

## Gamma 2017

Book	1-Corinthians
Topic	How are we Resurrected
Reference	1-Corinthians 15: 1-35
Date	9 August 2017
Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

1 Corinthians 15:35 (ESV) But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”

When you are thinking about raising the dead, most people will think it is like reanimating a corpse. If we look at the laws of nature you cannot really re-animate the corpse, people have tried and it doesn't work. In 16<sup>th</sup> century in the UK they actually found graves in Wharram Percy where they actually have marks which were made by axes. They chop up the bones because they actually believe these people will come back to life one day. So they go to the graves, they chop up them so that they won't come back. So there is an early primitive belief in the resurrection. We have movies today that talk about the living dead. This is again the concept of resurrection; it is a reanimating of a corpse.

The nature of man, the Greek concept is the body is separate from the soul and so therefore there is a heavenly self and then will go up to God and your earthly self is left behind.

Resurrection in popular culture. Mythical figures, osiris from Egypt or Mithras who is supposed to be a god like figure just after Christ who also had 12 disciples. They are mythical figures that god resurrected. Historical figures are like the roman emperors, Julius Caesar, Augustus, even up to 1936 there have been people who have allegedly been resurrected. So resurrection is a common theme. This is a writing from Seutonius who is basically a historian,

*A comet appeared about an hour before sunset and shone for seven days running. This was held to be Caesar's soul, elevated to heaven ...Seutonius*

So basically he writes that Caesar died and his soul went up and that's called resurrection. So it is not a bodily resurrection. For the Roman emperors it is basically their spirits. Augustus Caesar, a soldier actually saw

*'an ex-praetor actually swore that he had seen Augustus' spirit soaring up to Heaven through the flames'.*

So the idea of resurrection in roman times is actually spiritual. This Greek idea of your earthly self being burned and your spiritual self being sent up.

Apollonius of Tyana disappeared when he was in temple, probably transported to heaven, appeared in a dream to one man. All of these are the Greek ideas, body burned and the spirit goes up.

There was a Jewish teacher who called himself Messiah. He died in 1697. His name was Sabbatai Sevi. His brother went to the tomb and he found a dragon guarding the entrance. Upon being allowed to pass Elijah discovered nobody but the cave was full of light. It was also reported that Sabbatai did not actually die, but only appeared to do so and went to heaven directly.

Lahiri Mahasaya is an Indian, cremated and after telling his followers that he would rise again, he appeared to three followers individually. These meetings were said to have been rather brief, occurring in three different cities at about the same time and appeared as if his body was transfigured. Very few witnesses, only three.

Sir Yekteswar. 1936 died and buried. Appeared to flesh and blood appearance of the dead Yekteswar while Paramhansa Yogananda was meditating. He reports that he touched his teacher's body and then had a two-hour conversation with him, chiefly about the nature of the afterlife. Another old lady also had reported seeing the guru

These are some of the stories that we get but they are very-very few witnesses and most of them are like his soul went up. Very few of them are like Jesus Christ except this last one, allegedly had a conversation for two hours and he actually touched the teacher's body. This is the one that is like Jesus.

It is highly improbable that this happened if you think about it, so therefore you can understand the skepticism Paul actually had among the people of Corinth. Robert Ingersoll Green is a modern day skeptic. He says

*"We get atoms to support our bodies from what we eat. Now if a cannibal should eat a missionary and certain atoms belonging to the missionary should be used by the cannibal in his body, and the cannibal should then die while the atoms of the missionary form part of his flesh, to whom should these atoms belong to on the morning of the resurrection?"*

This is a very stupid idea of resurrection, because your thought true by laws of nature. If I am a cannibal I eat the missionary, his atoms are in me and I die and my atoms also die, so in resurrection we all share atoms. So my body half, your body half. So we do we actually get resurrected. So you can understand Robert Ingersoll Green is thinking about resurrection as a reanimation of the corpse. Paul doesn't think of resurrection as reanimation of the corpse.

Michael Shermer is a New York best seller author. He basically is a skeptic who used to be evangelical Christian. He says, *I don't believe in resurrection, Majority do not believe -4 billion Non-Christians in the world. Never seen before -1 in 100 billion occurrences. Lack of extra biblical sources on the resurrection. Biblical sources-gospel not accurate as written in AD 70's...memories fade* Catholic church "mystery" of faith as something that transcends and surpasses history

These are some of the reasons why people don't tend to believe in this. Now let's look at the argument Paul puts out. There are arguments from analogy. So what he does is that he looks at nature and he uses analogies from nature to argue back that resurrection is possible and also describes how resurrection occurs. There are three analogies

1. Analogy from the seed where you die in the ground, you rise from the ground.
2. Analogy from the terrestrial life, different forms of life.

3. Analogy from earthly bodies and astrological bodies, different levels of brilliance of different bodies.

So he is using these three arguments from nature to argue and tell you what the resurrection body is going to be like.

## SEED ANALOGY

1 Corinthians 15:36-37 (ESV) 36 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.

So there is a discontinuity, as you plant the seed into the ground, it disappears and then it comes out. It is discontinuous. What you see plant in the ground is completely different from what you see coming out. This is not only in the seed. It happens in nature all the time. What you put in and what comes out will be completely different. So there is a discontinuity. So therefore Paul is saying, when we are dead and when we are resurrected there is a discontinuity, our bodies will not look the same. So therefore you cannot conceive of resurrection in same terms as reanimating the corpse. What you plant inside has no relationship to what comes out because what you sow is not the body but the bare kernel of grain. It looks horrible like all of us who are old, but when it comes out is wonderful. You will look very-very different. Using the seed analogy, he says there is also continuity as well. What kind of body will they come?

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

Although it is discontinuous once it goes in the ground, does not look like what comes out but there is a continuity, there is a correspondence. If you put in the seed it comes out as a particular body. For example, if you put a mango seed you will get a mango tree, you don't get a strawberry tree. There is a correspondence. So there is a discontinuity when you die, what you look like right now will not be what you look like later on but there is some semblance, because what you will look like now, what you are now will have some semblance to what you will be later on. Pope Benedict says

*"Jesus had not returned to a normal human life in this world like Lazarus and the others whom Jesus raised from the dead. He has entered upon a different life, a new life — he has entered the vast breadth of God himself..." (p. 244) "What already exists is not called into question. Rather we are told that there is a further dimension, beyond what was previously known. Does that contradict science? Can there really only ever be what there has always been? Can there not be something unexpected, something unimaginable, something new? If there really is a God, is he not able to create a new dimension of human existence, a new dimension of reality altogether?" (p. 246-7)*

So we are not talking about looking at science and looking at how science orders the world and science can't explain it. It is a new dimension. Ian Hutchinson is a scientist; he is basically the professor of nuclear science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a committed Christ and he writes

*Today's widespread materialist view that events contrary to the laws of science just can't happen is a metaphysical doctrine, not a scientific fact. What's more, the doctrine that the laws of nature are "inviolable" is not necessary for science to function. Science offers natural explanations of natural events. It has no power or need to assert that only natural events happen.*

What he is saying is that if you are scientist you can just measure and look at natural events. That does not mean natural events are all there is. If there is a God there could be something supernatural. So you cannot conceive and think about supernatural events in terms of natural phenomenon.

### **The only non-Christian writings on Jesus resurrection.**

Flavius Josephus actually wrote that Christians did believe that their savior, the messiah actually rose from dead. So you are looking from a non-Christian, non-person who lived during the time of Jesus after some years who actually wrote about Jesus's resurrection but he didn't believe. He just said the Christians believed.

The other one is a Nazareth Inscription found in Nazareth AD41 which is like 10 or 11 years after Jesus died and then he actually writes an order from Rome forbidding anybody from stealing things from the grave and also moving the grave stone. Now why would the emperor be interested in people moving the grave stone, must have been because of some resurrection issue there. That is the only indirect evidence that you actually have on non-Christians writing about this.

Aside from this all evidences about the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes from New Testament documents and there are plenty of New Testament documents and they must be logically coming from New Testament documents, because how could a non-Christian author write about someone who rose from dead when he never met the person before he rose from the dead. You got people who are disciple. Only the disciples who are eyewitness can write about resurrection, because they know Jesus, they walked with Jesus for three years, he died, they were there and then he rose again. Then you actually had a complete witness. If you have somebody who have never met Jesus before it would be quite difficult for them to write especially if they are skeptics.

### **TERRESTRIAL LIFE ANALOGY**

1 Corinthians 15:39-42 (ESV) For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

If we look at creation, not all flesh is the same. Not all bodies are the same. God creates them in a different way, one is for human, one is for animals, and one for birds and they are uniquely adapted to their environment. God's fingerprint we know now from science is actually DNA. DNA is basically the unique fingerprint of God.

Right inside Antarctica recently they actually found bacteria. Bacteria that actually lives on methane gas. There is no sunlight there, there is no oxygen and there is only methane gas. So the bacteria are designed to metabolize in its oxidative state. Again you can't have this bacteria living among us today because there is no methane gas. So how does God do that. If God can do that then argument Paul was saying that God can also uniquely reengineer our bodies for the resurrection life.

If you just take one segment out of this book of life of God's fingerprint things will change. Recently Shoukhart Mitalipov who is from Kazakhstan and migrated to United States in the University of Oregon and they actually found ways in which they produce a process where they can take away a gene for a disease called cardiomyopathy. They are actually managed to use embryo and use a certain technique to take away this gene. When you take away this particular gene the embryo will grow up without cardiomyopathy. Again wonderful, each one is designed

God has already so arranged the universe that there are bodies of all kinds adapted to their various existences...why can't he do the same for the resurrected body for its eternal existence

### **ANALOGY FROM EARTHLY AND ASTROLOGICAL BODIES.**

There is glory called brilliance.

1 Corinthians 15:40 (ESV) 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.

So if you look at the earth and all the stars the kind of glory, splendor, brilliance, how brightly they shine is completely different. The sun is a million times bigger than the earth, in a way that earth shines and the way the sun shines are completely different, so God has assigned different levels of glory to different bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:41 (ESV) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

So God makes all these bodies and they all have their own splendor. So therefore he is arguing if that is the case he would be able to give us an earthly body which has glory of the earthly body but there is also a glory of a heavenly body. It makes sense, just as he makes the different stars in the earth and the moon and the sun he can also make our bodies in a glorious fashion.

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.

It is with the resurrection of the dead.

- what is sown is perishable, it is raised is imperishable
- what is sown is in dishonour, it is raised is in glory.
- what is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
- what is sown in natural body, it is raised in the spiritual body.

So this is a seed metaphor coming back into play. So he is saying that if you look at yourself today, think about what you will be in the resurrection bodies, completely opposite.

Emma Marano aged 117 years, she lived so long. She eats two eggs a day but the trouble is that she never left the apartment for the last 20 years. It is a very sad existence if you live too long.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes is the world's greatest explorer. He is the first and only person to circumnavigate the whole planet through both the north and south pole. He walked the entire length of Antarctica without any support by dogs in 73 days. He suffered a severe heart attack and 4 months later he ran 7 marathons in 7 continents in 7 days for the British Heart Foundation. When they asked him what is your wish at 71 years of age after a heart attack. He said, I wish for a fitter body, so I can explore more things and do more.

Inside our hearts we are actually built

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (ESV) He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

If you ask Ranulph Fiennes at the age of 71 he still wants to explore outer space. He wants to find things to do because inside the heart he has this idea of eternity and God puts that inside us because of the resurrection. If you think of resurrection in terms of human terms, logical signs than it doesn't make sense. If it is corpuscular, if it is protoplasmic, if it is molecular how can it be in two places at one time. How can Jesus walk through the wall and still eat fish? So if you think of it in those terms then it doesn't make sense. So you can't think of it in basically those sense. Spiritual body is a body which is adapted for life for future existence.

1 Corinthians 15:45 (ESV) Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit

If we look at the inbuilt design, you have got different corresponding beauty or glory, you got terrestrial, earthly bodies, glory of the earth, glory of the moon and celestial heavenly bodies, glory of heavenly and glory of the sun.

1 Corinthians 15:46 (ESV) But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

So therefore we have a natural body today. The Corinthian Christians thought they already achieved true spirituality, they are already like in heaven. So therefore it didn't matter about their body. Paul reminds them, it is a natural body first then it comes the spiritual.

1 Corinthians 15:47-49 (ESV) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 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. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

There is a problem in the ESV and the NIV when they translate it. If you look at the Greek, it is actually the first man of earth, a man of dust, second man of heaven. The of does not mean from. Of means material. It is made from of earth, the origin in terms of what kind of material, man of dust. The second man is made of heaven, means heavenly material. So therefore we are made of dust, we are of Adam, one day there will be the man of heaven which is Jesus, if we are of heaven we shall bear the image of the man of heaven. So just as there was Adam and there is Christ we will be like Christ. Lastly, it tells us that this change is necessary because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable

Just imagine this how could you have eternal life living in this body. At 58 it looks like crap already, imagine what I will look like in a 1005. It is impossible, you cannot sustain. How can a human being live in the presence of the unshielded glory of God? You know, God will just burn you up. How can you live near the sun, how can you approximate even the sun? Your body has to be different, so therefore he is saying, to be real, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God because you are perishable, you cannot inherit the imperishable. There is an incompatibility, so change is coming.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV) Behold! I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

So if you are alive, if you are dead that particular moment we will be changed instantaneously, it is not a slow progress, it is an instantaneous process at the last trumpet which is the sound of victory. This is a mystery which is something that is revealed to you before but now it is revealed.

1 Corinthians 15:53-54 (ESV) For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality,

‘Put on’ is a clothing metaphor, you put on. Paul tells us that, he doesn’t say you exchange your body, he just says you put on which means if I take it off I will be mortal, I put it on I am immortal. So therefore what inside will be retained. So he is saying that you yourself will be retained. The cloak is a cloak of immortality that is what Paul is trying to tell us, it is discontinuous and that it is still continuous. One day all of our dead bodies we will put on the cloak of immortality and we will live forever. So you don’t have to climb up and leave your earthly self behind, the earthly self will put on the cloak of immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:54-56 (ESV) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

So he is saying when this happens two references in scripture, one is Isaiah. Isaiah says

6 On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. 9 It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Hosea 13:14 I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol; I shall redeem them from Death. O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

These are the passages that tell of the victory of God over death and it comes through Jesus.

The burden of sin has two things, one is death because you owe death, two the law. The law enslaves and condemns us. When we have the law it only do two things, one we think we can obey the law, we are actually blind, we try our own self-righteousness to obey the law and it creates a portfolio for ourselves, actually we are blind we can't do it. On the other hand, we can be under confident and self-condemnation, always aware of our sin but are completely helpless. So we have the burden of sin that causes death, enslaves and condemns us and blinds us but the victory is through Jesus Christ our Lord. So therefore when Jesus comes death is gone, paid in full, life is fulfilled, the law is fulfilled in full by Jesus Christ and then we have victory. So therefore now we live in the space between life and death and what do we do, most people in the world had this huge problem. How you are going to live when you are going to die?

It is like asking a prisoner at the end of time, you are condemned to die, I give you a last meal. Most people won't enjoy the last meal. If you look at life it is actually like this. You can only do two things; you can deny that death won't come. Don't think about it, if you don't think about it you can live, you can eat your meal, you can have your dance, you can have your family etc. and people do that. Ernest Beck and Sigmund Freud wrote about death and they say, all of civilization is actually a response of a denial of death. We build all the walls around ourselves and the culture around us so as to occupy, distract us, so that we don't actually have to think about that, we deny death. We try to deceive ourselves.

You can deny death and try to run away or you can transcend death. A story was told of Achilles outside the Troy. Achilles came and he had a fight against the Troy and the magician said to him. You got two choices, I can see the future. You either go back and I guarantee you live, marry a beautiful woman, have children live until old age or you can fight in the battle field and you will die but your name will live on forever. He choose to fight and he choose to die, he thought he is going to do sooner or later and I might have name edged in the memory of people forever. That is the idea to overcome death to transcend it.

Einstein says, *"Our death is not the end if we can live on in our children for they are us, our bodies are only wilted leaves on the tree of life"*

Many of us live in our children, this is exactly what we live for. It is a fact. We will do anything for our children. Woody Allen is a very clever man. He says, *"I don't want to live out my life in future generations I want to live in my apartment"*

Coping with death by denying it, by living for other things doesn't really work. Death is swallowed up in victory. Resurrection is like a mirror and a window. You look at the window you see Jesus because it is no longer your sin that you see, you see Jesus died for your sin. It is also a mirror because the mirror makes you look into the future, the picture of our future is Jesus Christ, you will be looking like him. So your past and your future both look like Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian today you look in the past you see Jesus, you look in the future you will see Jesus and that's how you live.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Peter Berger is a sociologist. He actually writes that in today we are like living in a prison of modernity, a world without windows. We are living in a world that doesn't think about the future,



about spiritual things, about super natural things, about things beyond this current dimension. What we see is what we get and we live in a world like this. It is like driving a car without windows, it is like you don't know what is coming ahead. This is a very beautiful picture. You look at people who do this, Steve Jobs. He lives in a world without windows. He says,

*Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart*

So therefore he is saying that I live in a world with no windows. There is no tomorrow. I live within this four square miles and I can do whatever I want and have a great time and then I die and then finish. How do you live life like that? Then you would be a very dangerous person. So we cannot live like that.

There was a huge procession in Taiwan one day and they were all worshiping Buddha's one finger and that tells me where Buddha is. He is still in the ground. You put our faith next to the empty tomb that's where we are headed, an empty tomb. Nothing will hold us back. So therefore, for a Christian the most wonderful thing that we ever know and live for today is a fact that one day we will have a new resurrected body. We won't be walking around with our bones. We will be through the eyes of faith resurrected.

There was an old Persian general that tells of a story in those days. When he catches captives and soldiers and they wanted to kill them. they ask soldiers only two things. How would you like to die, firing squad or there is a dark door?

The soldiers always choose firing squad as they can see it. They will never choose the door. The door could actually lead to their freedom. To see past the big black door, you must actually have faith and all too often we are like that prisoner, we settle for the firing squad. We don't want to look at the dark door but with the eyes of faith we can see beyond the dark door that one day we will be clothed with this immortality.

If that's the case then your life has to be worth something, you go and walk around and you see the flower sprout out, in few days it dies. In fact, some flowers only sprout out for 24 hours and you ask God why did you make that flower. You ask God, why did you make that man who was born blind for how many years of his life until Jesus came and touched him and healed him and he started to testify and then you ask yourself why were you born, whether you are old or you are young you have a purpose.

Paul says, be steadfast immovable, always abounding in the work of Lord whether it is a saxophone, whether it is Bible study, whether it is encouraging each other commit your life because this life you live one time after that we will be with Jesus forever and we will not get a chance to do this again.