

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**A1315 – April 14, 2013 – 1 Corinthians 15:42-50**  
**The Nature Of The Resurrection Body**

Question: Why is the music/worship at the starting of worship and not at the end of the service to give praise to what we have learned about or to the glory of God? Can you give an explanation of what man vs. Bible has to say on this subject?

Answer: Good question. The question is dealing with the order of service and let me say from the start that there is no order of service prescribed in Scripture. By prescribed I mean commanded, we are not commanded to follow a specific order of service. However, that does not mean that the order of service is irrelevant. For example, putting a benediction at the beginning would be nonsense. Even Scriptural books often put a benediction at the end.

To address directly your first question, why is the music at the start and not at the end? I'm not sure why most, although not all of the music done here, is at the start of worship and not at the end. A lot of churches place the majority of the music at the start in order to set the mood they want. We're not doing that. We're not trying to set a mood. Trying to set a mood is to try to manipulate the emotions and I don't think that's valid. Sometimes churches even add stimuli to enhance this mood, things like dimming the lights, releasing scents or encouraging movement. Of course, these things are done to manipulate people's emotions and that's not biblical and we don't do that here. The music we do at the beginning is not designed to set a mood. The preliminary music, as we all walk in and get settled down is designed to remind us when we enter that we have gathered to worship God with fellow believers. But I don't see that as manipulating emotions.

I think the real issue with the music whenever it is played, at the beginning or the end is whether the music facilitates worship in spirit and truth. Jesus

said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Therefore the musical element of worship should teach us or remind us of truth and in the privacy of our soul give us an opportunity to respond to that truth. If it doesn’t do that it is stirring up the wrong kind of emotions.

The second part of this question concerns the issue of why not put the music at the end of the service as a response to what we have learned about God? And what does the Bible have to say about this subject?

Again, the Bible doesn’t prescribe whether we should worship in song before, during or after a congregational meeting. However, most of the examples of worship in song found in Scripture do occur *after* God has done some work or after He has revealed something verbally. For example, in Exodus 15 Moses and the Israelites sang a song of thanksgiving extolling God’s character for His work of saving them and judging Pharaoh and his army. The content rich worship song was a response to God’s work on their behalf. A second example is Revelation 5:9-10 where the twenty four elders and four angels in heaven chant a response to the discovery of the Lamb who is able to open the seven-sealed scroll and pour out judgments on the earth. So again the worship song is a response to the Lamb of God for His work of redemption. A third example is Revelation 15:2 where the martyrs are shown worshipping in song because of their victory over the anti-Christ. So again, the worship in song was after God’s victory on their behalf. A fourth example is Habakkuk’s song composed and recorded in Habakkuk 3 after God had revealed His plan for the coming invasion of Babylon against his nation. Other examples might come to mind from David who wrote many of the Psalms after some event in his life when God rescued him. So the vast majority of songs in the Bible are written and sung after God has done some work or revealed some verbal truth. So the most we can say is that the dominant patten of worship by music is that it comes after God has done something or verbally revealed something and so worship in song should express biblical truth concerning God’s work or God’s word and give people an opportunity to respond to those truths.

Second, I think it’s interesting that both Eph 5:18 and Col 3:16 teach that singing songs to one another in the congregation is a result of being filled by the Holy Spirit. Most people just think being filled by the Spirit is being in fellowship but that’s not the whole story. How do we know we are filled by the Spirit? One of the manifestations of being filled by the Spirit is that we

sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another. Others are that husbands love their wives and wives submit to their husbands, children obey their parents, employers treat their employees well and employees obey their employers. So there are several manifestations of the filling of the Spirit and singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another is one of those manifestations.

Lastly, what model are we going to follow? Man's or God's. Well, certainly we're not going to introduce manipulative music or other stimuli up front. That is man's way of getting everyone in a mood. That is deceptive. In the end the Bible doesn't command us when to put the musical part of worship and so I can't prescribe when we do it. I can only say that the general trend in Scripture is that it comes after God has done some work or revealed some truth and so we ought to sing songs that are rich with truth and give worshippers the opportunity to respond to that truth between themselves and God. As an example, Johnnie is often able to pick and choose songs that capture the theme of the text being taught that day. That enhances our ability to think about the truths we are learning that day and to respond accordingly. If we want to put it all after so that we have just been immersed in a lot of truth then I'm fine with that. It would be interesting.

Question: You mentioned this morning, when you were talking about point #4 (axiological): "live consistently, stop sinning, start living for God, right now". Do you believe that it is possible for a Christian to totally stop sinning?

Answer: Good question. I said that out of 1 Cor 15:34 where Paul says "stop sinning." While Paul commands them to stop sinning and we should all stop sinning, no, I do not think a Christian today can totally stop sinning (until he gets his resurrection body). The view that a Christian can stop sinning is called perfectionism and was developed by Charles Wesley who founded the Methodist movement. Today perfectionism is held by the Church of God, Nazarene and Pentecostal Holiness Church. They believe that Christians can totally stop sinning in this life. They say that while we can reach sinlessness we cannot avoid making mistakes, committing accidental errors and having incomplete knowledge. However, to say that Christians can totally stop sinning in this life as perfectionism teaches is contrary to what the Bible teaches. 1 John 1:8 specifically says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." The passage means that when

the Christian looks at his total self he is deceived if he thinks he is without sin.” However, 1 John 3:9 and 5:18 teach that when the Christian looks only at his born of God self he is without sin. “We know that no one who is born of God sins.” The born of God self is the regenerate self or the new nature. The new nature is completely sinless because it is the nature through which Christ’s impeccable nature is transmitted when we live by faith. In the end the Bible teaches that when you become a Christian you have two natures, a sin nature and a regenerate or new nature. Therefore, looked at from the standpoint of your total person you cannot say you are without sin. However, when looked at from the standpoint only of your regenerate nature you must say you are without sin. So there is a kind of perfectionism taught by the Bible but it does not refer to the total person, it refers only to the regenerate nature.

Turn to 1 Cor 15 and we’ll look at vs. 42-49. Paul’s looking at the nature of the resurrection body as linked to the present body but also unlinked; connected but disconnected, that’s the idea of the resurrection, it’s a transformation of the present body into a different kind of body just as Christ’s body that died on the cross was buried in the tomb and then transformed into His resurrection body so the tomb was empty. He starts in verse 42 and what he is going to do is look at the body from the standpoint of its fallen state vs its resurrected state and the fact there are similarities but also differences. But I think it’s helpful if we start off by reminding ourselves that originally we have the Creation of the body and the original body that God created for Adam and out of which He created Eve was very good. It was a perfect, sinless body, but it could become imperfect and sinful, it had the capacity to become sinful even though originally it was not sinful. The best way of expressing this I’ve found is to say that Adam’s original body was *incorrupt but corruptible*. By saying it that way we’re preserving the truth that God is perfect and when He created our body He created it perfect, it was incorrupt. But at the same time we’re preserving the truth that the body is no longer perfect, it is now corrupt. Both truths have to be preserved and a way to do it is to say that God created Adam incorrupt but corruptible, that is, with the capacity of becoming corrupt through sin. Now that’s what happened at the Fall. When Adam sinned against God he and all humans in him, including Eve, died spiritually; that is he experienced spiritual death or separation from God. And when this spiritual death occurred his physical death process began. So we all sinned in Adam and are born spiritually dead

and physically dying. Eventually we all die. Why? Because we sinned in Adam. Romans 5:12. "Therefore just as sin entered through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned." The ultimate cause of all physical death is our sin in Adam.

Paul, in our verses today, is looking at our body from the standpoint of this Fall in Adam and the fact that all of our bodies are therefore fallen and perishing and corrupt and weak, etc...and he's contrasting that with the resurrection body that is most certainly to come. Notice verse 20, "Christ has already been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming." There is a certainty in v 22 that in Adam we all died but in Christ we will all be made alive. And verse 23 deals with the order of the resurrection. "Christ" first, "after," the Greek word indicates a gap of time, "after that those who are Christ's at His coming," that's the rapture, the coming of Christ includes at least three phases, His coming for His saints in the air, His coming in judgment upon the world and His coming with His saints to earth, the first phase is looked at here when we are raptured and raised, "then," verse 24, the Greek indicates another gap of time, "then comes the end," that's at the end of the millennial kingdom, "when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father..." So we will be raised and the time of our being raised is the first phase of Christ's coming, when He comes for His saints in the air at the rapture and that is when we will be raised.

Now let's look at what the raised body will look like as compared to our present bodies. First, in verse 42 **it is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body.** When the body dies it's sown in the ground like a seed awaiting the time when the conditions are right for it to sprout forth and grow into a plant, so it is with our bodies, when our bodies die they are sown in the ground but when the conditions are right they will be raised **imperishable.** Those conditions are described in 1 Thess 4:16 as "a shout, a voice and a trumpet." Those three simultaneous actions are what wake up our bodies at the rapture so they come forth from the grave and are raised.

So there is a connection between the two bodies in that the imperishable one comes from the perishable, but there is also a disconnection between them in

that the imperishable one will not have corruption working in it. The reason of course is because the imperishable body no longer has any sin present in it. It is free from the presence of sin altogether, there is no sin nature, so there is no cause of corruption and therefore it cannot break down and decay. Then Wesleyan perfectionism will be the doctrine, total sinlessness forever. There is no opportunity to fall into sin ever again, there is not another tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there is only the tree of life and so we will not be exactly like Adam originally was created because he was created incorrupt but corruptible, but we will be incorruptible, imperishable, same word in the Greek, no more sin, no more possibility of sin, only righteousness forever and ever more.

Now this body must be very interesting compared to the body we have now. This body we study the biology, the chemistry, the physics, it's a fascinating creation even though corrupted by sin. But the resurrection body we don't know the biology, the chemistry or the physics. We know there is a biology, a chemistry and a physics in the resurrection, we just don't know what it is. The only opportunity to access the new biology, chemistry and physics was when Christ was walking around in His resurrection body, but nobody did any analysis of His body. They touched it, His body could be touched, it had a physical component, they could hear it, it spoke showing it could interact with this physical order, it could eat, it could drink, all of these things show that the resurrection body can interact with this present order, but no experiments were done to analyze the differences that allowed it to appear and disappear and perhaps be seen in multiple locations all at the same time. We don't know how this can be but it seems apparent that there is a biology, a chemistry and a physics to the resurrection body that is radically different than the biology, chemistry and physics of the present body and completely foreign to man. And what this shows us is how weak man is intellectually. We can't even imagine a body that never dies. Men have dreamed of a fountain of youth. Ponce De Leon was once said to have found it, men have dreamed of never dying and proposals have been made for why we die and bright, bright minds in the world of biophysics and molecular biochemistry and neurobiology have sought to discover how to live forever. But no man has ever discovered how to remove the sin nature which is the only way to live forever. Nobody except God knows how to destroy the sin nature and resurrect people into a new body that is unlike anything anyone has ever dreamed of. So the resurrection body, whatever it is, is something extremely



spectacular and you are scheduled to get one. Verse 42, you are going to dwell with God forever in an awesome, **imperishable body**.

Second, in verse 43, another comparison from agriculture, **it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory**, and again we're looking at the body from the standpoint of the Fall. When the original body of Adam and Eve were created they were in a state of honor but through the Fall and sin the body fell into a state of disgrace and humiliation, the word **dishonor** means "humiliation" and it's looking at the body as a thing to be ashamed of.

Remember when Adam and Eve fell and their eyes were opened? What did they realize? They were naked. Nakedness from that day forward in the Bible is a symbol of shame, of humiliation. That's why historically captives of war, criminals and the like have been stripped and marched into captivity, it's humiliating. And ultimately it's a picture of our spiritual state before God, we are naked before an all holy, awesome God and we have nothing, we need to be clothed by the righteousness of Christ. Clothing itself is making a theological statement. It's saying that we are naked and ashamed before God and we need to be clothed. God is the one who provides the clothing which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And when we believe we are clothed spiritually we still need our bodies to be clothed from on high and that will be remedied by the resurrection. Verse 43 says **it will be raised in glory**. Then our bodies will be arrayed with a brightness, a splendor, a radiance that is surpassing anything anybody ever imagined, a super awesome body clothed in radiating light and verses 40-41 showed that they, like the stars of the heavens, will radiate varying degrees of light relative to our reward status. We will all be **raised in glory**.

Third, also in verse 43, another comparison from agriculture, **it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power**. Again the body is looked at from the standpoint of the Fall. The original bodies of Adam and Eve were not subject to weakness but through the Fall they fell into a state of weakness; meaning their bodies were subject to sickness, to disease, to aging, to all the physical frailties of life, to dust you shall return. But in the resurrection our bodies will be **in power** meaning our bodies will have tremendous potential, remarkable capabilities, unheard of proficiencies, not subject to death, to disease or to aging. You will be able to do things that you never dreamed of and which dwarf any physical accomplishment or mental accomplishment of any human being who ever lived in the history of the world. The resurrection

body is qualitatively, not just quantitatively, qualitatively more powerful than any fallen human body ever. It's something in a class all by itself, it is of a different kind. **It will be raised in power.**

Fourth, in verse 44 he gives the last comparison from agriculture, **it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** Our bodies as fallen Paul calls **natural**. The Greek word is *psuchikos* from which we get "soul" or "life," usually thought of as an immaterial entity but when used as an adjective, as here, modifying the noun **body**, it is simply telling us that the **soulish body** is designed for this world and the things pertaining to this world. By contrast, in the resurrection we are given **a spiritual body**, a body designed for the next world and the things pertaining to that world. The Greek word for **spiritual** is *pneumatikos* from which we get "the spirit" and again, usually the spirit is thought of as an immaterial entity but when used as an adjective, as here, modifying the noun **body**, it is saying that the resurrected body is designed for the world to come and the things pertaining to the world to come, which are all the things of God. In other words, our resurrection bodies will be outfitted for life with God and the world of God; Paul would be referring to the eternal state as described in Rev 21-22. The resurrection body is designed for that world and our greatest desire and greatest joy in that world will be to know God by learning more and more about Him every day. Rev 21 says every day our spiritual thirst will be quenched because He will lead us to the spring of the water of life, quenching our spiritual thirst to know more and more about the infinite, eternal God who loved us and saved us. Ultimately we will continually thirst to know Him and each day He will satisfy that thirst, but we will never come to know Him exhaustively. God is incomprehensible and though we know Him truly we can never know Him comprehensively. So each day for all eternity we will grasp some new facet of God, some new understanding of Him that has forever been true but unknown to us and we will once more be impressed with Him. That is what our **spiritual body** is designed for, for Him and the things pertaining to His world to come.

End of verse 44, and he's transitioning from the nature of the resurrection body to the logic of this resurrection body. First, **if there is a natural body**, that is, a body designed and fitted for this world then **there is also a spiritual body**, a body designed and fitted for the world to come. Logically this must be true.



For proof, verse 45. **So also it is written**, or it has been written such that it stands forever. **“The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.** He’s contrasting the two Adam’s and there is possibly a lot of theology tied up in this verse. The quote there at the beginning of the verse, talking about Adam, comes directly from the Greek Septuagint version of Gen 2:7 where God formed the body of Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and then the end of the verse is the part Paul quotes, **and MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL.**

1 Cor 15:45      ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν

Genesis 2:7      ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

What is Paul’s point? Well the point he’s making is very difficult to discern but I think what he is saying is that when God first made **Adam** He designed him for this world, his whole constitution was outfitted for this world, and that designed constitution was transmitted to every other human (except Eve and Christ) through procreation such that they were outfitted for living in this world too.<sup>i</sup> But the **last Adam**, Jesus Christ, **became a life-giving spirit**, meaning that His whole constitution in the resurrection was outfitted for the world to come, and that our constitution in the resurrection will be derived from His such that we will be fit for the world to come. As I said, this is very difficult but I think fundamentally what is being said is that our present constitution is derived from Adam and fit for this world whereas our future constitution is derived from Christ and fit for the world to come.

**However**, verse 46, **the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.** He’s just giving the order; the soulish constitution derived from Adam is what comes **first**, it is designed for life in this world, **then the spiritual** constitution will come after, it is designed for life in the world to come. Why this would need to be stated is something of an anomaly but it seems there were some strange ideas at Corinth concerning the human constitution that were tainted by Greek philosophy. We won’t get into it. For our purposes it’s enough to say that the order is first, the soulish constitution designed for this world, then after our spiritual constitution designed for the world to come.

Verse 47, **The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.** Again the sequence is in mind, but he adds something else, the source of the **first man** over and against the source of the **second man**. The **first man**, Adam, is from the dust of the earth. Clearly Paul has Gen 2:7 in mind again; when God formed man from the dust of the earth. The Hebrew “formed” means He framed him from the dust of the earth. This framing from the dust reveals man’s purpose in this world; which is to work and till the dust of the earth, to cultivate it. But **the second man is from heaven** and not from earth so His purpose is fit for the world to come. Likewise our resurrection bodies will be from heaven and therefore derived from another world and designed for that other world. Put another way, the resurrection body is made from heaven and for heaven, the new heaven and the new earth.

Verse 48, **As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy, and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.** It seems obvious that there is a difference between the earthy and the heavenly body. But some of the Corinthians didn’t really appreciate this difference because they emphasized the fact that when Christ rose he ate food from this world and drank water from this world and He had scars from this world. But such observations, though true, were not the total picture. Christ also appeared and disappeared among other things that are not within the capabilities of **earthy** men. Therefore Paul’s point is that there really is a great difference between those who are **earthy** and designed for this world and those who are **heavenly** and designed for the world to come.

Verse 49, **Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly,** We have worn the image of Adam who was made in the image of God but from the earth and for the earth such that we are presently designed for this earth, but **we will wear the image** of Christ who is also made in the image of God but from heaven and for heaven, designed for the world to come. Christ in his humanity was re-designed at the resurrection from above and for above such that both He and we have a body that is made in the likeness of Adam (though His without sin) and for this earth as well a resurrection body that is re-made in the likeness of Christ and for the heavenly world.

Verse 50, **Now I mean this, brethren**, Paul is going to give explanation for what he has just said. He does not say, **Now I say this**, to introduce something new in v 50. The Greek word translated **say** is *phemi* and means “this is what I mean” or “Now I mean this,” as a point of clarification (cf this usage also in 1 Cor 10:19, “What do I mean then?”) of what he has just said in vv 20-49. So verse 50 is looking back at the prior verses as sort of a conclusion or summary or clarification of what he has been saying. And so the pericope division should be placed after verse 50 and not before. Lots of Bibles put the divide before verse 50 and break the train of thought. But the Greek text indicates that verse 50 is an explanation of what has come before and the break should be after verse 50.

So verse 50 is explaining what Paul means in the prior verses and I would translate it, **Now I mean this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable**. They must have had some thought that the present **flesh and blood** body could **inherit the kingdom of God and that the perishable** body could **inherit the imperishable** world so Paul is correcting that (cf 1 Cor 4:8). That is not true. That much is easy. But the details of this verse are not easy; they are very, very difficult.

For example, what phase of **the kingdom of God** is being referred to here? The one thousand year phase which was not yet revealed until 40 years later in Rev 20? Or the eternal phase we think of as the new heavens and new earth? There are several problems if it refers to the one thousand year phase. First, if the verse is referring to that phase and it says **flesh and blood cannot inherit** that phase then how do you get the flesh and blood mortals of Isa 65:20 and 23 into the one thousand year kingdom to bear children as the Isaiah 65 text requires? Second, if the verse is referring to the one thousand year phase of the kingdom and it says **flesh and blood cannot inherit** that phase then how do the flesh and blood mortal sheep of Matt 25:34 “inherit” that phase of “the kingdom” as the Matt 25 text requires. Third, if the verse is referring to the one thousand year phase of the kingdom then how can that be reconciled with the end of the verse which says by parallelism that this phase of the kingdom is **imperishable** when indeed it is not? Rev 21:1 says this initial phase of the kingdom will pass away, it is perishable.

Taken together, these problems and my exegesis up to this place point to only one conclusion; **kingdom of God** here does not refer to the one thousand year phase but to the eternal phase which **flesh and blood cannot inherit** and which is **imperishable**. And I would add to this that in the context we have been studying everything has been pointing to this eternal phase which necessitates resurrection. That is Paul's fundamental point, our bodies in this world are fallen and crumbling and perishing but our bodies must be raised to be fitted to inherit the world to come. When they are they will be awesome, imperishable, incorruptible bodies with new capabilities never dreamed of by humans, designed from above for a world with God and fit for the things of God.

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<sup>i</sup> This is called traducianism.

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