

## WITH WHAT KIND OF BODY WILL WE BE RAISED?

We know about the “natural body” -- What can be expected about our “spiritual body”?

1 Corinthians 15:40-44

**TEXT:** *There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Those of you who may remember the movie series of “The Godfather” starring Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, and Robert Duvall, may recall the depiction of the brutal death of Don Corleone's son, Sonny. He was shot to death by half dozen machine guns. The movie showed the grief-stricken Don Corleone bringing his son's bullet-riddled body into the funeral home with the instructions to the mortician: “I want you to use all your powers and skills to make him look right again. I don't want his mother to see him this way.” Then with a dramatically sad face and voice that only an expert actor like Marlon Brando could create, the Don Corleone said: “Look what they did to my boy!”

Many times such a brutal death will result in a funeral with a “closed casket.” The devastation of dying is often too much and too painful to see.

But when death comes upon us and our loved ones in less devastating fashion, we often speak of “death by natural causes.” I recall the death of one of our older members who had lived a long and blessed life among us as a lovely Christian woman. After a short illness the Lord took her gently to heaven. I remember her husband standing next to my wife and me looking over her lifeless body in the casket, and saying, “Look at how lovely she looks! Not a wrinkle on her face!” He was obviously looking through his own eyes of love because there were many wrinkles caused by the natural passing of many years.

What peace and joy we have in knowing that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! And what this means to all how know and believe this is that we too, will rise from the dead when Christ returns!

So after so many funerals, so many personal experiences with dying, the question is that when we rise from the dead, WITH WHAT KIND OF BODY WILL WE BE RAISED? Paul tells us that we will rise with “a spiritual body.” We know about the natural body. What can be expected of this “spiritual body?”

We know about the “natural body.” Each of us have been in an intimate relationship with the so-called natural body since our conception. For nine months we lived, grew and developed in our mother's womb. We were blissfully unaware of anything on the outside, except for the fact that we could hear sounds, like the voices of our parents and others we would someday meet.

Also, we were unaware of a terrible defect. I'm not talking about some sad physical defect. Even if a child in the womb is sadly deformed in some way, or injured in some way, or has inherited a chromosomal defect, that child has no way of knowing that there is something wrong. That is sad enough. But the most distressful defect is what Scripture says is a spiritual one. It is the original sin of Adam that is inherited by all souls ever conceived. Scripture has nicknamed it: The Old Adam. The most powerful and specific revelation of this spiritual defect is David's Psalm: ***Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*** Ps 51 And Jesus' own words: ***Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*** Jn 3

The world does not believe this nor accept it. Their premise is that “there is a basic good in everyone,” and that babies are innocent when they are born. But the world cannot argue with the consequences of original sin: ***... the wages of sin is death...*** Ro 6 Babies die in the womb. Children die young. And as we live and grow and mature, looking in the mirror becomes more distressing year after year as we witness our natural bodies begin to shrivel up and break down. When my own granddaughters saw our wedding picture on day they asked their grandma if she had been married before. “Who is that man next to you?” They didn't believe her when she told them it was me, their grandpa.

We know about the natural body and what sin has done to it. We know about how our own sinning has contributed to its demise. We feel the grip of death tightening around us the longer we live inside this earthly house called “the natural body.”

But Scripture says: (this body) *is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

What can be expected about our “spiritual body”? The Apostle Paul tells us what to expect by contrasting the natural body with what Scripture calls the “spiritual body.” *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.* This spiritual body sounds like a contradiction because the “natural body” is seen and touched. The “spiritual body” is something totally unknown to mortal man. The only Scriptural reference I can cite about this mysterious and amazing body that God’s people will someday have is from John’s epistle: *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* 1 Jn 3 Our new bodies will be perfect and wonderful like our Lord’s resurrected body, but without the wounds in he had in his hands and feet from his crucifixion. John says: *we shall be like him...*

Unless Christ returns before we die, we will all one day be buried. But Paul assures us: *The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable ...* When each of us reach our individual expiration date, assigned by our Lord, we will stop breathing and our hearts will stop beating. Someone will pronounce us “dead” and we will be buried. Dying is not a pleasant thought. Unless someone is in great physical distress, we normally do not like to think about dying. Our eyes well up with tears when we think about those we love passing away before our eyes. But Christ is risen! And so shall we! With new bodies that cannot perish! Christ is risen and death has no power over us!

Paul says that this natural body that we know so well *is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory!* We pay funeral homes lots of money to hide the dishonor of dying. The mortician picks up the lifeless body, hires specialists to fix up our physical features, fix our hair, and dress us in appropriate clothes in an attempt lend a final honorable respect to this mortal body now at the will and whim of those who must bury it. But Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Paul writes: *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.* 1 Co 15 Listen to this amazing fact! Listen and believe! For this isn’t wishful thinking, it is God’s inspired truth.

In *the twinkling of eye* we will stand with bodies built for eternal life in God’s Kingdom. What *is sown in weakness, (will be) raised in power ...* In Psalm 16 the Bible says: *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.* Ps 16 You see, the “natural body” is not built for what awaits us in heaven. Joy in God’s presence! The sight of seeing God on this side of heaven would kill us instantly. But there is a joy awaiting you the surpasses all comprehension when you stand with eyes able to see the full glory and majesty of God. And there will be “pleasures” things from God’s own hand that will touch our senses with the greatest of pleasure. Only an amazing new body, created to stand before God and to taste, touch, see, smell and hear pleasing things from God forever and ever can do this!

With what kind of body will we be raised? Our Creator has created some amazing things. Paul says: *There are ... heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead.* Look at the splendor of the heavenly bodies! Amazing color photography from giant telescopes in space testify to the beauty of galaxies and stars. *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead.* A brand new kind of body will be given you, and you will not be disappointed! Amen.