
Bible Knowledge Commentary - 1 Cor 15:35-58

2. Answers to Certain Questions ([15:35-58](#))

a. Answers About the Resurrection of the Dead ([15:35-49](#))

[15:35-37](#)

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2. Answers To Certain Questions ([15:35-58](#))

In the preceding section ([vv. 1-34](#)) Paul had taken up the question implicit in [verse 12](#), why believe in the Resurrection? He answered it with arguments rooted in history, logic, theology, and experience. He then addressed two other questions: How is the resurrection achieved? What is the nature of a resurrected body?

a. *Answers about the resurrection of the dead* ([15:35-49](#))

[15:35-37](#). One objection to belief in anyone's resurrection might be its incomprehensibility. This was the point of the questions **How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?** Paul did not consider these sorts of questions a wise person would ask, as is obvious from his response, **How foolish!** (lit., "how senseless or thoughtless") to his imaginary interlocutor. Belief in the Resurrection was like belief in seedtime and harvest. Neither could be completely understood but both were real. As a plant which sprouted from a seed was directly linked to it but remarkably different from it, so too was the relationship of a natural and a resurrected body.

[15:38-41](#)

[15:38-41](#). The variety in Creation reflects the will of the Maker ([Gen. 1:1-26](#)). The differences in the animate creation (**men... animals... birds... fish**) and inanimate creation (**sun... moon... stars**) give expression to the splendor of God and bring Him praise (cf. [Ps. 148:13](#)). The differences in splendor between the **earthly bodies** and the **heavenly bodies** suggested to Paul the differences between a natural and a spiritual body (cf. [Dan. 12:3](#) where resurrected saints were compared to stars; also [Matt. 13:43](#)).

[15:42-44a](#)

[15:42-44a](#). An earthly **natural body** is fallen and so is temporal, imperfect, and weak. A heavenly **spiritual body** will be eternal, perfect, and powerful (cf. [2 Cor. 5:1-4](#)). Like a seed sown in the earth and the plant which proceeds from it, there is continuity but a gloriously evident difference.

[15:44b-49](#)

[15:44b-49](#). Discussion of the contrast between Adam and Christ (mentioned earlier in [v. 22](#)) is resumed here. Adam exemplified the earthly ([v. 40](#)) natural body (the word trans. **being**, [v. 45](#),

psychē, is related to psychikos, which is trans. **natural** in [v. 44](#)). **Adam** gave his nature to all who followed him (the man without the Spirit is the natural [psychikos] man; cf. [2:14](#)). **The last Adam**, Christ, exemplifies the heavenly **spiritual** body ([15:22](#)) which those who belong to Him ([v. 23](#); cf. [2:15](#)) will likewise assume at His coming from heaven (cf. [Phil. 3:20-21](#)). The full harvest will be like the firstfruits ([1 Cor. 15:23](#); cf. [Col. 1:18](#)). First the seed must die; then the spiritual body will emerge.

b. Answers About the Rapture of the Living ([15:50-58](#))

[15:50](#)

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b. Answers about the Rapture of the living ([15:50-58](#))

15:50. What about those who are *not* dead at Christ's coming? Paul now turned to answer that unexpressed question. With all that had preceded about the need for the natural body to give way to the spiritual, it followed that **flesh and blood**, the natural body, could not enter the eternal state (cf. [vv. 24-28](#)).

[15:51-52](#)

15:51-52. Paul had revealed the same truth to the Thessalonians ([1 Thes. 4:15-17](#)). The Rapture of the church was a **mystery** (mystērion) in that it had not been known in the Old Testament but now was revealed. (Cf. other "mysteries"—now revealed truths—in [Matt. 13:11](#); [Luke 8:10](#); [Rom. 11:25](#); [16:25](#); [1 Cor. 4:1](#); [Eph. 1:9](#); [3:3-4](#), [9](#); [5:32](#); [Col. 1:26-27](#); [2:2](#); [4:3](#); [2 Thes. 2:7](#); [1 Tim. 3:9](#), [16](#); [Rev. 1:20](#); [10:7](#); [17:5](#).) The dead in Christ will first be raised, and then the living will be instantaneously transformed. The **trumpet**, as in the Old Testament, signaled the appearance of God (cf. [Ex. 19:16](#)). It is the 546th blast for the church because this appearance shall never end (cf. [1 Cor. 13:12](#)). (There is no basis for posttribulationists equating this trumpet with the seventh trumpet in [Rev. 11:15-19](#). The trumpets in Rev. pertain to judgments during the Tribulation, whereas the trumpet in [1 Cor. 15:52](#) is related to the church.)

[15:53-54](#)

15:53-54. Like the dead ([vv. 42-43](#)), the living will exchange the temporal and imperfect for the eternal and perfect (cf. [13:10](#)). For those who belong to Christ, death's power will be removed.

[15:55](#)

15:55. As in the allusion to [Isaiah 25:8](#) ([1 Cor. 15:54](#)), Paul again recalled an Old Testament passage which prophesied the cessation of death ([Hosea 13:14](#)). (The recollections were adapted by Paul and do not correspond exactly to any of the extant Gr. or Heb. texts.) The apparent victories of Satan, in the Garden of Eden ([Gen. 3:13](#)) and on Golgotha ([Mark 15:22-24](#)) were reversed on the cross ([Col. 2:15](#); [Heb. 2:14-15](#)) and vindicated in the resurrection of Christ. From the vantage point of the certain resurrection of the saints, Paul voiced his taunt against **death** and Satan.

[15:56-57](#)

15:56-57. As the word **victory** which ended [verse 54](#) led Paul into the exaltation in [verse 55](#), so the word **sting** which ended [verse 55](#) led him into this brief digression in [verses 56-57](#). Like other theological nuggets in this chapter ([vv. 21-22](#)), these verses were later given expanded discussion in Paul's letter to the Romans ([Rom. 7:7-13](#)). **Death** came as a result of man's rebellion and disobedience against the command of God ([Gen. 3:17-19](#)). The **Law**, which epitomized the command of God, was thus the mirror against which human rebellion and disobedience was starkly portrayed. Like the first Adam, all who followed him rebelled (cf. [1 Cor. 2:14](#)). But through the obedience of the last Adam, **our Lord Jesus Christ** ([15:45](#); cf. [Rom. 5:19](#); [Phil. 2:8-11](#)), came "victory" and life ([1 Cor. 15:22](#); cf. [2:15-16](#)).

[15:58](#)

15:58. Paul's doctrinal declarations led to practical directives and this chapter's conclusion was no exception. The Corinthians were urged to **stand firm** in the apostles' teaching ([v. 2](#)), unmoved by the denials of false teachers (cf. [Eph. 4:14](#)). This certainty, especially concerning the Resurrection, provided an impetus to faithful service (cf. [1 Cor. 3:8](#); [Gal. 6:9](#)) since labor **in the resurrected Lord is not** futile (kenos, "empty"; cf. [1 Cor. 15:10, 14, 17, 30-32](#)).