



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Jesus Rose—How Should that Impact Me?

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-49, 58

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

[Join our post-sermon discussion on Zoom at 11am](#)

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**SUMMARY:** Among Evangelicals the Christian hope is often reduced to ‘going to Heaven when we die,’ as disembodied souls/spirits. Yet this pagan idea owes more to Plato than to Paul, who rebutted this notion when writing to Corinth (1 Cor. 15). It’s time to retrieve a genuine, biblical hope—the bodily resurrection and transfiguration of those ‘in Christ.’ *En route* we address some misunderstood Scriptures. Contrary to many, Paul’s enigmatic saying, ‘*The last Adam became a lifegiving spirit,*’ does *not* describe Christ’s relation to the Holy Spirit. Rather it denotes the glorified body of the risen Lord. That’s important, since Christians are promised fully conformity to Jesus, the glorified ‘Heavenly Man.’ Resurrection hope was a great incentive to Paul, governing his life & labor; it should do the same for us

### The Believer’s Hope is not ‘Heaven,’ but Resurrection

- A. “The Christian hope is *not*...a disembodied existence as disembodied souls or spirits in an eternal Heaven...The *real hope is for [resurrection]* ‘life after life after death’ –N. T. Wright
- B. “In popular evangelicalism, the *Christian hope was often reduced to ‘going to heaven when we die,’* which was perceived as a spiritual, rather than bodily existence...[Yet,] if the risen Christ is...the ‘first-fruits’ [1 Cor. 15:20, 22]... [our] resurrection will complete the ‘redemption of our bodies’ & usher us into the new creation.” –Tim Grass
- C. “We tend to misunderstand the resurrection, as though it were an isolated & strange event that happened only to Jesus long ago.” –Clark Pinnock

### Searching for the ‘2nd Adam’—Abraham, Israel, or Christ?

- A. Adam Failed; God called Abraham—the ‘Second Adam’?
- B. Israel, Abraham’s race failed, God sent His Son
- C. Jesus replaces Adam, heads a new humanity (Rom. 5:12, 15)
- D. “In Adam” or ‘In Christ’? –“Just as *in Adam all die*, so also *in Christ all will be made alive*.” (1 Cor. 12:22)
  - “The risen Jesus is...the model for the Christian’s future resurrection] body & the means by which it comes.”—N. T. Wright

## Adam & Christ (1 Cor. 15:44-49)

- A. Adam brought Sin & Death to all Humanity (Rom. 5:12, 14; 1 Cor. 15:21-22)
- B. Two ‘Adams’—the First & the Last—two types of body (1 Cor. 15:45-46)
  - “1 Cor. 15:45-49...is one of the easiest passages in Paul to misunderstand”—E. P. Sanders
  - “To understand [this]...keep in mind two crucial...matters. [1.] the concern is *not* Christological...Rather, [it] is...that just as there is a *psychikos* body, so there is a *pneumatikos* body... [2.] Paul’s concern [is]...‘With what kind of body?’ (15:35)... [It] is *not* [whether]...Christ & the Spirit are somehow interchangeable ...[It] is...to [show] *Christ is the foundation for the believers receiving a ‘spiritual body’*. To make any further theological deductions...is to do the Apostle a grave injustice.” – Gordon Fee
  - “The first Adam was made a ‘living being’ [‘soul’] *with a physical body* by the creative power of God (15:45a). But God, by raising [Christ] from the dead, made the last Adam a ‘life-giving spirit’ (15:45b) *with a spiritual body*...” –John Paul Heil C. Christ as ‘Second Man,’ ‘life-giving spirit,’ begins at Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45b)

## Resurrection body vs. present body (1 Cor. 15:35, 44-45)

- A. Continuity & Discontinuity—the same, yet different (1 Cor. 15:41-44)
- B. “Spiritual,” “soulish/natural” –animation, not composition (1 Cor. 15:44-45)
- C. Transformation vs. Exchange
- D. In Resurrection –we retain our personal identity (Phil. 3:20-21)

## The Defeat of Death (1 Cor. 15:50-58)

## The Ethical Imperative—“*Therefore...*” (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-10, 15; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

- “Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, knowing your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
- “Whether we are ‘at home’ [in this body] or away, *we make it our aim to be pleasing to him*.<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he’s done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Cor. 5:9-10)
  - “Paul’s constant ambition to know Christ’s approval (5:9) was a direct consequence...of his awareness that death would inaugurate a person-to-person communion with Christ... [This] prompted the *aspiration of gaining* [Christ’s] *acceptance ... both before & after death*.” –Murray Harris
- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. 4:7)

## QUESTIONS:

- A. If a friend or colleague were to ask you—‘OK, you’re a Christian, so what’s your ultimate hope?’ How would you answer? Discuss. What would constitute a clear, yet concise, and biblical answer?
- B. In 1 Cor. 15:35-49 Paul is answering the question: “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?” (15:35). In his answer, Paul develops several successive points, based on his first-century view of the world. How would you (briefly) summarize his points? Do you find his arguments convincing or not? Why or why not?

- C. In 1 Cor. 15:36-43 Paul gives a 'seed—plant' analogy—the 'seed' represents our present body & the 'plant' our resurrection body. Based on this analogy, what characteristics does Paul assign to our present body, & to our future resurrection body?
- D. Some suggest that at the final resurrection we exchange our present 'earthly body' for a superior 'heavenly body'—it's "like trading in an 'old, beaten up, junk car' for a new model at the auto dealership." Is this analogy helpful? Why or why not?
- E. In 1 Cor. 15:42-47 Paul applies his 'seed—plant' analogy to resurrection. Based on this he asserts "If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (15:44b) i.e., there *must be* what he calls "a spiritual body." Do you see his point? Does his line of reasoning convince you? Why or why not?
- F. In 1 Cor. 15:45 Paul quotes from Genesis: "the Lord God formed the man out of the dust...& breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, & the *man became a living soul.*" (Gen. 2:7) Notice in Scripture 'soul' can represent the whole (embodied) person; e.g. "Noah's...ark...in which...**8 souls** [*psyche* (pl.)], were saved through water." (1 Pet. 3:20) "All the *souls* of Jacob that came to Egypt were **70.**" (Gen. 46:27).
1. So, what is included when Paul talks of Adam as a "living soul"?
  2. Doesn't Paul equate the "natural/ 'soul-ish' body" (15:44) with Adam as a "living soul" (15:45)?
  3. Why might this present difficulties to Greeks who thought of human as having a distinct 'body' (material, bad) & 'soul' (immaterial, good)?
- G. Paul adapts the statement in Genesis, "So it is written, '*The first man Adam became a living being* [soul];'" and then 'extrapolates': "the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (15:45b)
1. What minor modifications' has Paul made in quoting Genesis 2:7? How does that help his 'extrapolation'?
  2. Paul sees 15:45b "the last Adam became a life-giving spirit," as a *necessary implication* of 15:45a '*The first man Adam became a living being* [soul]'. Do you see his argument? Are you convinced? Why or why not?
- H. 1 Cor. 15:58 says, "*Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work...*" (15:58). The promise of a future resurrection with a glorious body was an incentive to Paul; how can it be an incentive to us today?