

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

[www.twojourneys.org](http://www.twojourneys.org)

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at [twojourneys.org](http://twojourneys.org)

## **The Resurrection Body Described**

### **1 Corinthians 15:42-49**

#### I. Key Question: What Will the Resurrection Body Be Like

*1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"*

##### A. The Context: Corinthian Doubts About the Resurrection of the Body

*1 Corinthians 15:12 how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

##### B. Paul Rebukes their Skepticism

*1 Corinthians 15:36 How foolish!*

1. They just can't believe that God could even do this... as though the logistical problems prove it cannot happen at all

C. So, Paul gives some amazing insights here into what kinds of bodies we will have in the New Jerusalem... what kinds of bodies will carry us to explore the New Heavens and New Earth... what kind of bodies will sit at tables in the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

#### II. The Resurrection Body Contrasted with the Mortal Body

*1 Corinthians 15:42-44 The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

A. A Set of Four Couplets... Contrasting the Mortal Body with the Resurrection Body

1. Perishable vs. imperishable
2. Dishonor vs. glory
3. Weakness vs. power
4. Natural vs. spiritual

B. Perishable vs. Imperishable

***“The body that is sown is PERISHABLE... it is raised IMPERISHABLE***

1. Perishable means able to die... a synonym for mortal
2. It also implies a certain process of decay
  - a. All living things decay... that decay comes from nasty bacterial growth, resulting in bad odors
  - b. Even while we live, there is a process of death going on all the time at the cellular level
  - c. Romans 8: All of creation is groaning in bondage to decay
  - d. But this decay really takes off after death

***Psalm 49:14 Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions.***

***John 11:39 Martha, the sister of the dead {Lazarus}, said "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."***

- e. So... the body that is sown is PERISHABLE... it will become a rotting corpse in the grave, and death will feed on it
3. The body that is raised is IMPERISHABLE... it cannot die, it does not decay... it is pulsating with life and will for all eternity

***Revelation 21:4 “No more death, mourning, crying, or pain... for the old order of things has passed away and everything will be made new!”***

- a. Our resurrection bodies will LIVE FOREVER... immortal
- b. There will be no aging process in heaven... no diminishment of capability over the infinite time we will be in heaven; our eyesight will not dim over the endless millennia in heaven; our arms will not grow weak, our hearing will not grow faint

#### 4. Eternal HEALTH

***Revelation 22:2 On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.***

Ongoing health coursing through our veins... our resurrection bodies will never get sick, be injured, or experience pain

#### C. Dishonor vs. glory

***“[the body] is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.”***

1. There is an essential dishonor to perishing and death
  - a. First of all, the wages of SIN is DEATH
  - b. We are dying because we are part of Adam’s sinful race
  - c. And we are personally dying also because of actual sins we have committed in violation of God’s holy laws
  - d. Therefore, the aging and death process are inherently dishonorable; death is the **ultimate dishonor**
  - e. Funeral directors, pastors, and families try to bring honor to the funeral: military personnel cover the casket with the flag; there may be a twenty-one gun salute; or loved ones give testimony and speak of the honorable way the person lived their lives ... and that is wonderful
  - f. But when it comes to the actual corpse, it is as this scripture says “SOWN IN DISHONOR”
  - g. BUT... it is RAISED IN GLORY!!!

## 2. Raised in GLORY

- a. The resurrection body is inherently GLORIOUS

***Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.***

- b. Christ will bestow a radiant glory on his bride, the church... he will dress her up in white robes and deck her with radiant glory

***Revelation 21:9-11 "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.***

- c. Every individual Christian will be in resurrection bodies, and will be perfect physical specimens... beautiful to look at, stunning in their appearance

- d. There will be an essential HONOR to being one of the resurrected saints

***Romans 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.***

Aaron the high priest was clothed with special garments covered with jewels... why?

***Exodus 28:2 Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor.***

So God will clothe his redeemed with honor by the glory of their resurrected bodies

### D. Weakness vs. Strength

***1 Corinthians 15:43 it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power***

1. The corpse that is sown is the very picture of WEAKNESS

- a. Weakness is the inability to do much... barely able to pick up a piece of paper
- b. Elderly people are frail, weak; they have trouble standing up, trouble chewing their food, trouble doing most ordinary things in life; this is normal aging...
- c. But friends, this text is not talking about aging, or the elderly... it is talking about the CORPSE that is sown in the earth... that CORPSE is sown IN WEAKNESS
- d. A corpse is the very picture of weakness... it is not true that it cannot do much... actually IT CANNOT DO ANYTHING
- e. It is the human body at its weakest—overcome by death, it sinks down into the grave and cannot stop a single thing from bringing about the decay that is inevitable
- f. It is SOWN IN WEAKNESS

## 2. But... RAISED IN POWER!!

- a. The resurrection body will be staggeringly powerful... this is not referring to the power God shows in raising it, but the power of the body itself!!
- b. What does this mean? Will we be super-heroes, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, like Superman? Will we be able to fly? To move at the speed of light?
- c. Like this angel, powerful??:

***Matthew 28:2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.***

Or, like Samson, who tore loose the two doors of a city gate, together with the gateposts and crossbar and carried them to the top of a hill in Hebron

Maybe! Who knows for sure? But the resurrection body is raised in POWER... that means CHARACTERIZED BY POWER

3. I think of this verse more than any, when I think of the POWER of the resurrection body

***Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. <sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; <sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint***

Endless power! Measureless strength!

No need to sleep to renew our strength... we will get continual strength directly from God Almighty

Illus. Tour de France... riding up the Alps with limitless energy!

E. Natural vs. Spiritual

***1 Corinthians 15:44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.***

1. This is the most mysterious of all
2. The corpse that is sown Paul calls “a natural body”... it is the physical body we know so well here below
3. But the resurrection body is made of different STUFF, if we can use the word “stuff”; as though the very elements of the body are made in a new way
4. The very words “spiritual body” seems almost to be a contradiction in terms... like they are opposites: there is the body and there is the spirit... the body is the house for the spirit
5. But the resurrection body will involve a perfect harmony between body and spirit
6. And it seems it will follow different physical laws

F. Summation

1. Our corpse is PERISHABLE, DISHONORABLE, WEAK, and NATURAL

2. Our resurrection body is IMPERISHABLE, GLORIOUS, POWERFUL, and SPIRITUAL

### III. The Eternal Pattern: Christ's Resurrection Body

#### A. Paul Calls Christ's Resurrection Body: Firstfruits

***1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***

1. The word "firstfruits" implies the first harvested, with a vast harvest to follow
2. There will be a multitude greater than anyone can count from every nation on earth, raised from the dead
3. As Jesus himself promised:

***John 6:39-40 This is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'***

#### B. Paul Openly Connects Our Resurrection Bodies to Christ's

***1 Corinthians 15:45-49 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.***

1. The reference to "Adam" is a re-connection to the theme of federal headship that he opened earlier in this chapter

***1 Corinthians 15:21-23 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.***

2. So Paul teaches a FIRST ADAM and a LAST ADAM

***1 Corinthians 15:45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.***

3. This is the doctrine of federal headship... a single individual represents the whole group in the sight of God
4. Adam represented us at the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden... he stood for all his unborn children and represented them; when he ate the forbidden fruit, he ate on behalf of the whole human race... all of us SINNED in ADAM
5. This is also the doctrine of original sin
  - a. Paul said in verse 22, "in Adam ALL DIE..."
  - b. He develops this theology—the doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN—in Romans 5:12-21 "ALL SINNED" in Adam
  - c. In the same way, when Christ was RIGHTEOUS and OBEYED, we all were righteous and obeyed IN HIM

***Romans 5:19 just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.***

6. Paul applies that theology here directly to the BODY
  - a. Genesis 2:7: God formed Adam's body from the dust of the earth and breathed into it the breath of life
  - b. When Adam sinned, he immediately came under the death penalty God had threatened

***Genesis 2:17 you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.***

Adam did not die right away, but he went into spiritual death in his relationship with God and his body began the death process

This is the judgment of God on Adam and indeed on the WHOLE HUMAN RACE in Adam

***Genesis 3:19 dust you are and to dust you will return.***

- c. When Adam and Eve came together in sexual union, the children they produced were born in the likeness of Adam

***Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.***

- d. So, Seth's body was made in the likeness and pattern of his father, Adam... and in that way, his body was born into death... born into corruption... and so were ALL OF OUR BODIES
- e. The moment we're born, we begin dying... to some degree

C. The Parallel Between Adam and Us... and Between Christ and Us

***1 Corinthians 15:45-49 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.***

1. The sequence is plain... Adam came first, then Christ
2. Adam's children were born to die... their bodies were born to sink back into the dust from which we ultimately came in Adam
3. So, we have borne the image of the man from the dust
4. Christ, the Second Adam, makes an infinitely greater impact on us
  - a. Adam's effect is temporary, Christ's effect is ETERNAL
  - b. Adam's sin affected our whole lives here on earth... all of the aches, pains, diseases, injuries, suffering, birth defects, tumors, amputations, paralysis, and in the end, death... all of that comes from Adam and assaults our mortal bodies
  - c. We have born the likeness of the man from the earth

d. But Christ is a LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT... and his resurrection body is eternally alive, vibrant with life

e. Thus we will bear the likeness of the man from heaven (vs. 49)

#### D. The Mysteries of Christ's Resurrection Body

1. Christ's Resurrection Body was a physical body

***Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.***

So also will our resurrection bodies be real, live, physical bodies

2. Christ's Resurrection Body looked like a normal body to observers

- Disciples on the Road to Emmaus walked and talked with Him as if He were an ordinary man... at one point they asked if He was a stranger to Jerusalem

3. Christ's Resurrection Body could eat food

***Luke 24:41-43 He asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.***

- All told in the Gospels and Acts, Jesus centers time with His disciples around food five times

So also we will be able to consume food at the banquet table of the Lord at the Great Wedding Feast

4. Christ's Resurrection Body had continuity with his life before death

***John 20:27-28 He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"***

Jesus' nail marks seem to be a special case, however, because of the special role his death plays in the salvation of all who would

come after him; it is reasonable to assume that the resurrection body will have no scars or wounds or deficiencies of any sort  
 BUT there is continuity with the past body, or there could be no resurrection... but also DIFFERENCE!!

5. Christ's Resurrection Body looked different to people who knew Him well

- Mary Magdalene thought he was the gardener, though she knew him well
- The two disciples on the Road to Emmaus spent most of the day with Him, and "were kept from recognizing Him." It seems God did something in their minds to prevent their recognizing of His face and voice
- In Matthew 28:16, it says "When they saw Him, they worshiped Him... but some doubted."
- BUT in other appearances they recognized Him right away, no hesitation

6. Christ's Resurrection Body could do some amazing things

- Sudden Appearance

***Luke 24:36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."***

- Sudden Disappearance

***Luke 24:30-31 He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.***

- Travel through walls

Jesus got out of the tomb by passing through the rock walls.

***John 20:19*** When the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them

- Ascent to heaven

***Acts 1:9*** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

7. And Christ's Resurrection Body was free forever from death, corruption, and pain

***Romans 6:9*** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

So all of these unusual behavior patterns may give us a clue as to what "spiritual body" means...

In any case, Christ's resurrection body is the PATTERN for ours... as Paul makes plain

***1 Corinthians 15:49*** And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

#### IV. Application

A. Repent and Trust Christ

***John 11:25-26*** "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

B. Rejoice and Trust Christ: Because Christ Lives, You Also Will Live

C. Set Your Hope Fully on the Future Grace

***1 Peter 1:13*** set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

D. Do Not Lament the Destruction of this Body, or Spend Too Much on Combating Aging

E. Look forward to an amazingly ACTIVE time in the New Heaven and New Earth... some people think heaven will be boring, just sitting around forever on a cloud, strumming a harp, and singing songs... but the resurrection body is physical, and so will be the resurrected world... a world to explore and in which to do work... why would God give us staggeringly capable resurrection bodies with amazing power and energy, and then give us nothing to do?

E. Do Not Speculate Too Much... Just Know It Will Be Wonderful!!!

Robert L. Wilkin: The other day I found myself walking behind two small children being followed by their grandparents. The little girl, perhaps five years old, was rhythmically hopping across the mall, delighting in the quickness and flexibility of her body, oblivious to what was around; the grandparents were healthy able folk, not elderly, yet they moved deliberately, prudently looking down lest they slip. Later in the day I watched a very elderly man with a walker shuffle in to a hardware store, tiny step by tiny step, each made with a great act of will. Thinking medieval thoughts I wondered: Which body-that of the child, those of the middle-aged couple, or that of the man with the walker-will be raised in the resurrection? The medievals asked, Will there be differentiation by sex in heaven? Will we all be the same age? If so, what age? Will limbs that were crippled or amputated be restored? What of those born with deformities? Will we have internal as well as external organs? Will a child that dies in infancy be raised as an adult? Into what will aborted fetuses rise?

Augustine:

“It remains, therefore, that we conclude that every man shall receive his own size which he had in youth, though he died an old man, or which he would have had, supposing he died before his prime...; all shall rise neither beyond nor under youth; For even the world’s wisest men have fixed the bloom of youth at about the age of thirty; and when this period has been passed, the man begins to decline towards the defective and duller

periods of old age." [Augustine, *City of God*, Book XXII, Chap. 15]

Best NOT TO GET THIS SPECIFIC!

Stick with these four couplets, and be satisfied with that:

***1 Corinthians 15:42-44 The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body***