



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: THE BIG FINISH

TITLE: GOODBYE GRAVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58

DATE: OCT. 5, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians have wondered *what* our heavenly bodies will be like. Perhaps the reason we ponder this is because we know how frail our earthly bodies are. Sickness, injuries, and handicaps can easily make one long for the promise of a new, heavenly body.

Others may wonder *when* this transformation happens. Last week, we looked at what Paul told the Thessalonians about the timing. He explained that the dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thess. 4:16). Then, those who are still alive will be caught up with Jesus in the air. He further instructed that the Lord's return will be like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2-4).

Beyond these questions, the Corinthians were asking whether there would even be a resurrection body. Their question wasn't so much *what* or *when*, but *how*. And it is sort of unclear whether the Corinthians themselves were asking this question or opponents to the Corinthian Christians.

These are not bad questions in themselves. But as we read Paul's answer, the tone of the question may have been argumentative rather than inquisitive. Paul's sharp rebuke—"You foolish person!"—implies as much. They questioned how we could be certain there is a resurrection. How can something that is truly dead come back to life? Is it really possible that there is a resurrected body?

Text

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

[35] But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

[36] You foolish person! 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.

[38] But God gives it 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, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.

[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.

[42] So is it with the resurrection of the dead. 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

[45] Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

[46] But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

[47] The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

[48] 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.

Explanation

As we progress through this passage, it's helpful to keep in mind the two challenges Paul addresses:

- How are the dead raised?
- With what kind of body do they come?

Analogy

Paul compares the resurrection of the dead to a seed being planted in the ground. A seed appears small, lifeless, and unimpressive. Yet when buried, it grows into something far more glorious—like a tall oak tree or a fruitful crop.

Different kinds of seeds exist, each created by God to produce something specific. A seed cannot change its nature or decide to become something else.

Paul's point is clear: if God can bring life from a seed, then surely He can bring life from a lifeless body. Resurrection is not beyond God's creative power. The person who is raised will still be human—but their new body will be greater in glory and more fitting for eternity.

Here Paul is answering in part the question, “How are the dead raised?” They are raised by the power of God. And just like seeds are raised according to its kind, we will be raised still as humans. We are certainly made new, but not different in kind.

Different Bodies with Different Glories for Different Environments

Paul further explains that there are different types of flesh—human, animal, bird, and fish. He also distinguishes between earthly and heavenly bodies. Each body is designed by God for a specific environment:

- Fish for water
- Birds for air
- Humans for land
- Sun, moon, and stars for outer space.

In the same way, our resurrected bodies will be designed to fit our heavenly home.

Remember that Paul is answer the question: “With what kind of body do they come?” His answer expands to inform us that our new bodies that is suitable for a heavenly dwelling.

The Glorified Body

What will this body be like as it compares to our earthly bodies? Paul outlines the contrast between earthly and resurrected bodies:

- Sown perishable; raised imperishable
- Sown in dishonor; raised in glory
- Sown in weakness; raised in power
- Sown a natural body; raised a spiritual body

The resurrected body will not perish—it will live forever. The resurrected body will have a glory about it, untarnished by the curse or by sin. The resurrected body will have power—never ill, sick, fatigued or famished. The resurrected body will be spiritually complete—holy righteous, never tempted, or ill-motivated.

The Basis: Jesus, the Second Adam

Paul refers to Jesus as the **Second Adam** or the **Last Adam**—a concept he also explores in *Romans 5*.

In *Romans*, Paul explains that Adam acted as humanity’s representative. Through Adam’s sin, all people inherited a sinful nature. *Romans 5:12* says: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—” Adam was the first to sin, and because of him, death became a universal reality. But Paul also notes in *Romans 5:14* that Adam was “a type of the one who was to come.” That “one” is Jesus. Where Adam brought death, Jesus brought life. Jesus, the Second Adam, lived a sinless life and died as our substitute. His righteousness now represents us before God.

Paul highlights these contrasts in *1 Corinthians 15:45-49*:

- Adam became a living being; Jesus became a life-giving Spirit.
- Adam came first; Jesus came afterward.
- Adam was from the earth; Jesus came from heaven.

- Those from Adam reflect his image; those in Christ reflect His.

So, what more can we say about how the dead are raised? For starters, they were dead because they belonged to Adam. But they are raised because they now belong to Christ. Because Jesus was raised and ascended to heaven, we too will be raised and dwell in heaven.

Discussion Questions

- Do you ever hear someone challenge that there is life after death? What might be some common challenges? Any potential answers come to mind?
- Thus far in our series, we have answered who, what, when, and how questions around the topic of resurrected bodies. Which one have you pondered the most: the who, what, when, or how?
- Are there still some questions that you have around resurrected bodies? Like what?
- What is your general posture as you ask questions about Christianity: sincere curiosity, speculation, or challenge?

Text

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

[50] I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

[51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed.

[53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

[54] When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

[55] “O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

[56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

[57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus

Christ.

[58] Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Explanation – 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Why Do We Need New Bodies?

Why not simply resurrect our current bodies? While few would want their old, broken bodies back, Paul gives us a deeper reason: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” Heaven is an imperishable place, and our earthly bodies are perishable. We need bodies made to dwell in God’s eternal kingdom.

When Will We Receive Them?

Paul writes that it will happen: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” This refers to Christ’s return. It will happen suddenly and unmistakably. The moment will be accompanied by a trumpet blast. We will hear an archangel’s call and a command from the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16).

At that moment, the dead will be raised imperishable, and the living will be transformed. No believer will be excluded, whether they have died or still alive.

Death Defeated

At Christ’s return, the final defeat of death becomes fully realized: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” Death, which seemed unbeatable, now stands defeated. Christ’s resurrection broke its power, and that victory will be fully manifested at His return.

Conclusions/ Applications

YOU LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN

In light of what is to most assuredly come, how then might we live? Paul tells us to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Life in eternity will certainly be so much better than on earth. It perhaps might be tempting to think that if life in eternity lies ahead for us, then why don't I stop caring about this life? Yet, the opposite is true. In Paul's reasoning, since life in eternity is great, we should give more effort in this life to live for God. The reason is because our labors for Christ will not be in vain.

Life is not meaningless. In fact it has a tremendous impact to affect eternity. Everything you do in life can be done for the Lord. Any labor that you do will not be in vain.

Discussion Questions

- On a scale from 1-10, how might you rate yourself on following the description: “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord?”
- In day to day life, what might that look like?
- Does death seem scary to you? Why or why not?
- Does anything in our passage today give you comfort in times of grief? How so?