



Around the Word
BIBLE STUDY
 Eastertide, 2015

The Resurrection
1 Corinthians 15:35-49

OVERVIEW

Author: The Apostle Paul

Outline:
 Analogy of sowing a seed (v. 35–38)

Analogy of different kinds of bodies (v. 39–41)

Application to the resurrection (v. 42–49)

St. Augustine on 1 Corinthians 15:43:
 "We will still be bodies, so vivified by the spirit, however, as to retain the substance of the flesh without suffering the accidents of sluggishness and mortality" (*Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, 14:333).

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OPENING: Psalm 19

¹The heavens declare the glory of God,*
 and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

²**Day to day | pours out speech,*
 and night to night reveals | knowledge.**

³There is no speech, nor | are there words,*
 whose voice | is not heard.

⁴**Their measuring line goes out through all the earth,
 and their words to the end | of the world.*
 In them he has set a tent | for the sun,**

⁵which comes out like a bridegroom | leaving his |
 chamber,*
 and, like a strong man, runs its | course with joy.

⁶**Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
 and its circuit to the | end of them,*
 and there is nothing hidden | from its heat.**

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect,
 reviv- | ing the soul;*
 the testimony of the LORD is sure,
 making wise the | simple;

⁸**the precepts of the LORD are right,
 rejoicing | the heart;*
 the commandment of the LORD is pure,
 enlightening | the eyes;**

⁹the fear of the LORD is clean,
 enduring for- | ever;*
 the just decrees of the LORD are true,
 and righteous alto- | gether.

¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold,
 even | much fine gold;*
 sweeter also than honey
 and drippings of the | honeycomb.**

¹¹Moreover, by them is your | servant warned;*
 in keeping them there is | great reward.

¹²**Who can dis- | cern his errors?***
Declare me innocent from | hidden faults.

¹³Keep back your servant also from presumptuous
 sins; let them not have dominion | over me!*

Then I shall be blameless,
 and innocent of great trans- | gression.

¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation
 of my heart be acceptable | in your sight,*
 O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.
 Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
 and to the Holy | Spirit.
 as it was in the be- | ginning,*
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–49

v. 35–36: "But someone will ask, 'How are the dead

raised? With what kind of body do they come?'
You foolish person!"

Now Paul addresses someone who might, skeptically and unbelievably, be concerned with the mechanical process of the resurrection of the body.

Paul sharply calls such a skeptic a "fool"! What does the Bible say about "fools"? See Psalm 14:1; 53:1; Proverbs 12:15; 13:16; 14:16; 17:24; 18:2; 18:6; 26:11; 28:26; Isaiah 32:6; Luke 12:13–21.

v. 36–38: "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body."

Paul answers the skeptical fool by giving three analogies from God's created order. His first analogy says, "Consider the garden in your own back yard!"

The phrase "bare kernel" is better-translated "*naked kernel*."

How does Jesus apply this same analogy to Himself in John 12:24?

What kind of variety did God give in His botanical creatures in Genesis 1:11–13?

Martin Luther: "When you see a peasant or husbandman walking along on his field, reaching into his sack and then scattering and strewing something about him, you have a beautiful picture and painting of God's method of resurrecting the dead.... You can imagine and think of God as such a peasant and yourself as a small kernel which He casts into the ground, so that it may come forth much more beautiful and glorious.... The cemetery or burial ground does not indicate a heap of the dead, but a field full of kernels, known as God's kernels, which will verdantly blossom forth again and grow more beautifully than can be imagined" (*Luther's Works* 28:176, 178).

v. 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."

Paul's second analogy says, "Consider the different kinds of flesh (and bodies) of people and animals!"

The Greek word for "flesh" is *sarx* (σὰρξ), which literally

means “the material that covers the bones of a human or animal body.”

How did God create Adam (and all people) to have both body and soul? See Genesis 2:7.

According to Genesis 1:26–28, what sets human beings apart from the domestic animals, the birds, and the fish? How do Matthew 10:28 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 show that God created human beings to be soul *and* body for all eternity?

Read Genesis 1:24–25 to see how God created the domestic animals. Next read Genesis 1:20–23 to see how God created the fish and the birds. Notice how God wove great variety into His creation.

v. 40–41: “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. 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.”

Paul’s third analogy says, “Consider the sun, the moon, and the stars!”

How do the celestial bodies—sun, moon, stars—give glory to God when He reveals His judgment on sin? See Isaiah 13:10–11; Joel 2:10–14; Matthew 24:29–31.

How do these celestial bodies give glory to God by showing His goodness? See Psalm 19:1–6; 148:3–6; Romans 1:20.

v. 42–44: “So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”

Paul returns to his analogy of the seed and the plant to contrast the difference between the “naked” body (see v. 37) that is planted in burial and the glorious body that is harvested in resurrection.

What happened to David’s body when he died, and what happens to our bodies when we die? See Acts 2:29; 13:36.

What did *not* happen to Jesus’ body when He died? See Acts 2:27, 31; 13:34, 35, 37. See also Psalm 16:10.

In v. 42, the word for “imperishable” can also mean “incorruptible, immortal.” How is this word used of God in Romans 1:23 and 1 Timothy 1:17? How is this word used of the heavenly realm in 1 Corinthians 9:25 and 1 Peter 3:4?

What will the Christian’s “spiritual body” be like in the resurrection? See Philippians 3:20–21; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:2–3.

Martin Luther: “When it is called a spiritual body, this does not imply that it no longer has physical life or flesh and blood. No, then it could not be called a true body... It will be a completely spiritual existence, or life, of the whole person, covering both body and soul” (LW 28:189-90).

v. 45–48: “Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the

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dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

Here Paul once again compares/contrasts Adam and Jesus (“the second Adam”). See Romans 5:12–20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22.

What was Adam’s origin? See Genesis 2:7. What is the origin of Jesus, the “second Adam”? See John 3:13, 31.



How has “the first man Adam” left his “image” on all human beings? See Genesis 5:3–5; Romans 5:12–14; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.

How does “the last Adam”—Jesus Christ—leave His “image” on those who belong to Him? See 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:1; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2–3.

v. 49: “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Paul now applies his teaching in the previous verses to all Christians. The verbs “borne” and “bear” are better translated “worn” and “wear.” Should Christians be preoccupied with fashion? See Matthew 11:8 and James 2:3. What do Christians wear, and where do they get it? See Galatians 3:27. What did Jesus wear so that we might be clothed in His righteousness? See John 19:5.

How did God originally create human beings? See Genesis 1:26–27. What is the “image of the man of heaven”? See Colossians 1:15–20. What will the resurrection of the body mean for all believers in Jesus? See Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Martin Luther: “We shall ... receive another’s [image], namely, the celestial Christ’s. Then we shall have the same form and essence which He now has since His resurrection. ... The entire body will be as pure and bright as the sun and as light as the air, and, finally, so healthy, so blissful, and filled with such heavenly, eternal joy in God that it will never hunger, thirst, grow weary, or decline.” (*Luther’s Works*, 28:196).

Closing Hymn: The Gifts Christ Freely Gives

The gifts flow from the font
Where He calls us His own;
New life He gives that makes
Us His and His alone.
Here He forgives our sins
With water and His Word;
The triune God Himself
Gives pow’r to call Him Lord.

(Richard C. Resch, 1947; *LSB* 602:2)

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