

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 15

(The Resurrection) – Part 6

~Repeated from last week~

“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

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. 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 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. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 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. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Corinthians 15:35–49 NKJV).

Paul seemed to be a little annoyed by the “*foolish*” questions presupposed by the Corinthians. However, they being rhetorical suggests that he was not actually annoyed with any one person. His

apparent discouragement with the Corinthians' struggle about the physical resurrection of Jesus—and the corresponding physical resurrection of the saints—allowed for his excellent summary address.

For several years I have had many people ask me about the physical resurrection of the saints. There is a constant thread to the questioning. I hope my summary coupled together with what Paul has already addressed will help broaden our overall grasp of the coming glorious event we all anticipate.

Some of the questions I have received are as follows:

- 1) If we are awaiting a physical resurrection, where are the “dead” saints now?**
- 2) Is “Soul Sleep” a biblical doctrine?**
- 3) If we are cremated or buried, does it matter?**
- 4) When will the saints be resurrected?**
- 5) Will we be the same recognizable persons once we are resurrected?**
- 6) Will we be male and female in heaven?**
- 7) What age will we be in heaven—and/or—will we all look the same age?**

These questions and many more could take weeks to answer. However, a short address will be necessary.

- 1) If we are awaiting a physical resurrection, where are the “dead” saints now?**

The Bible teaches us that “the body without the spirit is dead” and “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” Therefore, the “departed” believer is very alive in heaven as soul and spirit but the physical body is awaiting resurrection.

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26 NKJV).

“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV).

“Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23 NKJV).

2) Is “Soul Sleep” a biblical doctrine?

No! Sleep is the nomenclature used throughout the Scriptures to suggest a future resurrection. The saints in Christ will be raised and rewarded with a glorified body. The wicked will be raised to final judgment and eternal damnation. (See Revelation 20:11–15)

3) If we are cremated or buried, does it matter?

No! However, burial was the Jewish custom. Neither method is sin and none more “righteous” than the other. The fundamental difference is the amount of time in which physical decomposition occurs.

4) When will the saints be resurrected?

In Scripture we note 5 phases of the “*first resurrection.*” They are as follows: Jesus’ physical resurrection, a number of saints around Jerusalem just after Jesus’ resurrection, the Rapture of the Church at the end of the Church Age, the two prophets who are murdered and resurrected midway through the Tribulation, and the pre-Church Age and Tribulation saints at the time of the second coming. (See Matthew 28:1–8, Matthew 27:51–54, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, Revelation 11:1–12, Daniel 12:1–3 and Revelation 20:4–6)

5) Will we be the same recognizable persons once we are resurrected?

Yes! However, we will be in glorified new bodies.

Several false religious groups teach that we will be united into one universal essence. However, this is heresy! We are uniquely created as individuals called to bring individualized glory to God. (See 1 Samuel 28:3–25, Luke 16:19–31, Matthew 17:1–5, and Revelation 5:8–14)

6) Will we be male and female in heaven?

Yes, God created us male and female. However, we will not be married and procreating—as in the present time continuum. (See Matthew 22:23–33)

7) What age will we be in heaven—and/or—will we all look the same age?

This is vague in Scripture. It would seem most likely that we will all be at a perfect mature “age.” One might surmise that we will continue aging in numerical years but without the “effects” of age. However, another might suggest that in the New Heaven and New Earth “time” shall be no more. Time is a created element! There is no biblical record of babies in heaven (although Mormons seem to believe so). Moreover, Jesus is seen in heaven with white hair... (See Daniel 7:9 and Revelation 1:14)

It is pretty clear that there is much we don't know. However, what we do know is that the bodies we now inhabit are temporal, natural, dishonorable, and corruptible. But, our future bodies will be new, incorruptible, powerful, and spiritual.

Our new bodies will be like that of our Risen Savior—physical but unbounded.

John recorded, “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’” (John 20:26–29).

After Jesus’ physical resurrection, He walked through the wall, said “*reach your hand here*” in order to allow Thomas to touch His body. We also know that after His resurrection Jesus ate with His disciples, walked with them, talked with them, and visibly ascended into heaven before their very eyes.

We have a lot to look forward to my friends!

I love you all,
Pastor Paul