

The Resurrection our Hope

1 Corinthians 15:12-23, 35-49

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I. What is the Christian hope?

Our hope is *the resurrection of the dead*. Our hope is that one day Christ will return in glory and the dead in Christ will rise from their graves and we shall ever be with the Lord body and soul. As Paul writes to the Roman Christians – *we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the...redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope...* (Rom 8:23b-24a). Likewise, Paul reminds the Corinthians that *“the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord [Jesus] and will also raise us up by His power”* (1 Cor 6:13b-14). So Paul tells us in Phil 3:11 that his goal is to *“attain to the resurrection from the dead”* because the end of human history coincides with the return of Jesus in glory *“who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”* (Phil 3:21).

II. The Resurrection our Hope (1 Cor 15:12 – 23)

A. The dead are not raised! (12-19)

Paul insists that Jesus’ resurrection and our resurrection are intertwined. Because Christ has risen from the dead, we too shall rise. Christ’s resurrection proves the certainty of our resurrection such that:

Paul’s Premise: If we are not raised, then Christ was not raised (13, 16).

Corinthian Teaching: We are not raised! (12b)

Conclusion: Christ is not risen.

Here’s what Paul wants us to understand: the resurrection of the dead is of the essence of the Christian faith. If we abandon the resurrection of the dead, then we will soon abandon the resurrection of Jesus; and if we abandon the resurrection of Jesus, then the cross of Christ is pointless and we are still in our sins.

B. But now Christ is risen from the dead! (20-23)

Jesus is the _____ – His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection. Because Christ rose from the dead, we too shall rise from the dead. *NB NOT: Because Christ rose from the dead, we shall go to heaven!*

C. Traditional Christian Teaching

The resurrection *is* traditional Christian belief. The idea that the very body placed into the earth shall be raised to glory at the coming of Jesus Christ and shall be of the same quality as Christ’s glorified and resurrected body – this is the Christian hope. We believe in *the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting*.

III. How Can These Things Be? (1 Cor 15:35 – 49)

A. The Question (v. 35)

“*But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’*” (35)
 “Come on Paul – this whole notion of a resurrected body is absurd! That can’t possibly be true! How could God possibly be concerned about our bodies? It is our souls that matter!”

B. The Seed Analogy (vv. 36 – 38)

Paul responds to this charge of absurdity by reversing it (36a). The one who denies the resurrection is absurd, not him.

1. Fundamental Continuity
2. Glorious Discontinuity

C. Other Illustrations (vv. 39 – 41)

Even in the world about us we have examples of things that have *similar substances* but in which the *quality of those substances* is different. So too with the resurrection body – it is of the *same essential nature* as our current body and yet *far more glorious*.

D. The Resurrection Body (vv. 42 – 45; cf. Phil 3:21)

What does Paul mean that the resurrection body is not a natural but a spiritual body? These words do not describe the *nature* of the body but rather what it is that *powers* the body – that enables it to thrive and survive. The difference between a “*natural*” body and a “*spiritual*” body is that the *natural body* is animated by natural forces (food & drink) whereas the *spiritual body* is animated by God’s Spirit.

IV. Application

A. The Centrality of the Resurrection

B. The Goodness of Creation (1 Cor 6:13-14, 20)

C. Death and Resurrection in the World

V. Conclusion