

# The Resurrection Body

## Insights into Eternity - Session Four

*Warm-up question: What is your favorite story of returning home? Share a time which sticks in your mind, what was it that made returning home feel so good?*

When I was 17 years of age, I worked on a cruise liner. It was called the Avalon, and it traveled to Morocco, visiting Tangiers and Casablanca, as well as Gibraltar and Spain. The temperature was in the upper 90's and there was no air conditioning on the vessel. We worked very long hours. That was my life at that time; working long hard hours followed by times of long diligent partying. Working on the Cruise Liner was no luxury. The worst part about it was that I was working in the kitchen and it was terribly hot. We had to take salt tablets every day because of excessive sweating. The voyage lasted only two weeks but it felt like much longer due to the hard work. After one trip, I remember weeping when the ship finally passed the White Cliffs of Dover, England; home was just an hour away! It was a special moment. My time away from home on that voyage was so bad; I resolved that I wouldn't travel again! (Of course I did not keep that personal vow.)

There is the story of an old missionary couple, the Morrison's, who were finally returning to America after serving Christ as missionaries in Africa. On the same ship was Teddy Roosevelt, the American president at the time, who was returning from an African Safari. Bands and parades were going on in New York as everybody turned up at the dock to welcome Teddy as his transatlantic liner came alongside the quay. The crowds and press were waiting just to catch a glimpse of Teddy finally returning home. The Morrison's were despondent as they left the port that day as they had little money, only enough for a very simple apartment. Henry was quite sad as he saw the welcome that Teddy Roosevelt received. He told his wife that something had to be wrong as they had given 40 years of their lives for Christian missionary work, and no one cared enough to welcome them home. His wise wife told him to go to the Lord in prayer about it. A little while later he returned, with a beaming smile on his face, having been reminded by the Lord, "You are not home yet, Henry."

If you ever grow weary of this life, remind yourself, "you're not home yet." Likewise, if you grow complacent because of an easy lifestyle and put all of your resources and effort into enjoying the comforts of this life, think about this: "This is not all there is. This is not your eternal home."

*What are you looking forward to when you think about an eternal home in heaven, and what do you see and anticipate in your minds eye?*

The Bible uses several words to describe the afterlife; Heaven, Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, Hell, Hades and Sheol to name a few.

*What is the difference between Paradise and Heaven? Will we see those in hell while in heaven?*

We are told very little about what it was like in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22.KJV), Abraham's side (NIV), otherwise called paradise (Luke 23:43). The Greek word translated "bosom" literally means "chest." The imagery is of a banquet with feasting, music and fellowship with God's people, e.g. Abraham, the man of faith. In New Testament times friends ate reclining against one another, as pictured in the Last Supper (John 13:23-25). In this picture we see John the Apostle with his head against Christ's chest. The English word paradise, Greek *Paradeisos*, is from the orient and was first used by the historian Xenophon. It was used to denote the parks of Persian kings and nobles. The Greek translators of the Old Testament used the word to translate Genesis 2:8, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward of Eden." It was obviously a very beautiful place and is synonymous with heaven. I don't know what differences there are with heaven, but it is very likely that one did not see the Lord while in Abraham's bosom or Abraham's side (for a fuller explanation see the third session of Insights into Eternity). Habakkuk, the prophet, speaking about God, tells us, "your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong" (Habakkuk 1:13). Isaiah, the prophet, confirms this by saying,

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Some have wondered why the scriptures refer to Abraham’s Bosom and if there is a difference between that place, and heaven or paradise. Personally, I conclude that until the sin issue was taken out of the way by the death of a substitute, man could not enter into God’s presence. When Christ died on the cross, God showed man that fellowship with God was restored by tearing the curtain that separated man from God in the Temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:51). This important symbolic Act of God heralded a New Age in which fellowship with God was finally restored with no separation between God and man. The sin issue had been dealt with through Christ’s victory and now God wanted us to know by tearing the curtain that had separated man from God in the Temple. Several years after the death of Christ, Paul the apostle, reports being caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2), and in verse 4 calls it “paradise.” My conclusion is that believers now go to paradise which is synonymous with heaven, since the way has been made for us to stand before God the Father through the Righteousness that comes from Christ’s substitutionary death.

As to seeing those in hell from heaven, I do think that the eternal world will be open to our spiritual eyes if we so choose to view it. The prophet Isaiah writes prophetically about satan’s demise in hell with these words:

<sup>13</sup> You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” <sup>15</sup> But you are brought down to the grave, to the **depths of the pit**. <sup>16</sup> Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, <sup>17</sup> the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” (Isaiah 14:13-17 Emphasis mine).

Verse 16 of chapter 14 sure seems to indicate that we will be able to stare at the one who held us captive in sin, for he will be in the *depths* of the pit. This passage also agrees with what we said in session three concerning different levels of hell, where those who have done terribly evil things will suffer worse, in that they are consigned to the “depths of the pit” (Verse 15). Verse 10 says that there will be some leaders who will

say to him, “you also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us.” It certainly seems from this that we will be able to view what goes on in eternity.

One of the questions that I received on the third session was, “What’s the significance or purpose of receiving a new body after our spirit has gone to heaven?”

We are incomplete without a physical body. We have been created by God to live in the physical realm. As we said in a previous session, we are composed of body, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Man became a living being only after he was formed by God from the dust of the earth and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He was not a living human being until both the invisible side of his nature and the material, were joined (Genesis 2:7). I believe that when a man is born again of the Spirit of God (John 3:3); at the return of Christ and the Resurrection of the saints, those that are Christ’s are raised with a resurrected body like Christ’s. We will be able to abide in both heaven and on Earth, just as Christ did in the 40 days after His resurrection. Christ Jesus has not left His body on Earth somewhere; He abides in heaven with a physical resurrected body. Isn’t that true of Enoch, the man of God? God enjoyed his company so much he took him up to heaven in his physical being:

<sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away (Genesis 5:24).

We are told the same thing of Elijah, the man of God, he too was taken up to heaven still clothed with his physical body (2 Kings 2:11). We have a tendency to vastly underestimate what God has done for us in the new birth. Yes, our physical bodies are decaying, but living within these decaying bodies is the life of God if you are a Christian.

The Bible is very clear that, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12). Without the abiding Christ living in us we do not really have life as God intended. John, the apostle, is not talking here about physical life, we all have physical life. What He is saying is that when one receives Christ, he receives something of the life of God. Jesus told us that His mission in coming to earth was to give us His life:

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come that they may have life**, and have it to the full (John 10:10 Emphasis mine).

What does Jesus mean by these words? If He has come to give us life, what did the people have at that time as they were listening to his words? The listeners were obviously alive; some were just not alive to God, and if one is not alive to God, he is what the Bible calls “dead” (Ephesians 2:1). The Greek word that is translated “life” in the above passage is the word *zōē*. It means: “to live.”

“It is a somewhat metaphysical term which denotes the very life force itself, the vital principle which animates living beings. *Zōē* is used most in connection with eternal life. This life is the very life of God of which believers are made partakers.”<sup>1</sup>

Some people do not like the thought that we will live in a physical body on a new earth (Revelation 21:1). At the end of the age, when Christ returns, there will be a resurrection of the body of those that are His. The rest of the dead will not be resurrected until the end of a thousand years, at which point will be the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11). At the resurrection of the saints (those that have given their lives to Christ and are walking with Him), we will be clothed with a physical resurrection body that will be similar to Christ’s resurrection body. There will be some continuity in that we will be recognizable but we are talking about a body that is imperishable, a body that is raised with the glory of God shining from us. Let’s look at what Paul the apostle taught concerning this in his first Corinthian letter:

<sup>35</sup> But someone may 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.<sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.<sup>39</sup> All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.<sup>51</sup> Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.<sup>53</sup> For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.<sup>54</sup> When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”<sup>55</sup> “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:35-57).

*Which sentence stands out to you from this passage? Share your thoughts about what this new body will be like.*

### ***The Seed of Life***

The first thing that I want to draw your attention to about the resurrection body we will have is that it comes from a seed. When we go to a plant nursery, many times we will buy whole plants that we can plant in our yards or gardens. That is not how it was done in ancient Israel. Plants came from seeds. Even today commercial farmers do not plant small plants in the hope that they will grow into large fruit bearing plants, they plant seed, perhaps of wheat (Verse 37) or corn. Paul says that God is the one who determines what the seed will become when it grows up (Verse 38). He says that there are different kinds of physical bodies on planet earth, men, animals, birds and fish. All physical crea-

<sup>1</sup> Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Page 1630.

tures that are born on earth come from seeds. I see Paul making two different analogies when he talks about a seed:

1) Our resurrection body will be able to be recognized in some way as us. He says, “<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. Within the seed is the DNA of the physical body that you will become. Oranges do not grow from apple seeds, monkeys do not become people. There is a continuity of life shared between the seed and the body it will become. Our heavenly resurrected bodies will be somewhat like the seed of our earthly fleshly body. We will recognize one another in our resurrection bodies.

2) We have received a seed from the Lord Jesus Christ that is growing within us. It is the zōē life seed that was planted in us when we received Christ. This seed is not a physical seed at all; it is a seed that is sown in us from heaven. Surely this is what Jesus meant when He said, “**I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full**” (John 10:10 Emphasis mine). The growth from this seed is not seen until the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Jesus. “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and **what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2, Emphasis mine).

How did this spiritual seed of the Lord Jesus come to be in us? This brings the Parable of the Sower more into focus because Jesus said, “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). There is something very powerful about the Word of God to change our lives. The writer to the Hebrews says that, “the word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12).

*What would the writer of the letter to the Hebrews be seeking to communicate with the above sentence?*

<sup>23</sup> “For you have been born again, not of **perishable seed, but of imperishable**, through the **living** and enduring **word of God** (1 Peter 1:23 Emphasis mine).

I don’t understand how words can be seeds but I do not doubt the power of words. God spoke His word and the World was created. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light (Genesis 1:3). Satan hates this book as much as he hates Christians praying. There is great power in the spoken word of God. These seeds

were scattered by His death on the cross. Just as our physical life was inherited from Adam in that we became like him, in the same way we will also be like the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Resurrection. <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 Corinthians 15:49. Emphasis mine). The Lord Jesus came to give His Life as spiritual seed. John, the apostle carries this thought further:

<sup>20</sup> Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. <sup>25</sup> The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me (John 12:20-26).

*What would Jesus be referring to when He talks about a kernel of wheat falling into the ground and dying to itself?*

Firstly Jesus is talking of Himself by saying that He would be a single seed that would be sown that many lives would receive His life. But He is also talking about the mature disciple that will also give up his life that others might hear. If I took a kernel of wheat in my hand and wanted it to reproduce, I would have to sow it into the ground. It would need some moisture, some good earth and some heat. God is good at turning up the heat in our lives! In dying to ourselves, there is a brokenness that comes to the outside of the kernel (Psalm 51:17) and the life within the seed comes forth. It will send down roots and a shoot will go upwards. The seed actually cracks open to release the life that is inside. This life that is within us is the life of Christ. Paul told the Colossian believers of a great mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations:

<sup>26</sup> the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:26-27).

Spiritual life is only reproduced by the death of the seed planted; the Lord Jesus Christ was that heavenly spiritual seed that is planted in our hearts and it grows more and more, transforming us into His likeness, as the scriptures say; “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). The resurrection body will have the glory of Christ resting on it. This is what Paul is talking about in our main passage about the resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:35-57). He talks about Adam, the first man, being a living seed to bear all of us in his image. He then says that the Last Adam (Christ) became a life giving spirit (Verse 45). Paul has already said earlier that what happened to Adam happened to us all. Adam was representative of all of us because he was the federal head of the human race. It may not seem fair to you for all of his progeny to inherit his sin nature. The life of that seed, Adam’s sin nature, was passed to all of us. We were helpless in our sin from that time on. But God has come Himself to be the federal head for all that receive His full pardon. In this way, God brings His Divine life through another seed, one that is perfect and free from sin. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22). Just as Adam gave us our sin nature, Christ also gives us this seed of new life planted in our hearts. He came to give us life!

In a similar way, each of us can be spiritual seeds that die to ourselves in order that others too may receive life. We are called to die to ourselves and take up the cross of Christ. That’s why Paul could say, “I have been crucified with Christ and **I no longer live, but Christ lives in me**. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20). Fruitfulness comes as we put to death areas in our lives that are not yet yielded and obedient to the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

*What areas of your earthly nature (that which you inherited from Adam) constantly war against your nature that you inherited from Christ?*

Paul calls Christ the Last Adam, so that we don’t expect a third, which is what Moslems claim, that Mohammed was the next prophet. That is a lie! There

is no other name given among men whereby we may be saved (Acts 4:12). The Bible tells us that in the last days many will be deceived. We will see many false claims of coming “Messiahs” that will lead people astray (Matthew 24:4).

### ***We Shall be Changed.***

That which is on the inside will someday be revealed. It won’t be the same as our old nature; Paul says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Verse 50). It will no longer be perishable but imperishable (Verse 53). We won’t all sleep; (not all Christians will be separated from their bodies), there will be some that are transformed instantly without going through the death process. When Christ comes, in a flash, in the batting of an eye’s time, we will be changed from having a perishable body to being clothed with an imperishable body (Verses 51-52).

<sup>20</sup> ...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 (Philippians 3:20-21 Emphasis mine).

This word that is translated *transform* is the Greek word *Metaschēmatizō*. Meta means a change of place or condition and schēma means shape, outward form. To transform, change the outward form or appearance of something, refashion, reshape.<sup>2</sup>

*What do you think it means to have an imperishable body? (1 Corinthians 15:42.) What do you think we will be able to do that we haven’t been able to do until that point?*

An imperishable body means that it won’t age or get sick. Our new bodies will be glorious all of the time. You will always have youthful strength and be radiantly beautiful with God’s glory radiating from you. I believe that just as Jesus walked through walls into the upper room where the door was locked for fear of the Jews (John 20:19), we also will be able to pass through walls and travel instantaneously, not bound by the physical realm.

### ***Will We Get Our Resurrection Bodies When We Die?***

Wayne Grudem, in his book *Systematic Theol-*

<sup>2</sup> Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Page 1651.

ogy has something interesting to say on this topic:

“Paul further explains in 1 Thessalonians that the souls of those who have died and gone to be with Christ will come back and be joined with their bodies on that day, for Christ will bring them with Him: “for since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep” (1 Thessalonians 4:14). But here Paul affirms not only that God will bring with Christ those who have died; he also affirms that “the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). So these believers who have died with Christ are also raised up to meet Christ (Paul says in v. 17, “We...shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”). This only makes sense if it is the souls of believers who have gone into Christ’s presence who return with him, and if it is their bodies that are raised from the dead to be joined together with their souls, and then to ascend with Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

*What will the resurrection body be like?*

Paul says that it will be like Christ’s glorious body (Philippians 3:20). This radiance that accompanies us will be both authoritative and beautiful. Jesus said that, “the righteous will **shine like the sun** in the kingdom of their father (Matthew 13:43. Emphasis mine). Those that are Christ’s will command respect but it will be a respect that is born of a wisdom that is from above. There will be a kindness and joy that will be ours. Don’t you love to serve leaders that love you and care for you? It will also be a powerful body (1 Corinthians 15:43). I don’t think that this speaks only of strength, although that certainly will be part of it. I think that there will be a power and authority to work

the miraculous just as Jesus did and does still. We will exercise a new level of power through the spoken word, just as Jesus does. He will be able to trust us with such power for we will know all things just as we are known. It will be raised a spiritual body (verse 44). Daniel the prophet also speaks of that time in this way:

<sup>1</sup> “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. **There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.** But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. <sup>2</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> Those who are wise **will shine like the brightness of the heavens**, and those **who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.** <sup>4</sup> But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge” (Daniel 12:1-4).

Daniel says that this will happen at a time when there will be a time of distress such as never before. But at that time everyone whose name is written in God’s book—will be delivered. That which God has been doing on the inside will be made known and it will be glorious, the chrysalis of this old decaying body will put on an immortal body, just like our Lord’s. It will be time to go home!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for preparing a place for us. Thank you for the free gift of life that you have come to give us. May your light shine in us ever brighter. Amen.

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