

# The Hope of Our Resurrection

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**Q.** What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

**A.** At the resurrection, believers, raised in glory, will be publicly recognized and declared not guilty on the day of judgment and will be made completely happy in the full enjoyment of God forever.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #38)

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.”

(1 Corinthians 15:42-43)

In yesterday’s devotional we began to take a look at the Bible’s teaching in regards to a question that has been asked by every Christian, in every age since the beginning of the world, and that question is this: “*What happens when I die?*”. Literally thousands of books have been written by Christian writers, pastors and theologians on this topic, because it is a subject that is applicable to every single one of us. Death is the great equalizer. It’s no respecter of persons. And unless Christ returns first, every believer will experience death at the time appointed for them by the Lord (*Hebrews 9:27*). But for the Christian, death is not something that is to be feared. For those who are in Christ, death marks our entrance into the innumerable blessings and benefits that God has in store for us. As we looked at yesterday, death, for the Christian, marks the moment that we will be made perfectly holy and freed from all sin. It is at the very moment of our death that we will be ushered into the very presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But there is another aspect of death that many Christians seem to overlook when it comes to their hope of the afterlife. You see, not only do Christians anticipate their souls’ immediate entrance into heaven, but we also eagerly await the return of Christ and the resurrection of believers from the dead. One of the most popular Christian hymns of all time is the hymn, “*I’ll Fly Away*” written by the gospel music composer Albert E. Brumley in 1932. This well-known hymn declares, “*Some glad morning when this life is over, I’ll fly away; To a home on God’s celestial shore, I’ll fly away*”. And for many Christians in this generation, the only thing that they are looking forward to after death is that their souls will “*fly away*” to be with Christ in Heaven. However, according to the New Testament, the Christian’s greatest hope is not only that their souls will one day be with Jesus in Heaven, but that one day when Christ returns we will get our bodies back!

You see, Heaven is the *intermediate state* for the Christian...it's not the ultimate destination! The great Christian hope is that just as Jesus was raised *bodily* from the dead, so will His children. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 15 the Apostle Paul spends 58 verses speaking about the believer's great hope of our *bodily* resurrection. Paul tells the Corinthians believers, "*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*" (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

What happens when a believer dies? Immediately their souls are separated from their bodies. Their body lays in the grave, while their soul is instantly ushered into the presence of Christ in Heaven where there is no sin, suffering, sickness or pain (*Revelation 7:14-17; 21:4*). But that is not the end of the story. Instead, one day Christ will return to this world in judgement (*James 5:7-9; Hebrews 9:28*) and at that moment, all those believers who have died will experience their own bodily resurrection, their souls once again being reunited with their bodies (*1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16*). You might be asking yourself, "What will our resurrected bodies be like?" Paul answers that question for us in 1 Corinthians 15 when he writes, "*But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body'*" (1 Corinthians 15:35.42-44). In other words, our resurrection bodies will be incorruptible. Unlike our current bodies, which can age, decay and break, our resurrection bodies will last forever.

You and I as Christians have much to look forward to after we die. And not only do we anticipate the moment that our souls will be with Jesus in Heaven, we also eagerly await our bodily resurrection and the new heaven and the new earth.

## Dig Even Deeper into God's Word!

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

1 John 3:2

Psalm 16:11

1 Thessalonians 4:17