

The Apostle Paul denies Jesus rose as a man

The apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:50, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them." He is not referring to death for if we die food will still be around. He is referring to what happens in the resurrection. He writes about resurrection in that chapter. If there will be no food in Heaven and when we are resurrected and we don't even have a stomach then clearly the earliest Church did not believe that the resurrection of Jesus was the resuscitation of a dead man's body but the person of Jesus returning in a magical new body. Ghost was the best way to describe the risen Jesus. Paul denies that the historical Jesus promised to drink wine with his disciples in his kingdom, shortly before he died and rose. The gospels of course choose to differ. They contradict Paul. The Church argues that the risen body will have the stomach done away with as necessary but it can have a stomach and food if it wants. This is just trying to get around what Paul wrote. It contradicts the plain sense of his words. If there will be no stomachs or food in Heaven then there would hardly be any sex either. If there is sex and we recall that Jesus said there is no marrying in Heaven is Heaven really a big orgy where anything goes? Who in their right mind would want this sterile Heaven? Christianity urges people to suffer on earth for the sake of gaining a Heaven that is simply an improvement over Hell but not much of a reward.

N.T. Wright wrote: "There is that about the body which will be destroyed; in the non-corruptible future world, food and the stomach are presumably irrelevant. So, for that matter (since food and stomach point metaphorically here to sexual behaviour and sexual organs) will human reproduction be irrelevant. Paul is again treading a fine line here, since he wants to say simultaneously both that the creator will destroy the bits of the body which are being touted by some in Corinth as those to do what they like with and that there is bodily continuity between the present person, behaving this way and that, and the person who will be raised to new bodily life."

I would say that a body that is not about sex and eating is not a body at all - at best it is a shadow.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6 that the body is not meant for fornication but the Lord and the Lord is for the body. He adds a bit to prove this that God will raise us up as he did Jesus. This does say the body is to be used for God and it says we need a body. But even if you suppose your body dies and rots and God raises you up by making a magical body for you you could still talk the way Paul does. What he says has nothing to do with the idea that the body dies and is revived. The Lord is for the body. That is what he says. What an odd thing to say! The Lord he means is Jesus. He can't mean that God is for the body for God is for himself and there was a time he was making no bodies. He indicates that Jesus is Lord but is not God. Jesus was given to us for the body by God. Paul says the Church has the spirit of Jesus therefore it is his body. The Lord is for the body means that the Lord Jesus turns the Church into himself - literally. If Jesus can achieve something so absurd then Paul would agree that the resurrection of Jesus could be mystical and beyond understanding too and can only be known of in mystical experience.

Read 1 Corinthians 15. The idea that the resurrection of Jesus implies that the body was not stolen when the tomb was found empty but totally restored to life is wrong. The Bible does not state that the body of Jesus was never stolen. And if Jesus had been stolen that wouldn't stop him rising again from the dead in his human body. The Bible says that that the old body was used to provide the SEED for the resurrection body.

That the resurrection of Christ was not physical was made plain in the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15, a part of the Christian scripture. Paul was writing to those Christians in Corinth who had stopped believing that a person could come back from the dead including Jesus. He said that they were wrong because if Jesus hasn't come back from the dead and been raised then the dead are lost. Paul thought that Jesus needed to rise from the dead to save everybody else from being lost and non-existent after death. When the resurrection was equated to survival in Paul's thinking then for them to do this would appear to mean that they didn't believe in a life after death at all. Both they and Paul thought that if survival happened it was necessary for there to be a resurrection.

So Paul thinks that the resurrection is essential for survival. Now a physical resurrection is not essential for survival after death for you could come back as a bodiless spirit or something. If Paul says it is he seems to think that there is no spirit that lives on after death and you need a resurrection of some sort. This is proven by verse 32 where he says that if there is no resurrection you may eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow you die. So the resurrection is the only hope for life after death. He must be thinking of spiritual resurrection for physical isn't necessary and has nothing to do with his argument. Incidentally, he would reject Catholic devotion to the saints as heresy for the saints are not raised yet.

Paul then says that there will be those who ask what kind of body the resurrected dead would have and he calls them fools (v 36). In answer, Paul said that the seed has to die – bad science – meaning cease to exist and having rotted away for the

plant to come. Christians say Paul meant that it only looks as if the seed dies. Then why did he not say so? We should take him literally for he could have meant it literally.

You don't know a seed is dead until it rots. He says that the seed is not the body that will come after it but only a kernel of it (15:37). It is possible that Paul is thinking that the plant only seems to come from the seed. What happens is the seed dies and by some miracle a plant grows in its place so the only connection between the seed and the plant is that the plant just grows where the seed was but was not caused by the seed. This view would imply that Paul believed in the resurrection of persons and not of bodies. It would imply that the new body of Jesus had nothing at all to do with the body that died on the cross. The new body is only a body in the sense that Jesus can materialise it into a temporary body. Strictly speaking it is a spirit. It is only called a body because it houses the person.

It is possible as well that the seed for Jesus' resurrection body if a seed was used could have come not from his corpse but from the dead cells and body matter that Jesus lost when he was alive. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that it mattered about his corpse that was put in the tomb.

The seed is totally different from what grows out of it.

He was making it clear to those who found it impossible to believe that corpses can come back to life that they were right about that. His answer was that the new body is totally different from the corpse which provides its seed. Thus he eliminated the later gospel lies about Jesus raising Lazarus and the widow's son and Jesus' empty tomb and the story of the apostles raising the dead as fairytales - but added that the resurrection is the creation of a complete new and different thing. Why else would he say that the body we have cannot rise again as it is but needs to rot and become the material for a new body which may mean fully or partly rot or both? (Still Standing on Sinking Sand, Farrell Till). It is possible that Paul believed that the body of Jesus decayed a bit before he rose again and the more he rotted the more substantial his new resurrection body became as matter was transformed and spiritualised. Paul says that Jesus rose three days after his burial. Some would say that Jesus was incinerated after the crucifixion. This would refute the gospels. Others would say he miraculously rotted to nothing in three days. This would refute the authenticity of the Turin Shroud.

Paul also said that you have the glory of the sun and the stars and the glory of the earth which are totally different and the same difference exists between the nailed corpse of Jesus and his new risen self. If Paul was not saying that the difference between the human body and the risen body is radical his contrasting the seed and the plant and the things of earth and the sky for the purpose of showing the analogy that the corpse was wholly unlike the risen body would collapse and be unintelligible. God could raise you by using one cell from your corpse while it remains intact in the tomb.

In 1 Corinthians 15, it is remarkable how Paul hints that he sees Jesus' resurrection body as a star. Remember in those times that if a Roman Emperor died he was thought to rise again and become a star in Heaven. The Old Testament book of Daniel states that the wise who rise from the dead at the end of time will be like stars forever and ever. Was Jesus just a light?

The fundamentalist tome, *When Critics Ask*, deals with the problem of how Paul can say Jesus had a spiritual body after the resurrection if other Bible texts say his body was spiritual (page 466). The solution it gives is that the spiritual body means a body that is ruled by the spirit inhabiting the body and so which has spiritual powers. It says it does not mean an immaterial body. Like spirit, this body is immortal and imperishable. But despite this, spiritual body could mean an immaterial body or one that was nearly immaterial. If the spirit has all that power over the body then it could make it immaterial. Christians who believe that Jesus could pass through walls and vanish in one place and appear in another are saying the spirit can diminish the materiality so that this can happen. If the spirit of Jesus can make the body immaterial and then material again then it follows that it is annihilating and creating matter to do this. So if Jesus created a body when he appeared to Thomas and asked him to put his hand in his side, it follows that Thomas had very right to disbelieve. It was not Jesus' body he was touching but a replacement one. If a body turns into spirit and into a body again then the result is a new body. So Jesus lied to Thomas when he asked Thomas to put his hand in the side of the body that died on the cross. Also the body is not immortal at all and is not imperishable. The body dies and perishes when it is annihilated. It is not supernatural or powerful for it is the spirit that is powerful and supernatural for it can manipulate it as it pleases. People think of souls and spirits as ghosts or kinds of bodies. Paul was using that imagery when he said Jesus had a spiritual body. In reality, Jesus was a spirit not a combination of spirit and body. The thinking in *When Critics Ask* is just Christian gobbledegook based on making the New Testament contradictions fit together. The apostles didn't need to do that so Paul would have believed that Jesus couldn't be physical after his resurrection. In fact, his stating that the spiritual body was imperishable would indicate that his own visions of Jesus and those of others did not involve Jesus walking through walls and floating up above the clouds if he also believed that body was material. This would refute the resurrection accounts as we have them in the gospels. Paul wrote before them and is the only eyewitness whose writings we are sure we have.

People being baptised for the dead does not imply that they expect a bodily resurrection but it does imply they expect survival. Paul says that if people are baptised for the dead then the dead must rise. So Paul is saying they should believe in

the implications of what they practice. Had Paul meant a physical bodily resurrection he would have said so. And especially when he used the concept of life after death and the concept of resurrection interchangeably.

He would have used the word resurrection for bodily resurrection had he believed in it. It is a mistake to say that Paul is on about pagan baptisms for the dead here for he would not be silly enough to argue that the resurrection must be true when pagans believe in it though he is saying that it is true because Christians believe in it. The baptisers were Christians, heretics maybe, but Christians. So the original sense in which Paul and the apostles used the word resurrection did not necessarily imply coming back from the dead in your physical body. So Jesus could have been a vision. Paul's Jesus must have been an intangible vision because he meant survival by resurrection whereas if he had meant bodily resurrection he would have used the word resurrection for that alone.

Paul also uses the word *ophthe* which is a passive form of the verb for "to see" in relation to the appearances of Jesus being seen. It does not necessarily mean that Jesus was being physically seen for the word was used to refer to imagined visions and visions of immaterial beings such as angels etc (page 90, *The Virginal Conception and the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*). So if you get a very strong mystical impression that makes you think you almost see something that would be covered by *ophthe*. The dative construction used with *ophthe* indicates that rather than translating anywhere that Jesus was seen we should translate Jesus appeared.

When a man from Macedonia who was just a vision appeared to Paul (Acts 16:9) and when the three apostles saw the non-resurrected Moses and Elijah appear at the transfiguration of Jesus the word *ophthe*, appeared, was used which was the same word used to describe the appearances of Jesus following the resurrection. The use of *ophthe* indicates that Jesus may not have appeared physically but may have appeared just as a vision.

There is nothing to indicate that the body of Jesus seen after the resurrection was seen physically or that it was a physical body.

Paul stated in Romans 8:3 that God sent his Son Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh. This verse has been used by many theologians and heretics such as Marcion to argue that Jesus Christ was a phantom and not a real man for flesh was bad. The Christians say he only means that Jesus was like us sinners in all things but not sin. That is a strained interpretation. Paul clearly meant that Jesus did not have a body like ours for the body as we have it is bad.

1 Corinthians 15 says that the resurrection body is a spiritual body for which the physical body is only the seed. To be called that it is mainly like spirit so there is little matter in it or it might be something that the body or part of it is transmuted into. It says that Jesus has a body like this and even says he is spirit now. It might be possible to make this body seem more natural by materialising which Jesus may have done in Luke 24:49. There Jesus goes out of his way to encourage all there to handle him to make sure he is physical. It is not said who said he said this or how many. It is not said if they did it. The silence implies they did not. There is too much information lacking.

He said that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Heaven (15:50) any more than the perishable can inherit the imperishable. The perishable body cannot fit in, in Heaven for in Heaven nothing perishes. But the Old Testament speaks of men being thrown into a fire and not being burnt. Surely the perishable can inherit the imperishable if it is insulated against suffering and is preserved from death and if the mind is filled with God. This shows that God does not want flesh and blood in Heaven. He does not like it. The Christians saying that Paul means sinful flesh and blood is ridiculous for blood doesn't sin and it is persons not bodies that sin. The idea that it is flesh and blood under their current perishable condition doesn't hold water either. Flesh and blood are barred from Heaven. Jesus' resurrection was spiritual.

An orthodox Catholic book says that Paul "clearly rejects the idea that it is a physical body that is risen. But what does this mean? In its glorious state, the resurrected body would be transformed in such a way that, unlike a physical body, it would not longer be bound by the limitations of space and time. In its transformed state, then, it would not have extension, and so the body would not be in itself tangible" (page 66, *The Jesus Event*). "It would be correct to assert the resurrection of the body in Jesus' case, even if the tomb were not empty, for by the resurrection of the body, Paul means the identity of the risen Christ with the historical Christ - the same person in both cases" (page 68, *The Jesus Event*). Body or *soma* to Paul means the whole person (same page and page 74). It was his word for person. Paul knew that the body replaces itself when alive so the whole person can be restored without reviving a dead body. The person of Jesus died on the cross so the body which was not Jesus anymore for it was not a person. Jesus rising from the dead means the return of the person Jesus but not necessarily using the dead body to do it. Pages 67-68 state that Jesus could have risen without the body being raised and that this is acceptable to Bible believers. Pages 86-89 of *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* say that Jesus had a body but not one as we know it. It says that it is best to deny that the resurrection body is physical and that Paul implies it is no longer flesh and blood (page 128).

Fundamentalist tripe, *He Walked Among Us*, argues that Paul uses the word *soma* which means physical body for body as we know it so he viewed the resurrection as the return of the whole body to life (page 280). This is nonsense for he says

that it is a spiritual physical body and if a body was barely physical it would still be physical but not a body as we would know it. He said that the man who wondered how the dead could be raised and what kind of body they could have was a fool for the seed dies and then becomes completely changed. He then drew our attention to there being different kinds of flesh hinting that the new body is different from the old. He said that the new body is incorrupt and is spiritual. We could have the same kind of flesh we have now and be incorruptible but we cannot have the same if it becomes spiritual. The difference then is like the difference between the seed and the tree it becomes, completely different.

The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus (page 84) claims that when Paul said that we have to be buried in baptism and rise to a new life like Christ that it proves that he believed that the body had gone from the tomb. But this baptism is only a rough picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus. For instance, the living person is buried in water and rises up out of it. But with Jesus a dead person was buried and a living one rose. Baptism would fit a Jesus who went into a grave and had the clay all around him and touching his body and then rose again far better than a Jesus who was put into a cave. What Paul wrote fits the idea of Jesus been laid in a real grave and not a tomb.

The book also says that the references to Jesus being the firstborn from the dead say the body was entirely raised (Romans 8:29;1 Corinthians 15:23). However, these verses do make a link with the body but do not say it need all be revived. And to say that Paul meant that the whole body was resurrected and that Jesus was the first is to say that the resurrections of the dead reported prior to his in the Bible were fakes.

Paul said in Romans 8 that if the spirit of God who raised Jesus is in us he who raised Jesus will also raise our mortal bodies. Paul said just before that that we are dead when we are baptised so he means that God will raise our mortal bodies from spiritual death to spiritual life. He is not on about a real resurrection here.

Paul dealt with what happens to the bodies of the living when instead of dying they just convert into the same kind of being as a resurrected one. "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." Why is it a mystery how a body changes when it is not dead compared to it changing when it is rotting? You would be forgiven to think that the mystery is how instant this is - it seems that being dead and rising is not instant but a process!

It is said that a spiritual body does not mean a non-physical body. It means a spirit-saturated or spirit-driven body. That is nonsense for Paul does not even mention how the resurrection body is glorious because virtue shines through it. And a body can look ordinary and be ordinary and still spirit-saturated. Spiritual body means a ghost-like body.

The evidence is that the first writer about Jesus' resurrection and who must have known a thing or two did not need an empty tomb or missing body to assert that Jesus was alive. Jesus rose spiritually.