

Resurrection, how does it work? - Tony Pearce

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

1ST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIAN Chapter 15 verses 20-22

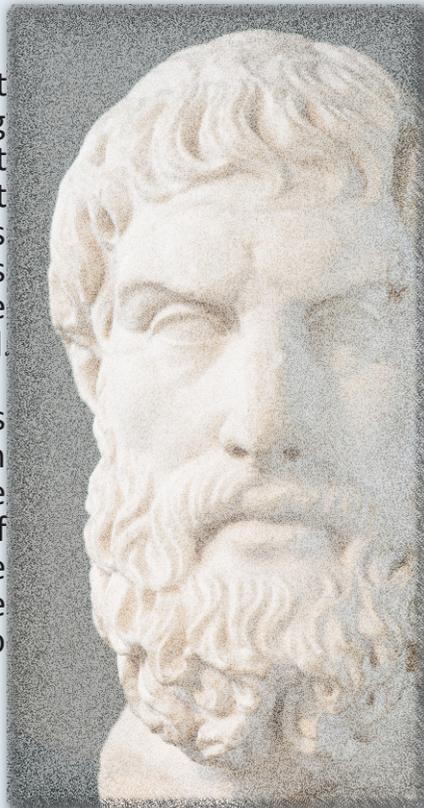
specifically in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, they're saying they don't believe generally that there will be a Resurrection from the dead. They believe that you have this life and that's it, it's over.

In fact, if you go through this passage he quotes the Epicureans who said '*let's eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die*' and part of the Epicurean philosophy was that this life is all you have, so enjoy this life and make the most of it because that's it. Get what you can out of life, have a success if you can, get some pleasure out of life because there is nothing after it.

One Epicurean proverb which is quite often used today at humanist atheist funerals says: '*I was not, I have been, I am not, I don't mind*'. 'I was not', there was a time that I didn't exist; 'I have been', I've existed as a human being; 'now I am not', I don't exist; and, 'I don't mind about it', it doesn't matter. That's the kind of philosophy which actually many people have today isn't it? This life is all you've got, there's nothing after death, so, it really doesn't matter what's going to happen after death.

The Bible tells you that that's very wrong thinking because it does matter what you believe about this and it does matter what happens after death. Because there is a life after death and there is a Resurrection of the dead.

Paul tells us that, if this is true, then our preaching is in vain. In fact, we're found to be false witnesses of God, and if you are believing this, you're still in your sins and you're going to die and it makes no difference to your life.



Epicurus was an atomic materialist, following in the steps of Democritus. His materialism led him to a general attack on superstition and divine intervention. Following the Cyrenaic philosopher Aristippus, Epicurus believed that the greatest good was to seek modest, sustainable pleasure in the form of a state of ataraxia (tranquility and freedom from fear) and aponia (the absence of bodily pain) through knowledge of the workings of the world and limiting desires. Correspondingly, Epicurus and his followers generally withdrew from politics because it could lead to frustrations and ambitions which can directly conflict with the Epicurean pursuit for peace of mind and virtues...

Epicureanism flourished in the Late Hellenistic era and during the Roman era, and many Epicurean communities were established, such as those in Antiochia, Alexandria, Rhodes, and Herculaneum. By the late 3rd century CE Epicureanism all but died out, being opposed by other philosophies (mainly Neoplatonism) that were now in the ascendant. Interest in Epicureanism was resurrected in the Age of Enlightenment and continues in the modern era.



But he says the Resurrection is real. **There really is a Resurrection from the dead.** And we, as Christians who believe this, must believe that there is a day when we will die and that one of the basic facts of life of course, is that we're going to die. There's no way around it.

Actually, there is one. The Bible says that one day, Jesus is going to come and raise those who are alive and take them to be with Him at the Rapture of the Church, which, may happen in our lifetime. Otherwise, the only course of events, the one thing we know about life is that we're going to die. And Paul says this 'as in Adam all die' so the basic fact of life is that this life is temporary, it's not going to go on forever. There's going to be a moment when we die 'as an Adam will die' which is bad news.

The Bible tells us that the reason for death, going back to **Genesis**, is because of sin. Because of human disobedience to God, and because of the punishment which came when Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan to disobey God, and sin came into the world, so 'as in Adam all die.'

All mankind, according to the Bible, has come under the death sentence because of the headship of Adam over the whole human race. So, generically, Adam becomes a symbol of the fatherhood of man, of the whole human race and the problem of the whole human race which is that we're under sin, under death, and under the power, ultimately, of Satan, who has the power of death.

We needed someone who was not under that sentence of death. If you like, someone who was without sin, to come into the world to save us from this power of death. This is what Jesus did at the cross and what becomes the meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus.

So, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

We thank God for the Resurrection of Jesus and the fact that we are made alive in Him and that something radically changes at the moment of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Because now the way is open for every person who calls on the name of the Lord to come into his presence and to be saved.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Paul describes for us those who believe this as **Christ, the firstfruits** and this actually connects to another Jewish aspect of the whole Resurrection account.

If you go back to the **Book of Leviticus chapter 23 verse 9 to 14**, you'll find that in the course of the Passover celebrations, there was something called '**the offering of the first fruits**'. This was made with one sheaf of grain being brought into the Temple to anticipate the rest of the harvest which would come later.

This offering was made on the first day after the Sabbath in the Passover week. So, the Passover week lasts for a week (seven days), and, inevitably, during those seven days, there is going to be one day which will be a Sabbath (Sabbath rest). According to the teaching in **Leviticus**, on the day after the Sabbath in the Passover week, you would offer 'the feast of the first fruits'. The day after that in the Jewish calendar is **yom rishon (יושאר סוי)**, the first day of the week (Sunday).

What was the day in which Jesus rose from the dead? The first day of the week. **Jesus rising from the dead is typologically-speaking the offering of the first fruits.** He's the first one to die and arise from the dead, to rise from the dead to eternal life.

He's saying that if He's the first fruits, then, who are the second fruits? Who's going to come after him? You and me, who believe in Jesus. Every person who then believes in Jesus is following on and is the fruit of Jesus' death and Resurrection.

Jesus was raised in a Resurrection body. So will we be raised in a Resurrection body. Do you believe that? Well, if you don't believe it, then, do believe it. And if you do believe it, then it's something which is tremendously exciting and tremendously positive, and gives you a tremendous hope in this life because, **if by man came Resurrection of the dead in Christ, all shall be made alive.** Then we have a hope in the Resurrection of the dead after we die.

Now when it says **in Christ** or **shall be made alive**, does that mean that everybody is resurrected? The answer that is 'yes' and 'no'. Actually, **everybody is going to be resurrected.**



Jesus spoke about **the Resurrection of life** and **the Resurrection of condemnation** or the Resurrection of damnation.

There will be a general Resurrection of the dead, but there's also a clause which you have to make clear that you understand.

There are two possibilities in the Resurrection of the dead: one is the Resurrection to life, to eternal life. The other is the Resurrection to damnation or condemnation. And the difference between which one is yours and mine is whether we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead.

Paul goes on to speak about different kinds of bodies. He says that all flesh is not the same. There is some flesh, one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, a flesh of fish and of birds and so on. He speaks about celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, telling us '*here's something about the nature of our bodies and our life now*'.

One of the things he's saying here very clearly is that **there is a difference between you as a human being and animals around us**. Something which is actually contested by a lot of modern thought with evolutionary ideas, that we're all descended from apes and monkeys and so on.

The Bible tells us **we're actually categorically different from animals because we, unlike animals, have a spirit part of us which is made to communicate with God**. Either that spirit part will be dead or is to be made alive. And if it's made alive through the new birth of the Holy Spirit, then we are children of God and we have God's Holy Spirit living within us.

That can't happen to your cat or your dog I'm afraid. Animals have natural life but, when they die, they will go to the dust. When we die, our bodies may go to the dust, but our spirit will go to Heaven, it'll go before God.

So God is saying that we are different, and Paul is saying there's a difference between human flesh and animal flesh and also between the celestial bodies the stars and so on.

He says there are different bodies or structures in the universe. Each one created for its own glory. Each one for its own environment and needs. But **we have our present bodies which are adapted to this environment on the earth. Yet, we will have a Resurrection body which will be adapted to the environment of eternity**, of being with the Lord. That's why he speaks about the first Adam and the second Adam, the natural birth and the spiritual birth, the man of the dust and the Heavenly man.



We have a physical nature which is of the dust but Jesus came with the Heavenly nature and He has the power to change our natural nature into an eternal nature. Eternal nature by the Holy Spirit as we are raised to newness of life in the Resurrection, as we identify with Jesus in the Resurrection of the dead.

The last part of the passage here in **1 Corinthians 15** speaks about the fact of the Resurrection. He says:

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

1ST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIAN Chapter 15 verses 50-55

This verse should really encourage you because it tells you that you have a body which is mortal and which is corruptible. Anybody aware that their body is corruptible? As you get older, do you find that your body works better? No. We have a process which is in us which is causing us to become physically less and less effective in some ways, as we get older. A process which is going to lead ultimately to mortality, which is death.

It's part of what has been programmed into us since the fall of man. Actually, it wasn't God's original will, but it's something which we have inherited, going back to Adam.

The Bible tells us there's a day coming when this process will be reversed. Now, our body is adapted to live in this present environment on the earth. The Bible tells us there's going to come a time when we're going to be taken out of this environment to be with the Lord, that will either happen at death or it will happen at the event I referred to earlier called the Rapture of the Church.

1 Thessalonians 4.16-17 tells us this: A day is coming when **the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air** as the Lord comes at the Rapture of the Church.

Whenever you think that the Rapture comes, according to the Bible, it is going to come and the people who are alive at that time are going to be supernaturally caught up to meet with the Lord. They're going to be called up to meet with the Lord in the air.

Where the air is, we're not told. But it's clearly outside of this present environment, this earth. So, we're going to go to a place where we're not on this earth. We're going to have to need a new body to live there. Does that make sense? That's what the Bible says is going to happen. There's a day coming when this body, this mortal body is going to be changed like unto His glorious body.

I hope that gives you some kind of excitement because it means that whatever body you're in now, it's not your permanent state. Whatever state you're in in this life, it's not your permanent state.

It maybe that some people here are sick and that they feel that their their sickness maybe even a serious sickness. It maybe that they know that they don't have even so long to live. All of us actually know that there is a day coming when we will leave this body.

27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW Chapter 11 verses 27-29

It maybe there are some people here who are lonely. They're sad. The Bible tells us that there's going to be a time when we will not be lonely anymore, we'll be together with a whole host of people in the presence of the Lord. We won't be sad anymore, we'll be glad, we'll be rejoicing in the presence of the Lord. We won't be in this body, this mortal body. We will be in a new body which will never get sick and never die. If that doesn't excite you and it doesn't make you feel good, I don't know what does because that's what the Bible tells you is going to happen, to you and to me, if we believe in Jesus the Messiah.

That means that **no matter how dark things get out there in the world today, no matter how difficult our lives may be every day that we live on the earth, we're getting nearer to the day we're going to be with the Lord.**

Therefore, we can live with confidence and hope and with joy even in the midst of trials and even in the midst of difficulties knowing that the best is yet to come. It's not just the best, it's beyond any preacher's ability to describe what's going to come. Paul himself said:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

This letter to the Corinthians, this treatise, if you like, on the Resurrection which Paul gives here gives you mainly two things to learn:

One: that **it really happened. It was an event in time and space. Jesus really died for our sins and rose from the dead.**

And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.

BOOK OF PSALMS Chapter 89 verse 5

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God (John 1.12).

We have to personally accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour. You can't get into Heaven on someone else's faith, you can't get into Heaven by just listening to Tony Pearce speak.

You have to make a response, you have to believe and to accept the Gospel, and to put your trust in Jesus Christ, and to make sure that you are a child of God, that you have a future and a hope because if you don't, then, you do face a Resurrection to damnation.

I have to tell you that. That is a reality. There is a place called 'Hell', there is an eternal separation from God. And if we die without Christ, that's where we're going.

The choice is very simple. Actually, it's very clear: **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.** He's alive today, He has risen and, if we believe Him, we have eternal life, and we have a glorious hope and a glorious future.

Praise the Lord! Jesus is alive! Jesus is coming! And we have every reason to believe in Him. Praise the Lord!

Let's just pray. We're going to sing our final hymn.

Lord, we thank you for the great and blessed hope we have of the Resurrection of Jesus. We thank you that it's true, that it really did happen in history. Thank you that you died, that you were buried, that you rose again from the dead, and that you are now ascended to Heaven and you ever live to make intercession for us. And that you're coming again in power and glory to judge the world in righteousness. And so we thank you Lord for the blessed hope which we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

BOOK OF REVELATION Chapter 20 verses 4-6

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Number two: that if you believe this, your whole life is transformed, you have a glorious future, you have a glorious hope and you have something to look forward to which is out of this world and which is going to be beyond anything which you can possibly describe.

It all depends on our faith and that brings me to my last point.

We have to believe it. He says, if you believe, if you've received this, if you've received it...