

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

What Will Our Imperishable Bodies be Like?

Revelation 21:3-8, 22:10-15

INTRODUCTION:

Many people believe that there is an afterlife. The scriptures tell us that there is an eternal heaven reserved for the children of God. The problem for many is that they have heard of heaven so many times that the **thrill** of living eternally with God in heaven has faded away. We often get so caught up in our daily lives, that we **fail to reflect BY our lives** how glorious that day will be! Heaven is by far greater than anything here on earth because it is eternal and free from sin. Everything in this world is temporal and will go away.

ILLUSTRATION:

Consider how the world would react if the cure for all cancer was discovered and the treatment was painless and free to anyone who needed it. Can you imagine the excitement that would accompany such an event?

Heaven will be greater than anything here on earth including a painless and free cure for cancer. Why? Because our time on earth is temporary. If you were cured of cancer, it may prolong your life and give you a better life, but you **WILL still die**. The earth is going away whether you have cancer or not.

Christ assures us that His return **CAN** be the most wonderful thing that we will ever experience! He pleads to us to rekindle our excitement for His return and be prepared for it. If we overcome, we can rest upon His promises and have an assured hope for the future that the rest of the world cannot know.

This morning we are going to consider the question for today, "**When this life is over, what happens next?**" Will we just die, be buried into the ground, and then cease to exist?

NO! We are promised an eternal life in heaven in the presence of God free from sin. We will no longer experience thirst, hunger, or death. There will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the things of this earth have passed away.

So I ask the question, What kind of body will we have?

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 21:3-8, Rev. 22:10-15 (NASB)

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is

among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He *said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” ⁶ Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”...

The Final Message

¹⁰ And he *said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

¹² “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

Prayer

BODY:

I. OUR IMPERISHABLE BODY.

While the Bible doesn't describe in detail the **imperishable** bodies we will receive in heaven, we are given some clues. The passage in the Bible with the most detail is found in ...

1 Corinthians 15:42-53 (NASB)

I am going to read and then comment throughout this passage.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is **sown a PERISHABLE BODY**, it is **raised an IMPERISHABLE BODY**; Perishable means that we will die. Imperishable means that we will NOT die. Just like a tree seed that is planted and grows into a tree. The seed has to die in order to transform itself into a tree.

⁴³ it is **sown in DISHONOR**, it is **raised in GLORY**; it is **sown in WEAKNESS**, it is **RAISED IN POWER**; ⁴⁴ it is **sown a NATURAL BODY**, it is **raised a SPIRITUAL BODY**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

Our perishable body is filled with **sin**, our imperishable body is filled with righteousness.

When Paul uses the term “spiritual body”, he is not talking about a body made of spirit, or a body without flesh or bones. The word "**spiritual**" here is an adjective **describing** "body", not negating its meaning. Paul could have simply said, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spirit,” if that were the case. Judging from Christ’s resurrection body, a spiritual body appears most of the time to look and act like a regular physical body. It is just that this body is not affected by sin.

⁴⁵ So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

If verse 47 was all we had, then it could be legitimately interpreted as saying our resurrection bodies won’t be physical. But it is **not** the only passage we have.

⁴⁸ As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

Because of the Fall and the Curse, we have never been or seen human beings who are fully functional as God’s image-bearers, conveying the brightness and majesty of his being. But that day is coming. Christ will be the ultimate image-bearer, fully conveying the brightness and majesty of God.

Note that the difference between Adam and Christ is **not** that one was a physical being and the other wasn’t. It was that Adam was under sin and the Curse, and Christ was untouched by sin and the Curse.

The Mystery of Resurrection

⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the **perishable** inherit the imperishable.

Our human bodies are described as perishable, dishonorable, and weak, all due to sin. **So, can one be “of dust” yet not under sin and death?** Yes. Adam was, until the Fall. But he was subject to temptation. When we are in our new bodies and fully redeemed, we will not be subjected to temptation. The scriptures tell us that only righteousness dwells in heaven and God does not tempt.

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep (There will still be Christians alive when Christ returns.), but **we will all be changed**, (We will **NOT inherit** our imperishable body when we die. This transformation is going to happen in an instant!) ⁵² **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, (WHEN?) at the last trumpet;** (When is the last trumpet? The second coming of Christ!) **for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Christ is and will forever remain both God (from Heaven) and man (of earth).

Our **imperishable** bodies will no longer suffer from sickness and death, nor will they ever be subject to heat and cold or hunger and thirst. Our new bodies will be honorable in that they will not be shamed or shameful because of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, the first thing they felt because of the sin within them was **shame** because of their nakedness. The Bible portrays our **new imperishable** bodies as being righteous (free of sin) and clothed in white garments.

Revelation 3:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Our earthly bodies are **“weak”** in many ways. Not only are we subject to the natural laws of gravity, time, and space, our bodies are also weakened by sin and its temptations. Our imperishable bodies will be **in one** with God Who owns us, and weakness will be no more.

Just as our earthly bodies are perfectly suited to life on earth, our resurrected bodies will be perfectly suited for our new life in heaven. Our future bodies will be **untouched** by sin and indestructible. They will be like Christ’s resurrection body—both physical *and* indestructible.

But even Christ's resurrection body was not fully glorified. It seems more likely that we will be like the transfigured Christ.

1 John 3:2 (NASB)

² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

II. THE GLORIFIED BODY OF CHRIST.

The Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our mortal bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

We know that Christ’s resurrected body, before his ascension, was quite normal in appearance. But what is Christ’s “glorious body” like?

Paul on the Road to Damascus.

Consider how the apostle Paul relates his encounter with the glorified Christ on the road to Damascus where he was intending to persecute Christians:

Acts 22:6-11 (NASB)

⁶ “But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, ⁷ and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ ⁸ And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’ ¹¹ **But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light**, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

It appears that Paul's unredeemed eyes were not yet ready to behold the glorified Christ.

The Stoning of Stephen.

This is in contrast to Stephen, who, when he was being stoned to death, saw the glorified Christ at God's right hand, but apparently was *not* blinded:

Acts 7:55-56 (NASB)

⁵⁵ But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; ⁵⁶ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

We are given a picture of Christ's glorified body on the Mount of Transfiguration:

Matthew 17:2 (NASB)

² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

The transfiguration appears to have given us a preview of Christ's glorified body. John describes the glorified Christ he saw in the present Heaven:

Revelation 1:12-16 (NASB)

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, **clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.** ¹⁴ **His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.** ¹⁵ **His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.** ¹⁶ **In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.**

III. THE RESURRECTED BODY OF CHRIST.

Now, in comparison to both [Matthew 17](#) and [Revelation 1](#), it appears that the **resurrected body of Christ**, before his ascension, was not yet fully glorified. If He would have been glorified, surely his identity would have been immediately apparent to those He appeared to after the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene.

John 20:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and ***saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.**

The Disciples on the Emmaus Road.

Luke 24:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. ¹⁶ **But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.**

Jesus' Appearance before the Eleven Disciples.

Luke 24:36-43 (NASB)

³⁶ While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and *said to them, "Peace be to you." ³⁷ **But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.** ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³ and He took it and ate *it* before them.

The nail prints in Christ's hands and feet are the strongest possible affirmation that the same earthly body that was crucified is now the same heavenly body that was raised.

CONCLUSION:

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NASB)

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

We may not know exactly what we will be like in heaven, but we have enough information to know that it will be a glorious experience if we remain faithful and overcome.

Many of us are looking forward to Heaven more now than we did when our bodies were functioning well.

ILLUSTRATION:

Joni Eareckson Tada says it well: "Somewhere in my broken, paralyzed body is the seed of what I shall become. The paralysis makes what I am to become all the more grand when you contrast useless legs against splendorous resurrected legs. I'm convinced that if there are mirrors in heaven (and why not?), the image I'll see will be unmistakably 'Joni,' although a much better, brighter Joni."

Inside your body, even if it is failing, is the blueprint for your resurrection body. You may not be satisfied with your current body or mind—but you will be thrilled with your new resurrected bodies. With them you will be able to serve and glorify God without the restriction of sin and enjoy an eternity of wonders he has prepared for you.

Here is the **message of warning** from Revelation: All of us will have eternal lives. Either we will overcome and live with God in our imperishable bodies or we will live eternally separated from God with Satan and his angels.

Revelation 21:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."...

This is the Day!