

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 49 - JESUS' RESURRECTED BODY]

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*The last couple of times we have been looking at the subject of the new creation inaugurated by Jesus' resurrection.*

- ◆ He was the first human who passed from mortality to immortality, so there is a new creature in God's good creation.
- ◆ A human has been infused with the life of God.
- ◆ A human has crossed from death to life, not just physical life, but to eternal life.
- ◆ The question we are going to look at today is, what kind of body did this new immortal creature have?
- ◆ And I hope to show you there is a very important connection between the resurrection and the incarnation.

***What is the relevance of this question for us today? What kind of body did this new immortal creature have?***

- ◆ The simple reason is, the time is coming when we will have the same type of immortal body as the risen Christ has.
- ◆ ***1 Corinthians 15: 20-23 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***
- ◆ Firstfruits, as mentioned before implies something to follow as this section of scripture goes on to explain.
- ◆ ***V.21 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.***
- ◆ Notice again the representative principle at work. Adam introduced sin and death, while Christ introduces righteousness and eternal life.
- ◆ Now Paul goes on to explain the progression of those who will follow Christ to immortality.
- ◆ ***V.23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.***
- ◆ This is the culmination of God's plan of making man in His image. Physical human beings who have fallen asleep will follow in Christ's footsteps and be resurrected to share eternal life and fellowship with God.
- ◆ ***1 John 3:1-2 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is***
- ◆ Incredibly, humans will be infused with the very life of the godhead so we can share their existence as their children.

***We will speak more of that in the future, but for now, we will concentrate on the "body" of the resurrected Jesus.***

- ◆ Notice though, both in this section and as we will see in 1 Corinthians 15, there is a limited amount of information on what our resurrected body will be like, ***and what we will be has not yet been made known.***
- ◆ And a complete revelation of what our body will be like won't happen until we encounter the risen Christ.
- ◆ However, until that time, there are some things we can know.

***The first thing we need to understand is there are different bodies designed to suit different environments.***

- ◆ In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul goes to great lengths to explain how these various bodies have been designed to function in their particular environment.
- ◆ ***V.39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.***
- ◆ Human bodies and animals have been designed to live primarily on land, while birds have been designed to fly, and fish designed to live in water.
- ◆ The bodies they have are designed to function in their particular environment.
- ◆ He then makes the same point in reference to the celestial bodies.
- ◆ ***V.40-41 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. <sup>41</sup> The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.***
- ◆ The sun provides the light, heat and time we earthlings need to function, the moon regulates the tides, etc., and the stars are there to confound the proud atheists who refuse to admit the designer behind the universe.
- ◆ Now Paul turns his attention to what our resurrected body will be like, and like the examples he has just cited, they will be bodies designed to function in the environment of the new creation.
- ◆ We have already made the distinction between chronos time and eternal time.

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- ◆ Our present physical bodies were designed to live in the four dimensional environment of time and space.
- ◆ But now that we are being raised to live in the spiritual realm of the new creation, eternal time, we will need an appropriate body to function in that dimension.
- ◆ **V.42-50 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**
- ◆ The physical body that relies on food, water and air for basic survival in the decaying world of chronos time is not an appropriate body for the spiritual world of eternal time.
- ◆ **V.45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.**
- ◆ As humans came into existence through physical procreation from Adam, so these new bodies will come into existence through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, and the **"life-giving spirit."**
- ◆ The gift of immortality comes through the **"life-giving spirit"**, Jesus Christ. There is no intrinsic power in man such as the immortal soul that can make the transition from mortal to immortality.
- ◆ We, like Jesus Christ, rely on God to raise us from the dead and receive the gift of immortality.
- ◆ **V.46 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 is of heaven.<sup>48</sup> As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven.<sup>49</sup> And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.**
- ◆ In the same way we are presently in the image of the earthly man Adam, one day we will be in the image of the heavenly man, Jesus Christ.
- ◆ **V.50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.**
- ◆ In the same way Jesus said to Nicodemus, **"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.<sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. (John 3:5),** so Paul confirms we will have a spiritual body suitable to function in the heavenly realm.

**But notice Paul's emphasis on the word, "body."**

- ◆ Although it will not be a flesh and blood body, the spiritual body we will have still retains an important connection to our physical bodies.
- ◆ When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, He was recognizable as Jesus, not only by His appearance, scars from His crucifixion, but in the way He conducted Himself when He broke bread (Luke 24:30-40).
- ◆ Paul confirms this connection between the old physical body that has gone before and the new spiritual body when he uses the analogy of a seed that produces a plant.
- ◆ **1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"<sup>36</sup> How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.<sup>37</sup> When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.**
- ◆ Although the seed disappears or dies in the process, there is still a connection between the seed and the plant that grows from it.
- ◆ **V.38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.**
- ◆ That is why those who want to inherit eternity must be born again of the Holy Spirit. In that process the old physical body dies and is replaced by the new spiritual body.

**It was with this new spiritual body that Jesus appeared to His disciples.**

- ◆ **John 20:19-20 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"**
- ◆ For Jesus to suddenly appear out of nowhere in a locked room ought to tell us something about His new body.
- ◆ It had powers way beyond the natural. Jesus was either a great magician or this was a supernatural occurrence.
- ◆ **V.20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.**
- ◆ We spoke earlier how each of us is a unique "person" with our own personality, gifts and talents.

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- ◆ Jesus wanted to assure the disciples that He was the same person they knew before His crucifixion so He asked them to check His hands and His side.
- ◆ So not only is Jesus raised immortal, but also we see his “personhood” transcending death in the miracle of the resurrection.
- ◆ In other words, there was a continuation of His personal being and existence of the man Jesus before and after His resurrection.

***Jesus was recognisable, but there was also something very different about the body of this resurrected Jesus.***

- ◆ It had the capacity to pass through doors, able to appear and disappear, to eat or not to eat.
- ◆ It had the capacity to communicate and fellowship with physical humans.
- ◆ And as other spiritual heavenly bodies have related to humans in the past, it had the capacity to function in both the physical and spiritual dimensions.
- ◆ The Lord along with two others appeared to Abraham before He destroyed Sodom (Genesis 18:1-2).
- ◆ Jacob wrestled with the Lord (Genesis 32:23-25).
- ◆ The commander of the army of the Lord appeared to Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15).
- ◆ Two angels appeared to Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb (John 20:11-12).
- ◆ So this spiritually transformed body of Jesus was capable of functioning in both dimensions when the need arose.

***But don't for a moment think this was the true spiritual body that appeared to the disciples. This was merely a shadow of the now glorified Jesus Christ.***

- ◆ A better description of the glorified body of the risen Christ is found in Luke 9 when He was transfigured before Peter, James and John.
- ◆ ***Luke 9:28-30 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.***
- ◆ This spiritual body was a little different from the body that appeared to the disciples post resurrection.
- ◆ Here was the living Christ in all His divine glory, the same body He will have on His return, and we will then see Him as He truly is, because ***“we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).***
- ◆ ***Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.***
- ◆ This amazing truth is confirmed here at the transfiguration.
- ◆ ***Luke 9:30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.***
- ◆ Both Moses and Elijah, humans, also appeared with glorified spiritual bodies.
- ◆ Here again is proof that we serve a God who has the power to raise humans who have died from the grave and give them glorified spiritual bodies.
- ◆ But notice here too there is some connection between the old mortal bodies and their new spiritual bodies as both of these men were recognizable as Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:3-4).
- ◆ But just as a plant is so much more glorious than the seed it grew from, so it will be with our glorified spiritual bodies.

***We have spent most of our time today focusing on the type of body Jesus had when He was resurrected.***

- ◆ But if this is all we focus on, we miss the most important aspect of Jesus' resurrection event.
- ◆ This new human creature that rose from the dead on the third day is the culmination of God's creative purpose of making man in His image.
- ◆ And this is what ties the resurrection to the incarnation.
- ◆ As Jesus mentioned in His parable of Lazarus and the rich man, there is this vast gulf between mortality and immortality (Luke 16:26).
- ◆ There is no way we humans can transcend this gulf as our physical bodies were designed to die.
- ◆ However, we have a Savior who can and did cross this vast gulf.
- ◆ He willingly lowered Himself to our level in order for us to join Him at His level.

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- ◆ The incarnation is about God joining us in our humanity, whereas the resurrection is about us joining God in eternity.
- ◆ If the Son of God who sat at the Father's right hand were not willing to humble Himself and join us in our humanity, then this pathway to eternity would never have opened (Philippians 2:5-8).
- ◆ But by adding humanity to His divinity, Jesus opened the pathway for humans to join God in eternity.
- ◆ He is the life-giving spirit who connects finite humanity with His being as the divine Son of God.
- ◆ This is why Jesus calls Himself "the gate for the sheep" (John 10:7).

***But as Jesus goes on to say in John 10:4, access to this pathway is contingent on a relationship with the life-giving spirit, Jesus Christ. Only those who know His voice and follow Him will be admitted (John 10:4-5).***

- ◆ Only those who are willing to give up their false humanity and allow it to die with Christ will be admitted.
- ◆ Jesus, by joining Himself with that false humanity, was able to draw us into the healing fold of the trinity and grant us the ability to share in the life and love of the godhead.
- ◆ Ultimately, humans were created to relate to our God and Father.

***The upshot of all this is, as humans our lives are limited. We are finite. However, we serve a God who has the power to extend the finite nature of human personhood beyond death.***

- ◆ The extension of this personhood is based on a relationship to God through Jesus Christ Himself who is infinite.
- ◆ When Jesus rose from the dead, He destroyed the hold the power of death had on mortal human beings. The mortal body died, but in its place rose the glorified spiritual body with its personhood intact.
- ◆ Because Jesus Christ was willing to join us in our humanity, death no longer limits the history of a finite person. He will be raised up with his personhood intact with a glorified spiritual body designed to live in eternity with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- ◆ ***Romans 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.***