

What Happens to People When They Die – Part Three

"But some will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?'" I Corinthians 15:35

In this portion of God's revelation, His apostle gives three illustrations dealing with what to expect regarding the resurrected body. Paul's purpose with the analogies is to show that progress is not checked but realized through death. In this section he teaches with what kind of bodies the dead are to rise:

Seed – Seeds look more alike than the plants they produce. You cannot infer from the seed what the plant looks like. However, the plant proceeds from the seed.¹ The Law of the Harvest is a beautiful application; you must die to live.

Flesh – Paul shows not the differences, but rather the identity of the person in all changes through which he passes. Our future body will be like our present body in the sense that our present body is the same as the body with which we were born. "Flesh" does not mean "body" in this analogy in that the flesh changes, but the body remains the same.²

Sun, Moon, Stars – as the created bodies (stars, sun, moon) are different in glory, so too the resurrected body differs in glory from the present body.³

Paul is seeking to show, not the difference, but the identity of the man in all the changes through which he may pass. He is speaking of the man who is dead, not the mass of matter undergoing dissolution in the earth; if the body is decayed and gone, what kind of a body will you have in the resurrection? Death is not annihilation, but disorganization; death is the passing from one form of existence to another. Although the Bible teaches that the resurrected body is similar to your present body (e.g., Jesus ate and drank in his resurrected body), you are not told in what sense that sameness consists.

To doubt the doctrine of the resurrection because of reason is the same folly as mentioned in the opening chapters of I Corinthians. Materialism makes no room for miracles, mystery or revelation. You must embrace the assumptions of the Bible in order to follow Christ. You find one of the assumptions in part one of this trilogy on the resurrection: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."⁴ **At the Judgment, God will judge you according to what you did while in your present body.**

¹ I Corinthians 15:35-38 ² Verse 39 ³ Verses 40-41 ⁴ II Corinthians 5:10