

## JESUS RISING IN BODILY FORM? THE BIZARRE SIDE OF TRYING TO UNDERSTAND JESUS' RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus turns into a hyped up ghost story if Jesus did not rise from the dead physically. So Christians have sought to undermine the truth that the Bible does not teach that Jesus rose as man. It teaches he appeared as man but it is more complicated than that.

You would wonder why the Christians of Corinth were asking if the dead rise and what kind of bodies they have if the original resurrection of Jesus story was anything like the gospels where he appears in a humanoid form. They were asking this near the time of the alleged event which adds to the confusion.

Paul, the first Christian writer, gives us the nearest we get to an account from a witness. But he know nothing of what he saw and the book of Acts implies he just saw a light in which Jesus spoke to him and that gave him belief in the resurrection.

We cannot rely on anybody's hearsay that Jesus was really seen as a man and not as a light or ghost or something. And that is all we have from the Bible and tradition.

Origen held that the resurrection body is a sphere and is shape-shifting and is glorious like the body of the angel. It is a body that in a sense has nothing like human flesh. For him, the angels in the tomb were no different from the risen Jesus. Clement of Alexandria said that Jesus appeared in a phantasmal shape and his body has no feeling so it is very different from a human body. Read his Miscellanies 6.

The Greeks saw the body as an island that interacts with other islands. It is John and not Pete. Paul would have accepted the traditional Hebrew view that a body is not like this but is a communion with other people. In other words, you are your family (page 89, The First Easter). This is silly I know but that is how they thought and Buddhists often think in the same way (page 97, The First Easter). Paul's doctrine of the Church members being one body and part of the body of Christ proves he thought like them for the community being the body of Jesus Christ is not a metaphor but a fact according to the theology of Paul (page 66, The First Easter). In 2 Corinthians 4:10 we are told that we carry the death of Jesus in our bodies so that the life of Jesus may be seen. This text tells the Church to show the resurrection by being the resurrected Saviour. Paul said that the body is a member of Jesus Christ a part of his body so that was why it would be so terrible for a Christian to have sex with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:14-20). He did mean all this literally. Romans 12:5 says we are parts of Jesus' body so we belong to one another. If Paul just meant that we are one family then why did he say body? The unity in a body is stronger than unity even in a family. Paul was too serious to exaggerate by saying body when he should have said family. It is not surprising that he is taken to be saying that the Church is the resurrection body of Jesus and that Jesus would cease to exist anymore without it (page 69, The First Easter). I would correct this to say that it would mean Jesus lost his body and would cease to be a resurrected person. He might be a spirit. If the Church is the risen Jesus then it follows that there was no need for visions or a missing tomb at all. All that was necessary was a sense of communication with the Holy Spirit that Jesus was alive and physically the Church. When Jesus appeared it would then not have been as a vision but in a way that can only be described as a vision for it was the mystical experience that the Church was the risen Jesus through which he speaks and works and lives. Intellectually and spiritually it was a vision though there might never have been physical appearances of Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-6 Paul writes that when we give up our earthly tent we will get a habitation in the Heavens not made by human hands. Some say that this means that our home on earth built by human hands will be given up for a better one in Heaven not built by human hands. But Paul is speaking of the body which is the tent for the real person. By saying it's made by human hands he is metaphorically referring to the human work of sex that produces our body. The new body will not have a bodily origin and human hands can't make it for it is not physical. It is a different body. In Hebrews 9:11, 12 the greater tabernacle Jesus went into is apparently his resurrection body. That tent in 2 Corinthians is a metaphor for body is proven from the context which in verse 6 says that when we are in the body we are away from the Lord. Also Paul said that salvation was indescribable and different from earth so he wouldn't encourage the idea of houses to live in in Heaven. It is perishable bodies that need houses and he says what is saved is imperishable. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 5 that we yearn for the heavenly dwelling to cover us up so that what is mortal may be absorbed by life. He means the heavenly dwelling makes you immortal for it is an immortal body for us to live in. He uses the metaphor as well that to get this dwelling we must not be naked but clothed. He means clothed by the power of Christ. This tells us that the passage is metaphor for you can't mix metaphor with what is not metaphor if you want to make sense. To speak of us losing our tent below and getting a house in Heaven would not be metaphor. It would be metaphor if the tent was the body we live in on earth and the house was the new body. He says we get this house when our tent is destroyed. That proves it is not literal tents for God will save you when you die if you are qualified regardless of whether your tent exists or not. The tent that is destroyed is the body.

Paul does seem to be saying that you rise again when you die but invisibly and by your consciousness being switched at the moment of death from your body to your new body. Or perhaps the new body is prepared at death but not inhabited until the second coming?

The fundamentalist tome, *When Critics Ask* argues on page 467 that Paul uses the word spiritual to talk about a spiritual rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) from which Israel got spiritual drink. The Old Testament speaks of a literal rock that water came out of to nourish the people. The manna from Heaven that Israel ate was called spiritual food (1 Corinthians 10:3). Paul spoke of living men as spiritual men (1 Corinthians 2:15). So the book concludes that when Paul called material things spiritual he could have meant that Jesus was material when he said Jesus had a material body. Paul said too that Israel was baptised into Moses by walking through the waters of the Red Sea that had been parted and the cloud (1 Corinthians 10:2). This shows that Paul intended to talk metaphorically. The manna symbolised spiritual food, the water and the rock symbolised spiritual drink and the walking through the cloud and sea symbolised baptism into Moses for it was not a baptism at all. Israel went through the sea dry. So Paul was using material things to picture spiritual things. What he wrote then cannot have anything to do with proving that the spiritual body was material. He speaks of living men being spiritual men. But he is using the word spiritual here to describe what these men are like not what they are. He uses spiritual body to refer to what Jesus's body is. Its a different situation. Nothing refutes the notion that Paul was describing an immaterial "body" when he said Jesus had a spiritual body. With the tendency in Corinth and other places to believe that Jesus was just an apparition who did not rise from the dead for he never died, Paul would not have used the expression unless he really did believe Jesus was an immaterial being after he rose. He would not wish to encourage such people. Docetism, the heresy that Jesus was a vision that only looked like a man but was not a man threatened to destroy the Church in the first century.

In 1 Corinthians 15:28-29, Paul says that God will save us and will be all in all to us. Then he stated revealingly that if the dead are not raised for this to happen then why are people baptised for the dead? But the fact is that you can be baptised on behalf of the dead even if there is no resurrection for there are other ways to survive and be happy beyond the grave. Paul knew this from the Greeks so he must have meant survival by resurrection or resurrection was his word for survival in a good state after death. If you come back as a ghost or your body comes back to life that is resurrection.