

THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY OF JESUS AND BELIEVERS

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WHAT KIND OF RESURRECTED BODY will each believer have? Will it be an immaterial or a material body? If the body, which is made of flesh, is weak or evil, then circumventing this form of existence will be not only desirable but also necessary to exist in God's holy presence. Such thoughts have led some to conclude that believers will have a bodiless existence.¹

When a few years ago *The Jesus Family Tomb* was published and the *Lost Tomb of Jesus* documentary film aired worldwide (involving James Cameron, Simcha Jacobovici, Charles Pellegrino, and James Tabor), advocates claimed that Jesus rose spiritually, not bodily.² They said Christians should venerate the Jesus ossu-

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¹ Jehovah's Witnesses are one of various groups that believe Jesus did not rise physically (see <http://4jehovah.org/jehovahs-witness-resurrection.php>). The view that Jesus could have risen bodiless is also held by others. For example in a symposium in Jerusalem about a year after the "Jesus Family Tomb" debate James Charlesworth concluded, "I don't think it will undermine belief in the resurrection, only that Jesus rose as a spiritual body, not in the flesh." Then he added, "Christianity is a strong religion, based on faith and experience, and I don't think that any discovery by archaeologists will change that" (quoted in Tim McGirk, *Jesus 'Tomb' Controversy Reopened* (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1704299,00.html>), January 16, 2008 [accessed February 14, 2008]). See also David Horowitz, *Editor's Notes: Giving 'Jesus' the Silent Treatment* (<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1171894551868&page-name=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>), March 3, 2007 [accessed June 21, 2007]).

² For a full discussion of this subject see René A. López, *The Jesus Family Tomb Examined: Did Jesus Rise Physically?* (Springfield, MO: 21st Century, 2008), and for a shorter treatment see idem, "Does *The Jesus Family Tomb* Disprove His Physical Resurrection?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165 (October–December 2008): 425–46.

ary found in Talpiot, Jerusalem, in 1980, since this did not pose a problem to the Christian faith that is founded on Jesus' resurrection.³ However, does a spiritual resurrection present a problem to the Christian faith, or does the validity and eternal salvation of Christians hinge on the physical resurrection of Jesus and believers? Furthermore since it is well documented that first-century Judaism believed in a bodily resurrection,⁴ would Jesus' resurrection and that of believers be an exception to the rule? In other words what is the nature of Jesus' resurrection body and that of believers?

PHYSICAL RESURRECTION, NOT A SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

Regarding the resurrection bodies of believers Paul wrote, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44).⁵ Interestingly this passage actually says the opposite of what most people claim. Many wrongly interpret the words "spiritual body" to mean an "immaterial" body (i.e., composed of "spirit") or a body composed of a semi-spiritual "light substance."⁶

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection show that He now possesses a body that is similar to His former state but yet is different from it.⁷ Paul made the same point in 1 Corinthians 15:1–50.

³ Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino, *The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, the Investigation, and the Evidence That Could Change History* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 70–71.

⁴ See López, *The Jesus Family Tomb Examined: Did Jesus Rise Physically?* 147–98. See specifically chapters 10–11, which discuss how the Hebrews viewed the resurrection of the dead.

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of other passages (e.g., 2 Cor. 4:1–5:10), see N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God (London: SPCK, 2003), 3:209–309, 361–72.

⁶ See Otto Pfleiderer, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology*, trans. Edward Peters (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), 1:201; and Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30–150*, trans. Frederick C. Grant (New York: Harper Collins, 1959), 2:535. "Startling, since all exegetical, theological, and lexicographical evidence is against it, Louw and Nida astonish us by placing 15:44 almost alone in a short sub-category under the heading 'pertaining to not being physical'" (Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 1277). See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1998), 1:694, section 79.3.

⁷ All four Gospels are known to be selective in the information each writer chose to include and exclude. It is important to note that all four Gospels mention the

“Jesus’ own appearances, in which he eats and is seen and touched by others, reveal that the first-century Christians who held to Christianity held to a resurrection hope. The model was Jesus, the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:15–20). In fact, this clear teaching of the Gospels necessitates a *physical* resurrection.”⁸

Paul argued from what people witnessed in the Gospels about Jesus’ bodily resurrection. They were now witnesses taking the stand to bolster Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15:1–8. Paul obviously witnessed the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9). Whether he had other encounters with Jesus cannot be known for sure (e.g., 2 Cor. 12:2). Furthermore Paul contrasted how resurrection overcomes death. If this were not the case, then God’s curse that brought physical death to humankind has not been overturned (1 Cor. 15:12–23; Gen. 3:1–22).⁹

Paul seems to have sought to correct the influence that Platonic thought and culture had on the Corinthians. Platonic thought held that matter is evil and spirit is good. Hence some believed God would dispel the evil influence of the body composed of matter and leave all humans as bodiless spirits. Dulle accurately describes the thought Paul attempted to correct in 1 Corinthians 15.

A true incarnation of God demands that He retain His human existence for all eternity. The same applies to human beings. Part of being human is having a human body. To claim that when we are in the eternal state we will discard this aspect of our humanity is to deny the very essence of what it means to be a human. Our flesh is not some evil substance that we are trying to get rid of. This idea is rooted in Platonic dualism which sees the physical realm as inferior to the spiritual, incorporeal realm. Those who follow Plato’s line of thought believe that the ultimate goal of Christianity is to rid ourselves of our flesh. Many people believe that Paul teaches this because of his many

removal of the stone (Matt. 28:2-4; Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1). It seems clear that God through the removal of the stone wanted to show that the body that went into the tomb came out of the tomb. Though it was a glorified body, it was nevertheless a physical glorified body not subject to the effects of the fallen world. For Jesus this would mean that He never again had to pay for all mankind by dying as a man (cf. Rom. 6:1–10; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:15–21; 1 Pet. 2:21–25; 3:18). And for believers this means that their sinful Adamic nature (the sinful predisposition) need not rule them any longer now and guarantees them a future glorified body (a complete disposition of flesh and spirit) that will not be subject to the fallen world. For an analysis of all eleven of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances see López, *The Jesus Family Tomb Examined: Did Jesus Rise Physically?* 217–26.

⁸ Darrell L. Bock and Daniel B. Wallace, *Dethroning Jesus: Exposing Popular Culture’s Quest to Unseat the Biblical Christ* (Nashville: Nelson, 2007), 211.

⁹ Wright notes that creation was redeemed by Jesus’ new bodily resurrection (*The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 313–14). See also Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 185; and López, *The Jesus Family Tomb Examined: Did Jesus Rise Physically?* 181–98.

negative comments against the “flesh.” They misunderstand Paul’s references to flesh to refer to the human body, but Paul’s meaning of flesh must be concluded from context. In most contexts Paul uses flesh to indicate the fallen carnal nature of man, not the human body.¹⁰

Harris explained the thought that Paul encountered at Corinth and the kind of bodily resurrection Christ and the believers will have.

In Orphic and Gnostic thought the *summum bonum* consisted of emancipation from the defilement caused by embodiment. *Sôma sêma*, ‘the body is a tomb.’ It is, of course, incontestable that incorporeal conscious existence is possible (God exists as pure spirit), but in Pauline as in Jewish thought true existence for human beings or a full life either on earth or beyond the grave was inconceivable apart from embodiment. Somatic resurrection was the prerequisite for the resumption of true life after the intervention of death. Paul makes it clear that the object of the Christian’s desire is “the redemption of the body” from its bondage to decay and sin, through its transformation (Rom. 8:23, where *tou sômatos* is an objective genitive, not a genitive of separation). When he spoke of the “spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:44), a body animated and guided by the redeemed human spirit and revitalized by the divine Spirit, he was implicitly rejecting not merely a materialistic view of resurrection (it was a spiritual body) but also a spiritualistic view of immortality (it was a spiritual body).¹¹

Thus in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul corrected any Hellenistic idea that sought to interpret Christ’s and the believer’s resurrection as spiritual rather than physical. Such a situation does not overturn the curse from the fall, nor does it empower Christians to live holy lives now and to stop sinning (1 Cor. 15:34)—a real problem that was plaguing this church.¹²

ACTUAL RESURRECTION, NOT AN APPARENT RESURRECTION

In 1 Corinthians 15:35 Paul asked rhetorically, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” He answered this by using a metaphor of seeds sprouting (vv. 36–38) and by numerous other contrasting analogies showing that the resurrec-

¹⁰ Jason Dulle, “Heavenly or Earthly Bodies?” Institute for Biblical Studies (www.onenesspentecostal.com/bodiesheaven.htm [accessed February 2, 2012]).

¹¹ Murray J. Harris, “The New Testament View of Life after Death,” *Themelios* 11 (January 1986): 49.

¹² For more on this issue see René A. López, “The Use and Abuse of 1 Corinthians 15:1–11,” in *Scripture Unlocked* (spring 2010): 1–4 (or see http://www.scripture-unlocked.org/images/stories/SUM_Newsletter_spring10.pdf).

tion body contains both continuity and discontinuity from its former earthly existence. "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 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" (vv. 39–41).

Paul could not mean the resurrection body is *immaterial*, because that would argue against the point he made that all matter is not of the same "kind" of substance. The contrasts in the analogies are not denoting two different substances of human existence ("immaterial-spirit" versus "material-flesh") but two different kinds of material substance ("material-spirit-controlled" versus "material-fleshly-controlled").¹³ All these analogies have different "kinds" of matter; hence the same is true of the resurrection body. It will not be of the same kind of material substance believers now possess, but yet it will be of some bodily material substance.

Three parallel negative terms also indicate modes of existence, not substance: "corruption" (decay), "dishonor" (disgrace), and "weakness" (vv. 42–43).¹⁴ Hence Wright observes that "Paul will stress the distinction between a body which is corruptible, i.e., which can and will decay, die and ultimately disintegrate altogether, and a body of which none of this is true (verses 50b, 52b, 53, 54)."¹⁵ Wright adds, "This contrast of corruption/incorruption, it seems, is not just one in a list of differences between the present body and the future one, but remains implicit underneath the rest of the argument, not least between the present humanity in its *choikos* ('earthly') state, ready to return to dust, and the new type of humanity which will be provided in the new creation." Hence "the fundamental leap of imagination that Paul is asking the puzzled Corinthians to make is to a body which cannot and will not decay or die: something permanent, established, not transient or temporary."¹⁶

¹³ "Philosophers made distinctions between different kinds of substance, but they did not draw the line in the same place that modern western thought has done, between 'physical' and 'non-physical'" (Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 348–49).

¹⁴ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1276. He notes, "This is confirmed by . . . the generally accepted modal use of *ἐάν* in the sets of contrasts."

¹⁵ Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 347.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

In fact Paul's uses of the adjectives "natural" (ψυχικός) and "spiritual" (πνευματικός) in 1 Corinthians do not refer to objects or persons composed of immaterial or material substance.¹⁷ Instead he employed the terms to emphasize what kinds of powers are controlling a person.¹⁸ Either a person is controlled by a *fleshly, carnal*, or *human* force, or he is controlled by the *Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 2:13, 15; 3:1; 14:37).¹⁹ Believers in Corinth were failing to live according to the Spirit.²⁰ And so in 1 Corinthians 15:44 Paul epitomized the ultimate victory over the *fleshly* (ψυχικός) nature that controls unbelievers (2:14) but that can also drive believers to act in similar ways (3:1).²¹ Hence in 15:44 Paul seems to follow his ear-

¹⁷ Thiselton observes, "On rare (always non-Pauline) occasions in the New Testament, πνεῦμα may denote a ghost or spirit being (almost exclusively Mark 14:26; Luke 24:37; Acts 23:8), but such a use is generally avoided because of its association with evil spirits (Mark 9:25; cf. Mark 1:34, δαίμων)" (*1 Corinthians*, 1276).

¹⁸ Charles L. Quarles also notes, "In other contexts it is clear that they do not refer to persons or objects as either made of matter or spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:14–15, for example, the terms refer respectively to people influenced by human drives versus people under the control of the Spirit. It is likely that Paul's use in 1 Corinthians 15:44 is related to this earlier use" (*Buried Hopes or Risen Savior: Is the Talpiot Tomb the Burial Place of Jesus of Nazareth?* (www.lacollege.edu/ifl/jesus_tomb.pdf, March 4, 2007 [accessed October 18, 2007])).

¹⁹ Paul used πνευματικός ten times in 1 Corinthians (2:13, 15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3; 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44, 46).

²⁰ They needed to overcome sin and be delivered from schisms in the church (1:10–4:21; 11:18–19), incest among the brethren (chap. 5), contention in legal matters among believers (6:1–11), marital problems (chap. 7), a legalistic spirit (chaps. 8–11), abusing spiritual gifts (chaps. 12–14), and denying the physical resurrection that supplied them the power to overcome all other problems (chap. 15). Paul left the most important issue for last; because if they denied this, the Corinthians would deny the very power that could allow them to overcome the power of sin in their lives (not the penalty of sin, since they were already saints, according to 1 Cor. 1:2 and all throughout the letter).

²¹ Elsewhere in the letter Paul described believers who are controlled by carnal desires and thus act like unbelievers. See René A. López, "Does the Vice List in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 Describe Believers or Unbelievers?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164 (January–March 2007): 59–73. Wright comments, "The overall structure and logic of the chapter thus confirms what we would have guessed from the direction in which the rest of the letter points: that this is intended by Paul as a long argument in favour of a future *bodily* resurrection. . . . Paul repeatedly indicates earlier in the letter that Christian behaviour in the present life is predicated upon continuity between this life and the future one. It would be surprising if now, addressing the issue head on at last, he were to undermine what he said all along. There was, in any case, no indication in Judaism either before or after Paul that 'resurrection' could mean anything other than 'bodily'; if Paul was going to argue for something so oxymoronic as a '*non-bodily* resurrection' he would have done better not to structure his argument in such a way as to give the appearance of articulating a Pharisaic, indeed biblical, worldview in which the goodness of the present creation is reaffirmed in the age to come. Since that is the kind of argument he has composed, at the conclusion of a

ly use of πνευματικός.²² In addition it seems that if Paul had wanted to indicate that the resurrection body was an “immaterial-spiritual” entity, he would have used the adjective πνευματικός.²³

All “exegetical, theological, and lexicographical evidence” goes against saying that the words “spiritual body” refer to an “immaterial body.”²⁴ Instead, as seen by the overwhelming majority of commentators, “Paul is speaking in v. 44 of a *mode and pattern of intersubjective life directed by the Holy Spirit.*”²⁵ Bruce points to the fact that verse 45 refers to the life-giving Spirit,²⁶ and Barrett says the “spiritual body” is “the new body animated by the Spirit of God.”²⁷ Thus in verse 44 Paul conveyed two points of contrast, belonging to two different realms, controlled by two different drives.²⁸ Harris also concludes,

Details of the anatomy and physiology of the spiritual body were of no more consequence to New Testament writers than was celestial topography. But its basic properties in addition to “spirituality” are clear. It is of divine origin (1 Cor. 15:38), with God as its architect and builder (2 Cor. 5:1–2). It is imperishable, free from any form of decay; glorious, of radiant and unsurpassed beauty; powerful, with limitless energy and perfect health (1 Cor. 15:42–43, 50, 52–54). It is angel-like, not because it is sexless (sexual identity, an essential element in personality, is retained in the resurrection) but because it is deathless (Lk. 20:36) and without sexual passions or procreative powers (Mt.

letter which constantly points this way, no question should remain. When Paul said ‘resurrection,’ he meant ‘bodily resurrection’” (*The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 314).

²² A similar observation is made by Quarles, *Buried Hopes or Risen Savior: Is the Talpiot Tomb the Burial Place of Jesus of Nazareth?* (accessed October 18, 2007), 12; and Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1276.

²³ Thiselton clarifies the difference between these adjectives. “The widely accepted (although not decisive) lexicographical distinction between –ός endings, which often, perhaps regularly, denote composition, in distinction from –ικός endings, which regularly denote modes of being or characteristics” (*1 Corinthians*, 1276). See also Quarles, *Buried Hopes or Risen Savior: Is the Talpiot Tomb the Burial Place of Jesus of Nazareth?* 12 (accessed October 18, 2007).

²⁴ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1277. See also Eduard Schweizer, “πνεῦμα, πνευματικός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 389–455.

²⁵ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1276.

²⁶ F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 152.

²⁷ C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 372.

²⁸ See David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 734.

22:30; Mk. 12:25; cf. 1 Cor. 6:13–14). It is heavenly, perfectly adapted to its natural habitat, heaven (2 Cor. 5:1–2). According to Paul, these were also characteristics of the resurrected body of Jesus, so that Christ now is what redeemed believers will be; the risen Christ is the firstfruits of perfected humanity.²⁹

The “natural body” refers to the complete person, composed of matter and spirit, that belongs to this fallen Adamic realm in which two controlling powers (the “flesh” and the “Spirit” in Gal. 5–6) fight to gain control of a believer. Conversely the “spiritual body” refers to the believer as a complete person composed of a material body and a renewed spirit (cf. Rom. 6:6)³⁰ that is Christlike and belongs to His redeemed realm.³¹ Thus the resurrection body will be perfectly suited to obey God in everything through a body controlled by the Spirit.³² That is the goal of the “spiritual body.”

²⁹ Harris, “The New Testament View of Life after Death,” 50. Whether Matthew 22:30 refers to a resurrection body that has no procreative powers may be questionable. This may refer only to the “function” not “nature” of the believers in their resurrection bodies. When materialized in a body, angels could eat and sleep (Gen. 18:5–8; 19:2–16) and perhaps, based on one’s interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4, they may be able when materialized to have sex. Then in that case Matthew 22:30, which compares the believers’ resurrected state with that of angels in heaven, may refer only to their function and not their bodily capabilities, since believers will probably be able to eat as Christ did (Luke 24:41–43; John 21:5–13; cf. Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14).

³⁰ For an explanation of the “new man” in regenerate Christians see René A. López, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver*, rev. ed. (Springfield, MO: 21st Century, 2009), 129–31.

³¹ Thiselton observes, “Body, therefore, affirms the biblical tradition of a positive attitude toward physicality as a condition for experiencing life in its fullness, but also assimilates, subsumes, and transcends the role of the physical in the public domain of the earthly life. Hence it would be appropriate to conceive of the raised body as a form or mode of existence of the whole person including every level of intersubjective communicative experience that guarantees both the continuity of personal identity and enhanced experience of community which facilitates intimate union with God in Christ and with differentiated ‘others’ who also share this union” (*1 Corinthians*, 1278).

³² Schweizer also makes a similar observation based on the context. “The idea that σῶμα as a form represents the continuum which simply exchanges the carnal substance for the spiritual substance is also quite untenable. The true concern of Paul may be seen in the fact that ψυχικός (v. 44) on the one side is interpreted by φθορά (v. [sic] 42, 50), ἀσθένεια and ἀτιμία (v. 43; cf. Phil. 3:21 ταπεινώσις), and πνευματικός on the other side is interpreted by ἀφθαρσία (v. [sic] 42, 50), δύναμις and δόξα (v. 43; Phil. 3:21). Behind the form of thinking in terms of substance there thus lies the OT distinction between weakness and power. Man is referred to the creative power of his Lord, who will raise him up. Continuity between the earthly and the heavenly body rests on a miracle. The same is to be seen in v. 47, where the first clause with γῆ denotes that stuff from which the first man is made, while the second clause characterises [sic] the second man, not by the substance of which he consists but by his origin. Thus the σῶμα πνευματικόν of either Redeemer or believer is to be understood, not as one which consists of πνεῦμα, but as one which is controlled by

One must note, however, that Paul did not discuss here the state of the believer after death (2 Cor. 5:1–9).³³ Rather he emphasized only the pre-rapture state now in the perishable body and the need for all to be transformed. How that occurs will not be the same for all. “For some believers the transition to spiritual corporeality will be by way of death and resurrection, but for others [it will be] by means of a resurrection-type transformation. The distinction is between those who die before the Parousia of Christ and those who are alive at the Parousia.”³⁴ In fact here is an astonishing thought. Because of “the population explosion of the twentieth century and the expansion of Christianity,” those who will not experience physical death may “in fact outnumber the sum total of believers under the old and the new covenant who experience death!”³⁵ However huge this exception may be, this was not the rule, as Harris notes. “Paul recognizes in the case of Christians who live to witness the Parousia an exception to his rule that death is a prerequisite for resurrection (1 Cor. 15:36). By special revelation (1 Cor. 15:51a) he knew that those who did not, by a pre-Parousia death, qualify for the transformation that was necessary for the inheritance of the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50) would nevertheless all undergo the required transformation at the Parousia (1 Cor. 15:51–52).”³⁶ What will be the rule for all is that “both the dead and the living will be transformed, but only the dead are also raised. And for both groups the outcome of the transformation is identical: possession of a spiritual body comparable to Christ’s ‘glorious body’ (Phil. 3:21).”³⁷

the πνεῦμα” (“πνεῦμα, πνευματικός,” 6:421).

³³ First Thessalonians 4:14–16 may indirectly answer the question of whether believers receive their glorified bodies at death (an interim or intermediate body of some sort) or remain as spirits until the rapture. Believers who have died before the rapture will come with the Lord and those who have fallen asleep will rise. But if Bruce’s thesis holds true that believers after death already receive their glorified bodies, a question still remains regarding this text: “Why would those who come with Christ need to rise first, since they already have a glorified body?” Or what kind of rising is this if they already possess a glorified body before the resurrection? Will there be yet another body? By no means is this a settled argument. Yet Bruce’s interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:1–9 seems to clash with the details in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–16 (Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 311–13). See Larry J. Waters, “The Believer’s Intermediate State after Death,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169 (July–September 2012): 283–303.

³⁴ Harris, “The New Testament View of Life after Death,” 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

A link then exists between Jesus' resurrected body and the kind of body believers will possess. That is, "this provides a constructive connection between the salvific and ethical character of the body directed by the Holy Spirit and character of Christ's own raised body in later traditions of the canonical Gospels as 'more' but not 'less' than an earthly physical body. In these resurrection traditions Jesus Christ was not always immediately 'recognized' (John 20:14, 15; 21:12; Luke 24:13–20) but his personal identity was recognized in terms of sociophysical gestures and characteristics (Luke 24:31; John 20:16, 20, 27–28; action, voice, hands, side)."³⁸ Similar to Christ, believers will have a unique body that will function marvelously in the new realm but will also be able to be recognized as the person he or she was before.³⁹

CONCLUSION

All the witnesses in the New Testament clearly believed and give evidence that they saw the resurrected Jesus. Also they touched, ate, and conversed with Him after He rose bodily from the dead.

³⁸ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1277.

³⁹ Hence Darrell L. Bock concludes, "In experiential form, this is what Paul discusses conceptually in 1 Cor. 15:35–49, especially 15:41–44. . . . Paul's point is that another force is the key to the resurrection body; it is a 'spiritual' body as opposed to a 'soulish' body. This is why it is more than flesh and bone and can be immortal." Then Bock points out that the resurrection bodies of believers will be similar to Jesus' body. "The resurrection body is flesh and bone transformed into a form that is able to move through material matter. . . . There is no way to distinguish the person of Jesus from the risen Christ except that his existence now takes place at an additional dimension of reality. They are basically one and the same. A spirit has not taken his place, nor is he just a spirit. The person buried in the tomb is raised and transformed, but Jesus is sufficiently distinct in appearance that he is not always immediately recognizable. In his resurrected state, he clearly is transformed, though in a way that still leaves traces of his former existence (e.g., the nail prints in his hands and feet)" (*Luke 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 1933–34).

Paul Lampe writes, "For [Paul], the term 'spiritual' emphasizes that God's Spirit is the *only* force that creates the new body. The creation of this new body is totally *beyond* all the possibilities of the present nature and creation. That is all that Paul wants to convey with this term. Therefore I do not see how the natural sciences could help us to understand the totally different 'nature' of this future body—unless natural science were able to transcend the nature of this universe. Paul asserts that our spiritual body will be very similar, even 'conformed' (*symmorphon*), to that of the resurrected Christ (Phil. 3:21). But he refrains from giving further details, which later evangelicals pretend to 'know' by describing the resurrected Christ. The apostle only affirms that our spiritual body 'in heaven' will be a 'body of glory' as opposed to the 'body of lowliness' in which we now live (Phil. 3:20–21)" ("Paul's Concept of a Spiritual Body," in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, ed. Ted Peters, Robert John Russel, and Michael Welker [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 109).

Believers were able to examine Jesus with their five senses. Hence there is no doubt that Jesus' resurrected body was physical. His resurrected body was similar in some sense to the one in which He was buried, but also it was uniquely different, since now time and spatial barriers do not limit it. Similarly Paul argued in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 that believers will possess a uniquely physical body called a "spiritual body," because it will be perfectly suited to obey God through the power of the Spirit. But this does not mean that this body is incorporeal. The evidence of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection and Paul's explanation of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 clearly teach that Jesus rose physically in a glorified body, and so shall all those who place their faith alone in Him. To understand the resurrection in any other way than a physical, glorified, bodily resurrection is to misunderstand and confuse how Jesus can guarantee eternal salvation and victory over sin (1 Cor. 15:17-20; cf. Rom. 6:4-5). Thus the resurrected body of Jesus and the believer's resurrection body is a glorified body, a body no longer controlled by all that characterizes this fallen world.