

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

What We Will Be Like

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-15

From time to time, as I pick up newspapers here and there, my attention is drawn to Ann Landers' column. I don't know why, but it is. I recently read this in her column: "Dear Ann Landers, our Cocker Spaniel, Rags, died yesterday. He was 15 years old and everyone adored him. There are reminders of that darling pet everywhere: a feeding bowl, a rag doll, and the ball he loved to chase. Our son, Terry, age 9 asked, 'Is Rags in heaven? Will I see him when I die?' I asked our clergyman how to respond. He said tell him no, animals do not go to heaven. I believe this is an insensitive response to a nine year-old. Can you give me a better one? Signed, San Juan."

"Dear San Juan, I checked with several authorities, and the best reply came from Andrew McKenna, who is not a theologian, but vice chairman of the Board of Directors of Notre Dame University. And, he said, tell the boy that heaven is anything you want it to be. Assure him that he will see everyone he wants to see in heaven including his pets." End quote. Heaven is anything you want it to be and you can see anyone there that you want to see, including your pets. I'll tell you for sure that man is not a theologian. Heaven is not anything you want it to be. Heaven is exactly what God made it to be.

And we've been looking at the heaven that is the true heaven, the heaven prepared by God for His people. And we've been asking a series of questions. And we've asked the question, what is heaven? And tried to answer that from Scripture. We've asked: where is heaven? And tried to answer that. And then we've been looking at the subject of: what is heaven like? And we have been tremendously excited to see the reality of what that place is like and what it holds for us.

Now, I want to go on tonight and look at another question. And there are a few more yet to come in the future, but for tonight I want us to look at the question: what will we be like in heaven? What will we be like? To give you a general answer, and then we'll dig a little more deeply into it, the Bible teaches that we will experience the eternal perfection of body and soul. We will experience the eternal perfection of body and soul. That is to say the perfection of the whole person. Heaven is a perfect place for people made perfect. And since we as human beings are inner man and outer man, soul and body, or if you will, spirit and body, we will be perfect spirit and body forever and forever.

I want to talk about that a little bit tonight so that you'll get a perspective. The whole idea of God's redemption is to make us perfect. The whole idea is to fit us to dwell forever in the presence of God. That is the whole purpose of salvation. Now, salvation, I want you to understand me, is a process. You came to Christ in faith and were born again, but that only began the process because you have

not yet been completed. That's why the apostle Paul says in Romans 13, "Now, is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We are in the process of being saved. We are heading for the ultimate expression of salvation when we are made perfect. That salvation work has already begun in the salvation of our souls, in the transformation of the inner man that we know as the new birth.

But that is not the end; that is only the beginning. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ you were made a new creation, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says. Colossians 2:10 says that you were made complete in Christ. And Peter says you know have all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3 and 4. So, you're a new creation, complete in Christ with everything that pertains to life and godliness. The life of God dwells in your soul. You are a new person on the inside. There is newness in you.

To understand this, just briefly, and I don't want to spend a lot of time because you can listen to the series on Romans 6 and 7, but just to touch it lightly, turn in your Bible to Romans 6, and let's see if we can't begin to build an understanding of what heaven is really going to be for all of us in terms of the perfection of our person. Now, we have been made new creations in Christ. We have been given, as it were, a new life in Christ. We have been given a new heart the Bible says. We have been given a new spirit. That's part of what it means to be born again, converted, regenerated, redeemed, made new in Christ. We have, it says in chapter 6, if you'll look over at verse 18, we have become slaves of righteousness. We have a new life. Instead of being slaves of sin, we're now slaves or servants of righteousness. Instead of experiencing, verse 23, the wages of sin which is death, we have received the free gift of God which is eternal life. In fact, verse 22 says we have been freed from sin and enslaved to God. The result is sanctification and the ultimate outcome is eternal life.

Now, those are all ways of saying there's been a dramatic change in us. We're no longer slaves of sin; we're slaves of God. We're no longer servants of wickedness; we're servants of righteousness. We're no longer possessors of a principle that leads to death; we're possessors of a principle that leads to life. We are a new creation. He makes that very clear. In fact the old creation has died. The old creation has died. Verse 11, "Consider yourselves to have died to sin." Something died and something new lives. That is new life. That is the regenerate part of you that God has recreated.

Now, can I reach back to your understanding when we went through this part of the Bible and just remind you that the problem you have is you have a newly created inner man incarcerated in the flesh, okay? Incarcerated in the flesh. In chapter 7, please notice how Paul points this out, starting in verse 15. He says, "For that which I am doing, I do not understand." And the reason he doesn't understand it is because in his heart, in this new inner man, he loves the right things, he longs for the right things. But, he says, there's something I don't understand, I'm not practicing what I would like to do. I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the law confessing that it's good. The very fact that I don't want to do it says I acknowledge the law of God.

Then, he says in verse 17, "So, now no longer am I the one doing it but sin which indwells me." Now, here's a very important principle. Paul says I am a new creation, I have a new life principle in me, I'm in the process of being sanctified, I'm a slave to God and a servant of righteousness, I have a new principle of life within me, but it isn't free, notice this, to fully express itself because of the presence of what? Of sin, of sin. I am inhibited. I am debilitated. I am restricted in my ability to live according to the law of God in which I delight because of sin. Now, let's follow his thought in verse 18. "For I know that nothing good dwells in me," now here it is, "that is in my," what? "Flesh." That's another word for humanness. In my humanness, or in my fallen human nature, he means not just his physical body but the whole of his fallenness. He has a fallen mind. He has fallen emotions. He has a fallen will. So, here is this new life principle, eternal life, the life of God in the soul of man, it's there but it's incarcerated in fallenness. Can you grasp that? It's incarcerated in fallenness: in a fallen body, a fallen mind, fallen emotions, a fallen will. Flesh means more than just skin and bones and tissue. It means my humanness.

So, here's the point I want you to understand. Listen, beloved, your soul has been redeemed and deep within your human soul or spirit, God has planted new life, the life of God is in you in the form of His indwelling Spirit. But it cannot fully express, mark this, even what is in your soul because it is hampered by sin.

He says again in verse 19, "The good that I wish, I do not do. But I practice the very evil I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I'm no longer the one doing it but sin which dwells in me." I recognize there is still that principle that is in my humanness. So, he says, verse 21, "I find the principle of evil present with me. And on the other hand," verse 22, "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members." Over and over, he says it's in my flesh, it's in my body, it's in my members. He calls it in verse 24 the body of this death. Verse 25, "With my flesh I serve the law of sin." Flesh, body, bodily parts, body members, all refers to his unredeemed humanness. Okay? Now, just get that in your mind.

God has planted a new creation within you. The indwelling Holy Spirit is perfect. That transformation has taken place. And the Holy Spirit's longings become your longings, and you love righteousness, and you love goodness, and you love truth, and you love justice, and you love God, and you love the Bible. But all of that is inhibited because your soul and your body are still wrestling with their fallen condition in which sin dwells. Now, I agree that the authority in your life of sin is broken; the dominion of sin is broken, but the presence of sin has not been eliminated, right? In fact, 1 John says, "If any man say he has not sin, he's," what? "He's a liar." So, in the deepest part, and I don't understand the mystery of this, but in the deepest part of your eternal soul, God has planted the incorruptible seed of eternal life. And you have a new power to do what is right. You have a new heart and a new spirit. And all of that, get this, is a down payment, a first installment on the fullness of what you're going to get in the future. But that new creation, that new heart, that new principle, that new spirit, that new life

is incarcerated in the flesh. It is embattled in the flesh. As it endeavors to bring the soul and the body into conformity to the righteous standards of God. It has a real war on its hands because it is fighting against our fallenness. The seed of eternal perfection is there. The seed of incorruptible eternal life is there. It is planted, mark this, it's not yet in full bloom. So, we long for the day when that perfection comes. We long to be what we shall be.

Look at chapter 8 verse 23. And Paul carrying the same thought into chapter 8 says, "And we ourselves," second phrase there, "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit," in other words, having had the down payment, having had the first installment, having had the new heart, new life, new principle, new spirit in us, having had a taste of that, "we ourselves groan within ourselves." And what are we groaning about? "Waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." In other words, we've had a taste of what a redeemed soul is like, we'd like to get the whole thing redeemed, you understand that? And so, we live in hope, we live in hope, we groan waiting to be what we will be.

Sin has crippled our soul. It has marred our spirit. It has scarred the faculties of thought and will and feeling. And so, we long for the day when that eternal seed within us will bloom into fullness and we will be redeemed from head to toe, from outside to inside. The time will come, and what a tremendous thought, when God Himself, with His penetrating eyes to discern every single thing in existence, will scrutinize you and scrutinize me with those fiery penetrating eyes, and will go to the very smallest piece of our being and find absolutely no trace of sin. Won't that be incredible? But that's what's coming. God will perceive us in every single dimension of our existence as absolutely and perfectly and eternally holy and righteous and without flaw.

So, heaven then, is the place of the perfection, the eternal perfection of soul and body. We lose all of our fallenness. We come into all of God's planned perfection. We enter heaven perfect. In fact, dear friends, no one ever enters heaven who isn't absolutely perfect. No one ever goes there to stay to dwell who is not absolutely perfect. In Revelation 6:11, "There was given to each of them a white robe," these are the martyrs. "They were told they should rest for a little while longer till the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were killed, even as they had been, should be completed also." The white robe is the symbol of their absolute and utter perfection. The white robe is the symbol of their holiness and their purity. They are robed in accord with their new nature having its full expression.

In Revelation 7 and verse 14 it says the ones coming out of the Great Tribulation have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And again the emphasis there on the whiteness, on the cleansing, the perfection of the saints who enter into the heaven of heavens where God dwells with those who are perfect, who are perfect.

Now, listen to me, we still need a perfected soul. We have within our souls, within our inner man, the seed of perfection, but the soul or the whole inner person is not yet perfect. Listen, it's not just my body that sins, it's my mind and my thoughts and my will and my emotions. My soul is not perfected. But the moment a believer dies, that believer's soul enters immediately into the presence of God and is instantly perfected and made holy. The body goes to the grave; the soul goes immediately to heaven. That's how it is. Absent from the body; present with the Lord. Far better to depart and be with Christ, Philippians 1:23 says. Paul says, "I'm not here. I'm with Christ." So, when a believer dies, that soul not yet perfected is instantly perfected in the presence of God. The body goes to the grave. So, the first thing you need to know is we go to heaven without a body. Okay? Christians go to heaven without a body. In fact, as far as the church of Jesus Christ is concerned, the bodies are all still on the earth. All of the saints who have died and are now in heaven are only in heaven in their spirit or in their soul without their body. That is made clear to us, if not other places certainly it is made clear to us in Hebrews chapter 12. Verse 22 says, "You have come to Mount Zion to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels," listen, "to the general assembly and the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven." You come to heaven, you come to the place where the church is, "And to God the judge of all," now listen to this, "and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect." What you have in heaven right now are perfected spirits. You say, "Where are the bodies?" In the grave, in various degrees of decay.

But now let's ask the question: all right, we go to heaven as a soul, first of all. If I were to die today, my soul would go to heaven; my body would go to Forest Lawn, probably. My soul or my spirit, same thing, would be with the Lord. Now, what would my perfected soul be like? Well, the only thing I can tell you is that God can scrutinize my entire perfected soul to the nth degree, and He would find no imperfection and no sin at all. I would be absolutely perfect. I don't know any other way to explain that. So, all I can say about it is that the perfection which we wait and wait for and experience when our souls go to be with the Lord is just that, perfect freedom from all evil forever. Imagine that. Imagine that. Never a sinful thought, never a selfish thought, never an evil word, never a useless word, never an unkind deed, absolute eternal perfection. Never defiled, never unclean, never imperfect, never doing anything but that which is absolutely righteous, holy and perfect before God. Can you imagine yourself behaving in such an incredible fashion? I find it almost unbelievable. No imperfection, absolutely none.

The book of Revelation comes to an end, it makes this abundantly clear in chapter 21, verse 27 says, "Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it." Nobody who has any stain on them at all will ever come into the heavenly city, to the abode of God, the heaven of heavens. Chapter 22 also passes on the same kind of information. It says in verse 14, "Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying." Nobody is going to be in there who isn't perfect. "There shall in no case enter that city anything that defiles." Think about it. No sin,

no suffering, no sorrow, no pain. You want to know something? You'll never doubt God in any way. There will be no doubts there. There will be no fear of God's displeasure because God will never be displeased, because you'll never do anything to displease Him.

No temptation will ever come upon you. Satan will not be there. The world will not be there. The flesh will not be there. There will be no persecution there. There will be no abuse there. There will be no division there. There will be no discord, no disharmony, no disunity, no hate. There will be no quarrels there, no fights, no arguments, no disagreements. Everyone will be perfect, and everyone in heaven will agree with what I've been teaching through all these years. There will be no disappointments. There will be no anger. There will be no effort. There will be no more fasting, because there will be nothing with which to fast or for which to fast. There will be no repentance because there will be nothing to repent of. There will be no confession of sin because there will be no sin to confess. There will be no weeping because there will be nothing to make you sad. There will be no watchfulness because there will be no danger, and no temptation, and no trial of any kind. There will be no more teaching. There will be no more preaching. There will be no more learning. There will be no more evangelism. There will be no more witnessing. There will be perfect pleasure in Thy presence. There is joy; Psalm 16 talks about that. There will be perfect knowledge. We will know as we are known. We'll know as we are known. We are known comprehensively and we'll know comprehensively. There will be perfect comfort. You will be absolutely at the apex of comfort every moment throughout all of eternity. You will never have for one split second an uncomfortable moment. Isn't that incredible? Some wife is saying, "You don't know my husband." Well, he won't be uncomfortable.

Luke 16:25, "Child, remember that during your life," Abraham is speaking, "you received your good things and likewise Lazarus bad things, and now he is being comforted here and you are in agony." Hell is agony, heaven is eternal comfort. Perfect love, "And now, abides love, the greatest of these," in 1 Corinthians 13:13, you will love perfectly, you will be loved perfectly, you will love everyone perfectly, everyone will love you perfectly. You will love God perfectly, He will love you perfectly. You will love like Jesus loved. John 13:1 says, He loved His disciples unto perfection," that's exactly the way you will love. You will be loved by God. Your soul will be embraced by God. The love that was weary and hungry and tempted and scorned and hated and scourged and spit on, that love that was buffeted and crucified and pierced, that love that wept and bled and sweat and died, that love for you will embrace you forever and be embraced by you and you and I will be engulfed in eternal love.

Now, what that all sums up to is is perfect joy. And we could simply say heaven is the place of unmixed and unending joy, unmixed and unending joy. Whatever joy there is in this life is mixed with sorrow, isn't it? You get a little bit of joy and you can't fully enjoy it because there's too many other problems. Joy is mixed in this life. At best, it is mixed with sadness and sorrow, and discouragement and disappointment, and worry and fretting and anticipating. If there isn't a problem now, I can't get too happy because as soon as the day turns around it will be a problem day. You never can enjoy the day because of what tomorrow might bring. All our joys are mitigated by sin. All our joys are mitigated

or inhibited by grief. All our joys are mitigated and inhibited by sorrow. And this life is mourning, mourning, mourning and more mourning and weeping as we look at what really happens. But when you get to heaven: joy, joy, joy, absolutely unmixed joy. Look at Matthew 25. I'm just telling you what your spirit's going to be like up there. And it all sums up in this unmixed, unending joy. Matthew 25, do you remember the parable of our Lord? It's like a man about to go a journey. He called his own slaves, verse 14, Matthew 25, entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, each according to his own ability, and he went on his journey.

Immediately, the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, gained five more talents. The same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. He who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. This is talking about spiritual privilege. Some men used their spiritual privilege and gained blessing. Some men took their spiritual privilege and wasted it. The master of the slaves comes, settling accounts with them. Verse 20, the one who had received the five talents came up, brought five more talents saying, "Master, you entrusted five talents to me. I've gained five more talents." His master said to him, "Well, done, good and faithful slave, you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the," what? "Joy of your master." That's what heaven's all about. I'll put you in charge of many things. Enter the joy of your master. You're going to have joy unmixed in heaven. You're going to enter into the joy of the Lord. You're also going to be in charge of some things. We'll talk about that in our next study. The one who received two, his spiritual privilege was not quite as magnanimous as the spiritual privilege of the first, but he took it and made something of it. And he says, verse 23, "Well, done good and faithful slave, you were faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master." And you remember to the one who did nothing with his spiritual privilege. The Lord took away what he had, and instead of being in a place of joy, verse 30 says, "Cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness." In that place, not joy, but weeping and grinding or gnashing of teeth.

Now, heaven then is a place of joy. The dominant characteristic of heaven is joy. Joy that is born out of all the wonderful things that I've mentioned to you. Joy. And any joy you have now is just a little taste of the joy that is awaiting you. Heaven is absolutely defined in its purest, simplest terms as a place of unmixed and unending joy.

Now, why do we say unending? Well, it has to be unending because the conditions that make it possible to have unmixed joy never change. Did you get that? Since the conditions of heaven will never change, whatever it is that produces joy to begin with will produce joy forever and ever and ever because the conditions never change. The heavenly perfection is never altered. Never, ever altered. Hell is the opposite, by the way. Hell is a place of unmixed pain and unending torment. In heaven, you have an eternal life of satisfaction for all the longings of the redeemed soul. So, it is a place where the spirit and the soul will be perfected forever.

But let me take it a step further. We were never designed to be disembodied spirits and just float around in some spirit form. We can function outside of a body. I can call somebody on the telephone and talk to them, and I don't know what their body's doing, and I can still communicate with their person. I can write a letter or get a letter from someone and I'm communicating with their spirit, their inner person, without having any contact at all with their body. We could communicate. God could take away our bodies, as He does, put us in heaven as spirits and we could still be a spiritual entity as God is a spiritual entity. But that's not what we were made to be. When God made man He made him soul and body. He made him an inner man and an outer man. And when He perfects him, He's going to perfect him as an inner man and an outer man also. We are designed by God to be a body and a soul. And our ultimate perfection demands that we be a body and a soul. And the creation of a new heaven and an actual new earth also demands that we have bodies that can walk on a real earth. The new earth then calls for its inhabitants to have real bodies.

Now, death, mark it, death means the separation. The bodies go to the grave; the spirit goes to be with the Lord. Well, how long does that last? Well, only until the resurrection. Jesus said in John chapter 5 that everybody's going to rise from the dead, everybody. In John 5, "Do not marvel," verse 28, "at this, the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come forth, those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." Now, this, will you? In the present time, the people in the church who have died are in heaven in spirit. In the present time the unbelievers who have died are in hell in spirit. But there is coming a great resurrection. And at the time of the resurrection, the bodies of the redeemed will be joined to their spirits and they will be in the eternal perfection of body and soul. At the time of the great resurrection, the bodies of the ungodly will be raised from the graves as well, and they will be joined to their disembodied spirits so that they can, body and soul, will endure the torments of hell forever. God created men and women to be body and soul, or body and spirit. Same thing.

So, that's what God is moving toward. Even after our souls are perfected, that's not the end. That's not the end. There will be a resurrection of body and to join that spirit, that's God's plan. You can read about the resurrection of the ungodly in Revelation chapter 20 starting in verse 11. The sea gives up the dead, death and the grave give up the dead and they're all judged according to their deeds. And then, of course, they're thrown into the lake of fire. There will be a resurrection unto damnation, a resurrection unto judgment.

But what about our resurrection? What about the redemption of our bodies? And remember in Romans 8 a moment ago I said we are waiting for the redemption of our bodies? We're waiting for what 2 Corinthians 5:2 calls our "house which is from heaven, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, very familiar text. First Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep," and that has reference to the bodies of saints, their spirits are gone to be with the Lord, their bodies are in the

grave. "Don't grieve for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep." When Jesus comes back, He's going to bring with Him the spirits of the saints that are dead. When the Rapture comes and Jesus comes out of heaven, the spirits of the saints are coming with Him. "For this we say to you," verse 15, "by the Word of the Lord that we who are alive," we're still here in body and spirit, not yet glorified, "those of us who remain till the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep."

In other words, they're going to get their bodies before we go up. Why? Because they've been waiting a long time. Some of them centuries, floating around as disembodied spirits in a not yet fully perfected humanness because they don't have their bodies yet. So, when Jesus comes to Rapture, the church, the first group that are going to be taken care of are those who have been disembodied, they will get their new bodies and then we will go up after them. It says it in verse 16, "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first and then we who are alive and remain will 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." That's another feature of heaven: you're always with the Lord forever, and ever, and ever, and ever. But the dead are going to go first because they've been waiting a long time for their bodies. Their bodies are going to come out of the graves, join with their disembodied spirits, be instantly perfected for all that heaven has for them. Then, we're going to follow them up and get translated on the way. And we'll be perfected when we leave this world in the Rapture if we're here when Jesus comes. Now, that's the promise of God that we have to look forward to: a new glorified body to go with a glorified spirit. This earthly tent, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:1, will be torn down, and we'll get a building from God.

Now, that poses the question I want to focus on as we bring this to a conclusion tonight. What will these bodies be like? What are they going to be like? The soul in its perfected state, mark this, has to have a body in a perfected state to fully express itself. The human soul is limited in its expression without a body because we are that perfect combination. But what will the body be like? Let's go to 1 Corinthians 15. There is so much that could be said about this. I'm going to try to bite my tongue and go through it rapidly. Verse 35, "Someone will say," and I can hear it, you've already thought it: how are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come? See, somebody says, "Ah, are you kidding me, bodily resurrection? People are going to be in the grave for centuries and centuries. There's not going to be anything there but a pile of dust. And what about people who got burned up, and what about people who were exploded? Is the Lord going to go collect all the pieces? And what about people who drowned in the ocean, and they've been disintegrating in the ocean for centuries, and centuries, and centuries? How are the dead raised up?"

One writer, Charles Ball, says, "The limitation of our present knowledge makes it almost impossible to comprehend the resurrection of a body. We raise questions about flesh that is buried in a grave and reduced to the elements or burned to ashes or dissolved in the sea. Can it be possible that these scattered elements will be reassembled with the same molecular structure as at the hour of death?"

Some have ridiculed this by picturing a body in the grave, dissolving in the action of the rain, and the heat of the sun, and in time fertilizing the grass above. And where a cow is grazing, the cow produces milk which is consumed at the breakfast table and nourishes another generation. Then, they die and they go in the grave, and they decay, and they make the grass grow, and another cow eats the grass, and that cow produces milk, and that milk is consumed at the breakfast table, and that milk nourishes another generation. And who in the world will ever be able to know what molecules go with what person?" Well, that's the kind of reasoning you're dealing with. And God, they say, has got an impossible problem to figure out whose molecules are whose.

Well, I don't even want to get into that kind of foolishness. If God could make us, He can remake us. We don't have to think like that. Constant change is going on in the cells of our bodies in this life. We're not even the same as we were three years ago. Cells of our body are being thrown off each day; new cells are taking their place. I hate to say this, but it's true, most of the dust in your house is human skin shedding, about 75 percent of it, from what I read. Does that shock you? Yes, you're being replaced. It's beyond our comprehension, folks. But somehow a new body will be made to accommodate an eternally perfect soul. It's a house not made with hands. It's an eternal house. The Greeks used to say the body is a prison to inhibit the soul. No it's not. The body is a vehicle to express the soul, that's the idea. It's a vehicle to express the soul.

Now, what is it like? Well, let's go back to verse 36 and find out. What is it like? "You fool," he says, that's being kind, you shouldn't even argue like that, "that which you sow does not come to life unless it dies." The Greek is "senseless one," a severe rebuke, by the way, which assumes that the objector prided himself on his intelligence. "You don't even know what you're talking about. Let me give you analogy of a seed. He says, 'That which you sow doesn't come to life unless it dies. And that which you sow you do not sow the body which is to be but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else, but God gives it a body just as He wished. And to each of the seeds, a body of its own.'" He says, just look at this analogy. You have a little seed in your hand, you put it in the ground, does that seed in any way resemble what it's going to produce? Of course not. I mean, there is tremendous difference. The life principle is in the seed, but there's no way to know if you didn't know because you had past experience that that kind of seed would turn out to be that kind of plant. The seed dies. That's the first thing a seed does. Now, you explain this to me perfectly, and then I'll also be dependent on your explanation of resurrection.

How in the world can something die in order to give life? How can it do that? How can a seed go into the ground, decompose and give life? I don't know. I don't understand that. And how in the world can a monstrous tree come out of that little thing? There is a vast difference, but Paul is saying your body is going to die, it's going to go into the grave, and it's going to come out of there and it's just like a seed that dies in an analogy sense and produces some plant that you could never have seen in the seed. Never. Jesus even said that in looking at His own resurrection. John 12:24, "Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies it brings forth fruit." And He was

saying, "I'm going to die and do the same thing. I'm going to produce fruit. I'm going to come forth in a glorious resurrection body that's going to produce fruit." The mystery of the resurrection body, dear friends, is no different than the mystery of the seed. No different.

And if you're going to say, "Well, I don't believe in resurrection 'cause I don't understand the process," then you better not believe in harvest either because you don't understand that process. But it happens, and so will resurrection. That's Paul's argument. The bodies will have some connection to the one that was buried, but they'll be different. I don't know fully how. They'll be the same organism in some way, I'll be me and you'll be you, only we'll all be perfect. We'll be the same and yet we'll be different. Incredible. From the decomposition of the body in the grave, we don't have an obstacle to the resurrection. Just like a seed that dies and brings forth life, so the resurrection will come from the death of the body.

Look at verse 39, and then he takes another illustration. From the seed, he just turns a corner and starts to talk about the body. "All flesh is not the same flesh. There's one flesh of men, another flesh of beast, another flesh of birds, another of fish." Now, how do you explain that? I mean, all over this earth there are all different kinds of flesh, all different kinds. The differences in the flesh of animals are determined by amino acids. You know amino acids? I read there are 600 octodecillion combinations of amino acids. That's a lot. And that's what produces flesh. That's what produces a certain kind of flesh. You produce flesh. You produce your own flesh, I produce my own. It doesn't matter what I eat, I produce flesh. If I eat chicken all the time, I don't get feathers. Why? Why? Because the amino acids in my body will only reproduce in combination with my own flesh. So, no matter what I eat, I eat nothing but hamburger, I won't moo. I won't grow a tail, I won't get hide like a cow. Why? Because the amino acid structure that God has put into flesh keeps flesh distinct. God was not restricted to one kind of flesh in creation, so why should He be restricted to one kind of flesh in resurrection? We may not even understand what kind of new humanity that is any more than if all we knew were birds, and their kind of flesh we could understand a horse.

Then, he says in verse 40, "There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. The glory of the heavenly is one. The glory of the earthly is another." That is, there are terrestrial and celestial. There are earthly organisms and there are bodies that occupy space, sun, moon, stars. It's incredible. God has made everything from the tiny little crawling bug to a spinning sun, and everything in between. And from the human perspective, we look at these and why in the world would we say, "Well, I don't understand how He could ever make a resurrection body?" Well, look, He can make any kind of body He wants. There is one glory of the sun, verse 41, another glory of the moon. There's another glory of the stars and stars differ from other stars in glory. So, also is the resurrection of the dead. It's just like that. There are all kinds of bodies God has made: animal bodies, plant bodies, celestial bodies, suns, and stars, and moons, and comets and on and on and on.

I don't know if you ever thought about it, I was reading in Reader's Digest some years ago an article by Donald Peady (sp?) and he said this: "Like flowers, the stars have their own colors. At your first upward glance, all gleam white as frost crystals. But single out this one and that one for observation, and you will find a subtle spectrum in the stars. The quality of their lights is determined by their temperatures. In the December sky you will see Aldebaran as pale rose, regal bluish white; Betelgeuse orange to topaz yellow." End quote. In other words, even the stars are different. Different temperatures, different colors. All the heavenly bodies vary, all the seeds. Do you realize there are no two trees on the face of the earth alike? No two seeds alike. No two animals alike. No two people exactly alike. No two celestial bodies alike. And somebody says, "Well, how in the world could God ever create a resurrection body?" Big deal. He's got enough creative power on display that we shouldn't question that.

Verse 42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead." The illustrations of nature, the illustrations of astronomy illustrate to us that God can make any kind of body He wants. As one body differs from another, so the resurrection body can differ from the body we know now. There is the possibility that God is going to create a unique body, a body like we don't understand. Somehow, it will connect up with us. It will have our human personality in it. But it will be preserved forever with all its distinctions, with all its uniqueness in absolute and eternal perfection. And so, the graveyards of men become the seed plots of resurrection, and the cemeteries of the people of God become through the heavenly dew the resurrection fields of the promised perfection. Then, in verse 42, "It is sown a perishable body; it is raised an imperishable body." And here come the contrasts. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." That's the difference.

Then, he says, "It is sown in dishonor because of sin; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Now, what does he mean by that, a spiritual body? He doesn't mean it's a spirit, it is a body. But it is a body, it is a body that can contain and express itself in spiritual ways. To put it simply, it is a body which expresses the spirit, the needs of a perfect spirit.

Now, look at that. What's your body going to be like? It's going to be imperishable; that is, it never decays. You will never lose any part of that body. You won't be turning over your skin every seven years. There will be no elimination process in your body. It is an imperishable body. It will be permanently and eternally perfect, never changing, never. You will never look at your hand and say, "What is that? I've never seen that before." You will never feel somewhere, "And where is that lump coming from." There will be no cancer x-rays in heaven. No one will develop anything there. Absolute, imperishable perfection.

Not only that, it will be glorious, glorious. It will be a reflector of the glory of God. It will be raised in power. It will have power beyond anything you can imagine: power to fly, power to accomplish anything and everything that it desires. It will be a spiritual body in the sense that it gives expression

to a renewed spirit, a perfect spirit. It's incredible to think about it. It's adapted for the existence of the redeemed in an order of heaven that we know nothing about at this point. It's just unbelievable.

And then in verse 45 he takes us one step further and says, "So, also it is written the first man Adam became a living soul; and the last Adam," that's Christ, "became a life-giving spirit." He contrasts the heads of two families. He appeals to Scripture here for his argument. And he says the last Adam is a life-giving spirit. Jesus Christ is the last Adam. And He will give a life; He will give life where Adam gave death.

Adam, the natural man, sinned and brought death on the human race. The last Adam brings life. "The spiritual is not first, but the natural then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth," that's Adam, "earthy, the second man is from heaven. And as is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy and is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly."

Stop at that point, folks. You just got a tremendous insight. As we are on this earth like Adam, we will be in heaven like whom? Like Christ. And verse 49 says it. "Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of," what? "The heavenly." It's incredible. We're going to be like Jesus Christ. We're going to be exactly like Jesus Christ. Well, what was He like? Well, He was incorruptible and eternal. He is glorified and we shall be. He is spiritual; that is, He gives expression to a perfected spirit through His glorified humanity, and so shall we. We shall possess, according to Philippians 3:21, a great statement, "The body of His glory." I just can't imagine that. But see, we have been saved to be conformed to the image of God's Son. We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, Romans 8 says. We're going to be like Him, 1 John 3:2, because we shall what? See Him as He is. We're going to be like Him. What was He like? It's incredible to think about it. He flew to heaven. Stood on the mount in Acts chapter 1 and a cloud took Him right to heaven. He could fly. He moved about. He appeared suddenly after His resurrection in that glorified humanity. He walked through walls. With the disciples, it tells us that He sat down, Luke 24 says, and ate. On one occasion, He broke bread. Another occasion He ate fish. He asked for something to eat, they gave it and He ate it. And Revelation 22 says that there will be fruit-bearing trees in heaven for the wholeness and the health of all the peoples. Like Christ ate after His resurrection, we'll eat. And He didn't need to eat; He ate for the sheer joy and pleasure of it. So, we'll spend eternity eating of the fruit of the heavenly trees not because we need it, but because we enjoy it.

I don't know how that's going to work. I don't know how you can eat eternal fruit and not have it change you in any way. I don't understand all of that, but it's sure going to be exciting. We're going to be like Christ. He could move about anywhere He wanted to go. He had the power to appear and disappear. He had the power to infuse men with His strength. He had the power even in His resurrection, of course, to do miraculous things which He did through His apostles. He walked. He talked. They could touch Him. They could feel Him. He spoke. He ate. We'll do all of that, only in a glorified humanity that's inexplicable to us now.

Well, there's so much more to say, but when you think about Jesus after the resurrection, that's the best picture of what we'll be like. A body fit for the full life of God to indwell and express itself forever, a body that can eat but doesn't need to, a body that can fly through space and go through walls, a body with no time limitation, no age, a body exalted to all that God has in mind in the creation potential, a body that is ultimately satisfied, knows no pain, no tears, no sorrow, no sickness, no death. A body of splendor, a body that shines like the moon and the stars, according to Daniel 12, the promise to the Old Testament saints in their resurrection, a body that's as bright as the brightness of the noon day sun, a body that shines like the sun and its strength. What an incredible thing to think about. What an incredible thing.

I want you to listen in closing; I'm going to close in about two minutes. What does all this say to you? Let me tell you what it says to me. It says that our longing for heaven should be intense. It should be intense. Let me put it really practically for you. If you find your joy and your comfort in this life, if you find your delights in this life so that heaven does not appeal to you, that is irrational. That is irrational.

Let me tell you why. First of all, you're idolizing a passing, sin-filled, decaying world. Secondly, you're contradicting the goal of God. The goal of God is to make you like Christ, and that's where you're going to have to go to get made that way. So, if you are longing to hold on to this world and you're hankering to stay here, and you don't want to go, and this is where you seek your comfort, and this is where you stack your treasure, you are irrational as well as sinful. And so am I if I think like that, because we're idolizing a decaying, godless, Christ-rejecting passing world. We are contradicting the goal of God. Furthermore, we are seeking what we will never find and then, therefore, we are aggravating our misery. Because we will never be satisfied.

How much better to long for heaven? We should groan for heaven like freedom is groaned for by a prisoner, like health is groaned for by a sick man, like food is longed for by one who is hungry, water for one who is thirsty. We should long for heaven like the farmer does for harvest, like the worker does for payday, like the runner does for winning. And if we don't, something is wrong. If we're not saying with John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," something's wrong when we think about what God has for us. If you're not a Christian, don't pity Christians. Don't pity us. I know some people think that we have kind of a boring life, and all of our fun has been spoiled because we've turned our back on the stuff of the world. But I want you to know, folks, don't pity us, pity yourself. We have enjoyed the best of life in the joy of the Lord, and we're going to spend eternity with the glories of His promise, while those who stand back and pity the party that Christians are missing are going to spend eternity without God in the torment of hell.

All that is glorious, all that is noble, all that is blessed and all that is thrilling awaits us in heaven. I hope you're going to be there, and I hope if you're headed for heaven, you have a longing in your heart for that reunion with Christ. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for our time tonight. What a great time in Your Word, and how excited we are about what You have planned for us. And though eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and it hasn't entered into the heart of man the things You've prepared for us, we could never comprehend it. Just this tiny glimpse is enough to fill our hearts with joy. I pray for every soul here to be prepared for the inevitable day of death, that in that day, they may enter the heaven of heavens and not experience the wrath of God, that they may know joy forever and ever, and not the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. And Father, for those of us who are headed for heaven, fill us with anticipation. Help us to hold lightly to the world and to long to be with You. Help us to be weary over sin, to see the worthlessness of this world, to invest all we have in longing for heaven. Help us, as Paul said to the Colossians, to set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth. Help us to long for that day when we will exchange these vile bodies, as Paul said to the Philippians, for the glorious body that is like the body of Jesus Christ, that perfection of body and soul which awaits us who are citizens of heaven. Help us to long for that transformation. We thank You for this wonderful hope that is planted in our hearts because You have told us enough about heaven to give us such a longing. We thank You for Your grace, for what You give us in this life, and what You've prepared for us in the life to come. Amen.

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