

1 CORINTHIANS Chapter 15

LIFE AFTER DEATH

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as *The Apostles' Creed* puts it . .

-- "The Resurrection of the Body"

Preliminary Background

The significance of "the Body" – Our Bodies

1. Health, Appearance, and Aging –

- Food, Drink, Nourishment, Hunger
- Covid
- Surgery (fixing old and replacing with new parts)
- Inevitable deterioration
- The Mind: relationship to body/brain
- Abortion – in discussions both ancient and modern, the issue deals with "life" and development of the body (e.g., heart beat)

2. Artificial Intelligence – can a robot, no matter how human the thinking, ever be "human" without a flesh and blood body?

3. Race – much writing about "black and white bodies"
(Ta-Nehisi Coates, etc.)

4. Sexuality

- **Gender** –do our bodies determine gender (the trans-gender discussion)?
- **Sexual expression** – inside marriage? outside marriage? same-sex?

TO THE ANCIENT GREEKS . .

The body was

- irrelevant to "True Spirituality"

The body was

- like a tomb to be "escaped from"
- A prison for the true person within

Therefore – two options for morality

a. Don't touch it

OR

b. Do what you like with it

This was not Paul's view . . .

Paul uses the word "body"

(Greek = *SOMA*, e.g., psycho-somatic)

-- x73 in all his letters

-- x 36 in 1 Corinthians

-- x 7 in 2 Corinthians

I. God is the Creator and Designer of the Body

- Paul is a Jew!
- In Hebrew thought, the material world is God created and essentially "good" – and "speaks" about God.
(See Genesis 1-2. Psalm 19)
- The body is to be taken care of.

1 Corinthians 12.17-18

If the whole **body** were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole **body** were hearing?

But as it is, God arranged the members in the **body**, each one of them, as he chose.

1 Corinthians 12.24

whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the **body**, giving the greater honor to the inferior member . .

Ephesians 5.29

For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church

II. Our Bodies are Precious to God . . .

3II. Our Bodies are Precious to God

- a. God wants to live within our bodies.
- b. God holds us accountable for what we do with our bodies – who we give our bodies to.
- c. Sexual intimacy is “sacramental” not merely “neutral” or natural

1 Corinthians 6.19

Do you not know that your **body** is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? . . .

1 Corinthians 6.19-20

. . . and that ***you are not your own.***

For you were bought with a price;
therefore glorify God in your **body**.

1 Corinthians 7.4 (*who owns us?*)

The wife does not have authority over her own **body**, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own **body**, but the wife does.

2 Corinthians 5.10 (*accountability- warning*)

All of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense *for what has been done in the **body***, whether good or evil.

Philippians 1.20 (*accountability – positive*)

It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always **in my body**, whether by life or by death.

1 Corinthians 6.13 (*the argument from “nature”*)

“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other.

The **body** is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the **body**.

1 Corinthians 6.16 (*sex as sacramental*)

Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one **body** with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.”

1 Corinthians 6.18 (*the body NOT to be used with indifference, casually*)

Shun fornication!

Every sin that a person commits is outside the **body**; but the fornicator sins against the **body** itself.

III. But Paul does not assume the body is easy to handle!!

- a. The Body is weakened and enslaved to sin
 - its “natural” impulses have been tainted by sin
- b. The body needs to be controlled
 - and some aspects of its desires need to be “crucified and put to death”
- c. God used “a body” to bring us and our bodies back to God
- d. And Paul’s own physical appearance seems to have been at times a test for others (Galatians 4:13-14)

1 Corinthians 11.24

when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my **body** that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Colossians 1.22

he has now reconciled (us) **in his fleshly body** through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—

Romans 6.6

We know that our old self was crucified with him so that **the body of sin** might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin

Romans 8.13

if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the **body**, you will live.

1 Thessalonians 4.4

each one of you (should) know how to control your own **body** in holiness and honor

1 Corinthians 9.27

I punish my **body** and enslave it so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

IV. The Present Body is Irredeemably Imperfect BUT is not our Ultimate Body!!

“Flesh and blood would not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50)

Romans 7.24

Wretched man that I am!

-- Who will rescue me from this **body** of death?

2 Corinthians 5.6

So we are always confident;
even though we know that

while we are at home in the **body**
we are away from the Lord—

Philippians 3.21

He will transform the **body** of our humiliation
that it may be conformed to the **body** of his glory,
by the power that also enables him
to make all things subject to himself.

SUMMARY . . .

I. God is the Creator and Designer of the Body

II. Our Bodies are Precious to God

- a. God wants to live within our bodies.
- b. God holds us accountable for what we do with our bodies – who we give our bodies to.
- c. Sexual intimacy is “sacramental” not merely “neutral” or natural

III. Paul does not assume the body is easy to handle

- a. We cannot equate “natural” with “the will of God”
- b. Nature has been twisted by sin

IV. The Present Body is Irredeemably Imperfect

- a. we cannot escape the love/hate relationship

BUT is not our Ultimate Body!!

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (US)

CONFESSION OF 1967 -- 9.47d.

The relationship between man and woman exemplifies in a basic way God’s ordering of the interpersonal life for which God created humankind.
Anarchy in sexual relationships is a symptom of alienation from God, neighbors, and self.

(there is) Perennial confusion about the meaning of sex

The church, as the household of God, is called to lead people out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ.

Reconciled to God, people have joy in and respect for their own humanity and that of other persons . . .

The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by society when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.

Trans-Gender Debate:

(DR Note: respect for all humanity; Note: gender dysphoria is painfully painful . . .)

In the light of Biblical teaching on “the body” . .

Is the ultimate question:

What is Male? Female?

- *Defined bodily? – If not . . then*
- *Some subjective other way?*

By what standard?

-- By male or female stereotypes?

-- the standards that feminism resists – whether for male or female?

OR: does normal confusion escalate

because we push to the side

The real ultimate question(s)?

- What/whose image is to shape my vision of myself? – whether M or F?
 - Whose body is central to my self-definition?
 - In His life? (*in-carnation*)
 - In His death? (*body broken*)
 - & In his resurrection (*of body*)
 - What does God think of my body?
 - Can I expect “peace with my body” here and now?

1 CORINTHIANS 15

CORINTHIAN QUESTION 1.

- **Paul: you can't be serious?**
- **Resurrection of the spirit? OK!**
- **Resurrection of the body? You have to be kidding!**

Paul: THE FACTS ON THE GROUND REGARDING JESUS' BODY

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters,
of the good news

- that I proclaimed to you,
 - which you in turn received,
 - in which also you stand, (*where? Rom 5:1*)
 - through which also you are being saved,
 - if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

³For I handed on to you as of first importance
what I in turn had received:

I. that Christ died for our sins

in accordance with the scriptures, (*Isaiah 53?*)

II. ⁴and that he was buried,

III. and that he was raised on the third day

in accordance with the scriptures,

- Hosea 6:2 -- *After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.*
- Jonah 1:17-- *But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.* (*Lk. 11:29*)
- Psalm 16:9-10 -- *My heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.*

IV. ⁵and that **he appeared**

*Was this "appearance" wishful thinking?
personal? communal?*

i. to Cephas,

ii. then to the twelve.

iii. ⁶Then **he appeared** . . .

to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time,

most of whom are still alive,
though some have died.

iv. ⁷Then **he appeared** to James

(Jesus' brother, see Galatians ^{1:19})

v. then to all the apostles.

vi. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born,

he appeared also to me.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles,
unfit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and his grace toward me has not been in vain.

On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them
though it was not I,

but the grace of God that is with me.

¹¹**Whether then it was I or they,**

so we (*apostles are all united to*) proclaim
and so you have come to believe.

CORINTHIAN QUESTION 2.

- **There is no resurrection of the dead (bodies)**
- **(The power of the surrounding culture)**

¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed
as raised from the dead,

*how can some of you say
there is no resurrection of the dead?*

¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead,
then Christ has not been raised;

¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then

- our proclamation has been in vain
- and your faith has been in vain.
- (1) ¹⁵We are even found to be **misrepresenting** (*bearing false witness to*) **God**, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

¹⁶For if the dead are not raised,
then Christ has not been raised.

¹⁷(2) If Christ has not been raised,

- your faith is futile
- and **you are still in your sins**.
- (3) ¹⁸Then those also who have died in Christ . . . **have perished**.
¹⁹If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

[e.g., why sacrifice?

How do we understand suffering?]

CORINTHIAN QUESTION 3

- **So why don't we see more evidence of resurrection?**
- **Paul's View of God's TIMING – and the "2nd Coming"**

²⁰But in fact . . .

Christ has been raised from the dead,

the first fruits

(Using a Biblical Image -- *Leviticus 23:10-11, beginning of harvest at Passover*)

of those who have died.

²¹For since *death* came

through a human being,

(*Genesis 2:17, 3*)

the *resurrection of the dead* has also come

through a human being;

²²for as *all die* "in" Adam, [N.B. no blame of Eve!!]
so *all will be made alive* "in" Christ.

²³**But each in his own order** [*in God's good timing*]:

a. Christ [*died and raised*] the first fruits,

b. then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

²⁴Then (*DR: and only then*) comes the end,

- when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father,
- after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. (*Psalms 110*)

²⁵For he must reign until he has put **all** his enemies under his feet.

²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

(*Isaiah 25:6-8, Hosea 13:14, Rev. 21:4*)

Isaiah 25:6-8

⁶On this mountain the Lord of hosts **will** make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷And he **will** destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; **he will swallow up death forever**.

⁸**Then** the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

²⁷For

(as Psalm 8:6 says)

"God has put **all things** in subjection under his feet."

→ AN ASIDE on How "The Trinity" works!!

(*was this a Corinthian issue?*)

But when (the Scripture) says,

"All things are put in subjection,"

it is plain that this does not include (*DR: God*)

the one who put **all things** in subjection under him.

²⁸When **all things** are subjected to him,

then the Son himself

will also be subjected to the one
who put *all things* in subjection under him, so that
[DR: in God's Good Time at Christ's coming]

God (F,S, HS) may be all in all.

Note: "subjection" → *bossed by? controlled by?*

→ *operating in the right/proper relationship to?*

→ *Mission accomplished*

→ *humility in the Godhead? Philippians.2:6*

→ AN ASIDE on the "Inconsistent" Corinthians

²⁹Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead?

If the dead are not raised at all,

why are people baptized on their behalf?

*[we have no clue whether or not Paul approved
of this practice, or what exactly it meant]*

→ AN ASIDE on the Sanity of the "Sacrificial Christian Life"

- ³⁰And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? ³¹I die every day! *(2 Corinthians)*

That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- ³²If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it?

If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." *(Isaiah 22:12-13)*

→ AN ASIDE on "listening to contemporary culture/philosophy"

³³Do not be deceived: *[by your peers and Greek philosophy]*

"Bad company ruins good morals."

³⁴Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

CORINTHIAN QUESTION 3

- What does the resurrection look like?
- What do WE look like in the resurrection?

³⁵But someone will ask,

- "How are the dead raised?"
- With what kind of body do they come?"

³⁶Fool!

(Psalm 14:1)

3a. God's "two bodies" plan in Nature

*(Nature: akin to the Parables of Jesus,
and making sense to "this worldly" people)*

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

³⁷And as for what you sow,

- you do not sow the body that is to be,
- but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
- ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen,
and to each kind of seed its own body.

³⁹Not all flesh is alike,

- but there is one flesh for human beings,
 - another for animals,
 - another for birds,
 - and another for fish.
- ⁴⁰There are both heavenly bodies
- and earthly bodies,
but the "glory" of the heavenly is one thing,
and that of the earthly is another.
 - ⁴¹There is one "glory" of the sun,
 - and another "glory" of the moon,
 - and another "glory" of the stars;
 - indeed, star differs from star in "glory".

42So it is with the resurrection of the dead.

What is sown is perishable,
what is raised is imperishable.

⁴³It is sown in dishonor,
it is raised in glory.

It is sown in weakness,
it is raised in power.

⁴⁴It is sown a physical body,
it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a physical body,
(*why is there a problem with thinking that*)
there is also a spiritual body.

3b. God's "two men" plan

+ God's Timing # 2

- We will look like the resurrected Jesus
- HE is our "image"

⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam,
became a living being" (Genesis 2:7)
the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (Joel 2:28)

⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first,
but the physical, and then the spiritual.

⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust;
→ the second man is from heaven.

⁴⁸*As was* the man of dust,
so are those who are of the dust;
→ and *as is* the man of heaven,
so are those who are of heaven.

⁴⁹*Just as* we have borne
the image of the man of dust,
→ *we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.*

⁵⁰What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this:
(*and in this, I, Paul, agree with you*)
flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,
nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
(which means that the "imperishable" is still to appear)

3c. God's "two states"//Dead & Living// Plan + God's Timing #3

⁵¹Listen, I will tell you a mystery!

We will not all die, [DR: before Jesus comes?]

but we will all be changed,

⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trumpet. (no sooner)

For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised imperishable,
and we will be changed.

⁵³For this perishable body
must put on imperishability,
and this mortal body
must put on immortality.

⁵⁴When this perishable body
puts on imperishability,
and this mortal body
puts on immortality,

Then (*and only then*)

the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory." (Isaiah)

⁵⁵*"Where, O death, is your victory?"* (Hosea)

Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶The sting (*the cause*) of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷But thanks be to God,
who gives (as a free gift)
us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved,

- be steadfast, immovable,
- always excelling in the work of the Lord,

because you know
that in the Lord
your labor is not in vain.