lord is never in vain. He will reward and that reward is an eternal one. With this understanding we don't need to be shaken or sullen. Keep going forward in Jesus because everything we may experience in this life will all be worth it in the life still to come!