

TITLE: THE RESURRECTION EXPLAINED

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58

INTRO: Everything Paul has said in this chapter so far has been to prove that there *is* a resurrection: Christ was raised, and we will be too. We know it will occur when Christ returns. But how? What's going to happen? We'll find that Paul's answer is "by God's power" (v. 38), and that this is all we need to know!

I. ANALOGIES OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 35-41):

A. (v. 35-38) Example of a seed – death is necessary in order to change (resurrect)

(v. 35) *But some will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?* People were concerned with what body one would be raised with (expecting a physical body). This may also have been a sarcastic argument of the naysayers. Some today oppose cremation because of this same concern (they think they're same body will be raised)!

(v. 36-38) To this Paul says, *Thou fool! That which you sow is not made alive unless it dies. You don't sow the body that will be, but wheat/grain* (i.e., the seed). You plant the seed, not the final product! Jesus said this of Himself – "*the seed must die for the plant to live*" (Jn 12:24). *But God gives it a body...to every seed his own body.* We will not have the same body we died with!

- B. (v. 39-41) Examples of differences in bodily composition & appearance** – God's power to create various forms/appearances. (v. 39) *And all flesh is not the same: there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, fishes, birds.* There are different types of flesh – man is **not** an animal! Beasts don't breed fish; men don't breed birds. Animals don't breed humans (evolution is false)! (v. 40-41) *There are also celestial bodies* ('in the heavens') & *terrestrial bodies* ('in the earth') w/different glories (appearances). If God can do all this (multiple types of flesh & appearances), we shouldn't be surprised that He can raise us up and give us new bodies (Phil 3:21–*Christ will change our vile* (lowly, humble) *body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*).

II. EFFECT OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 42-49):

- A. (v. 42-44) The change brought on by the resurrection** – this is an answer to v. 35. *It is sown in corruption* (perishable, it can decay); *raised in incorruption* (an incorruptible body – not subject to disease, death, sin), *dishonor-glory; weakness-power; natural-spiritual*. Here is the point – this is how all these changes can take place. It was physical, now then it will be spiritual.

- B. (v. 45-49) The source of the change** – Back to the contrast between Adam & Christ (v. 21-22):

The 1st man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit. God gave Adam life (*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* – Gen 2:7), which gave life to **all** humanity. God raised Jesus, bringing **spiritual** life to all who obey (Heb 5:9).

(v. 46-47) Order: natural, then spiritual – The natural/physical life had to come 1st. Adam is of the earth, earthy (physical); the 2nd is the Lord from Heaven (spiritual).

(v. 48-49) We are all "earthy" (physical – there are obviously no doubts or disagreements about this fact). As surely as we are physical, it's just as certain that we'll be spiritual – we'll bear the image of the heavenly (Jesus – v. 47, Phil 3:21).

III. PURPOSE OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 50-58):

- A. (v. 50-53) The effect of the resurrection** – we will change.

(v. 50) *Flesh & blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...* Now we are flesh & blood (earthy), and we **are** part of the kingdom. But he's speaking of Heaven. In Heaven there will be no physical bodies. Corruption cannot *inherit* incorruption– there must be a change (v. 42). (v. 51-52) But this change does NOT require death. *We shall not all sleep* (die), *but we shall all be changed*. In the end, when Jesus comes and the trump sounds, in a twinkling of an eye (a blink – no more time to repent), *the dead shall be raised incorruptible* (v. 42), *and we* (which alive & remain – 1 Thess 4:17) *shall be changed*. He doesn't give any more details about the process; he just says (in v.53) that *this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal* (able to die), *immortality*.

- B. (v. 54-57) The victory of the resurrection** – death will lose.

(v. 54-55) When this change happens, then shall the saying be fulfilled "*Death is swallowed up in victory* (Isa 25:8). *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory* (Hos 13:14)?" Even the prophets spoke of the resurrection. If we die and stay dead, then death has the victory. Death being swallowed up in victory is resurrection! Death is the last enemy (v. 26).

(v. 56) *The sting of death is sin* – Sin results in death (Rom 6:23 – *the wages of sin is death*). *The strength of sin is the law* – this is explained in Rom 7:7–"*I had not known sin, but by the law. For I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*" The law revealed sin.

(v. 57) *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory* (resurrection) *through our Lord Jesus Christ* (He was raised, defeated death, and therefore sin). We'll experience this when we're resurrected (changed). Until then, He provides forgiveness of sin.

- C. (v. 58) The influence of the resurrection**

The resurrection shouldn't just affect us on the day we're raised/changed. It should affect us **now!** *Therefore be steadfast* (firm, settled), *unmovable, always abounding* (increasing) *in the work of the Lord*. Steadfast & unmovable are synonyms, giving a clear picture of something planted firmly so that it cannot be moved. In context of this letter, he's saying to be firm in the truth, not moved by any of these false teachings – know the truth, don't be moved (cf. 2 Pet 2:14–*beguiling unstable souls*). *Be always increasing in the work of the Lord*. If you aren't working, you're failing! We should just be working, we should be increasing in our work (always abounding). Doing *God's* work should keep us too busy to do other things. But it's usually the other way around! *Your labor in the Lord is not in vain!*

CONCLUSION: The key point is in v.44 – when Christ returns, we will all change from physical (natural) to spiritual. But what exactly does this mean? 1 John 3:2-3 - we don't know what we'll be like when we're in heaven, but we'll be like Jesus. (v. 51) Paul said, "*and we shall be changed*" (we who are alive & remain – 1 Thess 4:17). As inspired as he was, Paul did not know when Jesus would return. So he lived as if He would return in Paul's lifetime. We all should live that way! The end will come in the blink of an eye (v. 52). Blink your eye, then think about how much time you have during that blink to repent! If there's something you need to do to be right with God, do it now!