

Resurrection from the Dead!

1 Corinthians 15:20-21 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the **resurrection of the dead**.

I. There are Three Aspects of Jesus Emphasized in the Spring Feasts of Israel!

A. Israel is vitally important to study because God raised them up in order to speak to all other nations through them. Furthermore, God's dealings with Israel are key to His purposes for all nations, also to the timing of the end-time scenario.

1. **Passover** – illustrates His work as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
2. **Unleavened Bread** – illustrates His presence among us as the “Bread come down” and His sinless death over sin!
3. **Firstfruits** – illustrates Jesus as the first born from the dead and Head of the new creation!

B. These three spring feasts of Israel announce Jesus and declare His person and work while rehearsing God's redemption's history for mankind.

1. God Himself commanded the feast times - “mowar” to keep an appointment; “migraw” Holy Convocation: “someone called out to something important; a rehearsal” (**Lev 23:4-8**)
2. **Jesus said that He came to fulfill or “fill up” the law! *Matt 5:17 I did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill.***
3. **These appointed times find their substance and meaning is Christ! *Col 2:16-17 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a feast day or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.***

C. In the perfect plan of God He has destined that in the fullness of times He will bring together all things under Christ, both in heaven and on earth! The resurrection is central to this fulfillment of which firstfruits is an illustration.

Ephesians 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him.

II. There are Three Major Workings of God in Us, Two are present, one Future!

A. It is the Father's purpose to bring us into conformity with the image of His Son. There is a threefold application of this process to understand!

Romans 8:29-30 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

1. **Justification** – Legal standing given by grace, gained by faith, brings us to peace with God.
Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

2. **Sanctification** – Inward process of mortification and transformation into the image of Christ.
Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

3. **Glorification** – The final redemption of our bodies by resurrection and reunion with Christ at His coming!
1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
Colossians 3:4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

III. There are Three Groanings of Expectation Presently at Work!

A. There is a hope that is rooted in the resurrection of the dead that is lasting, spoken of as “eagerly waiting with endurance!” It is clear that all heaven and earth have an “earnest expectation” of restoration from corruption that is keyed to the revealing of the glory in the sons of God which is a living hope in them.

Romans 8:18-27 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who

searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

1. **There is a Groaning of Creation** – Restoration from the effects of the frustration and corruption of the fall.
2. **There is a Groaning of the Spirit** – Release of the kingdom and will of God now and completely in the future.
3. **There is a Groaning of the Christian** – Redemption of the body from corruption and revealing of glory.

B. The “Restoration of the Creation” that prompts the groaning of creation is awaiting the “Redemption (resurrection) of the Bodies (liberation) of the Sons of God” who are presently experiencing in them the groaning of the Spirit for the will of God activated and culminating in the “Revealing of the Son of God from Heaven!”

Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

C. Jesus is the Firstfruits of those that have died and our resurrection is inexorably tied to His second coming in the clouds and glory.

1 Cor 15:20-26 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (**Acts 26:23**)

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

John 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 6:39-40 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Titus 2:13 ...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

1 John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Appendix: Discussion of the Resurrected Body

Christ's resurrection was not simply a coming back from the dead, as had been experienced by others before, such as Lazarus ([John 11:1-44](#)), for then Jesus would have been subject to weakness and aging and eventually would have died again just as all other human beings die. Rather, when he rose from the dead Jesus was the "first fruits" ([1 Cor 15:20,23](#)) of a new kind of human life, a life in which his body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death, but able to live eternally.

It is true that two of Jesus' disciples did not recognize him when they walked with him on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24:13-32](#)), but Luke specifically tells us that this was because "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" ([Luke 24:16](#)), and later "their eyes were opened and they recognized him" ([Luke 24:31](#)). Mary Magdalene failed to recognize Jesus only for a moment ([John 20:14-16](#)), but it may have been still quite dark and she was not at first looking at him—she had come the first time "while it was still dark" ([John 20:1](#)), and she "turned" to speak to Jesus once she recognized him ([John 20:16](#)).

On other occasions the disciples seemed to have recognized Jesus fairly quickly ([Matt 28:9,17](#); [John 20:19-20,26-28](#); [21:7,12](#)). When Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples in Jerusalem, they were initially startled and frightened

(Luke 24:33,37), yet when they saw Jesus' hands and his feet and watched him eat a piece of fish, they were convinced that he had risen from the dead. These examples indicate that there was a considerable degree of continuity between the physical appearance of Jesus before his death and after his resurrection. Yet Jesus did not look exactly as he had before he died, for in addition to the initial amazement of the disciples at what they apparently thought could not happen, there was probably sufficient difference in his physical appearance for Jesus not to be immediately recognized. Perhaps that difference in appearance was simply the difference between a man who had lived a life of suffering, hardship, and grief, and one whose body was restored to its full youthful appearance of perfect health: though Jesus' body was still a physical body, it was raised as a transformed body, never able again to suffer, be weak or ill, or die; it had "put on immortality" (1 Cor 15:53). Paul says the resurrection body is raised "imperishable...in glory...in power...a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:42-44).

The fact that Jesus had a physical body that could be touched and handled after the resurrection is seen in that the disciples "took hold of his feet" (Matt 28:9), that he appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus to be just another traveler on the road (Luke 24:15-18,28-29), that he took bread and broke it (Luke 24:30), that he ate a piece of broiled fish to demonstrate clearly that he had a physical body and was not just a spirit, that Mary thought him to be a gardener (John 20:15), that "he showed them his hands and his side" (John 20:20), that he invited Thomas to touch his hands and his side (John 20:27), that he prepared breakfast for his disciples (John 21:12-13), and that he explicitly told them, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a *spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have*" (Luke 24:39). Peter said that the disciples "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10:41). It is true that Jesus apparently was able to appear and disappear out of sight quite suddenly (Luke 24:31,36; John 20:19,26). However, Jesus clearly had a physical body with "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39), which could eat and drink, break bread, prepare breakfast, and be touched.

Finally, there is a larger doctrinal consideration. The physical resurrection of Jesus, and his eternal possession of a physical resurrection body, give clear affirmation of the goodness of the material creation that God originally made: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good*" (Gen 1:31). We as resurrected men and women will live forever in "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). We will live in a renewed earth that "will be set free from its bondage to decay" (Rom 8:21) and become like a new Garden of Eden. There will be a new Jerusalem, and people "shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations" (Rev 21:26), and there will be "the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month" (Rev 22:1-2). In this very material, physical, renewed universe, it seems that we will need to live as human beings with physical bodies, suitable for life in God's renewed physical creation. Specifically, Jesus' physical resurrection body affirms the goodness of God's original creation of man not as a mere spirit like the angels, but as a creature with a physical body that was "very good." We must not fall into the error of thinking that nonmaterial existence is somehow a better form of existence for creatures: when God made us as the pinnacle of his creation, he gave us physical bodies. In a perfected physical body Jesus rose from the dead, now reigns in heaven, and will return to take us to be with himself forever.

The New Testament several times connects Jesus' resurrection with our final bodily resurrection. "And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power" (1 Cor 6:14). Similarly, "he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence" (2 Cor 4:14). But the most extensive discussion of the connection between Christ's resurrection and our own is found in 1 Cor 15:12-58. There Paul says that Christ is the "first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20). In calling Christ the "first fruits" (Gk. *aparche*), Paul uses a metaphor from agriculture to indicate that we will be like Christ. Just as the "first fruits" or the first taste of the ripening crop show what the rest of the harvest will be like for that crop, so Christ as the "first fruits" shows what our resurrection bodies will be like when, in God's final "harvest," he raises us from the dead and brings us into his presence.

After Jesus' resurrection, he still had the nail prints in his hands and feet and the mark from the spear in his side (John 20:27). People sometimes wonder if that indicates that the scars of serious injuries that we have received in this life will also remain on our resurrection bodies. The answer is that we probably will not have any scars from injuries or wounds received in this life, but our bodies will be made perfect, "incorruptible" and raised "in glory." The scars from Jesus' crucifixion are unique because they are an eternal reminder of his sufferings and death for us. The fact that he retains those scars does not necessarily mean that we shall retain ours. Rather, all will be healed, and all will be made perfect and whole.