

## The Resurrection

### I Corinthians 15

#### I. Introduction:

1. Have you ever heard a sermon about the general resurrection? (Not the *resurrection of Christ*, but the *general resurrection of the dead*).
  - A. I haven't!
  - B. I did some research of *Truth Magazine (Guardian of Truth)* all the way back to 1950 (64 years) and found only three articles concerning the general resurrection of the dead.
2. As we go through this sermon it will become crystal clear the *general resurrection of the dead* is inseparably linked with the *resurrection of Christ* and, therefore, is the most important doctrine in the Bible.
  - A. The resurrection of Christ establishes His credentials (e.g., Son of God, Savior of the body of Christ, etc.).
  - B. The general resurrection of the dead is at the center of the Christian's hope (I Pet. 1:3).
  - C. There is much false teaching concerning the resurrection (both of Christ's and the general resurrection).
    - (1) Materialists/Annihilationists: practically all denominations, esp. Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Worldwide Church of God (i.e., Herbert W. Armstrong/*Plain Truth Magazine*).
    - (2) Realized eschatologists (A.D. 70 doctrine): Max King is the champion of this false doctrine: "...the expected eschatological resurrection was the translation of the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:18)." (SOP-2, p. 309) These folks deny there will be a general resurrection of the dead on the day of final judgment. According to their theory the resurrection took place in A.D. 70 and is variously described as the church, Israel, the children of God from the Old Covenant being transitioned to the New Covenant, the Christian system escaping the oppression of Judaism (all of those positions deny the *general resurrection of the dead*!).
3. This morning we will study the resurrection as taught by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15.

#### II. Discussion:

##### I. Resurrection the Bedrock of the Gospel (vv. 1-11).

- A. Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians of the gospel: the gospel "*is the power of God to salvation*" (Rom. 1:16):
  - (1) "I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you" (v. 1, Acts 18),
  - (2) "which also you received" (v. 1; I Thess. 2:13),
  - (3) "in which you stand" (v. 1; 2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 5:1-2; 10:17),
  - (4) "by which also you are saved" (v. 2; Rom. 1:16),
  - (5) "if you hold fast that word which I preached to you" (v. 2; Heb. 3 & 4),
  - (6) "unless you believed in vain" (v. 2),

B. Paul establishes the core facts of the gospel (all *"according to the Scriptures"*):

- (1) *"Christ died for our sins"* (v. 3; Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2; Isa. 53),
- (2) *"He was buried"* (v. 4; Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60; Acts 13:29; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12),
- (3) *"He rose again the third day"* (v. 4; Matt. 20:19; 27:63-64; 28:1-6; Lk. 18:31-33; Jn. 3:19-22; 20:1-9; Acts 1:3; 2:23-24; 32; 13:30-35; 17:31; Heb. 13:20),

C. Christ's resurrection is the chief fact undergirding the veracity and the *"power"* of the gospel!

- (1) Jesus was *"declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead"* (Rom. 1:4).
- (2) *"God...raised up Christ"* (v. 15); *"whom God raised up"* (Acts 2:24). In other words, by God's raising of Christ from the grave He placed on Christ His seal of approval.
- (3) Resurrection demonstrates Jesus' victory over sin and death (Rom. 4:25; 5:10; Heb. 9:26; Acts 2:22-28).
- (4) Jesus entered the domain of Satan, the house of the strong man, spoiled his goods, plundered his house, and bound him (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 12:29; Acts 2:31; Rev. 1:18).
- (5) His resurrection thus qualifies Him as:
  - ☛ *"the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matt. 16:16),
  - ☛ The foundation upon which the church is built (Matt. 16:18),
  - ☛ *"raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,"* and make Him *"both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:29-36),
  - ☛ Able to *"save"* (*"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23),
  - ☛ The only *"name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).
  - ☛ Judge: gives *"assurance"* God *"has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained"* (Acts 17:31; 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:7).

D. No resurrection of Christ, no declaration of Jesus as the Son of God, no foundation for the church, no church to which the saved can be added, no Lord and Christ, no name under heaven by which we must be saved, no Savior of the body, no judgment...NO GOSPEL!

E. No resurrection of Christ then the Corinthian Christians would have *"believed in vain"* (1 Cor. 15:2; *vain* in the sense of based on a false foundation, i.e., no resurrection of Christ).

F. In vv. 5-8 Paul establishes the reality of the resurrection through the testimony of eyewitnesses. These witnesses were:

- ✓ *Credible* (both sympathetic and unsympathetic witnesses),
- ✓ *Multiple in number* (>513; *"over five hundred brethren at once,"* v. 6),
- ✓ *Multiple sightings* (12 separate sightings over 40 days).
- ✓ *Verifiable* (most witnesses still alive, v. 6 *"of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep"*). ***"If you doubt me, you can go and ask the witnesses yourself!"***

G. Paul establishes five truths (v. 1-11):

- (1) The bodily resurrection of Jesus was an essential element of the gospel (vv. 1-2).
- (2) The bodily resurrection of Christ was a historical fact (vv. 3-7).
- (3) The preaching of Paul and all of the apostles and evangelists featured the resurrection of Christ as a central doctrine (v. 11; Acts 2, 3, 4 [4:2], 10, 13, 17, 23, 24, 25).
- (4) The Corinthians had previously accepted belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus when they initially obeyed the gospel (vv. 1-2, 11).
- (5) If there were no resurrection of Christ there are dire consequences so severe as to destroy the entire system of salvation through the gospel (vv. 12-19).

#### H. Church at Corinth had many problems!

- ☛ Chapters 1-3: divisions, sectarianism, seeds of denominationalism,
- ☛ Chapter 5: immorality among the brethren,
- ☛ Chapter 6: taking brethren to law in heathen courts,
- ☛ Chapter 7: marriage, divorce, remarriage, etc.,
- ☛ Chapter 8: eating meat offered to idols,
- ☛ Chapter 9: financial support of gospel preachers,
- ☛ Chapter 10: fellowship with idolatry,
- ☛ Chapter 11: head covering and Lord's supper,
- ☛ Chapters 12-14: spiritual gifts,
- ☛ Chapter 15: resurrection of the dead.

## 2. **Essential Connection Between Christ's Resurrection and the General Resurrection of the Dead** (vv. 12-19).

### A. Source of problem/error in chapter 15 (resurrection of the dead): from where did these false notions about the resurrection come?

- (1) Not from converted Sadducees, they denied any and all aspects of the resurrection. The Corinthians accepted resurrection of Christ but denied general resurrection of the dead.

- (2) Objections to general resurrection probably came from the Greeks.

- (a) In Platonic philosophy an immortal soul was acceptable, but the resurrection of the body was very undesirable (inherent vileness of the flesh; gnostic heresy).

- (b) Greek Christians at Corinth obviously accepted the resurrection of Christ as an isolated case, but did not accept the general resurrection of the dead (v. 12).

### C. So the issue was not the resurrection of Christ, the Corinthians believed in that. The issue was a denial of the general resurrection of the dead (v. 12). But they had missed two inseparable connections: 1) Gospel→resurrection of Christ, and 2) resurrection of Christ→general resurrection.

### D. If the Corinthians were correct that there was no resurrection of the dead, then there are dire consequences:

- ✓ "Christ is not risen" (1 Cor. 15:13, 17),

- ✓ The preaching of the apostles (and our preaching) is “*vain*” (1 Cor. 15:14),
- ✓ Our “*faith is also vain*” (1 Cor. 15:14, 17),
- ✓ The apostles were “*false witnesses of God*” (1 Cor. 15:15; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18),
- ✓ We “*are yet in our sins*” (1 Cor. 15:17; Rom. 4:25; Heb. 4:14-16),
- ✓ Christians who have already died “*in Christ are perished*” (1 Cor. 15:18),
- ✓ Our “*hope in Christ*” is limited to “*this life only*” (1 Cor. 15:19),
- ✓ And, they (we) “*are of all men the most pitiable*” (1 Cor. 15:19).

E. If the Corinthians were correct:

- ✓ Then at the end of time when the Lord returns to judge the world, to destroy “*both the earth and the works that are in it*” (2 Pet. 3:10), and present “*a crown of righteous*” “*on that Day*” “*to all who have loved His appearing*” (2 Tim. 4:8),
- ✓ The saints will not be “*caught up together...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...and thus...always be with the Lord*” (1 Thess. 4:17),
- ✓ The Christian hope is empty, vain, and an illusion!
- ✓ Christians are entirely miserable dupes! Total losers!

F. Further, there are consequences to this inseparable connection between the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of the dead. The connection is unmistakable for Paul makes it three times!

- ☛ v. 13: “*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.*”
- ☛ v. 15: “*...we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise.*”
- ☛ v. 16: “*For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.*”

How do people miss the point when Paul states it three times in the space of four verses?!

G. The contradiction is obvious; the admission of the specific case (resurrection of Christ) makes the denial of the general (there is no resurrection) **impossible**. The two statements contradict one another!

H. The universal negative, “There is no resurrection of the dead,” cannot be true if someone was raised from the dead.

I. The two go hand in hand, if one exists, both exist. If one does not exist, then neither exists. If one falls, both fall; if one stands, both stand.

J. The position of the Corinthians on the general resurrection stood opposed to:

- (1) What the Scriptures said concerning Christ (esp. in regards to fulfilled prophecy).
- (2) What Paul and the other apostles and evangelists preached.
- (3) What the Corinthians had believed when they obeyed the gospel (surely Paul had preached the general resurrection as part of the gospel!).
- (4) What eyewitness testimony established.
- (5) What logic demands (i.e., res. of Christ and general res. stand or fall together).

K. The Corinthian heresy is an important doctrinal division from the gospel because it takes the very heart out of the gospel; it removes the bedrock foundation of the gospel!

- (1) Any doctrine today (e.g., materialists, A.D. 70) which denies a general resurrection of the dead, or tries to make the resurrection into something it is not, carries with it the same dire consequences Paul states here!
- (2) Any doctrine today (e.g., materialists, A.D. 70) which denies a general resurrection of the dead is false; is a “*damnable heresy*” (2 Pet. 1:1), and must be rejected and cannot be fellowshipped (2 Jn. 9-11).

“Repeatedly, Paul has pressed the argument to its logical consequences in order to show that the Corinthian’s denial of the general resurrection was not an innocuous deviation from the revealed faith. Rather, it was a pernicious, damnable heresy that denied the very foundation facts on which the gospel rested.” (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, p. 465)

“Make the Savior what you please, if he failed to rise from the dead he is useless, for he cannot free us from our sin, the one thing for which we need a Savior. If there is no resurrection, there is also no redemption, no reconciliation with God, no justification, no life and salvation. If Christ is still dead, then every believer is still dead in trespasses and sins. As long as Christ, our surety, is not released, it is certain that our debt is not paid, we are still liable, no matter how much we may trust in some supposed payment or in some release without payment. Christ’s resurrection is the positive proof that his sacrifice was, indeed, sufficient and fully accepted by God. Therefore, Christ was raised for our justification, Rom. 4:25. To reject his resurrection is to reject the efficacy of his sacrifice, and the death which he died is just as useless as our faith in such a dead Christ.” (Lenski, *First and Second Corinthians*, pp. 655-666).

L. Don’t lose sight of the issue: The Corinthian denied the general resurrection of the dead, not the resurrection of Christ. BUT, there is an inseparable connection: 1) Between the gospel and resurrection of Christ, and 2) Between the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection. Can’t have a saving gospel without the resurrection of Christ! Can’t have the resurrection of Christ without a general resurrection!

### 3. The Last Enemy Is Destroyed (vv. 20-28).

- A. Previously Paul argued the case for the truth of the general resurrection of the dead from a logical standpoint: if Christ has been resurrected there must also be a general resurrection; if the specific case is true it follows that the general case is true and vice versa.
- B. He now presents the case as it actually stands (v. 20): “*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*” In modern vernacular, “it’s a done deal!”
- C. Note that Christ is “*the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*”
  - (1) Others had been resurrected from the dead (e.g., Lazarus, son of the widow of Nain, Jairus’ daughter, etc.), but all of those arose to die again.
  - (2) Jesus was the first to rise victorious over death who never had to die again.
- D. The idea of *firstfruits* is taken from the ancient ceremony in Israel of waving the sheaf of the first fruits of the ripening grain (barley, then wheat) before the Lord (Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:9-11; Deut. 16:9-10).
  - (1) Associated with the feast of weeks (Pentecost) where the sheaf was the pledge and sample of the entire harvest.

- (2) It served as a guarantee that the entire crop would be harvested (i.e., same in kind and quality).
- (3) Therefore, the resurrection of all men is as certain as the resurrection of Christ, because He is *“the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* (v. 20; cf. Rom. 8:17)

*“Just as the first-fruits are the earnest of later harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of our resurrection.”* (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:484-486)

E. Paul’s next argument is based on Adam and Jesus as representative (federal) heads of the human family.

- (1) Adam through his disobedience (sin) brought death to himself and the entire human race: *“by man came death”* (v. 21) *“in Adam all die”* (v. 22; Gen. 3:19; Heb. 9:27).
- (2) Christ through His obedience triumphed over sin and death, was raised from the dead, so all of mankind through Christ will be raised from the dead: *“even so in Christ all shall be made alive”* (v. 22).

**Key verse** I Cor. 15:22: *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”*

**Very importantly:** The *“all”* who *“die”* *“in Adam,”* are the same *“all”* who *“shall be made alive,”* *“in Christ.”*

**John 5:28-29:** *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

**Acts 24:15:** *I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.*

- (a) The resurrection of all men as naturally follows the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the death (physical) of all men follows the sin and death of Adam.
- (b) Both are *unconditional*.
- (c) What mankind lost through the disobedience and death (physical) of Adam is regained through the obedience and resurrection of Christ.
- (d) As representative (federal) heads of mankind: 1) death passed on all men through the act of one man (Adam)(v. 22; Heb. 9:27), and 2) through the act of one man (Christ) the resurrection from the dead passes to all men.
- (e) The life and death referred to in this passage pertains only to the *“body.”*
  - (i) Whether the body is raised to everlasting life/eternal damnation is not the point.
  - (ii) If the term *“made alive”* (v.22) suggests the concept of *“everlasting life,”* the passage would teach universal salvation.
- (f) The point is that as all men will experience physical death, all men will experience a bodily resurrection.
  - (i) Later in the chapter it will become obvious why both the righteous and wicked must both be raised from the dead and given a new body.
  - (ii) Because in order to inhabit the next world, both the righteous and wicked will require a *“changed”* body.

**Here is the contrast Paul is presenting...**

**Sidebar:** Paul understood Adam to be a historical person. Therefore, I Corinthians 15 can only be understood if the Genesis account of creation and the fall of man is true. It destroys the arguments of the modernist and evolutionist.

F. Important to remember:

- (1) Death and resurrection are both unconditional, all men are subject to each (v. 22; Heb. 9:27).
- (2) General resurrection is not a salvation issue!
- (3) If the term “*made alive*” (v. 22) means “*everlasting life*” (i.e., salvation), the passage teaches universal salvation (“*all*” in the first clause the same “*all*” as in the second clause; cf. *\*Jn. 5:28; Acts 24:15*).

G. Timing:

- (1) “*Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.*” (v. 23).
  - (a) Resurrection final event in human history! “*Then comes the end*” (v. 24).
  - (b) Christ completes His reign: “*when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father*” (v. 24).
  - (c) “*when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power*” (v. 24).
    - (i) “*rootin day*” (Matt. 15:13),
    - (ii) All kingdoms, institutions, powers on earth shall be broken in pieces and destroyed; everything built up under the dominion of the devil will be destroyed (Dan. 2:44).

**Sidebar:** These verses leave no room whatsoever for any dispensational/ premillennial theories! “*Then cometh the end...*” The kingdom is “*delivered up*,” not “*received*”!

- (iii) “*the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*” (2 Pet. 3:10),
    - (iv) “*till He [Christ] has put all enemies under His feet*” (v. 25).
    - (v) The last enemy scheduled for destruction is “*death*” (v. 26).

“By specifying the last enemy to be destroyed, Paul more clearly defined the length of Christ’s rule. He tells us exactly when Christ’s reign shall end.” (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: I Corinthians*, p. 465)

**When? “*then cometh the end*”:**

- (vi) “*at the last trumpet*” (v. 52).
      - (vii) “*with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God*” (1 Thess. 4:13-18; v. 16).
      - (viii) When “*Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire*” (Rev. 20:14).
      - (ix) When the Lord “*and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*” (2 Thess. 1:7).
      - (x) When the Lord “*in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power*” (2 Thess. 1:8-9).

- (2) Thus, to deny the general resurrection is to:

- (a) Denies the lordship/victory of Christ over sin, death, and the devil; and all this means in God's scheme of redemption (e.g., Son of God, foundation of the church, Savior, etc.).
- (b) Rejects the Lord's plan for the consummation of the ages.
- (c) Rejects the validity of the gospel and the Christian's hope (1 Pet. 1:3).
- (d) Denies the reality of eternal punishment for the wicked and eternal life for the righteous

"Paul's argument in this section is clear: the denial of the general resurrection of all men is an assault on God's final purpose for the universe. He who denies the resurrection denies that the last enemy will ever be subject to Christ, and therefore, denies that the kingdom can ever be handed over to the Father that he may reign supreme." (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, p. 465)

"The denial of the resurrection constitutes a denial that Christ will bring this present struggle between himself and the devil to a successful end. If these Corinthians are right, then Christ's dominion and his glory are a delusion. The denial of the general resurrection is a denial of the gospel's hope. It denies the completeness of Christ's reign and his final victory over the devil." (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, p. 465)

#### 4. Denial of the Resurrection Leads To Loose Morality (vv. 29-34).

- A. This section can be difficult unless one realizes any interpretation must be consistent with the overall theme of the chapter. In a nutshell, Paul is saying that it is totally illogical to deny the resurrection.
  - (1) Mormon's use this section to teach "vicarious baptism" (i.e., baptism for the dead).
  - (2) Many Scriptures refute this false idea (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12).
- B. The point is this: if the dead are not raised:
  - (1) Why would a person be baptized?
    - (a) Baptism, puts one "into Christ" (Gal. 3:27), but if there is no resurrection from the dead, "then Christ is not risen." (v.13). Purpose of baptism is forgiveness of sins and resurrection to eternal life! Mk. 16:16; Romans 6
    - (b) Thus, our "hope in Christ" would be limited to "this life only." Why be baptized to be forever in the realm of the dead? (\*\*see v. 19)
    - (c) The reality of the resurrection is why people are baptized in the first place! Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6; Acts 2:40
    - (d) Hence, all the consequences in vv. 12-19 would be true (i.e., You'll be dead all over just like Rover!).
  - (2) Totally illogical to risk one's life for the gospel if there is no resurrection! Being a Christian subjects one to real possibility of persecution! It sure did for Paul!
    - (a) Paul said, "...why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?" and that he had "fought wild beasts at Ephesus" (literal or figurative? Doesn't matter!). To do so would be absolute foolishness if Corinthian's position on resurrection were true.
    - (b) Paul's preaching of the resurrection exposed him to persecution on a "daily" basis (v. 31; 2 Cor. 11:22-28; Gal. 6:17).
    - (c) Such exposure makes no sense if there is no resurrection! Rather, the best philosophy of life would be to "...eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (v.32). In other words, if there



is no resurrection the most logical course of life is to forget being a Christian and live for the here and now, because that is all there is to life!

C. Such a philosophy is obviously false and has serious consequences.

- (1) Sign of spiritual lethargy and ignorance; spiritual intoxication w/false doctrine..."you need to sober up!" (v. 34)
- (2) Sign of spiritual immaturity and lack of "knowledge of God" (v. 34; Resurrection deniers thought they were a little smarter than others, but were not!).
- (3) Downright shameful! (v. 34).
- (4) Ultimately leads to infidelity (v. 33→32 v. 32: *"If the dead do not rise, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!'"*).
- (5) Therefore, wake up and don't associate with those espousing such false doctrine (vv. 33-34; 2 Jn. 9-11).

## 5. **Objections to the Resurrection Answered** (vv. 35-49).

A. Paul now addresses two possible objections by those at Corinth who denied the resurrection.

- (1) *"How are the dead raised up?"* (1 Cor. 15:35)
- (2) *"And with what body do they come?"* (1 Cor. 15:35)

B. Both are foolish questions for those claiming to believe in God!

- (1) *"You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."* (Matt. 22:29) Earlier in this chapter Paul reproved the Corinthian doubters for denying the resurrection (i.e., v. 34: *"Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."*) His questions (*"Why then are they baptized for the dead?"* *"...why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?"*) also address the foolishness of those two objections.
- (2) Questions I've been asked over the years: "What about people consumed by a wild beast or fire?" "What about cremation?" "What about those drowned in the ocean whose body is never recovered and buried?" All men die and their bodies decay and their remains may be scattered to the four corners of the earth. (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:20; 12:7)
- (3) Question: "Since our current body will decay, and our future body is supposed to live forever, just what kind of body will we have in eternity?"

C. Answers:

- (1) Question #1: *"How are the dead raised up?"*
  - (a) Our dead physical body that is buried in the ground is not the same body that will be resurrected.
  - (b) Analogy #1: seed.
    - (i) When you plant corn or wheat what is the process? First you plant a seed that looks nothing like the mature plant that grows. Further, the seed you plant must die and begin to decay in the ground for the seed to germinate and the plant to grow and emerge (resurrection). Similarly, the human body that is buried is not the same body that is resurrected (Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2). Like the seed, the human body is sown, is dead in the grave and is resurrected as a new living body.

- (ii) The planted seed and the growing plant have two quite different bodies. And, very importantly, the process is ordained by God and occurs millions of times every day due to His power! Jn. 12:24

“The only point that Paul is trying to make is that the grain which is planted in the ground differs from the plant which grows from it. Similarly, our mortal bodies that are laid in the tomb will differ from our spiritual bodies which are raised from the grave.” (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: I Corinthians*, p. 465)

Seed	Human Physical Body
Buried	Buried
Dies	Dies
Seed has a different body than the plant	Resurrected body is different from the mortal body
Cannot predict the form of future body from seed	Cannot predict the form of the resurrected body based on the mortal body
God gives seed a new body suited for its life	God changes our mortal body into a body suited for eternal life
<i>“God gives it a body as He pleases”</i>	<i>“God gives it a body as He pleases”</i>

**Bottom line:** Resurrection body is not the same as the natural, physical body.

(c) Analogy #2: flesh.

- (i) God gave different kinds of flesh to men, animals, fish and birds. He gave each of them the type of flesh suited for the environment in which they live (earth, water, air). Point: *“God gives it a body as He pleases.”* (v. 38).
- (ii) The point: Therefore, God will give us a resurrected body suited for the environment of eternal life (Matt. 10:28; Mk. 9:42).

**Bottom line:** God gave us a physical body suited for life in the material world and will give us a resurrection body suited for the spiritual environment of eternity.

- (d) Analogy #3: celestial/terrestrial bodies: *“the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory”* (vv. 40-41)
- (i) Celestial bodies (i.e., sun, moon, stars) *“differ...in glory”* (v.41)
- (ii) Terrestrial bodies (e.g., Grand Canyon vs. Niagara Falls) *“differ...in glory”* (v.41)
- (iii) Therefore, these “bodies” differ greatly in glory as our resurrected body will differ (surpass) our mortal body in glory.
- (iii) Summary of mortal body versus resurrected body: *“So also is the resurrection of the dead.”* (vv. 42-49) *“So also...”* means a direct application of these analogies to the resurrection of the dead (using physical realm to demonstrate the spiritual realm).

<b>Creation</b>	<b>Resurrection</b>
Seed differs from plant	Plant body differs from seed
Different types of flesh	Different type of body
Flesh suited to varying needs (earth, water, air)	Body suited for eternal vs. earthly life
Bodies of differing glory (sun vs. moon; Grand Canyon vs. Niagara Falls)	Body of superior glory
<b>Mortal Body</b>	<b>Resurrected Body</b>
"sown in corruption"	"raised in incorruption"
"sown in dishonor"	"raised in glory" (Lk. 20:36)
"sown in weakness"	"raised in power"
"sown a natural body"	"raised a spiritual body" (v. 49; I Jn. 3:2; Phil. 3:21; cf. Psa. 17:5; Rom. 8:29)
"living being" (Gen. 2:7)	"life-giving spirit"
Natural body first	Spiritual body afterward
Bear image of "man of dust" (Gen. 3:19; Adam)	Bear image of the "heavenly Man" (Christ)

(e) Summary:

- ☛ Resurrection body is not the same as our mortal body.
- ☛ Resurrection body will be suited for the spiritual environment of eternity (whether its heaven or hell).
- ☛ Resurrection body exceeds the natural body in glory.

(f) Important to keep in mind that "*all who are in the grave*" will be resurrected, "*those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation*" (Jn. 5:28-29; Mk. 9:42-48; cf. Dan. 12:2).

(g) In the spiritual realm of eternity the righteous will need an incorruptible, immortal body for "*eternal life*" and the wicked dead will need an incorruptible, immortal body for "*everlasting punishment*" (Matt. 25:41, 46; Matt. 10:28; Mk. 9:42-48).

"Just as certainly as we have borne the image of Adam and had an earthy body, so also shall we bear the image of the resurrected body of Christ and possess a heavenly body. We need to be careful to understand that **heavenly** is no reference to our salvation. Since all men shall be raised from the dead, all men shall receive a body of this nature. The ones receiving that resurrection body will be separated into two groups, one living forever in heaven and the others living forever in hell. Both, however, will possess a resurrection body." (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: I Corinthians*, p. 476)

## 6. The Final Victory of the Resurrected (vv. 50-58).

A. Paul is about to announce mankind's victory over death, but first addresses one final objection or hurdle: "What will happen to those who are alive when the Lord comes?"

- (1) He already informed us we all will “*bear the image of the heavenly Man.*” (i.e., Christ)
  - (2) But a perishable body cannot inherit an imperishable kingdom; hence, both must be given a resurrection body (i.e., “...*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*” I Cor. 15:50)
  - (3) This presents a major problem for the living when Christ returns! Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15
  - (4) Flesh and blood are corruptible; our current bodies are unsuitable for eternity (i.e., for either heaven or hell).
- B. Paul already informed us we all will “*bear the image of the heavenly Man.*” Therefore, because our earthly bodies are not suited for eternal life, our bodies (alive or dead) will be “*changed*”; i.e., recast into the “*image of the heavenly Man,*” i.e., made suitable for eternity. Hence:
- “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”* (I Cor. 15:51-53)
- Note:** There are no moral overtones to “*all shall be changed*”; it simply means, whether dead or alive at the Lord’s coming, all will be changed so as to possess a resurrected body per Jn. 5:28-29.
- C. Now the conclusion to this section as well as the entire chapter: What shall we do?
- (1) “*Awake to righteousness*” (v. 34: “*Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning...*”).
  - (2) Associate with the right people! v. 33 (“*Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’*”)
  - (3) Thank God for the victory! v. 57 (“*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*”)
  - (4) Keep working for the Lord! v. 58 (“*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*”)
    - (a) If there were no resurrection in store for man, all that he did in service to Jesus would be wasted effort, vanity.
    - (b) But such is not the case, there will be a glorious resurrection, and we can rest assured that our “*labor is not in vain in the Lord*”!

### III. Conclusion:

1. Make no mistake: We **all** will be resurrected or changed (Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:51).
2. You are in control of your eternal destiny! Jn. 5:25; Heb. 4:1, 11
  - A. “*the resurrection of life*” (Jn. 5:29), or
  - B. “*the resurrection of condemnation*” (Jn. 5:29).