

The Mystery of Life

1 Corinthians 15:35 – 58



~ Our Spiritual Safari has exhaustively examined this awe-inspiring chapter of the Bible in our previous two reports. We don't run away from dealing with mind-boggling issues on this expedition through the entire Word of God; we face them all head on. This section of Scripture regarding the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is *extremely* difficult to capture in words and adequately articulate properly, correctly and completely. I trust you will read carefully after praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment.

We'll require one additional report from first Corinthians following this one, and then we'll move back into the Old Testament where we'll meet Ezra. Remember, when we last visited the Old Testament, in the books of first and second Chronicles, Israel and Judah had each been taken totally into captivity; Israel being taken to Assyria and Judah to Babylon. As most of you know, our safari seeks the Lord Jesus Christ on every page of Scripture – and that's rather easy in epistles like Corinthians – but we'll have to do some soul searching to find Christ in Ezra at the time in history that we will be studying....

³⁵ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

~ Men consistently fail to discern the difference between the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. Plato and Cicero both argue for the immortality of the soul. Here, Paul is arguing for the resurrection of the body! Well, how can a body that dies and a body that be raised from the dead be the same? Paul demonstrates an answer to that from nature, which is not identical – but it's remarkably similar.

Our fleshy bodies exchange all of its elements completely approximately every eight years. Our cells regenerate until there is not a single one we had just a decade ago. When a wheat seed falls into the ground, it sprouts up and grows again. The Corinthian church was unable to see there was dissolution here, but there is also continuity! This is not impossible; although it is a mystery. It's a deep paradox; but Scripturally, both are true. And with God, all things are possible. So, this is another area of the Bible where you'll have to decide if you really believe what it teaches. Personally, the Bible has been so frighteningly accurate in my life, I would be a fool not to trust it with my eternity; so, I do.

And that brings us to the subject of physical death for a believer — that day when the real you is inverted inside-out and examined internally under the microscope by the Lord Himself. The flesh disintegrates and is destroyed; dust to dust and ashes to ashes. The human body goes *'the way of all the earth,'* as David said. I believe God examines every atom and molecule. Christ is the first fruit in resurrection, and we'll follow. The church is currently looking for our Blessed Hope and waiting for the rapture. Old Testament saints, and those who have died previously, will be raised at that time. If we are alive, we will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, and we will be changed to be like Him. However, the seed of this flesh goes into the ground if we should die before Christ returns – and God Himself raises us *in that day* and provides us with a glorified body in the Atonement. God giveth it a body as it has pleased Him; *"it"* is the soul. That is *SO* important to understand....

³⁶ Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

³⁷ And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

³⁸ But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

~ The mystery of life is much greater than the mystery of death, friends. If we sow wheat seed, then wheat grows. If we sow wheat seed, carrots are never, never ever going to come up from that seed. The same is true of the human seed. Moreover, the difference between a dead body and a resurrected body is greater than the difference between man and animal. That which a man sows shall he reap! God is not mocked, my friends. We've gone from botany to biology to zoology in this report from our Spiritual

Safari. It's scientific. I think "*celestial*" in verse forty refers to the church at large. The "*terrestrial*" is Israel and the Gentiles. That takes us further into the realm of astronomy.

The first man is physical and psychological; the last man is spiritual. The first man is clay — dispensable and fragile; the second is eternal. Scholars speak with a learned supposition of ecological preservation and repairing the environment man destroyed — but man cannot solve the problems we have on planet earth. We cannot repair the effects from the myriad new disasters that we are creating every moment with our scientific advances. The fact that man is incapable of resolving the earth's dilemmas is beyond debate. Man himself is earthy rubbish; and the things he produces are merely his refuse, which is even worse. I'm sure many of you readers do not like talk like that; well, God says to you, "*too bad!*"

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior from Heaven. Our hope of an eternity with Him and all of the elements that realization encompasses is, frankly, the meaning of life. Even better, these old bodies we have are not going to Heaven. I'm looking forward to trading mine in, you may be sure. The resurrection isn't going to be some magic trick that makes these old bodies look good in the darkness and grunt out obedience to some obscure mad scientist's commands. Neither are we going to some type of repair shop or refurbishment factory. Everything is going to be brand new again. It's all about sowing seed down here; the seed goes in the ground where it dies, and it comes up anew and afresh — and it will be a new tabernacle for us to live in — eternally.

Most atheists want their ashes scattered in the ocean after they die and are cremated. It's nothing in the world but a direct challenge to God to see if He can get it gathered together again and reanimated for judgment. All of the elements that make up our body are found in the earth, of course — such as copper, iron, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus, water, and sodium. People assume that if they have their ashes scattered, they'll blend back into the earth. Well, we know all copper atoms are about the same, and all other elements likewise; so, it doesn't seem to make any difference if God

The Mystery of Life

1 Corinthians 15:35 – 58

>>><<

Page 5 of 7

used some parts that were not original originally. God has plenty of atoms in a jar somewhere. And to be sincere, God knows every molecule of dust on this earth.

God made us to begin with; so He can shoulder all the responsibility from here – and that’s perfectly fine with me. The Word of God says the bodies will come up out of the grave; and if you’re scattered over the ocean, you’ll be coming up out of the ocean. You can just write that down. The things of God could never have been thought of by mankind. The simple idea of God becoming man and dying for the sins of the world is just *NOT* something man could have *EVER* imagined; man would never have had that notion in a hundred thousand eternities.

Paul says not everyone is going to go through the doorway of death, but everyone *IS* going to be changed. I don’t think the average believer today realizes how much he or she will have to be changed in order to go into the presence of Christ. So many people think they’re going to run up, hop on Jesus’ lap, and give Him a great big kiss like Santa Claus or something; no, friends, you’re going to be changed. You cannot go to Heaven as you are right now; and with the old body, you wouldn’t even be able to comprehend Heaven. John fell at Jesus’ feet as dead when he saw Him. Plan on doing that so you aren’t as disappointed and ashamed of yourself as you will be otherwise.

That all happens “*in a moment*” — which infers the smallest particle of time that can be measured. Interestingly, when scientists discovered the atom, they thought they had the smallest particle of matter; until they discovered an atom could be cut like a railroad restaurant pie. Then, it’s not an atom any longer by definition, though – it’s something else. It would be closer to “*building blocks*” at that time. Chaos has ensued ever since. Simon Peter also talks about this in his second epistle chapter three; and he was a fisherman – not a scientist! Well, there will come a time when time will become a nonentity; no pun intended.

The last trump in verse fifty-two is Christ's voice, friends. Just as Christ called Lazarus from the grave, so will He call you and me; unless we have not yet died. That's the final victory. Death opens the vast reaches of eternity; and death is where we start down the hallway of forevermore. Personally, I'm scared to go through that door. Christ went through death as the Ark of the Lord went down through the Jordan River. It came up on the other side. So will we. But I am still frightened of that experience. Jesus not only leads us through this life, He leads us through the eternally deep waters of death. All we have to do is place our hand in His Nail-Pierced Hand and close our eyes — and He will take us there.

See, the sting of death is sin. Sin really does sting, too. The strength of sin is the law. Christ fights and defeats all of that for us — and by the Blood of the Lamb shall we overcome! God is faithful, friends. We have been called into fellowship with Christ. This is a sobering section of first Corinthians; but we're not quite finished yet. All things are ours — even *DEATH* is ours! All things to come are ours; and we are promised good things to come. Good things, friends. The Living Christ is in Heaven in glory today; I sure hope you know Him. He's yours, He's mine — and He is the worlds to follow throughout eternity....

>>><<<

The Mystery of Life

1 Corinthians 15:35 – 58

>>><<<

Page 7 of 7