

## Our Resurrection Body - a Brief Discussion

Forrest C. Gilmore

**1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (NASB)** <sup>35</sup> But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; <sup>37</sup> and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. [1] <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. <sup>39</sup> All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. <sup>40</sup> There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is 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. <sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; <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*. <sup>45</sup> So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. [2] <sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. <sup>50</sup> Now I say this, brethren, that 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 will not all sleep, but we will 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 will be changed. [3, 4, 5] <sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about 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?" [6] <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; <sup>57</sup> but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

=====

### [1] John 12:23-26 (NASB)

<sup>23</sup> And Jesus \*answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. <sup>26</sup> "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

**[2] Genesis 2:7 (NASB)** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (KJV - soul)

**[3] 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**[4] Isaiah 27:12-13 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> In that day the LORD will start *His* threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.

<sup>13</sup> It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

**[5] Matthew 24:29-31 (NASB)**

<sup>29</sup> "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>30</sup> "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

<sup>31</sup> "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

**[6] Hosea 13:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight.

-----  
As we said when we discussed the preceding verses in Rom. 15, there are several OT verses that speak about resurrection, but not all Israelites believed in this. The Sadducees, for example strongly opposed it; the Pharisees believed in a physical resurrection from the dead. Jesus mentioned this at least once:

**John 5:21 (NASB)** *"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*

In my opinion, as we consider the subject of resurrection, there are two, somewhat related, viewpoints or mindsets that need to be considered – (1) salvation by works and (2) an exaggerated literal interpretation of Scripture. Many OT Jews believed, and many who follow after God today still believe, that works and sacrifice bring us eternal life. One OT passage that illustrates belief in works, as contrasted to what God expects of His people is

**Isaiah 1:11-15 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.

<sup>12</sup> "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?

<sup>13</sup> "Bring your worthless offerings no longer; Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

<sup>14</sup> "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

Paul also speaks to this mindset:

**Hebrews 10:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

It was, still is, difficult to separate our physical existence from our spiritual nature. The writers of the OT clearly picture a time when all believers would live in God's presence, but they tended to picture this, or at least describe it, as an earthly situation.

The OT prophets spoke of the Day of The Lord. They described a time when their earthly oppressors would be defeated and God's people would worship in a earthly temple on Mount Zion. This was Eastern symbolic imagery, but many have interpreted it literally, in OT times and still today.

Consider **John 5:25-29 (NASB)** <sup>25</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; <sup>27</sup> and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, <sup>29</sup> and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

In vs. 25-27, Jesus speaks on the present - many of His hearers were spiritually dead and could not see who Jesus was. (cf. **1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB)** <sup>14</sup> But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. )

In vs. 28-29, Jesus speaks of His second coming - the Day of the Lord. (Since Jesus sees eternity, He sees these two events simultaneously, even though in history they are separated by thousands of years.)

Consider **Isaiah 25:6-8 (NASB)** <sup>6</sup> The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine. <sup>7</sup> And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. <sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

Clearly (in my opinion), this is symbolic language, and most modern Christians understand that this passage must refer to Christ's second coming.

The belief in works and physical victory easily led to the view that the physical body never really perished but instead went to dwell in another, dark, shadowy place, somewhat isolated from God. Evildoers were separated further from God than believers, but all were in this place called Sheol. (cf. Luke 16:19-31) This existence came to be called Purgatory by those who saw it as a time when sin was more completely purged, making the dead more fit for Heaven. This belief reflects an emphasis on human works. These people had not done enough to be in God's perfect presence, so it was possible for those living to pray for them and to be baptized on their behalf. Their work would substitute for the lack of works of those who had died.

But even in Genesis we learn that man had a spiritual as well as physical existence. **Genesis 2:7 (NASB)** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (soul) Our physical existence on this earth is part of God's plan to prepare us

for life with Him in eternity. Thus, when we die, we are for a time separated from our physical bodies, but our spirit (soul?) goes immediately to be with God, if we have been chosen, or to a place called Hell, if we are not chosen. We are chosen based on our faith in God, through Christ. (Much could be said here; theologians have widely differing views about this matter; we can't go into this here.)

Perhaps to preserve our memories, which generate in us more appreciation for the blessings of Heaven, or perhaps to demonstrate that our earthly existence had a purpose, God somehow regenerates our physical bodies into what Paul describes as a new spiritual body. He does this at a point in time that He decrees, having given humanity ample opportunity to come to faith. At that time, the earth as we know it will be done away with. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, as Isaiah and John describe it.

**Isaiah 65:17-19 (NASB)** <sup>17</sup> *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. <sup>18</sup> "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness. <sup>19</sup> "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.*

This prophecy was fulfilled once, perhaps, in a physical sense, when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, but it will be fulfilled finally, in a spiritual manner, at Christ's second coming. Rev 21 speaks about this:

**Revelation 21:1-4 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."*

In these new spiritual bodies we will live a glorified existence in God's presence. Our past sins will have been removed "as far as the East is from the West" by Jesus' sacrifice, never to be remembered by us or by God. Apparently, only the love we shared on this earth and the joys we experienced will be meaningful to us in eternity. Somehow, through our resurrected bodies, we will know one another, particularly those we loved on the earth, but these memories will seem very insignificant compared to the joy we find in Christ our Savior and Lord.