1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Bodies of the Resurrected Dead

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" 36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; 37 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. 38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. 39 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. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 41 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. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

# Introduction

Paul dives further into the issue of the resurrection. His arguments for the resurrection because of Christ, and because of God, seem to still leave an opportunity for the skeptic to misunderstand how as well as why. Paul goes into the details as he rounds out the biblical argument for both the eternal state as well as the nature of federal headship in this lesson’s passage. The human, being made in God’s image, has a physical form, a soul, and a spirit (c.f. Philippians 3:21). Christ, as fully God and fully man, could be representative of divine purity as well as righteous humanity. Paul is going to rely on this truth as he explores the resurrection.

*What is the hypostatic union?*

# How are the Dead Raised? And with what kind of body do they come?

Paul’s beginning questions most likely represent the arguments that he had heard from various skeptics and show the kind of thinking that they were having that was bound to earthly explanation as well as the time-space continuum. By denying the supernatural as the underpinning context they were setting themselves up for an outcome that was not based on God as creator and orchestrator, but instead humanistic thinking, which obviously could not have a biblical answer. Paul is going to answer the second question with careful clarity and in doing so he will answer the first question as well.

*Is there any question as to who raises the dead and by what power?*

## You Fool!

The Corinthian culture was full of their own wisdom and arrogance so Paul calls them out for their foolishness. The shock value of the strong language here is meant to startle them out of their arrogance and listening to false teachers. As a pattern we should be addressing one another with gentleness and loving correction (Galatians 6:1). Paul corrects harshly here to emphasize the arrogance of those involved with this logical fallacy. While egos may be bruised he needs to leave no lie standing so that true doctrine can be propagated in the church in Corinth.

*Does our modern culture try to infiltrate our thinking and cause us to potentially propagate foolishness? If so, how do we combat this in the church?*

## That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies … a bare grain of wheat

Paul delivers a clarification that demands a reminder of Genesis 3:18-19 where God promised Adam that he would return to the ground. Death was required as a consequence of the fall (Genesis 2:17), but the resurrection was the hope understood even of the patriarchs as Christ pointed out (Matthew 22:32). Their death was not a surprise, but their resurrection was demanded for the faithfulness of God to fulfil His promise to them.

*Why are we sown like plants in this analogy?*

## God Gives it a Body

God gives things a body – whether in Adam or Jesus - so that the creation can show the work of the creator. The body of this flesh, with its hormones and cellular structures and many weaknesses represents a body that God designed before He spoke the first 5 days of creation into existence. It represented a bodily form that His Son would take on. It represented His image (Genesis 1:26). Each type carries a signature of that type so that we don’t confuse a dog for a cat, and we don’t confuse a cat for fish. But God created the bodies and their representation as He saw fit.

*Does God give bodies in wisdom?*

### All Flesh is Not the Same Flesh

Types of things create distinction, separation, and they help identify the creativity that Adam was asked to name from God’s creative commands in the beginning. Paul reminds his Corinthian readers of this fundamental truth to establish his line of reasoning. This move is to help establish the thinker in the idea of *federal headship*. Federal headship is the principle of God creating first instances such as the first male and female of a species and their carrying the genetic makeup to all of their descendants. This gives the opportunity for genetic diversity over time but without breaking types. For example, a set of parents may have many children and the children may be distinct in their appearance, but they are all genetically different due to epigenetics [genetic influences that can modify genetic expression] and all different in age, but clearly from the parents of a specific type: Adam’s lineage.

*Why does Paul emphasize type and how does that impact the resurrected form?*

### Beasts, Birds, and Fish

It is worth noting that Paul’s argument for the removal of sinfulness of idol worship is to identify the creator verses the creator in Romans 1:25. His list here specifies a distinction of separation as an example of variance as well as helping circle his audience back towards a spiritual and earthly distinction in the next few verses.

### The Glory of Heavenly & Earthly Bodies

Besides a difference of animals Paul calls out God’s creative expression in the universe through planetary differences, stellar differences, and their distinction between one another. No matter what the pagan worship practices were in Corinth the creation of God may have been worshiped instead of the creator and Paul is starting back over in their simple reasoning to establish their thinking in a biblical place: distinction.

*What glory do bodies have?*

## Resurrected Bodies

The resurrection bodies were sown in a corruptible form. They died in Adam because he was the federal head that all humanity on the earth derives its name and type from. They did not have any chance for being ‘sown’ in the incorruptible form because Adam as their father was of a corruptible form.

*What does it mean for our earthly bodies to be sown in corruption?*

### Raised in Glory

Colossians 3:4 talks to us about our glorified bodies at Christ’s return. These glorified bodies are imperishable, uncorrupted, and are fully representative of our eternal state. These new bodies will not be susceptible to sin and its wages. God’s glory will be manifest in His bride.

*What glory do we have of our own accord?*

# The First Adam & the Last Adam

The doctrine of Federal Headship demands a second federal head for mankind to be redeemed, and it requires God’s intervention for righteousness where others may be restored unto fellowship with Him. Romans 5:12-21 tells us further about the representatives God had in place in Adam and Christ.

*Why is Christ called the last Adam?*

## Soul & Spirit

Genesis 2:7 tells us that God created man out of the dust of the ground and then breathed life into him and he became “soulish.” The contrast here is that Christ was not merely soulish, but because of the hypostatic union He was life giving as a spiritual being; as God. Christ is not just soulish and not just a spirit, but He is described as coming in earthly form and giving spiritual life! If Adam’s spirit became dead (separated) and Christ came to give life then His work would, in part, bring spiritual life.

The resurrection brings full replacement to all of what we understand about being God’s creation. Adam’s body was tainted by sin, his spirit was separated from God’s through sin, and his soul was therefore eternally condemned without faith. In the resurrected body, raised in Christ, we find that our new bodies will not have any corruption, we find that our spirit is alive and joined with His Spirit, and we find that our souls are eternally joined with His.

*What is the difference between eternal life and eternal death?*

## Earthy & Heavenly

The earthy came first, in Adam. They needed redemption, they needed to recognize and honor God through worship and sacrifices. The earthy had a conscience, they had a soul, a body and a dead spirit. If they ignored walking in respect to God and His decrees they would walk in deeper sin. It was not until Christ came and was resurrected that the Holy Spirit constantly indwelt the saint. The earthy were doomed to repeat carnal practices without God’s empowerment.

*What are some of the differences between the earthy and the heavenly?*

## Images of the Earthy vs. Images of the Heavenly

When we recognize the dust of the earth as our sinful heritage, a place of toiling not only for life, but also against the consequent sin against God we can turn in the consecration of Christ unto the righteousness of the heavenly image we have in Him.

*What does it mean to bear the image of the heavenly?*

# Conclusion

We find that our type in Christ offers hope, restoration, and an eternal state that has no corruption. As Paul has established the veracity of the doctrine of the resurrection we find he brings a conclusion to the doctrine next week in eschatology, mortality, and in motivation for our actions as believers today on the earth. When we understand the two Adams we begin to understand principles of all of the scriptures regarding empowerment, stewardships, and it stirs in us a longing for Christ’s return. When the fall happened mankind was under a period of conscience, which led to God saving all of humanity from destruction by preserving Noah and his family. When Moses came we learned that the Law could not cause us to be righteous by itself. When Christ came we learned that in Him, by His Spirit, given by the Father, we could have a resurrected, empowered life that lives into eternity.