

## OUR HEAVENLY BODY

A lot of people look to the resurrection of Jesus to see what our body will be like, and use Luke 24:39 to back up this belief.

*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

Here Jesus was proving to his disciples that he had actually risen. They weren't seeing a spirit or ghost because he appeared in his fleshly body. Having said that, if we go back to verse 36 we see that he didn't enter the room as a fleshly body would, but 'appeared in the midst of them'. In this particular instance Jesus had to use his earthly body otherwise they wouldn't have believed he was alive.

Although he was showing himself to his disciples Jesus was still dealing with natural man who always needs to see to believe. Jesus said he would rise and return from the grave, this meant his body had to disappear from the grave and be seen to be walking around. To man this is resurrection, the return of the same person in the flesh from death. It by no way means he is like this all the time. People tend to forget who he really is and are unable to separate Jesus the man from Jesus the Son of God. To put limitations on him is to limit God's power.

Jesus Christ could appear as anything he wanted to and in any form. His power was such that he transcended all physical boundaries. To Jesus death meant something different to a medical condition brought about by the absence of a heart beat or brain activity, it was the giving of his soul to the realms of death. When Jesus died on the cross, and I am not trying to diminish that act by any degree, it wasn't his Life he was giving but his Soul. Let me explain.

Mathew 20:28, John 3:16, Acts 20:10;

*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his 'life' a ransom for many.*

*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his 'life' for us....*

*And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, trouble not yourselves for his 'life' is still in him.*

The word 'life' in the above verses are translated from the Greek word PSUCHE, which differs from the next example which can be found in Romans 5:10

*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his 'life'.*

The word life used in this verse is translated from the Greek word ZOE, and although reading the verses you would think they all referred to the same interpretation, in fact they are fundamentally different.

If we take the easiest of the verses, Acts 20:10, where a man named Eutychus (verse 9) fell from a window whilst Paul, as it says in verse 9, was 'long preaching'. Paul went to him, but instead of saying, he is still alive, he said his life is still in him. The reason he said it in that manner was because he was talking about his PSUCHE, or soul. We know when we die our soul leaves the body, but as Eutychus had not died his soul had not left him.

Now we come to the other verses where it is stated that Jesus laid down his PSUCHE, soul, for us. Here we get a better picture as to what Jesus really did for us. He did not just give his life for us, something that soldiers do all over the world for their countrymen, but he gave up his soul, his very being for us.

The verse in Romans 5:10 which uses the word ZOE does not mean we shall be saved by his soul but this word refers to his life. Life in the sense of a real, genuine, active and vigorous life devoted to God, which is blessed. The absolute fullness of life both essential and ethical. We will be saved by living our life as close as we can humanly get to his.

**Speaking generally PSUCHE is the individual life, the living being, whereas ZOE is the life of that being.**

By this revelation we see that Jesus actually died twice, once physically and once spiritually. The physical death, his crucifixion, was his open sacrifice to the world, the physical manifestation of the requirements of the law, while the spiritual death was the spiritual requirements from God to save mankind from death. To create a door by which human kind can be saved. Jesus died spiritually because he had the sins of the world heaped on him.

It was for the benefit of the Jewish believers that Jesus returned in his own fleshly body. And it was to prove to his followers that he was back as he was before. But if we take a closer look the scriptures give us a clue to the mystery of our heavenly body.

Mark 16:12

*After that he appeared in 'another' form unto the two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.*

The word 'another' in this verse expresses a qualitative difference and denotes another of a different sort. To illustrate, the flesh of men and birds is different; it is another type of flesh but not in genus only in species. The word another used in our context is the difference between heaven and earth, angels and man. His physical appearance was that of Jesus so they could recognise him, and his form was right for terrestrial life, but that was the only similarity. Another instance is in John 20:14 when Mary turned from the empty grave and faced Jesus, after seeing two angels at either end of where his body should have been.

*And when she thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus.*

She was standing probably just a few feet from him and as it says 'she saw Jesus'. It was him but she didn't recognise him why? Only in verse 16 does the penny drop.

*Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto him Rabboni, which is to say Master.*

Some would have you believe she didn't see him because she was so distraught and her eyes were full of tears, which she may have been but not to the point of mistaking the person you love the most for a gardener. Also in verse 15 Jesus actually talks for a whole verse to her and she fails to recognise his voice. It only took one word in verse 16 for her to come to a realisation of who he was; 'Mary'.

It was only through the word that her eyes were opened, and I believe only because he wanted it that way. The words he spoke carry authority and power and although he only mentioned her name it was enough to carry with it the identity and realisation of his person to her. Jesus at this point was not Jesus the man anymore but Christ, the risen and living Saviour and as such God. He can be, and he is able to do, anything he wants, so this form which he took does not necessarily give us a true indication of what we will be like. However I believe it does give us a clue as to the forms we will be able to take.

1 John 3:2 gives us another clue.

*Beloved, now are we the Sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: 'for' we shall see him as he is.*

It tells us here, that we will know what we will look like when Christ appears and we are called to be with him. It also says that we will see him as he really is, indicating that prior to this event we can not rely on his manifestations being an accurate clue to his real persona.

I have highlighted the word 'for' in the verse because if you look at the Greek word it is the same as 'that', so what the passage is saying is that when he appears we shall be made like him so that we can see him. It is talking about the rapture when Christ comes for the Church. This is a private event for the bride and bridegroom, Christ and his church. The Second Coming is when he comes in the clouds for ALL to see. What this verse opens up to us is the fact that in our earthly body, which is designed for this world, we will not be able to see him, but at the rapture we will be

changed, (getting our spiritual body designed for the spiritual realm), and at that point we will be able to see him because we will be like him, in form.

This form has been the subject of debate for many Christians and ideas vary from a perfect version of ourselves at the age of 33 to what we look like when we die. I suppose the type of body doesn't really matter too much, as I am sure God will give us one that will suit the situation. If we look to see what clues God has given us in the Bible we may also get a better idea of what heaven may be like.

In Corinthians 15:35-54 are the clues we are looking for. Looking first through verses 35-38;

*But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

We are given a nice little image here of the change that will take place. When you put a seed in the ground, the casing of the seed has done its job and is finished but from it grows a plant or in this instance wheat. We do not expect another seed to appear, nor if we dig down do we expect to find the seed still there. Firstly we have to understand what our body is made up of now. We have the flesh, a terrestrial body, the part made up from the dust which in time returns to dust. Genesis 2:19

*....for from dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

This is the seed or shell that at the present moment is serving its purpose. Secondly in the body we have the soul, the part which in essence is us, this will never die, as it is spiritual in form. We do not know how or where it is in the body. All we can be sure of is that it is within us. Thirdly we have a spirit, which God has given to us and on our death goes back to God. Since Adam fell from grace the body was cursed, it has a life span and returns to the ground from where it came. It was not supposed to be like this but because of man's sin he brought it on himself. 1 Corinthians 15:21

*For since by man came death...*

When we die our body decays and we have no further use for it and our spirit returns to God as it says in Ecclesiastes 12:7, Luke 23:46 and Acts 7:59

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said Father into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having thus said He gave up the ghost.*

*And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*

We all have a spirit and its job is to help us to communicate with God. Unfortunately from the fall in Eden this communion has been severed and only when someone accepts Christ as saviour does this connection become workable. It is also said to be the life force of a person as breathed into Adam when he was first formed and became a living soul. Genesis 2:7

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

As we can see we are a tri-part being like God, and it can be said in this we are made in his image. Physical characteristics do not have to come into it.

Our soul whether in this terrestrial world or the heavenly realm, requires a body, and if we don't have one we wouldn't be able to live fully in the world we inhabit. We know from the scriptures that our soul requires a body and find evidence of this in 2 Corinthians 5:1-3

*1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

*2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from*

*heaven:*

*3. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

These verses are not talking about the type of house we will be living in, they refer to the body God has prepared for us. If I write verse 2 again from the Greek translation you can see all 3 verses take on a different meaning.

For in this (tent,body,flesh) also we are groaning, longing to be DRESSED in our habitation (not a temporary tent but a HOME) which is from heaven.

Here Paul is writing about the limitations of our human body and how he longs for the spiritual, heavenly body waiting for him when he dies. Philippians 3:20-21 tells us our bodies will be fashioned like the Lords, changed from its present vile state into one that conforms to his. The Greek renders verse 21 to be;

*Who will TRANSFIGURE the body of our habitation, to CONFORM to his GLORIOUS body.*

This verse goes well with the earlier verse we were looking at, when we shall be changed THAT we may see him.

It would be a good time to point out whatever form we take we will be a spiritual creature and that there is a big difference between being a spirit and a spiritual creature. Although we assume that all in the supernatural world must be spirits this is not the case and needs clarifying as you can diminish God's actual existence by getting them mixed up. To show what I mean look at John 4:24

*God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.*

If you look closely at this verse in your Bible you will see that the word 'is', is in Italics. Because of this I will write the verse out from the Greek Bible which has a more accurate translation.

*God (is) spirit and the (ones) worshipping in spirit and truth it behoves to worship.*

God IS spirit not God IS A spirit, as it says in many Bibles. There is a subtle difference in writing but a major difference in existence and substance. It is saying the very framework and make up of God is spirit, unbound and free, as opposed to being a spirit, a created being (bodiless soul or apparition). It is hard to conjure up a picture of God as we have only our earthly experience to feed our imagination.

There are some who put God in a physical body; I doubt that God would be lumbered with a body like ours, with all its limitations and faults. We were only made in his 'image'. There is a vast difference between image and genetic reproduction. A child's beaker is made in the image of an adult's glass but it is plastic in its make up, a lighter and less expensive copy. Although the function might be the same, in no way can it be classed as the same.

In 1 Corinthians we find a few questions and answers as to the body we have waiting for us.

**Q. Is it a body like ours with flesh and blood?**

A. NO Verse 50

Now I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God...

**Q. Will we look like we do now?**

A. NO Verses 44,49

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.

And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

**Q. Will we all be the same?**

## A. NO Verse 39

But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.

It quite clearly tells us that the earthly body we have now, is for use whilst we are alive and at our death we will be given another body. That body will be more use to us for the environment we will be in, also it will be one that God chooses for us.

The other question people ask is, will there be male and female. For this we must look to various passages starting with Luke 20:34-35 where the Sadducees were trying to trick Jesus by asking if seven brothers had the same wife one after another who would she be the wife of in the after life. His answer was as follows.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angels:.....*

From this we know that marriage is not a necessity. Marriage on earth is in effect part of reproduction; it is the bringing together of a male and female into an agreement and commitment, into which they can both bring a new life into the world. The statement regarding the likeness to Angels refers to the fact that angels can not die therefore there is no reason for them to reproduce, God creates them as and when he needs them.

Likewise when we die there will be no need for us to reproduce, as spiritual beings, not prone to death, we will continue for eternity. Gender after all is something earthly, it is merely a change in physical characteristics. Our soul, the 'us' part does not need to be anything defined because as far as Christ is concerned we are all the same. Galatians 4:28

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Another place to look is Genesis where Adam was created. His job was to be tender of the garden and to look after creation. This was a job initially for one and only later when God discerned that Adam needed a helpmate did he give him a helper, which he made female. Having said that it could be intimated that the female was taken out of man, that Adam was created as having no specific gender or both. This is something we can not really be to sure about, or could we? It is however a misconception to assume Adam was man in the sense as we take the word to mean.

A verse which shows this is Genesis 5:2

*Male and Female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name 'Adam', in the day when they were created.*

Some versions say 'Adam' and others 'Man', the meaning is the same and refers to a specific creature or type of being, mankind. Here in this verse it defines male and female but only in the context of the day when they were created. We do know however that the Female was not created, she was 'formed' so this verse takes on a slightly different meaning. It gets confusing because the verse mixes plural with singular and we assume that because we know man and woman are two that its meaning is obvious.

What we have to realise is, that God writes with knowledge not with a 'well they know what I mean' attitude. There is no reason why he didn't create Adam both male and female, as angels might be. In this way he was able to remove the woman element when he 'formed' Eve. This is why when God talks about marriage it is described as man and woman 'being joined together in marriage' and becoming 'one flesh'; the reversal of Adams split with the female element.

We can only assume there was a gap between Adam being created and Eve being formed from Adam. So we could say that only when woman was taken from Adam were the two genders formed. The actual act of forming the woman, which means 'out of man', can be said to be the first instance of genetic cloning or engineering. Genesis 2:22.

*And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

The word 'rib' does not translate well and we have taken it to literally mean a rib in the medical sense, whereas the word properly translates as 'side or cell'. Versions have the Hebrew word TSELA and translated it as rib. The only other place in scripture where it is mentioned is Ezekiel 41 where it is translated 'side chamber, vault', that is, of the temple. We then get a picture of God taking a cell or part of man and making from that, woman, engineering from that part of man another of the same. This is what Adam says in the next verse,

*And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man.*

There are various reasons why woman had to be from man, which is not really the aim of this study but what can be said is that male and female were requirements of this natural world, not of God's original plan.

Angels are sent to aid us, and appear without us knowing, whatever our race they appear as they need to be, to do God's work. I am sure we too will have this spiritual bodily freedom and power and our appearances will be as varied as it is now in our natural bodies. God is not in the recycling business, he does not need and I doubt would ever use anything from this cursed world in the new creation.

What is sure is that we will be spiritual creatures doing God's work in all the heavenly realms and so we will be given a body that will suit the tasks we will have to perform.