

# LIFE

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We Come Back Better

LESSON 4



## The Reality of Death and the Longing for Life

The thought of death touches upon a sensitivity in every human soul. We have a desire for good things to continue.

**The most tragic strain in human existence lies in the fact that the pleasure which we find in the things of this life, however good that pleasure may be in itself, is always taken away from us. The things for which men strive hardly ever turn out to be as satisfying as they expected, and in the rare cases in which they do, sooner or later they are snatched away....** Anglican Priest Peter Toon

Unless Death is not the absolute end, this is all that you get, but we have a deep, human sense that there is more to life than what we experience her.

**Do what they will, then, we remain conscious of a desire which no natural happiness will satisfy. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction to it? “Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread.” But I think it may be urged that this misses the point. A man’s physical hunger does not prove that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man’s hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called “falling in love” occurred in a sexless world.** *Weight of Glory*, C. S. Lewis

The Bible teaches that Life does not end when we die. At death, those who believe in Jesus get back what we lost that truly matters, we get back those in Christ we have lost, and we get in our possession better things than we ever possessed here. That is our hope as we approach the Best Day Ever. The Dead don’t stay dead. We Come Back Better. The Bible calls this the Resurrection.

## What is the Resurrection?

Broadly speaking, the Resurrection is the term used in the Bible to encapsulate a future date on God’s Calendar when Jesus returns to earth, and everyone comes back to life, and all is made new.

When the Bible speaks of resurrection of the dead, it is a kind of a technical term that does not refer simply to life after death.

**Resurrection isn’t a fancy way of saying, ‘going to heaven when you die’. It is not about the ‘life after death’ as such. Rather, it’s way of talking about being bodily alive again after a period of being bodily dead. Resurrection is a second-stage postmortem life: ‘life after life after death’.**

N.T. Wright

R. A. Torrey - **“We will not be disembodied spirits in the world to come, but redeemed spirits, in redeemed bodies, in a redeemed universe.**

**The Resurrection** refers to God, at the return of Jesus, giving those who believed in Jesus new bodies.

## **Bible Passages about the Resurrection**

Isaiah 26:18 - **Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.**

Daniel 12:2-3 - **Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.**

John 5:28-29 - **Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.**

Acts 24:15 - **I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.**

Romans 8:11 - **And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.**

## **The Significance of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.**

What was Jesus doing on a cross 2000 years ago?

1 Corinthians 15:3 tells us what he was doing: **For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.**

1 Corinthians 15:56 - **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.**

So, the Bible is clear in this passage and throughout: Death is the result of sin.

## **Jesus conquered death by atoning for sin, fully and completely**

2 Corinthians 5:21 - **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

Romans 3:23-25 - **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.**

1 Corinthians 15: 4 - **he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

1 Corinthians 15:57 – **Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **He brings Redemption to all that sin has touched.**

He restores/ reconciles our relationship to God.

He restores to spiritual life.

Ephesians 2:4-5 – **But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ, even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved.**

He restores/ resurrects our bodies.

Anthony Hoekema - **If the resurrection body were non-material or non-physical, the devil would have won a great victory, since God would then have been compelled to change human beings with physical bodies such as he had created into creatures of a different sort, without physical bodies (like the angels). Then it would indeed seem that matter had become intrinsically evil so that it had to be banished. And then, in a sense, the Greek philosophers “would have been proved right. But matter is not evil; it is part of God’s good creation. Therefore the goal of God’s redemption is the resurrection of the physical body, and the creation of a new earth on which his redeemed people can live and serve God forever with glorified bodies. Thus the universe will not be destroyed but renewed, and God will win the victory.**

The resurrection of the body is God’s supreme act of rescue from the curse of death. It is God creating for us physical, glorified, and immortal bodies that can participate in the New Creation in which there is no longer death and decay.

## The Resurrection of Jesus as an historical fact

His resurrection is ultimately what matters. In verse 3, Paul says that what he received, he passed on as of first importance. In other words, this is the most important thing that you need to know as a human being.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - People saw him on numerous occasions. As many as 500, who were still alive.

**When I looked at religion I said, I have two questions. One, has anybody ever conquered death, and two, if they have, did they make a way for me to conquer death? I checked the tomb of Buddha, and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of Confucius and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of Mohammed and it was occupied, and I came to the tomb of Jesus and it was empty. And I said, There is one who conquered death. And I asked the second question, Did He make a way for me to do it? And I opened the Bible and discovered that He said, 'Because I live ye shall live also.'** Canadian Scientist G. B. Hardy

## The Resurrection of Jesus as a Pledge of our resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:20 - **But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

The term has to do with the sacrificial system and the offering of the first fruits of the harvest. **The point to these sacrifices is that they are not offered up for their own sake, but as representative of the total harvest. They are a token expression of recognition and Thanksgiving that the whole has been given by God.** “the term seems deliberately chosen to make evident the organic connection between the two resurrections.... Jesus’ resurrection is not simply a guarantee; it is the actual beginning of the general event. In fact, on the basis of this verse it can be said that Paul views the two resurrections not so much as two separate events but as two episodes of the same event.

Richard Gaffin

## The Resurrection of Jesus as a Prototype of our resurrection

Jesus’s resurrection body is the Prototype for our future resurrection. We will have a body like his.

1 Corinthians 15:49 - **And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.**

Philippians 3:20-21 - **But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.**

# **What Does the Bible Say about the Nature of our Resurrection Body?**

## **There will be Continuity, with incredible Renewal**

**There must be continuity, for otherwise there would be little point in speaking about a resurrection at all. The calling into existence of a completely new set of people totally different from the present inhabitants of the earth would not be a resurrection.** - Anthony Hoekema

At the resurrection you will be you, but You will be a better you.

**Somewhere in my broken, paralyzed body is the seed of what I shall become. The paralysis makes what I am to become all the more grand when you contrast atrophied, useless legs against splendid resurrected legs. I'm convinced that if there are mirrors in heaven (and why not?), the image I'll see will be unmistakably 'Joni,' although a much better, brighter Joni.** - Joni Eareckson Tada

## **There will be Discontinuity due to fabulous Upgrades**

Paul says that we will be physical with all of the joys and delights and abilities that come with it, but he also says that we will all be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 - **Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**

## **The Resurrection Body will be Imperishable**

**What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.** 1 Corinthians 15:42

## **The Resurrection Body will be Glorious**

**It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.** 1 Corinthians 15:43

## **The Resurrection Body will be Powerful**

**It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.** 1 Corinthians 15:43

**The body is going to have more energy, more physical capability, more stamina, more athleticism, more speed, more coordination, more durability than it ever, ever had because we're not going to need the body less, we're going to need it more.** Donald Macleod

## **The Resurrection Body will be Spiritual**

**It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.** 1 Corinthians 15:44

When Paul uses the word natural and Spiritual, he does not mean what we mean. By Spiritual, we think "Non-Physical." That is not what he means.

The Greek words that Paul uses **describe not *the material out of which things are made but the power or energy that animates them.* It is the difference between asking, on the one hand, "Is this a wooden ship or an iron ship? (The material from which it is made) And asking, on the other, "Is this a steam ship or a sailing ship?" (The energy that powers it).** Paul is talking about the present body, which is animated by the normal human psyche (the life force we all possess here and now which gets us through the present life but is ultimately powerless against illness, injury, decay, and death), and the future body, which is animated by God's Spirit, God's breath of new life, the energizing power of God's new creation. - NT Wright, Surprised by Hope:

## **The Power of Future Resurrection for Life NOW**

### **1. The Resurrection enables Resilience in the face of evil, harm**

**You can kill us but you can't harm us.** Christian Justin Martyr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD

### **2. The Resurrection gives joy in the face of life's difficulties.**

**No matter how devastating our struggles, disappointments, and troubles are, they are only temporary. No matter what happens to you, no matter the depth of tragedy or pain you face, no matter how death stalks you and your loved ones, the Resurrection promises you a future of immeasurable good.** Josh McDowell

### **3. The Resurrection Compels us to live life on Mission.**