

1 Corinthians 15 and the Resurrection

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In 1 Corinthians 15:12-22 Paul discussed with the Corinthians church the importance of understanding the resurrection of the dead. What is the “resurrection”? Generally, it refers to being raised from the dead. Specifically, the belief that on the Day of Judgment all dead will be raised and changed. It is almost never discussed in the Old Testament (except in a brief mention by Job, by David and by Daniel). It was not part of the Old Law promises. We also understand that while many people were raised from the dead (such as Lazarus, the widow’s son, Jairus’ daughter), these people later died again; this is not that temporary resurrection. This is the resurrection into eternity. The Resurrection of the Dead is one of the fundamentals of Christ found in Hebrews 6:1-2. Not accepting or believing in it is spoken of as a great stumbling block, as seen in Acts 17:31-32. What do we know about the resurrection?

First of all, it is our body that is raised. According to Job, it is the body that he lived in that he expected would be raised at the last day. *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25-27). There are multiple occasions where we are told our body shall be “raised” (1 Thes. 5:23, 2 Cor. 4:14, 1 Cor. 6:4). There was no body of Jesus in the tomb because that body had been raised; so it will be with us.

Second, it is NOT our body that is raised. Almost in contradiction to our first point is this one: it is NOT the same body that is raised up. In 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 Paul describes the necessary change of the body for the inheritance. He goes on to say that *“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption”* (1 Corinthians 15:50). This body cannot receive the inheritance; thus it must be changed. As a seed is planted and becomes something else, so it is with our body.

Third, it is not clear what happens. Because of this seeming contradiction Scriptures indicate that the exact nature of the change and the resurrection is unclear. John states this in the first part of 1 John 3:2: *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be...”*.

Fourth, Jesus is our model of resurrection. In that same passage John goes on to say *“...but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* As Jesus body was raised it was changed, and was something quite different, not recognized by His closest friends, and no longer subject to the laws of this world.

We must believe in the resurrection. While it is not entirely clear what happens with the resurrection, or what our changed body will be like, we are told it is necessary to believe in it. We are told that the very hope of being a Christian is this even (Philippians 3:11, Acts 24:15). We are also warned against the dangers of doubt (2 Timothy 2:18).

Jesus is our Resurrection hope. His life means we have life. *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”* John 11:25