

MAIN POINT: The age to come has come crashing into this age through Christ's resurrection and ascension, and we experience it in part now; we wait, however, for its fullness—the resurrection from the dead and our full conformity to Christ's image.

ONE QUESTION STATED TWO WAYS (v. 35)

- After affirming the centrality of the gospel (vv. 1-11), Paul addressed those who denied the reality of the resurrection (vv. 12-28). Denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus denies the gospel, empties any motivation for holiness, and obliterates our hope of heaven (vv. 29-34).
 - In v. 35, Paul addresses not-so-sincere questions some might have about the nature of our future resurrection.

THIS AGE, THE AGE TO COME (vv. 36-44)

- Paul gives agrarian, animal, and astronomical analogies from this age in vv. 36-41 to answer the question posed in v. 35:
 - AGRARIAN (vv. 36-38) – The seed sown into the ground looks different from what breaks forth from the ground; and there is a life-through-death principle at play in Paul's seed analogy (cf. 2 Cor. 5:3ff).
 - ANIMAL (v. 39-40) – God has created animals with varying kinds of flesh (cf. Gen. 1:20-25), and earthly animals are different than heavenly hosts.
 - ASTRONOMICAL (vv. 40-41) – The glory of the heavenly hosts, different as it is from earthly animals, is still different from one host to another (i.e., the sun, moon, and stars all have varying kinds of glory) (cf. Gen. 1:14-18).
- Paul's three analogies are meant to demonstrate the reasonableness of the hope of the resurrection in the age to come, a resurrection demonstrating similarity and dissimilarity (vv. 42-44).

THE FIRST ADAM, THE LAST ADAM (vv. 45-49)

- The first Adam brought death to this age; he represents all those whom Paul describes as “natural” (i.e., not born-again nor indwelt by the Holy Spirit).
 - All those in Adam are like Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12-14).
- The last Adam, Jesus Christ, ushers in the age to come through his redemptive work; he represents all those whom Paul describes as “spiritual” (i.e., born-again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit; cf. 1 Cor. 2:6-16).
 - All those in Christ are being made like Christ (cf. Rom. 5:17; Phil. 3:20-21).
- Knowing that we were once in Adam by nature but now are united to Christ by grace through faith, let us bear the image of Christ faithfully (cf. Phil. 4:1).

Recommended Reading:

Resurrection Hope and the Death of Death by Mitchell Chase

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read I Corinthians 15:35-49

1. How does Paul use his three analogies in vv. 36-42—agrarian, animal, and astronomical—to demonstrate the reasonableness of the resurrection? How does each analogy add to our understanding of what the resurrection will be like?
2. How does Paul describe our bodies during this age in vv. 42-44? How does he describe what our bodies will be like in the age to come in vv. 42-44?
3. Why do you think Paul introduces the first Adam, last Adam theme beginning in v. 45? In what ways would this help support his argument about corruption during this age and the hope of a glorious resurrection in the age to come?
4. What is the end for those who are represented by the first Adam? What is the end for those who are represented by the last Adam, Jesus Christ? How does one transfer his/her “representation,” so to speak, from Adam to Christ?
5. Though we once bore the image of Adam, Christians are now called to bear the image of Christ. How might this look in your life today?