

CORINTHIANS - The MORE EXCELLENT WAY

STUDY 19

X-hortations

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour **in the Lord** is not in vain ... My love to all of you **in Christ Jesus**. I COR.15:58, 16:24

Study 19a: The RESURRECTION BODY (15:35-55)

15:35-41 Note how Paul illustrates theology from nature (natural revelation)

Some had evidently ridiculed the idea of a resurrection with questions as to the nature of the body with which men would rise. 'How can men possibly rise when their bodies have disintegrated?' must have been the kind of objection raised, an objection not unfamiliar in modern times. Paul counters by pointing to the miracle of harvest. The seed is buried, but it is raised up with a new and more glorious body. [Morris 222]

A 'reasonable objection' – from JW's as well as pagan non-believers

15:42-49 Why may we NOT conclude that phrases such as 'spiritual body' and 'life-giving spirit' must mean that Christ has given up His humanity forever?

[v.44] This does not necessarily mean 'composed of spirit', but rather 'which expresses spirit', 'which answers to the needs of spirit'. [Morris 228]

[vv.44-45] While he speaks of a **life-giving spirit** here, he does not exclude by that phrase the fact that Jesus has a resurrection body: the form in which Jesus rose from the dead was one in which he could be seen (9.1). But his present existence is in the spiritual realm (1 Tim. 3.16; 1 Pet.3.18); his resurrection body, like that which his people are to receive, is 'a totality taken up into the life of the Spirit himself, ... so controlled and possessed by the Spirit that it shares his life-giving powers' (M.E. Dahl, *The Resurrection of the Body* (1962), pp. 81f.) Cf. also 2 C. 3.17a ... The present body is animated by 'soul' and is therefore mortal; the resurrection body is animated entirely by immortal and **life-giving spirit**, and is therefore called a **spiritual body**. [Bruce 152]

... the body of Jesus was not immediately transformed into a spiritual body by His resurrection. It was still in His former body restored that He showed Himself,

though this body was already subject to other conditions of existence and activity than our earthly body. It was not till the ascension that the substitution of the spiritual for the earthly body was fully consummated. Jesus Himself indicated the gradual process which was taking place in Him when He said to Mary Magdalene, on the very day of His resurrection, John xx.17: "I am not yet ascended unto My Father ..., but I ascend ..." ... That Paul himself thinks of *bodily* appearances is beyond all doubt, in view of the inference which he draws from them, to wit, our own *bodily* resurrection. [Godet 878]

15:50 In Paul's writings what does 'flesh and blood' mean?

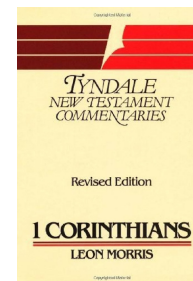
Flesh and blood is a not uncommon way of referring to life here and now (e.g. Gal.i.16; Heb.ii.14). It directs attention to two of the most important constituents of the physical body, and two which are peculiarly liable to decay. This expression is thus symptomatic of man's mortality and of the weakness of his mortal frame ... the combination *flesh and blood* seems always in the New Testament to have a physical meaning. [Morris 232]

[on 2:14] The *psuchikos* man is the unregenerate man while the *pneumatikos* man is the renewed man, born again of the Spirit of God. [A.T. Robertson Vol.4 p. 89]

'Thou fool'

15:51-55 WHAT 'puts on' immortality, and WHEN?

Immortal soul, or resurrection of the body?



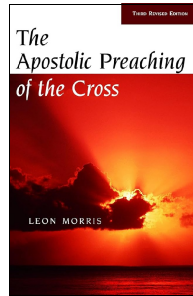
Paul's insistence on bodily life should not be overlooked. Those who thought of the immortality of the soul, but denied the resurrection of the body, usually looked for nothing more than a shadowy, insipid existence in Hades. Fundamental to Paul's thought is the idea that the after-life will be infinitely more glorious than this. This necessitates a suitable 'body' in which the life is to be lived, for without a 'body' of some kind there seems no way of allowing for individuality and self-expression. But Paul does not view this 'body' crudely. He describes it with the adjective 'spiritual' (v.44), and he expressly differentiates it from 'flesh and blood' (v.50). His thought is in marked contrast with that of Judaism in general.

The Rabbis held that the body to be raised would be identical with the body that died ... It was obvious to these Greek sceptics that a body quickly decomposes, and they thought to laugh the whole idea of resurrection out of court with their query as to the body ... Paul deals sharply with such objections. *Fool* may not be the most tactful form of address ... but its bluntness makes clear Paul's view of the worthlessness of such arguments. [Morris 222-23]

15:56-58 Though GLORY is the final victory, what victory should be the experience of Christians even now? (Romans 6:1-7)

[15:58; 16:13] The Corinthians were prone to fickleness, shifting without reason from one position to another. Let them get a firm grip on the truth of the resurrection, of God's final plan for all men and all things, and they will not be so readily shaken ... *Stand fast in the faith* points to the stability of the Christian firmly grounded in Christ, a stability distressingly absent from the Corinthians. *Quit you like men* may point to the immaturity shown by some of the things the Corinthians had been doing. They must be like responsible adults. Moreover, they are engaged in a desperate strife with the forces of evil, and it is therefore imperative that they play the part of men. [Morris 236, 243]

The point in question is undoubtedly faith in the atonement by the cross of Christ (ch.1), and faith in the resurrection with all its moral consequences (ch.15). [Godet 892]



16:1-12 Find the clues in this passage that fix the date of 1 Corinthians (Acts 18:18-19:10)

[v.3] Note Paul's scrupulous care in the handling of this money. He was arranging the collection, but he did not plan to touch the money in person at any time. The Corinthians would raise it, keep it till Paul came, and send it by messengers of their own choosing to its destination. [Morris 239]

16:13-18 Who should be especially recognized by the saints? (Heb.13:7,17)

[v.15] [The household of Stephanas] were shining examples of what Christians should be for *they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints*. Moffatt speaks of the verb rendered *addicted* as a 'trade metaphor' used, for example, by Plato of certain people who 'set themselves to the business of serving the public' by retailing farm produce. Stephanas and his family have taken as their particular responsibility, their piece of Christian service, this task of *ministry* ... It is service of the church. The house of Stephanas did not appoint themselves to any place of leadership or prominence, but to one of lowly service. [Morris 244-45]

"MARANATHA!"
– Our Lord,
come!

16:19-24 What, finally, is the tie that binds all Christians?

[v.22] ... apart from Tit.3.15, this is the only occurrence of the verb *phileo* in the Pauline corpus (otherwise Paul regularly uses *agapao* as the verb to love). The sentence may be a quotation – possibly from a liturgical interchange (it may be a counterpart to some

such words as 'If any one loves the Lord, let him draw near' or '... let him be blessed'). This possibility is rendered the more plausible by the invocation **Our**

Lord, come! immediately following, which may have been the congregation's response in confirmation of the ban [*anathema*]. We may indeed have here 'the remains of the earliest Christian liturgical sequence we possess' (J.A.T. Robinson, *Twelve NT Studies* (1962), p.157 ...) [Bruce 162]

'Spiritual' and 'carnal' (fleshly) in Paul's thinking

[on 2:14] **The unspiritual man:** lit. the 'soulish' man (Gk *psychikos*), the man who is controlled by his 'soul' (*psyche*) or natural self. The distinction between the adjectives *psychikos* and *pneumatikos* ('spiritual') recurs in 15.44-46, where the present mortal body of 'earth' is called the *soma psychikon* (RSV 'physical body'), while the resurrection body, which is immortal and heavenly, is called the *soma pneumatikon* ('spiritual body'). There the distinction between the two kinds of body is based on the fact that the first Adam was created 'a living *psyche*' (Gen.2.7) whereas Christ, the last Adam, the firstfruits of the resurrection order, has become 'a life-giving spirit (*pneuma*)' ... For Paul, while all 'unspiritual' men are **men of the flesh**, it is possible even for those who are in some sense **spiritual men** to be so described. The Corinthian Christians had received the Spirit, but they did not live as those who had received him; indulgence in party-strife was not a 'spiritual' activity, but a 'fleshly' one. They had not yet begun to produce the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal.5.22), but continued to indulge in some at least of the 'works of the flesh', among which dissension and party spirit are listed (Gal.5.20). By **flesh** in this sense Paul does not mean the body, but fallen humanity with the sum-total of sinful propensities inherited by natural birth. [Bruce 40,42]

**Was Christ raised
as a spirit being?**

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