



Sown in Weakness, Raised in Power
1 Cor. 15:35-49

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"

36 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.

39 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.

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.

42 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.

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

46 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.

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

Men tend to have a willingness to accept the idea that the soul will continue on much more readily than any discussions of a bodily resurrection. In the case of Jesus for instance, it is almost a trademarked principle amongst the cults that his resurrection was only spiritual, and that He wasn't raised with a real material body. In the discussion we had with a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses a few weeks ago, they scoffed at the idea that body of Christ that was raised was the same body that was put in the tomb. If you talk to people in the street about whether they believe in spiritual beings called angels, most will say yes, surveys show that most people in the USA regardless of whether they are Christians believe in Heaven and believe that when they die, their spirits will go there. But when you start talking about the bodies of believers being resurrected they begin to scoff. I've had people ask me, "***how are people who were vaporized at Hiroshima or Nagasaki going to be raised?***" or "***how are people who were eaten by animals or fishes and became part of them going to be reconstituted?***"

Now personally since I became a Christian, I've never really had difficulty with the idea that the same God who created the entire universe and everything in it, seen and unseen, from nothing, would have

difficulty reconstituting any particular body no matter what the circumstances. But apparently this is a major stumbling block for many, both today and in the ancient world.

The Greeks in Paul's time certainly didn't believe it was possible at all. How could our bodies which were weak and corruptible and to their mind hopelessly flawed because they were made of matter inherit heaven? How could we dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, a place where there will no be no more sin, or sickness, or death, in the same corruptible bodies that we lived and died in here in the fallen world? In verse 35 a kind of courtroom question is being posed by these skeptics, you know one of those questions along the lines of "***now how could you get from your home to the scene of the crime in less than ten minutes, I put it to you that this is impossible!***" As Leon Morris puts it they are in essence asking, "***What kind of body would arise from a heap of decomposed rubbish?***"

Well Paul answer is very sharp, in verse 36 he doesn't start out by saying, *oh what a good question!* He says ***fool***. These Corinthian skeptics think they are very wise and frankly Paul wants to cut them down to size and wake them up to the fact that they are not being intelligent at all. So he follows the biblical advice of Prov. 26:5 ***Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.*** [Now while the Apostle was right to cut the Corinthian Christians down to size this way , I wouldn't recommend that you naturally follow Paul's practice here to the letter in your own witnessing to unbelievers. Generally starting a reply with FOOL, isn't going to get you very far and may actually be hazardous to your health. I don't really want to have to follow up all your witnessing attempts with hospital visitations.]

He calls them foolish because they had observed the answer to their own questions in the natural world. Now imagine if someone were completely unfamiliar with plants and botany and they asked where does a mighty oak tree come from, or a huge corn stalk, or a beautiful sunflower, and you showed them this little seed and said, well "you see what we do is we take this dead inanimate little thing, and we bury it in the dirt, and in the process of decomposing it grows up into the beautiful plant you see. They might laugh, it would be one of those explanations you give your kids that seem so far-fetched they ask "Mommy, is Daddy telling the TRUTH or being FUNNY?"

But Paul says that is the process and plan that God uses to grow plants is analogous to what happens with the bodies of believers, we could say that the process of burial is like sowing. We put them into grave in the same way that we put a seed into the earth, in the certain knowledge that God by his power can create life again in that which was dead.

Now Paul also wants them to take another lesson from nature. You see he wants them to learn that the body that is raised, although it came from the same body that was buried, sown in dishonor is changed. It is raised a different kind of body from the body that was buried. To show them that he makes the point that even in the natural world there are different kinds of flesh. Any of you have eaten fish will have noticed how different it is from say beef, and even amongst fish have you ever noticed how different the consistency of Salmon is from say Cod? If you order a Sushi plate (somewhere where they bring your order) you end up with a plate of raw fish, but different kinds of raw fish each of which look and taste different. So there are different kinds of flesh even in this world.

He also points out that if we look to the heavens we see the difference between the heavenly bodies, the stars differ from the planets, though they both give light the Sun is intensely different from the moon, there is a principle of differentiation and a difference in glory in these various heavenly bodies.

Well says Paul, it is the same with the resurrection of the dead. The body believers are raised with is the same body that was buried but it is changed. ***It is transformed. It is a higher kind of body changed and suited for life in the new heavens and new earth.*** And he points out several important differences:

- * The body that was put in the ground is corruptible, subject to decay, but that which is raised is immortal and no longer subject to things like sickness and age and infirmity and eventually death
- * The body that was put in the ground in dishonor, there is nothing particularly honorable about a decaying body, it is not something we want to leave around for long, there is a reason we have to get rid of them quickly. But that which is raised is glorious and honorable.
- * The body that we have today is weak (comparison of the power of our bodies to those of animals) especially when compared to the power of the mind, and that which is buried has become completely powerless, but that which is raised is full of power.
- * That which was buried was a body designed for life in the natural realm, the fallen world. This doesn't mean it will not have a material component, but that it is adapted for life in the world to come, a life dominated not by the things of the flesh, but the things of the Spirit.

Now what is the key to this transformation? We follow in the train of Christ the firstfruits. Just as spiritually believers are regenerated brought to newness of life and conformed inwardly after him, so to we will become like him in his resurrection.

This is because when we were born into this world our federal head was Adam and we received the physical corruptible body modeled after his, he was the model our plan that our own bodies were built after. But now that we have been born again, we have a new head a new representative even Jesus Christ. And we have both new spiritual and eventually new physical life through him and not brief and transient as it was in Adam but *eternal* through the power of Christ.

Now Paul also wants them to understand this follows the natural order that God set, Adam our first head, was made of the dust of the earth and then God breathed life into him. Body first then Spirit, but then he makes the point that with Christ the order was reversed he was originally a Spirit dwelling with God the father, but he took on in the incarnation a body and that body he glorified in his resurrection.

We have been born again from above. And our bodies today are but a preparation for what is to come: ***“This is true in all the works of God, in which there is a development. Adam’s earthly state was to be preparatory to a heavenly one. The present life is like a seed time, the harvest is hereafter. The natural comes before the spiritual; as Calvin says, we are born before we are regenerated, we live before we rise.” - HODGE***

So for believers:

Burial – which is more appropriate is like a sowing, they are seeds, at Christ’s return they will rise. Difference then between burial of believers and the funerals of the unbelieving, never have bodies conformed to the glorious body of Christ:

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the **dust** of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Unbelievers are not planted, they are discarded -

First, “gehenna” is the Grecianized form of the Hebrew for “valley of Hinnom”, which was a deep gorge on the east of Jerusalem. This valley of Hinnom* was first used in connection with idolatrous rites (2 Chron. 28:3). Later it became a burial ground (Jer. 7:31), or more probably a crematorium. Still later became the place where the garbage of Jerusalem was thrown and burned (Josephus). Its fires were kept constantly alight so as to consume the filth and rubbish deposited therein.*

Second, this valley of Hinnom foreshadowed the great garbage-receptacle of the universe—Hell, just as other places and persons in the Old Testament Scriptures adumbrated other objects more vile—for example, the “king of Tyre” in Ezek. 28. Just as what is there said of this king has in view one more sinister than he, so what is said of the valley of Hinnom symbolized that which was far more awful. We can no more limit Gehenna to the valley outside of Jerusalem than we can restrict “the king of Tyre” to a mere man of the past. - PINK