

GAMMA 1- Answers

1 Cor 15b

B. The manner of the resurrection

- 1. Some of the scientific objections of non believers to the resurrection of the dead is basically against the re-animation of dead people which is seen in popular culture like the living dead movies. How is the resurrection described by Paul not like that.**

Non believers often associate resurrection with the re-animation of the dead. They tend to think linearly within the terms of reference of their own experience hence a resurrected person is basically the same person who was dead and is now made alive like Lazarus. Obviously this flies in the face of logic and there are no physical laws or scientific phenomenon that will be able to imply that this is remotely possible.

The Corinthians are in the same boat for they ask in vs 35 how are the dead raised ? and more specifically what kind of body? The question itself will reveal that they think of resurrection in terms of re-animation of the same body that was previously dead.

The resurrection described by Paul is not like that. There is a radical discontinuity in the process. Paul uses the metaphor of a seed vv36-37 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

The seed goes into the ground and it has no semblance of appearance to what comes out of the ground as a resurrected body. The body is like a bare kernel...nothing of its appearance has any remote resemblance of what the plant will look like when it re-emergences out of the ground.

The resurrected body is of a nature of its own and this nature is discontinuous with that of the body that was buried in the ground. It's a complete make over it is not a re-animation of the old body like a version 2.0 or a reconditioned car.

2. What are the common non Christian arguments against the possibility of resurrection of the dead, how do we answer these questions? Why does the scientific method for evaluating the resurrection of the dead not applicable here

The common non Christian arguments against the resurrection of the dead are like.

- 1) The majority of the world's population some 4 billion or so people do not believe in it so it cannot be naturally logical
- 2) It has never happened before hence the odds would be 100 billion to 1
- 3) There are no extrabiblical historical documents that write of Jesus being resurrected.
- 4) The gospels were written 40 years after the resurrection had taken place hence memories would have been distorted and the disciples could have been mistaken hence unreliable
- 5) There is no scientific basis for this phenomenon

The reasonable answers to these are

1. The truth of a matter does not necessarily require the majority of the world to believe in it. Truth is not a democratic process. Most truths about anything are usually held by small groups of people any way
2. Just because the odds are against it does not mean it cannot happen
3. Extrabiblical documents do attest to the life and crucifixion of Jesus from the writings of historians like Josephus and Lucian etc. The Jews and Roman authorities do acknowledge the empty tombs by providing explanations for it. If the tomb were not empty they would have produced the body of Jesus to destroy the faith. The Nazareth Inscription dated AD 41 specifically forbids people from moving grave stones and stealing corpses which is the closest non biblical document that hints at the controversy of the resurrection
4. Even though the gospels were written 40 years later on there were more than 500 witnesses to the resurrection and this is recorded by Paul's letter to the Corinthians in AD 55 barely 20 years after the fact. Paul visited Jerusalem and received the oral tradition as he testifies in Galatians written in AD 56 that he interacted with the apostles Peter and others then and received information about the resurrection from these first hand witnesses. The bible provides very accurate historical record of what has happened and the resurrection is based on history recorded.
5. Science cannot and does not disprove the resurrection. Natural science describes the normal reproducible working of the world of nature. Indeed, the key meaning of "nature", as Boyle emphasized, is "the normal course of events." Miracles like the resurrection are inherently abnormal. To be sure, while science can't logically rule miracles in or

out of consideration. Science offers natural explanations of natural events. It has no power or need to assert that only natural events happen. Miracles are events that occur outside the natural laws hence science can neither prove or disprove these events.

3. Paul's explanation of the resurrection makes it perfectly reasonable to believe in the resurrection in v 38-49 How does he do this?

Most scientists can make reasonable deductions about the state of the world based on what is observed in nature. Paul does the same by invoking the principle of discontinuity and correspondence.

Discontinuity

He uses the metaphor of the seed to show that it is not re-animation of dead corpse . If we can believe that a tiny miserable seed can be plunged in to the cold dark earth and re emerge months and years later as a tall luscious tree with fruits to boot having no semblance of appearance to the original seed why can't we believe that the same God the creator can plant a dead body like a seed in to the ground and raise it up to a glorious resurrected body totally unlike in nature that which was planted?

There is a degree of correspondence as well.

1 Corinthians 15:38 (ESV) But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

Just as a mango seed will yield a mango tree and not a papaya tree and a rambutan seed will yield a rambutan tree hence a human body planted in the ground will also yield a corresponding resurrected body

There is a pattern in nature

The animals have a kind of body with its unique characteristics and beauty of one kind and the humans have one which is of a higher order with its own awesome power and much more glory

Each creature has a distinct , separate and wondrous set of characteristics Things on earth will look different from the stars in the sky each has its own unique characteristics. Paul writes "There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another"

Hence isn't it logical for God to put the same pattern to the resurrection body that there is a unique set of characteristics for it and it will be very different from the earthly body. Just as the earth looks different from the sun and the stars so the human body will be different from the resurrected body.

So based on this logic it is not impossible in fact it is logical that God would have arranged for a resurrection body that corresponds to our earthly body but far not glorious and wonderful

The example of Adam and Jesus

In the same way our human bodies are patterned after our ancestor Adam we too are made of dust and will return to dust as we are part of humanity

1 Corinthians 15:48 (ESV) As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven

However just as we have have done that , we are now God's new humanity redeemed Jesus. Jesus is the man of heaven ...the supernatural resurrected man and our nature will one day become like His because we are though His death and salvation , we shall bear His image.

1 Corinthians 15:49 (ESV) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

4. What does Paul mean when he says we will have a “spiritual body” isn't that a contradiction of terms after all spirit means no body?

When we say spirit it means it is not physical hence a spiritual body is a potential contradiction of terms

However lets look at how Paul describes the resurrection body

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (ESV) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

The earthly body is subject to decay, and dishonor when it breaks down in the ground, it will lie helpless and immobile and will not function in any capacity. The resurrected body is glorious which means it is wonderful, it is powerful and so robust that it can never ever decay or be destroyed. Obviously when the resurrected body is described in such terms it cannot be an immaterial existence like a spirit. It is an indestructible body, hard as diamonds ..bullet proof existence. So Paul really means by spiritual as supernatural that is it will be made

of material of a dimension that will transcend what we already know in existence today. And yet such a body will be able to commune with God, live in His presence in his unsheiled glory and not get annihilated. Such a body will be spiritual from that aspect.

5. What does Paul mean when he says 1 Corinthians 15:56 (ESV) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law” How does Jesus overturn this power?

The sting of sin is death is easily understood as the penalty of sin is death physical and spiritual hence since Adam’s sin death rules because sin rules The power of sin in the world is because of the Law whether it is read in the Scriptures or in the consciences of man.

The law makes sin observable as sin it make you aware you have sinned against God and thus leads to condemnation (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6). The law although good unfortunately not because of the nature of the law but the nature of our flesh, functions as the agent of sin because it either leads to pride of achievement-self righteousness, on the one hand, or reveals the depth of one’s depravity and rebellion against God, on the other. In either case, it becomes death-dealing instead of life-giving.

Hence death is not simply the result of decay through normal human processes designed by our Creator. Death is the result of the deadly poison, sin itself, which became all the more energized in our lives through acquaintance with the law.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that that victory is the final triumph over the sin that brought death into the world, and over the law that has emboldened sin. But since both sin and the law have already been overcome in the cross, this is the reason we all give praise to God

6. How should we all now live in the light of verse 58 ? Share how one feels about death and how the resurrection has changed all that in life today.

We are no longer afraid of death and its grip we are free to be bold as we are eternally invincible

We are enabled by this hope to remain steadfast in our faith despite suffering and motivated to serve Him with even greater zeal