



## **The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

The originator of a new religion came to the great French diplomat-statesman Charles Talleyrand and complained that he could not make any converts. "What would you suggest I do?" he asked. "I should recommend," said Talleyrand, "that you get yourself crucified, and then die, but be sure to rise again the third day."

Christianity stands on the resurrection – the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I know of no other resurrection than that of the bodily resurrection of Christ for this is what the Scriptures teach. The historic orthodox view of the nature of Christ's resurrection body is that it was a real material body and not some kind of mystical or spiritual (non-physical) body possessed only by Christ's human spirit.

Why do some deny the physical or bodily resurrection of Christ? It's because Satan knows that if Christ did not rise **BODILY** and **PHYSICALLY** from the grave, the bottom drops out of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-3) and the Gospel would be a hoax because it could not provide us with the hope of salvation, resurrection, or any future in Heaven. Satan knows the importance of the bodily or physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus was not the God-man in His death and resurrection, by possessing a physical body when He died and rose from the dead, then redemption's plan for mankind would fail.

Jesus had to keep His humanity in His resurrection (Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5), by possessing a physical body, in order to confirm that God's redemptive payment for the human race was paid in full (Rom. 4:25), so He could be our High Priest representing man before God (Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25), and to ensure our own physical resurrection in the future (John 14:19). Any other kind of spiritual or mystical resurrection destroys the foundation of the Gospel message (1 John 4:2-3; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

Orthodox Christianity has always confessed two things about the resurrection body of Christ. First, it was the same physical body in which Jesus was crucified. Second, Jesus' body, at the moment it was resurrected, became an immortal, glorified body, a body that was physical but one that was also imperishable (Rev. 1:18). William G. T. Shedd, a noted theologian, said that "the doctrine of the resurrection of the body was from the beginning

a cardinal and striking tenet of the Christian Church." The Westminster Confession (1647) reads, "On the third day He arose with the same body in which He suffered" (8.4).

Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) said: "The resurrection is a resurrection of the flesh which dies." (Justin Martyr, *Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection*, ch. 10. Found in the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., and Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, vols. 1-14; Second Series, vols. 1-14*). Historically the bodily resurrection has been taken to always mean a literal physical body.

The word resurrection means "a rising from the dead" – something that comes back to life. Since the spirit or soul does not die or cease to exist (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) only the body can die and come back to life. Therefore, a "spiritual" resurrection would make no sense, since the spirit doesn't die and therefore cannot be resurrected. Let's get real. The ordinary meaning of resurrection implies that which is material and physical. This belief is based on the fact that at His resurrection Jesus permanently vacated the tomb in the same physical body in which He was crucified.

Webster defines a body as "the organized physical substance of an animal or plant or the material part or nature of a human being." The very definition of a "body" always speaks of physical substance and this is how the Scripture defines it. There is no such thing as an immaterial body, a body that is not physical.

Someone wrote a poem entitled: "On a Morning Like This"

"In the sky  
The song of the skylark greets the dawn  
In the fields wet with dew  
The scent of the violets fills the air,  
On such a lovely morning as this,  
Surely on such a lovely morning as this,  
Lord Jesus came forth from the tomb."

What a day it must have been when Jesus came forth from the grave!

**Jesus rose again with a real physical body that will live forever.**

This can be proven in four ways.

## **I. Answering the arguments against physical resurrection**

In Matthew 22:23 it states that “The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection.” Acts 23:8 confirms this same truth. The Sadducees were the liberal and modernists of their own day and time. We still have them today. They reject the truth of Christ’s bodily resurrection from the grave and reject the miraculous. But there is no way we can get passed the miracle of the resurrection if we believe the Bible, the eyewitnesses, historical data, and the writing of God’s truth upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

There are many ways to disbelieve in the resurrection. One can say it never happened at all while others can argue that Jesus was only revived by the spices in the tomb. Others say that Jesus was resurrected with a spiritual body. You might not believe in the miracle of the resurrection but the Bible teaches that the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is true. In fact, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ rose from the dead with a body that would live on forever. The Sadducees, the modernists, Platonic philosophy, Gnosticism and German rationalism (which came from Europe) have all denied the bodily resurrection of Christ throughout the years.

Today there are those who would have us to believe that when Jesus rose from the dead, He came back as a spirit, no longer possessing a physical, tangible body. He came back possessing an immaterial body, or as a ghost, and did not have a real body. However, to hold the view that the resurrection of Christ was only spiritual in nature (nonphysical) is to deny the testimony of Scripture and to bypass the entire purpose of the resurrection which gives the promise of a physical and bodily resurrection.

There are those who claim Jesus "rose" in spirit only but not in body. Others say Jesus used telepathic communications to convince the disciples He was alive. Of course, these theories are without foundation and their fallacies can be easily exposed by Scripture. The most subtle denial of the physical resurrection is one that claims that Jesus rose bodily from the grave; however, His "body" was not a tangible or material one. Instead, it was essentially invisible and immaterial. According to this position the appearances of Christ were miracles by which His invisible resurrection body was made visible. In other words, His immaterial body "materialized" at certain times. This strange view affirms an “empty tomb” while ironically denying that a material body emerged from it!

The theory that Christ's body was not found but that Christ only rose in a spiritual manner (without a physical body) is doubletalk that makes no sense whatsoever. The Bible only talks about the physical (a body) and the immaterial (a spirit). It talks nowhere of a non-material body. This whole notion and concept is silly and contradicts common sense and Biblical sense. All true bodies are material (physical) and visible in nature – not invisible. This materializing theory ignores what the Bible says about the importance of a physical, bodily resurrection of Christ that was visible and tangible to all.

Wolfhart Pannenberg confesses belief in the historical resurrection of Christ, but he denies that Christ's body was a body of literal flesh and bones even though Jesus Christ himself says it was (Luke 24:39). He views the "body" as spiritual or immaterial. These are liberal-based conclusions and not an accurate record of the physical resurrection of Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses also hold to an immaterial view of the nature of the resurrected Christ. They claim that "Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature" (Samuel Rutherford, *Let God Be True* [Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1946], p. 122). Jesus "was put to death a man, but was raised from the dead a spirit being" (Charles T. Russell, *At-One-Ment between God and Man* [Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1899], pp. 453-54). "Jesus' postdeath 'appearances' were simply His ability as a spirit to 'materialize' for the purpose of communicating with His disciples (Charles T. Russell, *The Kingdom at Hand* [Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1944], p. 259).

The Shepherd's Chapel groups also state that Jesus did not rise bodily from the grave but only spiritually. Cults attack the resurrection of Christ and reinterpret it in different ways thereby denying His physical and bodily resurrection. Satan knows that Jesus needed to remain both God and man to pay sin's redemptive price on the cross. Satan also knows that Jesus had to rise from the dead as both God and man (possessing a human body) in order to confirm, guarantee, and seal the salvation of our soul by giving us the promise of eternal life and the hope of a bodily resurrection from the grave.

We must ask if Jesus rose from the dead in the very same body He died in, or did He rise in a spirit body that was not flesh and bones? The answer to this question is very important. It separates true Christians from false

systems. The theories of Christ's spiritual resurrection and body are liberal, cultic and are designed to destroy the Gospel of Christ's physical death and resurrection to save mankind. Because our eternal destinies ride on the truth of the historical and literal event of the resurrection, this has been the target of Satan's greatest attacks against the church. Only heretics and infidels reject the literal and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Cyril of Jerusalem proclaimed, "Let no heretic ever persuade thee to speak evil of the Resurrection. For to this day the Manichees say that the resurrection of the Savior was phantom-wise, and not real." Tertullian (A.D. 160-230) stated that the resurrection of the flesh to be the church's "rule of faith," saying it "was taught by Christ" and only denied by heretics. (The Prescription Against Heretics, ch. 13.) The church was unanimous that those who denied a physical resurrection were not part of Christ's church.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in a physical and literal body. If Jesus did not rise physically, then what happened to His body? Was it dissolved? Was it moved somewhere? There is no Biblical account of what happened to Jesus' body other than that it was raised from the dead! We can know assuredly that Christ's body was physically raised from the realm of death. This is what the Bible teaches. Any other teaching about Jesus' resurrection is unorthodox and heretical.

Several arguments are used to prove Jesus had a nonmaterial body.

### 1. The spiritual body of Jesus

Paul wrote of a "spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44) in the resurrection in contrast to the pre-resurrection body, which is a "natural body." But a study of the context does not support the conclusion that a spiritual body is something immaterial. It was still a body! In other words, he was not referring to an immaterial body but a physical body that was spiritual.

A "spiritual" body is one dominated by the Holy Spirit - not one devoid of physical matter. When Paul spoke about a "spiritual man" (1 Cor. 2:15), he obviously did not mean an invisible, immaterial man with no corporeal body. He was speaking of a flesh-and-blood human being whose life was lived by the supernatural power of God. He was referring to a literal person whose life had spiritual direction. The spiritual body is a body directed by the spirit as opposed to one under the dominion of the flesh. A "spiritual body" does

not denote what is immaterial and invisible but what is godly and perfect in relationship to its existence.

## 2. The appearances of Jesus

It is also argued that Jesus' resurrection body was essentially immaterial and invisible because the New Testament stresses the fact that he had to appear to reveal Himself to people (Luke 24:34; Acts 9:17; 13:31 ; 26:16 ; 1 Cor. 15:5-8). It's asserted that this implies Jesus was essentially invisible and took the initiative to only make Himself visible by His resurrection appearances. However, this argument fails.

John used this same word for seeing Jesus in His earthly body before the resurrection (John 6:36; 14:9; 19:35) and also of seeing Him in His resurrection body (John 20:18, 25, 29). There was no difference. There simply is no reason for believing Christ's resurrection body is not the same literal, physical body. The statement that "He was seen or appeared" simply means that Jesus took the initiative to show Himself to the disciples, not that He was essentially invisible.

We do know the way in which Jesus appeared was sometimes miraculous. Since the resurrected Christ could appear in a room with closed doors (John 20:19, 26), it is further argued this proves that His body must have been essentially immaterial. However, this is misconstrued reasoning. Before His resurrection Jesus performed miracles with His body - miracles that transcended natural laws, such as walking on water (John 6:16-20). Of course, walking on water did not prove that His pre-resurrection body was invisible or immaterial.

Jesus could have done miracles like this in His pre-resurrection physical body, if He had chosen to do so, but instead, He chose to often limit these type of miracles (Phil. 2:7) but on some occasions did use them even in His physical body (John 9:59 – “but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by”). As the Son of God, His miraculous powers were just as great before the resurrection as they were afterward. Though physical, the resurrection body is by its very nature a supernatural body (1 Cor. 15:44). This means it should be expected that Jesus' resurrection body could do supernatural things such as entering a room with closed doors.

To conclude that Jesus' body was immaterial because of the way He appeared suddenly and vanished is unwarranted and unbiblical. The Gospels say that Jesus appeared suddenly in His resurrection body (John 20:19, 26). They also conclude that Jesus could disappear suddenly (Luke 24:31; 51; Acts 1:9). Once again, these miraculous actions do not mean that Christ's resurrection body was incorporeal, immaterial, or invisible. This suddenness to appear and disappear is one of the indications of the supernatural character of the resurrection body - not its invisibility. After all, the believer's resurrection body will be a powerful or supernatural body (1 Cor. 15:44).

Suddenness in appearance and disappearance is actually a characteristic of miraculous power. When Jesus or the apostles performed a supernatural healing the disease departed immediately connoting a supernatural working (Matt 8:3; Mark 1:31; John 5:9; Acts 9:18, 34). In the same manner, the sudden appearance or disappearance of the resurrection body is an indication of its supernatural ability, not of its immateriality.

We must remember that Philip was suddenly and supernaturally transported through the air in his pre-resurrection body (Acts 8:39). So, if a sudden appearance or disappearance is proof that a body is immaterial, one would have to conclude that Philip had a resurrection body before he died! However, the Scriptures declare that Christ is the first one to receive a resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:20). Sudden appearance or disappearance is not proof of the immaterial but of the supernatural ability of the resurrection body.

### 3. The vision of Jesus

Reference to a resurrection appearance as a vision is also sometimes used to support the immaterial view of Christ's resurrection body.

Luke 24:23

"And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive."

This account is sometimes misconstrued to mean that Christ's resurrection was a vision and therefore His body was not a physical body. However, the women did not convey this about the body of Jesus Christ. They said that they saw angels in a vision but that the angels actually reported that Christ had



risen from the dead. Jesus' post-resurrection encounters were never called visions. The difference between a vision and a physical appearance is significant.

The idea that Paul's experience with the resurrected Christ in Acts 9 must also have been a vision is also unwarranted. Paul listed this as a physical appearance of Jesus along with those received by the other apostles immediately after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:8). Those who were with Paul experienced the same physical phenomena as Paul did. They heard the sound (Acts 9:7) and saw the light (Acts 22:9). The fact that they "did not see anyone" (Acts 9:7) is not surprising since even Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light they all saw (9:8-9). Apparently only Paul looked straight into the light and he was the only one who actually saw Christ (1 Cor. 9:1). Only Paul was literally stricken blind by it (Acts 22:11; 26:13). For those who were with Paul it was an experience of a physical reality, not a mere vision.

#### 4. The different form of Jesus

Some also propose that after the resurrection Jesus had altered His form in some mysterious way and the fact that he appeared in another form confirms the immaterial nature of His resurrection body.

Mark 16:12

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

This is said from perspective of those who were looking at him. In other words, this is what is seemed to be like for the two on the road to Emmaus.

John 20:14

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

It's concluded by these statements that our resurrection bodies are so different that we won't be able to recognize one another. However, this is simply not the case since Paul says we will have a reunion with our loves ones when Jesus returns (1 Thess. 4:17-18). There is a similarity or continuity between the seed sown and the body it produces while at the same time there are differences (1 Cor. 15:35-42). You could never guess what a



tomato would look like by looking at a tomato seed. What we plant in the soil and what grows out of it doesn't look anything alike. Paul is teaching that the dead body that we bury in the ground and the resurrection body that comes from it will be dramatically different. However, a seed produces *after its kind* and this is true in the resurrection. Our bodies, like Christ's resurrection body will be of the same kind. There will be similarities.

When a seed is planted in the ground it dies; decomposing. This means it ceases to exist in its seed form but it brings forth a life that was similar to its previous existence as a plant! As God gives a new body to the plant that rises from the dead seed, similar to its former existence, so He can give a resurrection body to a man who dies which is a reflection of His former body. It will be a literal body and have many similarities to the body we now possess in appearance and likeness. However, they will also be vastly different in many ways than our former physical bodies because they will be perfect bodies, supernatural bodies, and undying bodies.

The point is this; the conclusion that the resurrection body of Jesus was immaterial because of the failure of some to recognize Him (Mark 16:12) is unwarranted. Writing of the same event (Luke 24:13-32), Luke said "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him – Luke 24:16). This unawareness could be the result from a divine action or from their own human dullness or failure to recognize Jesus because of the surrounding conditions such as dimness of light in the early dawn. We are talking about predawn hours and it would not be easy to distinguish someone. It's like when someone is walking along the side of the road at night and you cannot see them very easily.

The *different form* of Jesus (Mark 16:12) would then refer to either a form of momentary unawareness of who Jesus was because of God's intervention but more likely it's referring to a lack of light (Mark 16:9 – "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week"). When the Bible says that Jesus "appeared in another form unto two of them" this is written from their own visual perspective – not from the standpoint of Jesus' body. In other words, the change was due to their surroundings and what they could not see. Whatever a "different form" means it certainly does not mean a form other than a physical material body. This is because Jesus ate physical food as a proof that He was "flesh and bones" and not a "spirit" (Luke 24:38-43).

In summary, there is no scientific, Biblical, or theological reason for forsaking the historic evangelical view that Jesus' resurrection body is a literal, physical body. All the arguments used to prove the immaterial nature of His resurrection body fall short and they are unbiblical. There is overwhelming evidence that Christ's resurrected body was a literal, physical body of flesh and bones.

The very fact that Jesus repeatedly appeared before people for 40 days as "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3) after His resurrection, even to more than 500 people at once (1 Cor. 15:6), and was recognized as Jesus, is indisputable evidence that He rose bodily from the dead. These many appearances do not say that the resurrection body was invisible or immaterial; instead they show that it was indeed material, physical, and immortal. This is the emphasis of all the resurrection passages. Jesus went into the ground and came out with the same type of body.

There is no such thing as an immaterial or incorporeal body. The Bible teaches two distinct entities (James 2:26). There is a spirit (immaterial part of man's existence) and a body (physical part of man's existence). These two cannot be changed in to the other. A body cannot become immaterial in nature and a spirit cannot become physical in its makeup. The Biblical teaching of a physical body means that it cannot be an immaterial, spiritual, or ghostly type of body. Nowhere in all the Bible do we ever see nor hear of such a body. It defies theology and truth. All of these visible resurrection appearances of Christ are real proof of Christ's physical and bodily resurrection.

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed (illustrating resurrection) had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones.

## II. Joining the saints who believed in physical resurrection.

Some have argued that the doctrine of a bodily resurrection was unknown to the Israelites of the Old Testament and this is why the sect of Sadducees denied the bodily resurrection (Matt. 22:23). But this is not the case. We find that the Scripture is crystal clear about the subject of Christ's bodily or physical resurrection. Even the Old Testament saints believed in bodily resurrection and they did know something of a Deliverer to come and their Redeemer's resurrection and final victorious stand on planet earth during the Millennial Kingdom.

Job 19:25-26

"For I know *that* my redeemer liveth (this speaks of resurrection!), and *that* he shall stand (this speaks of resurrection and authority) at the latter *day* upon the earth (the Millennial Kingdom): And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body* (this is physical death), yet in my flesh (a reference to the human body) shall I see God."

After the time of Isaiah, the promise was still known.

Daniel 12:2

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"

These promises were not referring to some vague concept of the "immortality of the soul," some allegorized or spiritualized resurrection, or the transmigration of the soul (reincarnation) as taught in pagan religions. They are referring to the literal and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ and the human body! The OT saints did not know all the particulars about the resurrection as we do today but they did believe in bodily resurrection. It's only later when Christ would bring the promise of resurrection out into the light and provide great assurance regarding man's future destiny with God and his hope of a new body through Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

Of course, the saints living after Christ's resurrection certainly believed in the bodily and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their testimony was very clear.

Matthew 28:6

“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

It’s as if they were saying, “Surprise, surprise, surprise! He is not here!”

Acts 3:15

“And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

Acts 4:33

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.”

Acts 13:29-30

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead.”

Romans 7:4

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

Romans 8:11

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Ephesians 1:20

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*.”

1 Thessalonians 1:10

“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

2 Timothy 2:8

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”

1 Peter 1:3

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

1 Peter 1:21

“Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

The physical or bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the cornerstone of Christianity. Friend, join the ranks of the redeemed who have always believed in the miracle of the resurrection. It's only through the bodily resurrection of Christ that we have the hope of everlasting life and a new body.

Flowers and Easter go together. They give the promise of resurrection and life. Someone wrote:

“Daffodils in early spring  
Seem to cheer up everything.  
Little sermons do they preach,  
Valued lessons, too, they teach.  
Growing up from murky mire,  
Higher thoughts they would inspire.  
Though they're planted in the ground  
Far above it they are found.  
There's a Flower pure and true  
Blooming e'er before our view.  
From the darkness of the tomb,  
Where He lay in deepest gloom,  
Jesus rose, His life to pour  
Sweetest fragrance evermore.”

### **III. Believing the facts of Christ's resurrection**

Facts are stubborn things! We know that  $1+1=2$ . You can't get past this fact. The Bible repeatedly presents Christ rising from the dead in a physical body.

There are seven facts to consider.

## 1. The death to life analogy

Resurrection is often described literally as "from the dead" (Mark 9:9; Luke 24:46; John 2:22; Acts 3:15; Rom 4:24; 1 Cor. 15:12). In other words, the way a person dies (the death of a physical body) is the same way a person will be raised from the dead (they will possess a physical body). There is a death to life analogy or similarity which cannot be broken. A body dies the same way it is raised – physically.

Mark 9:9

“And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead” (out from among the dead in a graveyard).

This means that Jesus was resurrected out from among the dead ones, that is, from the grave where corpses are buried (Acts 13:29-30). This same phrase is used to describe Lazarus' being raised "from the dead" (John 12:1). Everyone knew that Lazarus possessed a real physical body. This makes it very clear that the phrase refers to a resurrection of a physical corpse out of a tomb or graveyard.

Acts 2:24

“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains (pangs) of death (physical death) because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

This reference can only be referring to physical death since this is the only type of death the Bible speaks about in relation to the human body (“the body without the spirit is dead” - James 2:26). In other words, at death the spirit leaves the body and the body simply dies from a physical perspective. Therefore, Paul and all the other writers of Scripture are referencing the bodily resurrection of Christ from the grave when they speak of resurrection. The human body is the physical part of man’s existence which can die and be resurrected. There are many other Scriptures like this one that speak of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (physical death). They are focusing on His physical body being raised from the dead – not some kind of spiritual body that is not physical in its makeup or design.

Acts 23:6

“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee,

the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”

Acts 25:19

“But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”

All of these verses clearly reveal that there is a continuity between the kind of body that goes in to the ground and the body that comes out. It is a physical body. Scriptures says nothing of an immaterial body being raised from the dead. A spiritual body that does not possess physical characteristics lacks common and Bible sense. Let’s look at another important Bible verse that brings hope to our hearts because Jesus rose physically and bodily from the dead.

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus declares:

“I *am* he that liveth, and was dead (physically dead – meaning His body had ceased to breath, function, and live); and, behold, I am alive for evermore.”

This is Easter! When Jesus rose from the dead the sun came up in relation to human history and human destiny! Christ living again can only be speaking of the same kind of life that Jesus possessed before He died. Jesus was now alive physically and bodily as He previously was. To come to any other conclusion would defy common sense and the clear comparison that Jesus was making between His own physical death and physical resurrection.

Revelation 1:18 goes on to say, “Amen” (so let it be true – And it is true!!); and have the keys (authority) of hell (hades = the place where human spirits reside in a disembodied state awaiting reunion with their physical bodies) and of death” (a reference to the human body that awaits resurrection). Sheol or Hades was in the center of the earth and was the place where Old Testaments saints (believers) went prior to Christ’s death on the cross (Eph. 4:8; Luke 16:22). Satan once had authority over these two realms (hades and death) before Jesus died and rose from death and the grave.

Satan had the authority to keep people (even God’s saints) in these two realms. He could hold their spirits in the center of the earth and keep their bodies in the grave without these saints possessing assurance of a future resurrection. But all this changed when Jesus came and conquered death and rose again for He triumphantly led God’s saints from this place in the



center of the earth into His heavenly abode (Eph. 4:8). Jesus Christ victoriously passed through the realms of hades and death and now has full authority over these two realms (the state of death and the place of the dead). He will one day bring back the souls and spirits of His people from Heaven and join them to their physical bodies which will then be raised from the dead (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We know this is true because Jesus rose from the dead and has the authority and power to raise us from the dead!

The grip of the Grim Reaper was broken! For the believer (you and me who know Christ), we have the promise that the risen Christ is in control of our future! He has full authority over our death. For this reason, we can be sure that we will meet Him when we die (2 Cor. 5:8 – “absent from the body and present with the Lord”; Phil. 1:23 – “to depart and be with Christ which is far better”). Knowing that Christ has authority over death provides assurance, since believers need no longer fear it. Jesus took the keys away from Satan and we can have the assurance that we will live with Him forever in Heaven and also get a new and glorious body someday. Christ is in charge of dying and living!

I’m reminded of what D. L. Moody said as he hovered in the twilight zone between life and death. “Earth recedes, Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go.” His son who was standing by his bedside said, “No, no, father, you are dreaming.” “No,” said Mr. Moody, “I am not dreaming: I have been within the gates: I have seen the children’s faces.”

## 2. The tangible reality

We know Jesus had a physical body upon resurrection because He could be touched. This is what tangible means.

John 20:27

“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

The Lord dealt gently and patiently with His faithless follower. He invited him to prove the reality of His resurrection by putting his hand into His side. This proves the physical nature of Christ’s resurrection body. There can be no doubt about it. Jesus possessed a literal body. In fact, when reflecting on

Christ's hands and feet, we know that Jesus still possesses the same wounds in His physical body in Heaven today.

Revelation 5:6

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain (a description of Jesus Christ that speaks of how Christ still bears some of the marks or wounds of crucifixion).

These wounds are the only manmade thing in Heaven!

Zechariah 13:6 is a reference to when Israel will meet Christ at His coming Kingdom: "And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends." A spirit cannot have wounds! Only a body can have scars. We will someday be with our resurrected and victorious Lord and visibly be able to see these wounds or scars. The very wounds He endured for us. They will be on display for all eternity to remind us of His amazing grace and mercy He showered upon us.

Fanny Crosby, who was blind at an early age wrote these words in a hymn:

"When my lifework is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,  
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;  
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,  
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

I shall know Him, I shall know Him,  
And redeemed by His side I shall stand,  
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,  
By the print of the nails in His hand."

Christ has a real body today in Heaven!

John 20:29

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed."

Jesus is talking about real faith in this statement. In essence, seeing is not believing; but believing is seeing! "Blessed *are* they that have not seen, and

yet have believed.” This is real faith! We can believe in the physical resurrection of Christ without having to see it occur. The same is true about Christ creating the universe. We were not there when Jesus created the earth or rose from the dead but faith sees it as happening anyway. Faith is when we believe God’s promise in spite of what seems impossible from a human perspective. “Blessed *are* they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

Elsewhere, in Matthew 28:9, it states:

“And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.”

You can’t hang on to the feet of a spirit. They were worshipping a risen Lord! Have you been worshipping the Lord in our daily routine of life? How much time do you spend reflecting on Him, thanking Him, praising Him? We need to get back to the feet of the risen Jesus!

William Bright said:

“And now the wants are told,  
That brought Thy children to thy knee;  
Here, lingering still, we ask for naught  
But simply worship thee.”

A. W. Tozer said:

“God is trying to call us back to that which He has created us, to worship and enjoy Him forever!”

### 3. The human conformity

We also know that Jesus had the ability to eat food. This is something a spirit cannot do. Jesus possessed a resurrection body that conformed to the likeness of a human body. He was able to eat and assimilate food. A spirit or immaterial body cannot do this.

Luke 24:41-43

“And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took *it*, and did eat before them.”

### 4. The physical certainty

Jesus Himself said He was a physical person and not a spirit.

Luke 24:37-40

“But tauththey were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 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. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

Any questions? The body of Jesus was real and tangible. Again, His body also bore the nail prints or scars, which at this time were seen and witnessed by the disciples. How much clearer could Jesus make it? He proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that He was raised from the dead with the same type of body He previously possessed, a physical body.

Although Jesus still retained His physical body, He had abilities not available to normal human beings. For example, on two occasions Jesus appeared to the disciples in the midst of a room without ever having come through a door.

Luke 24:36

“And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them (quickly appeared among them without entering through any doors), and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.”

John 20:19

“Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.”

Jesus in His resurrection body seems to have been released from at least some of the laws normal matter is subject to. This demonstrates that Jesus had a physical body, but it was a changed body, a supernatural body that was “sown in power” (1 Cor. 15:44). Jesus' special abilities were not due to a lack of human flesh (a physical body) but due to a different type of human body. Jesus' body had been glorified and was now operating by higher laws so that He could not be bound to the same limitations of humanity as He was before He was glorified.

## 5. The theological authority

Colossians 2:9

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

What does Biblical theology clearly reveal about the bodily resurrection of Christ? The emphasis on the word “bodily” cannot be overlooked. This tells us that the fullness of the Godhead still dwells in Christ in bodily or physical fashion. The Greek verb “dwelleth” is in the present tense, indicating that the fullness of the Godhead was still dwelling in Christ when Paul wrote his epistle in AD 61. This was approximately thirty years after Jesus ascended into Heaven, yet he claimed that Jesus still had a physical body!

## 6. The declaration of safety

Psalm 16:10

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (a reference to the body).

Acts 2:31

“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul (immaterial part of Christ) was not left in hell (hades), neither his flesh (His body – the material part) did see corruption.”

The promise is now given that Christ’s body would remain safe from corruption or decay. Why is the promise given that Christ’s flesh or body would not see corruption? It’s given to indicate that Jesus’ body would be resurrected in the same manner it went into the tomb (in a physical way).

Christ Himself, stated that His body would rise again on the third day (John 2:19-21). Scripture also made it clear that Christ’s body would see no decay, a charge that would make no sense if His body was not resurrected. This is a clear indication of the bodily, physical, and literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Nothing could be clearer. That it was Christ’s body that was raised from the dead, not His spirit or soul.

## 7. The covenant conformity

Acts 2:30-32 states:

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him (David), that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Jesus had to be raised physically to one day sit upon David’s throne in Jerusalem as the prophecy declares. Will Jesus as a spirit, possessing an immaterial body, reign on David’s throne? This is an absurdity. God made a covenant with David that He would establish his throne forever with His physical seed David (II Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4, 20-37; 132:11; Jeremiah 33:22, 25-26). In Acts 2:30-32 Peter declared that Jesus was the king that is to reign on David's throne, referencing God’s promise to David that his seed (lineage) would sit upon the throne to rule (II Timothy 2:8). By stating that it was David’s "seed" (a man like David) who was to rule demands that Jesus have a physical or human existence since David was human. Jesus' body had to be bodily resurrected so that He could physically sit on David's throne and rule with a rod of iron, as the Scripture foretold, and as the Lord promised to David.

An agnostic professor once said to a little girl who believed in the Lord Jesus, "There have been many who have claimed to be Christ. How can you be sure who told the truth? Which one do you believe?" Without hesitation the youngster replied, "I believe in the One who rose from the dead!" The same is true for each one of us today who have embraced the claims of Jesus Christ. We believe in the only One who has been raised from the dead! Have you embraced the claims of Christ and allowed the living Lord Jesus Christ to save you from hell and give you eternal life? This is the most important question on this Easter day.

#### **IV. Proclaiming the necessity of a literal resurrection**

What difference does it make whether Jesus rose in a material body or an immaterial one? Some suggest that if one believes that Christ conquered death, this should be enough. Actually, Jesus cannot conquer death if He did not rise physically and the significance of the physical or bodily resurrection of Christ is far-reaching. The view that denies the literal, physical resurrection of Christ has some serious theological problems and repercussions.

Why is the literal or bodily resurrection of Christ important?

There are four reasons for a literal resurrection.

### 1. It maintains Christ's integrity.

John 2:19-21

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.

Of course, Jesus was not speaking of some kind of immaterial or spiritual body but His own physical body, since the spirit cannot die and be raised again. Only the body can die and be physically raised to once again live as it previously did. Jesus was speaking of His physical body. Here is the point; if Jesus did not physically come forth from the grave, as He taught, then He would be seen as a liar and phony. Jesus prophesied that He would be raised from the dead with a body, the same kind of a physical body that He lived in and possessed while on earth. If you disbelieve in Christ's bodily or physical resurrection, you make Jesus a liar! This is a serious matter.

### 2. It maintains Christ's deity.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in history providing irrefutable evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be – the Son of God.

Romans 1:3-4

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God (sharing God's existence in the Trinity) with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

The physical and bodily resurrection from death (physical death) was the supreme validation of Christ's deity. Jesus was made the “seed” (physical offspring) of David “according to the flesh” (this speaks of Christ's body and humanity). In the same stroke of the pen Paul then says that the resurrection of David's heir (Jesus Christ) is declared or validated to be God's Son (“Son of God”) based upon his “resurrection from the dead” (a bodily, physical



resurrection). The passage of Scripture clearly reveals that Jesus proved He was the “Son of God” (that He shared God’s existence – John 5:18; Phil. 2:6) because He rose from the dead as David’s physical seed which will one day rule the world in a physical body.

Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. By His own physical resurrection from the dead He gives unmistakable evidence that He is Lord over all – He is God of very God.

Romans 14:9

“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

He is Lord! How do I know? It’s because Jesus has risen from the dead just as He said! Jesus is not the liar, you are a liar, if you deny the physical and bodily resurrection of Christ.

The most important thing to ask a person is what they believe and teach about Jesus Christ? Was He fully God and fully human? He needed to be both human and divine to pay the price for redemption. A person must accept Jesus’ identity and claims to be true and of God. To reject Christ’s deity or humanity in His earthly ministry of resurrection is the result of a lying spirit (1 John 4:2-3). Both the full humanity and full deity of Jesus must be equally maintained by the teacher who is to be considered genuinely of the Spirit.

The denial that Christ came in human flesh is called docetism (the word comes from a Greek word *dokeo*, meaning “to seem”). Docetism was a Gnostic heresy of both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ. This heresy taught that Jesus Christ was NOT God in the flesh (denying the incarnation of Christ), nor did He possess a true human body and nature (denying His true humanity). Docetism concluded that Jesus only seemed to be a human being. Jesus only seemed to be human and that his human form was an illusion. During His earthly life His body was not really human.

Docetism denied Christ’s true deity and humanity claiming that Jesus was Joseph’s biological son and that the divine “Christ” only descended on Jesus at His baptism and then left Him when He died on the cross, making the incarnation a lie. The essence of this heresy seems to have influenced Muhammad and lives on in some Islamic doctrines concerning Jesus.

Today there are those who deny that Jesus rose in genuine human flesh, possessing a physical body and this becomes is a type or neodocetism. Both false teachings diminish the full humanity of Christ, one *before* and the other *after* His resurrection. They also reject His deity *before* and *after* His resurrection. This doctrinal deviation existed in the first century. John addressed it when he warned against those who deny that Jesus Christ has come and remains in the flesh.

Apparently, false teachers in the early church were denying that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. A test was specifically set up for this situation: Does the teacher accept Jesus' full humanity and full deity in both His earthly ministry and heavenly ministry as the resurrected Lord. If not, his entire teaching is to be rejected.

1 John 4:2-3 gives this theological declaration:

**Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ** (literally – “confesseth Jesus Christ” = Jesus is Christ or the Messiah of Old Testament revelation which means He is God) **is come** (has come or having come to dwell and remain in the flesh during His earthly ministry and after His resurrection) **in the flesh** (meaning that Jesus possessed a body and was both human and the divine Christ, He was God incarnate - this is deity meeting humanity!) **is of God:** (that person is not following a lying demonic spirit but the Holy Spirit)

**“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come** (has come to dwell and remain) **in the flesh** (possessing a body, meaning that Jesus was the Christ and therefore God in human flesh, forever human and forever God) **is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist** (they are in opposition or against the claims and person of Jesus Christ), **whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”**

The use of the perfect participle (“has come”) speaks of ongoing reality and implies that Jesus came in the flesh in the past and He remained in the flesh when John penned these words after the resurrection. Jesus Christ did not change His physical body and humanity. He remained the God-man in a physical body in both His earthly life and resurrection life. God became flesh (John 1:1, 14) when He entered the world and He remained flesh (bodily) when He rose again and left the world in His ascension and heavenly work (Heb. 1:3; 8:1) to be our Great High Priest and secure our salvation before God in Heaven (Rom. 4:25; Heb. 7:25). You see, God had to become flesh

to save humanity and He had to remain in His humanity in His resurrection and ascension to Heaven in order to bring man (humanity) into a right relationship with God. Jesus had to remain God and man through the entire Gospel plan (in death and resurrection) to bring man to God.

2 John 1:7 repeats the same theological formula:

**“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ** (literally, “confesseth not Jesus Christ” – that Jesus is the Messiah and therefore is God) **come** (has come and remains) **in the flesh** (meaning that Jesus possessed a body and was both human and the divine Christ, He was God incarnate). **This is a deceiver and an antichrist.**”

In this parallel passage John once again used the present tense, warning against those refuse to acknowledge that Jesus Christ as God came in human flesh (that He possessed a body and was fully human) both during His earthly life and post-resurrection. This makes it very clear that John considered it wrong to deny the flesh of Christ either *before* or *after* His resurrection. To deny that Christ was resurrected in human flesh is to deprive Him of full humanity and this becomes a serious theological error that effects Christ’s person and saving work for mankind.

Rejecting the humanity of Jesus Christ in His physical and bodily resurrection is a Christological error of the worst sort that effects both the person and saving work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ had to be both God (divine) and man (human – possessing a body) to pay redemption’s payment. Furthermore, to remain human He had to maintain His physical body and enter into Heaven our Great High Priest, so we might be “saved by his life” – His resurrection life in Heaven (Rom. 5:10). The bodily and physical resurrection is the only way Jesus can be our High Priest and carry out His saving plan on our behalf (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus not only had to be God in the flesh (humanity) during His earthly ministry but God in the flesh (humanity) when He rose again to represent saved mankind in Heaven. If Jesus lost His humanity in the resurrection, by failing to possess a physical body, then God’s redemptive plan for mankind is worthless. Jesus needed to remain the God-man in His death and resurrection in order to save and secure us forever (“For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” - 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus had to maintain His status as a man (the God-man). This is why the Bible teaches the physical resurrection of Christ. Christ’s bodily

resurrection assures us that our redemption and salvation has been confirmed, validated, and sealed for mankind. God became man to reach mankind and He can only be reached if God remains man. God chose to save humanity through the God-man; therefore, to eliminate Christ's humanity in the resurrection is to destroy our salvation (1 Cor. 15:17).

### 3. It maintains the foundation of the Gospel message.

The Gospel message is built upon the foundation of a bodily or physical resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ (the Messiah - revealed to be God in the flesh) died for our sins (in a physical sense) according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again (in the same sense He died – He rose physically) the third day according to the scriptures.”

What is the Gospel? It is the message that Jesus died with a physical body on the cross, was buried in a physical body, and that He rose again with a physical body after His death. There is no other Gospel but this Gospel. To deny the bodily resurrection of Christ is to destroy the message of the Gospel. The only way Jesus Christ would be raised from the dead was through a physical, bodily resurrection. Anything less than this is heresy!

1 Peter 2:24

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

Jesus died in a body and He was raised in the same kind of body, a physical and literal body to authenticate His claims and confirm that sin's payment was fully paid. Jesus took on the form of a physical body to pay redemption's price and He needed to rise again with the same type of body to secure our salvation and redemption. The Scriptures are very clear on this. You destroy the foundation of the Gospel if the physical resurrection of Christ is not taught. The bodily, literal, or physical resurrection of Christ is verified by many post-resurrection appearances (1 Cor. 15:5-9). Hundreds of people saw Christ alive, bodily and physically, to fulfill the Gospel claims.

## 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

You will notice that:

- a. The Gospel saves us – “by which always ye are saved”
- b. The Gospel secures us – “wherein ye stand” (in the saving merits of Jesus Christ)
- c. The Gospel separates us – “if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain”

When we reject the basic tenants or teachings of the Gospel, which includes a bodily and physical resurrection of Christ out from among the dead, it proves that we are not saved and one of Christ’s children and followers. Believing the Gospel is the clarifying mark of true conversion. It separates us from those who are not believers. The physical resurrection of Christ from the grave is the foundation of the Gospel message and when we don’t believe it, it proves that we are not one of His children.

The Gospel is a complete hoax if there is not a bodily and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul reveals in this chapter. If Christ was not raised bodily and physically from the grave to substantiate Who He was and what He did for mankind, then the whole foundation of Christianity crumbles.

1. Our preaching is worthless – vs. 14 (“our preaching vain”)
2. Our faith is empty – vs. 14, 17 (“your faith is also vain”)
3. Our testimony is destroyed – vs. 15 (“we are found false witnesses of God”)
4. Our salvation is not genuine – 17b (“yet in your sins”)
5. Our Christian friends are in hell – 18 (“they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished”)
6. Our hope is all gone – 19

A dead Christ who has not been physically and bodily raised from the grave cannot save anyone. It destroys our faith, testimony, and we lose all hope of

Heaven and eternal life. Our hope is in the physical and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament teaches that belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ is essential for salvation.

Romans 10:9

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (Jesus as Lord – Jesus is God incarnate), and shalt believe in thine heart that God (God the Father) hath raised him (God the Son) from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

There is no getting past Jesus’ bodily resurrection. If you are going to Heaven it’s because you believe that He is alive today in a physical body and has defeated sin, death, the devil, and has given to us eternal life and acceptance before God in Heaven.

Romans 4:25

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

The physical and bodily resurrection of Christ is the *security* of our justification before God. If Jesus was not raised from the dead physically and bodily (in His humanity) as He said, then we have no assurance that God has accepted the payment for our sins (Heb. 1:3). The bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead is our *receipt* that God has accepted the Son’s payment for our sins and we are now declared righteous in His presence. Only a physical resurrection of God’s Son from the dead was acceptable to the Father. Jesus had to rise from the dead in a physical way, as the God-man to conform and validate our justification.

Think of it this way. Physical blood had to be shed (1 Pet. 1:18-19) as part of Christ’s physical humanity but also a physical body had to be raised from the dead (Rom. 5:10) to complete redemption’s plan. God is immensely concerned with Christ’s blood (the literal sacrifice of Christ) and Christ’s body (the literal resurrection of Christ). Both were vitally important in God’s plan of redemption and salvation for mankind (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). Only the God-man can save our souls. Jesus had to maintain His body and humanity to be our resurrected Savior and priestly representative in Heaven.

Jesus had to maintain both His deity and humanity to pay for sin's redemption. A risen spirit or materialized Jesus could never represent mankind in Heaven. Only a bodily or physical resurrected Christ ("the man Christ Jesus" - 1 Tim. 2:5) can represent mankind in Heaven before a righteous God. God looks upon the shedding of Christ's physical blood and physical flesh (His humanity) as playing a key role in our salvation, redemption, and justification before God. To deny Christ's bodily resurrection is to deny His humanity and destroy the very fabric and foundation of the Gospel.

Romans 8:34

"Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again (physically from the realm of death), who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Hebrews 7:25

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth (possessing a physical and eternal body) to make intercession for them."

Christ could not intercede for His blood-bought children if He did not maintain a truly human status, by possessing a physical, and literal body in Heaven. Christ had to maintain His status as a man (the God-man) forever, to pay redemption's price and maintain the saint's salvation in Heaven, as their Great High Priest.

Hebrews 9:12

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by (means of) his own blood (His human and physical sacrifice on the cross) he (in the same manner – a man with a physical body) entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."

In simple terms; *Jesus could not be our High Priest, representing man before God, if He ceased from being man in His resurrection.* Christ's physical body in both His death and resurrection was part of His manhood and it was necessary for mankind's redemption. 1 Timothy 2:5, "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man (speaking of Christ's humanness in Heaven) Christ Jesus." Christ had to possess His physical manhood in both death and resurrection to be man's Redeemer.



#### 4. It maintains the future hope of our bodily resurrection.

John 14:19

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.”

1 Corinthians 15:22-23

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”

Jesus Christ arose physically from the dead in order to give us the promise of a physical resurrection someday, just like His. We will be like Jesus someday not only morally but when possessing a physical, resurrection body like Christ's.

1 John 3:2

“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.”

How can physical death be conquered unless Jesus passed through it completely and overcame it by possessing a literal, physical, and bodily resurrection from the dead? In short, Jesus Christ could not conquer death if He was only raised in an immaterial body. Only Christ's physical and bodily resurrection gives us the promise and hope of our own physical and bodily resurrection someday.

It is the lily, above all other flowers, which we associate with Easter. One particular lily, the lotus lily, seems to have a built-in immortality. Seeds from this lily that have lain dormant for a thousand years have been known to germinate and grow.

In *200 Meditations on Hope* Wayne A. Lamb writes:

In the midst of a storm, a little bird was clinging to the limb of a tree, seemingly calm and unafraid. As the wind tore at the limbs of the tree, the bird continued to look the storm in the face, as if to say, "Shake me off; I still have wings."

Because of Christ's resurrection, each Christian can look the experience of death in the face and confidently say, "Shake me off; I still have wings. I'll live anyway." I'll not only live in Heaven forever with Jesus Christ but one day be raised with an eternal body that will enjoy eternity.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 speaks of Christ and the Gospel:

**"Who hath saved us** (from the penalty of sin), **and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now** (during the Gospel age when Jesus came to die and rise from the dead) **made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death** (both spiritual and physical death through the Gospel), **and hath brought life** (the promise of spiritual life) **and immortality** (endless physical life) **to light** (the new revelation in the Gospel age) **through the gospel"** (that physically Christ died, was physically buried, and rose again physically from the dead)

Through the Gospel, which includes the foundation of Christ's bodily resurrection, God has given us assurance of eternal life, resurrection, and the hope of Heaven.

#### a. Death is defeated

Only through a physical and bodily resurrection has Christ defeated the realm of death and given us the promise of everlasting spiritual and physical life beyond the grave (Rev. 1:18). By His own PHYSICAL death and PHYSICAL resurrection, Christ has "abolished death" (made it inoperative, taken out the sting). For believers, death is no longer a threat, no longer an enemy, no longer the end. It's the doorway or entrance into God's future blessings for us. This is because Jesus defeated death and rose from the dead! Jesus died bearing sin's penalty (Gal. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:3) and rose again giving us the promise of both everlasting and physical life (John 6:47; 1 Thess. 4:14-18).

In a very practical way, today we can sing: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). As believers, we must no longer must fear death for it takes us into God's presence in Heaven when we die and gives us the hope of a new body someday that will live forever with God.

#### b. Life and light are promised

## 1. Life is promised from a spiritual and physical perspective.

“Life” (2 Tim. 1:10) is likely referring to our spiritual and eternal life through Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:23) while “immortality” (2 Tim. 1:10) means “incorruptibility” and refers to the resurrection body. The Bible always identifies our present body as being corruptible; it dies and decays. However, the glorified body we shall have when we see Christ will not be subject to decay or death (1 Cor. 15:49–58; Phil. 3:21). In fact, the entire heavenly inheritance that we share will be “incorruptible and undefiled, and [one] that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4).

## 2. Light is promised from our new perspective.

This means that when Jesus finally came into the world, died on the cross, and rose again, humanity could clearly see God’s plan of the ages. The lights came on! The curtain came up. Everything finally came out into the open and made sense. Christ’s death and resurrection was in some way veiled throughout the Old Testament. It was taught in prophecy and types in the Old Testament. It gave the saints a somewhat obscure or shadowy picture of Christ’s death and resurrection. However, the New Testament breaks through the shadows of the Old and reveals clearly that Jesus Christ was the promised seed, who died and rose again, who now has brought eternal life and the promise of a glorious resurrection to all His children.

Friend, if you turn your back on the light of the Gospel, you will only cast another shadow and make the scene darker! Our light and hope is in the Gospel which proclaims that Jesus Christ died in a physical body for our sins and rose again in a physical body to give us the promise of spiritual and eternal life in His presence, but also the promise of a new physical body that will someday experience glory

The most famous clock in the world is London's Big Ben. It stands by the Houses of Parliament and towers above Westminster Abbey. It is a familiar landmark. The chimes play the tune of a hymn. The hymn is "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth." This makes all the difference for every true believer in Christ. Jesus is alive physically, representing His saints in Heaven. All the promises and hopes of the ages rest upon Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead. Without this we have no future or hope.

“Up from the grave He arose  
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes:  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.  
He arose, He arose,  
Hallelujah Christ arose!”

