

Our Resurrection Bodies – 1 Cor 15:35-49

1 Cor 15:35-49; While you turn there, I have a little pop quiz for you

A chance for you green-thumbers to show your prowess a bit; Are you ready?

What kind of **seeds** are these? Does **this** help? (radishes)

How about **this** one? Any **better**? (apple tree)

Let's make it a little easier – which **plant** goes with this seed? (palm tree; not daisies)

And one **more** – think summer; How about **watermelon**?

Lest you think I've gone completely off my rocker, the *point* of all this is to prime the pump a bit, and get your mind around the analogy Paul uses to *make* his point*****

An analogy particularly appropriate for this time of year, b/c it pertains to seeds/planting

And one of my goals is to forever change the way you look at Spring

To see it as one massive object lesson, one recurring precedent – that illustrates the truth about our resurrection

The truth that life comes from death *all* the time in God's design, and we're no different

- So after going to great lengths in the previous verses, to establish the truth of *our* resurrection – Paul now anticipates some objections
Saying in v35 – *But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”* And he responds with – *You foolish person!* (36)
IOW are you still objecting? Are you so obstinate? So entrenched in your anti-supernaturalism you can't see the truth that's staring you in the face?

And then he starts the analogy

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. [37] And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

Paul's saying that just like seeds die before they rise, so too do we; Death isn't the winner, and . . .

Our current bodies are but a hint of what's to come (v35-38a)

That's what Paul's getting at with his analogy here in v36-37

That though our current bodies will be *similar* to our resurrection bodies, they're still only a *hint* of what's to come; Just like seeds are to plants

For instance, this little **kernel of corn** looks nothing like the **plant** it grows into

In fact, if you had never seen corn, you wouldn't even associate the two; B/c the seed is transformed; *What you sow* [v37] *is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel*

It's but a hint of what's to come

And the list of examples on this point, abound – there's precedent all around us*****

Virtually every living thing we see in God's creation starts with but a hint of what it is
Starts with a mere seed; Eventually being transformed into something similar, but different; And we're no different

Our death will eventually give way to life, and our bodies resurrected – to be *similar*, like we saw a few months ago, but different

Similar in that we'll be visible, physical, and recognizable, but different in that we'll be transformed and changed; Retaining our substance, but changing our characteristics

That's the point Paul's making, by way of analogy

We are the seeds, the bare kernels that are being sown right now – and the plants are our resurrection bodies in the future

- And the *characteristics* of those bodies have already been *determined* by God
Just like we know exactly what a corn stalk will look like, or a bean plant, or an apple tree – so too, God knows exactly what *we* will look like; That's v38a
God gives it a body as he has chosen

You see, not only did God give you your *current* body, forming you in the womb and determining your shape and height and individual characteristics ahead of time . . .

He's already done the same with your resurrection body

He doesn't just *know* what you're going to look like, he's *determined* it; He's chosen it
Just like he's chosen what a seed will look like before *it* ever germinates and grows

- So our current bodies are but a hint of what's to come, and God has already chosen the unique expression of his creativity that you'll become
Just like he's chosen the shape, form, and characteristics of your favorite fruit

In which case, I hope you never look at a flower the same way again; And see the difference between its *seed* and its *beauty* . . .

As indicative of the transformation that awaits you

In fact, I hope this spring in particular you're reminded of all that's in store at *your* springtime – and God's perfect sovereignty in bringing it about; Second . . .

Our resurrection bodies will be in a league of their own (v38b-44a)

That's the next thought from v38-44, where Paul expands the analogy to include animals
Saying in v38 – *God gives it* [referring to the seed, which is analogous to our current body] *a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.* [39] *For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.* [40] *There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies*

- Much like different animals have different bodies, and different characteristics that are especially suited for *their* unique environments . . .
So too will our resurrection bodies be **uniquely suited**, to live forever in the presence of *God's* environment
That puts us in a league of our own, *uniquely adapted to our unique existence*

Just like fish are especially suited to live in the water; Or prairie dogs are particularly suited to live in the ground; Or birds to fly in the air; Or humans to walk the earth . . .
Our resurrection bodies will be uniquely suited to be with God

• With unique abilities

In our resurrection bodies, we're going to have *unique abilities*

Like we saw several weeks ago based on the example of Jesus when *he* walked the earth in his resurrection body

Abilities like not being inhibited by distance; Or confined by doors; Or having perfect health; Or possessing all the strength and power we need

But that's not it; The contrast Paul draws between heavenly bodies and earthly bodies in v40, seems to indicate even *more* unique abilities

B/c there's a big difference between that which is of heaven, our resurrection bodies, and that which is of the earth, our current bodies

- And then he references yet another aspect of our resurrection bodies in v40b – *the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another*
Glory meaning – splendor, magnificence, radiance
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.*
Our resurrection bodies will be in a league of their own – uniquely suited, with unique abilities, and **special glory**

While the glory of our earthly bodies includes some measure of our appearance, ability, intellect, and emotional capacity – the glory or splendor of our heavenly bodies . . .
Includes all of that to a greater *degree* – a degree of *perfection* (**Quote**)

Which I think is captured so beautifully by a poet, who said that . . .
“*So the graveyards of man become the seed plots of resurrection. And the cemeteries of the people of God become through the heavenly dew, the resurrection fields of the promised perfection.*” (Erich Sauer)
We're going to be endowed with a special glory – the glory of perfection

- But once again, that's not it*****
We're also going to be blessed with a different *type* of glory; Like he says in v40
The glory of the heavenly [our resurrection body] *is of one kind* [or one type], *and the glory of the earthly is of another*

Now, what that looks like, we don't know; Though Paul does give us *some* insight in v42-44, which we'll get to in a minute
For now, I think it's sufficient to say that the type of glory, the way in which we will radiate all that God has done in us – will be as different as heaven is from earth

- *And* different from one another
Like the sun's splendor is different than the moon's; And the moon's is different than the stars; And the glory of the stars is different from each other
Star differs from star in glory; And so it is [v42] *with the resurrection of the dead*

We too will differ from one another, in how we radiate all that God has done in us and for us; Just like we differ now in how we *shine as lights in this world* (Ph 2:15)
But then, we're going to be in a league of our own – with unique abilities, special glory, **and significant differences**

- 4 of which he cites in v42-44, saying . . .
What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. [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.
We're going to be significantly different

Now, we decay, we're *perishable*; Then, we won't – we'll live forever, imperishable
Now, we sin – we exist in *dishonor*; Then, we'll live in the splendor of righteousness
Now, we're weak; Then, we'll be strong – physically, emotionally, *and* spiritually

And now, we're confined by nature – we're natural; Then, in our resurrection bodies – we'll be supernatural; Living *above* the constraints of nature
I think that's the best description of what Paul means when he says that right now we live in natural bodies, but we'll be *raised a spiritual body*

- It can't mean *non-physical*, b/c that would run contrary to all the physical *analogies* he just gave – citing plants, and the flesh of animals, and birds, and humans . . .
And heavenly *bodies*
Not only that, but if spiritual were to mean non-physical, like a ghost or something – it wouldn't fit the tangible body of Jesus after *his* resurrection

So the best explanation of spiritual is supernatural – out of this world
Much like Paul says in chapter 2, that in Christ, we're spiritual *people*, as opposed to *natural* people; And when you put those two concepts together . . .
We've been supernaturally transformed on the *inside* as people, and now await the consummation of that, the completion of that, on the outside

Whether that means we're going to leap tall buildings, or fly faster than a speeding bullet, I don't know; I just know it means there are going to be *significant differences* . . .
That I can't wait to see and experience (**Summary**)
Differences that accompany our special glory and unique abilities, making us uniquely suited for God's presence
Our resurrection bodies will be in a league of their own; And last . . .

Our likeness will finally resemble the Lord (v44b-49)

That's the conclusion he comes to in v48-49; Speaking of Adam, he says . . .
As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. [49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
In our resurrection bodies, our likeness will finally resemble the Lord's
It's **confirmed by analogy**; That's what Paul is saying

- As we are to Adam now, as we resemble him v49 – we *will* resemble Jesus
As Adam was, so are we; And as Christ is, so we *will* be; If indeed we're of heaven; If we're a child of God, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb
We will bear his image Paul says

Not *look* like him, but *be* like him
Just like we bear the image of Adam as human beings with the same form and characteristics, but obviously not the same looks
Or, to say it a bit differently, having been *made* in God's image – with intellect, emotions, and spirit . . .
We will eventually we'll *bear* his image like we're supposed to – perfectly
No longer tainted, marred, and hindered by the sin of our fallen nature

When he appears we shall be like him (1 Jn 3:2); And he *will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body* (Phil 3:21); It's confirmed by analogy

- And in true Pauline fashion, it's also **supported by logic**
That's v44b where he says – *If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

IOW if the premise is true, and it is – we exist in natural, earthly bodies . . .
Then the conclusion is true – we will exist in supernatural, heavenly bodies

It would be like saying, if an apple seed exists – so does an apple tree
If a tadpole exists – so does a frog; If a caterpillar exists – so does a butterfly
And if a natural body exists, then so does a supernatural one; It's logical

- Then, in v45, he supports it by saying – *Thus it is written* [or this is why spiritual bodies follow natural ones], “*The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit.*
And we know it's Christ b/c he says in v47 that the second Adam is from heaven

The point being, that we are living beings now, in natural bodies, b/c we've inherited life from Adam; He became a living being, and therefore so are we
And having been quickened to life in the *spirit*, by the Spirit – the life-giving Spirit of Christ – we will eventually receive a spiritual *body*, a supernatural body . . .
To go along with our supernatural spirit
That's the logic he uses to support the conclusion in v48-49, that we will resemble the Lord someday

- But before he gets there, he throws in one caveat, v46 – *But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.*
Which is pretty straightforward – our natural, earthly bodies from Adam, came first . . .
And our spiritual life in Christ came second; With our spiritual *bodies* to come later
And the former prevails until the arrival of the latter; That's pretty clear
And it puts the kibosh on reincarnation – the belief that our spirits have always existed, and our bodies are just being reincarnated in different forms each time

The question is – why does he say it? And the answer I think, lies in 2 reasons

1. He's trying to counter those in his day, who believed that all things physical are passé, and don't matter; Only the spiritual matters
That's what some people thought; It was a form of asceticism
But Paul gives credence to *both* – both the spiritual *and* the physical
By saying that the physical came first, *and* that the two will exist hand in hand for all eternity; Our resurrection bodies are physical bodies
2. He's trying to counter the belief in some religious and philosophical circles of that day, that our supernatural bodies were somehow created first . . .
And are simply awaiting the death of our natural ones
And Paul just meets that one head on, by basically saying – uh-uh; the *physical* came 1st, and the spiritual will follow when the time comes

In any case, he returns to his line of thought in v47, saying – *The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.*
Setting up the analogy in the final two verses, that guarantees our resemblance to Christ in our resurrection bodies
It's supported by logic, and confirmed by analogy (**Summary**)

- None of which means that faith isn't necessary; It is
Without faith it's impossible to please God (Heb 11:6) . . .

Without faith, you won't believe he exists in the first place . . .
And without faith, you'll have no confidence or conviction that he'll do what he says – that he'll reward you with a resurrection body, logic or not

But *with* faith, God has some amazing things in store for those who love him and are called according to his purpose (**Summary**)
In fact, *no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him* (1 Cor 2:9)

So the next time you see a seed, or a plant, or an image of yourself in a mirror – remember that as a believer, what you see is but a hint of what's to come . . .
And when it does, you'll be in a league all its own

Pray – Thank you for the clarity this brings; And the hope it fuels; Use it to increase our sense of anticipation, and solidify our faith in all that you say and use our tithes now, to do the same in others