

**GOOD NEWS**  
for the unsaved  
WORLD!

(#178)  
What will our bodies be like?

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## What will WE be like after the resurrection?

... what we will be has *not yet been made known*.  
But *we know* that when Christ appears, **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is.  
1 John 3:2b (NIV)

### 1. There are LIMITS to what Scripture tells us.

We need to start with a reminder that there is much about the future that we *haven't* been told. This is because *we don't need it* – or God would have told us!

Instead of satisfying our curiosity, God has given us what we *need* for life and godliness. If we do not pursue the life and godliness that God offers *now*, we will have no chance of experiencing any of the wonderful changes that may occur *after the resurrection*.

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## (What will WE be like after the resurrection?)

### 2. Beware of SPECULATION.

There are *few* passages in Scripture that make direct statements about this issue.

Much of what people "believe" on this topic is pure speculation and imagination. Some of it comes from *imaginings* and *myths* invented by people. Some of it is based on *false assumptions* about Scripture passages torn out of context.

### 3. The Bible's PRIMARY FOCUS.

When asking this question, people tend to focus on *physical changes*. In contrast, most of what Scripture says about the resurrection and eternity focuses on *moral and spiritual changes*.

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We should begin with a reminder...

**IT'S NOT JUST PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO BE CHANGED.**

➡ **ALL CREATION IS GOING TO BE CHANGED.**

- ✓ God created a perfect world, but human sin destroyed it. Sin had to be judged, and *all creation was affected*. (You can read about this in Genesis 1-3.)
- ✓ Many Scripture passages point to a future restoration, and mention various aspects of it. (Example, the last few chapters of Isaiah.) The last chapters of Revelation show the *reversal* of the Genesis 3 curse. Things will be similar to what they were in the beginning... only better.

Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in **glorious freedom from death and decay**.

Romans 8:20-21 (NLT)

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## BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO PEOPLE?

➡ **WE NEED TO SEPARATE FACT FROM SPECULATION!**

- ✓ Facts, combined with imagination, can result in much speculation that is *not* described as factual by Scripture.
  - ✓ Some of the speculations may sound reasonable, and may be interesting possibilities. When the time comes, some may even prove to be correct.
  - ✓ But we should not become dogmatic about them. They remain in the "opinion" category; and we should be gracious to those who come up with a different set of speculations. (*A better alternative would be to avoid speculation.*)
  - ✓ The fact that God *didn't* tell us the things we speculate about shows us that they are of *secondary importance* to what he *did* tell us.
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## ⇨ WE WILL BE "LIKE JESUS"... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

⎓ We're going to start here, because we already read the verse that says, "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2b). ⎓

- ? If we look at the various accounts of the resurrected Jesus, should we assume that all characteristics we see there will apply to us?
- ⇨ He had "flesh and bones" and could be touched – i.e., he was not a ghost, but had a genuine physical body (Luke 24:37-39). He also had the scars of crucifixion (John 20:25-27).
  - ⇨ He could eat (Luke 24:42-43; Acts 1:4). [In Luke's account, it was part of Jesus' proof that he was *not* a ghost.]
  - ⇨ He could appear (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26) and disappear (Luke 24:31) at will, and was later taken up to heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9).
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? Let's not forget the book of Revelation, where we find a description of Jesus' appearance:

⇒ How can we describe him? His appearance is beyond our comprehension. (John could only make comparisons to things we *can* comprehend.) Clothed, blazing white appearance (or glow); terrifying.

He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. ... And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

When I [John] saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead.

Revelation 1:13b-15, 16b-17a (NLT)

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! Here is the issue:

⇒ None of these passages *claim* that they apply to the rest of us humans. They were all descriptions of *Jesus* specifically.

⇒ We do not know the extent (if any) that Jesus' *deity* had an effect on what the apostles saw. If it *did* have an effect on something, that specific thing would not apply to us.

⇒ We will look at some specific details:

✓ **Will we be able to appear and disappear, like Jesus did?**

- Angels do; but there is no passage that says we will... or won't. There is "silence" on this matter.
- Even if we did, it would be for specific purposes, not for entertainment, for humoring ourselves, or for scaring other people!
- Our conclusion: It must not be important for us to know!

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✓ **A physical body, not a ghost.**

- Some passages mention us coming to life *spiritually*. This occurs at the point of salvation; these verses are not connected to with the future resurrection.

[God] **made us alive** with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses.

Ephesians 2:5a (CSB)

- The following verse uses "resurrection language"; but it is probably a reference of the "call of God" for salvation.

"Awake, O sleeper!  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you!"

Ephesians 5:14b (NET)

- Most passages that use "resurrection language" make reference to a future physical body.

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- If we came to life *spiritually* (at salvation), we will come to life *physically* (at the resurrection).

... the redemption of our **bodies**.

Romans 8:23b (NIV)

Your dead will live; their **bodies** will rise.

Isaiah 26:19a (CSB)

[God] who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal **bodies** to life through his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:11b (CSB)

[Jesus] will take our weak mortal **bodies** and change them into glorious **bodies** like his own, ...

Philippians 3:21a (NLT)

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The **body** that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 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 15:42-44a (NIV)

("Spiritual" does *not* mean "ghostly" or "non-physical." The Spirit is the life source. It's a contrast between a body that is temporarily alive and one that is eternally alive – which is made possible by the Spirit who lives in us.)

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✓ **Will we eat food?** There is no reason to think we *won't* eat.

- The Tree of Life will be in the New Jerusalem, yielding fruit all year long. (Revelation 22:2, 14.)
- Jesus mentions drinking "the fruit of the vine" in the (future) kingdom of God. (Matthew 26:29; etc.)
- The book of Revelation mentions a future "wedding supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:7, 9.)

✓ **Clothes?** There is no reason to think we *won't* wear clothes. (It's not a return to the innocence of Adam and Eve.) The book of Revelation mentions clothes several times.

- John's description of Jesus' clothes. (Revelation 1:13b.)
- People wearing white robes. (Revelation 7:9, 13.)
- Angels wearing clothes. (Revelation 15:6.)
- The bride of the Lamb wears linen clothes – and the linen is given a special significance:

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

Revelation 19:8b (NIV)

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✓ **A glowing, radiant appearance?** Maybe!

- Jesus was this way, on the "mountain of transfiguration." (Luke 9:29); and also after his ascension into heaven. (Revelation 1.)
- Angels are sometimes (not always) described this way. (Example: Matthew 28:3.)
- Moses was this way *temporarily*, after being in God's presence. (Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:13.)
- Daniel seems to say so:

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Daniel 12:3 (NIV)

- If we *do* have a glowing, radiant appearance, it will be because we are reflecting the Lord's glory.

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✓ **Will we have blood?** There is no reason to say we won't!

- The only reason we even raise this issue is because some people compare 2 passages in different contexts and reach a conclusion (based on the differences) that we *won't* have blood!

... **flesh** and **blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

1 Corinthians 15:50b (NIV)

"Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have **flesh** and **bones**, as you see I [Jesus] have."

Luke 24:39 (NIV)

- All the Corinthian passage says is that our *present* bodies need changed, before we can enter the eternal kingdom. It doesn't say we will lose our blood!
- In the Luke passage, Jesus is telling them to touch him and verify that he has a body. There is no reason to mention blood, since he isn't telling them to cut him open!

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✓ **Scars?** Though not a common view, it has been considered by some, since Jesus apparently still has his crucifixion scars.

- Consider this interaction between Thomas and Jesus. Jesus was essentially telling Thomas, "Examine my scars."

The other disciples told [Thomas], "We've seen the Lord." Thomas told them, "I refuse to believe this unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my fingers into them, and put my hand into his side."

John 20:25 (GW)

Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, and believe."

John 20:27 (GW)

- It's quite unreasonable to think that we will have scars. Saved people have sometimes been horribly mutilated by torture, or even burned to ashes. Being resurrected back to that condition is quite contradictory to the resurrection concept!

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⇒ **WE WILL BE "LIKE THE ANGELS"... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for **they are like the angels**. They are God's children,\* since they are children of the resurrection.

Luke 20:34-36 (NIV)

\* (Also translated as "sons of God.")

- ? When Jesus says that the resurrected are "like the angels," does it imply *more* than the marriage issue that he mentions? There are some interesting possibilities; but in the long run, we will have to wait to see.

⇒ We've already alluded to two characteristics – the ability to appear and disappear, and a radiant appearance (at least sometimes). Here are some other possible issues: →

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✓ **Wings?** If we look at pictures that *people* draw of angels, they almost always have wings.

- Both Old and New Testaments describe a variety of heavenly beings, and some of them *do* have wings. But they are not called "angels."
- When we read about heavenly beings (angels) interacting with humans, wings are *never* mentioned. Instead, they always resemble humans (though at times, bright with radiance). And they aren't always called "angels." Sometimes they are called "men."

... suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them.

Acts 1:10b (CSB)

- ✓ **Cannot die; children of God.** Throughout the New Testament, these descriptions are applied to saved people. Some may be surprised to learn that even *angels* are called "sons/children of God." (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; possibly Genesis 6:2, 4.)

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✓ **No marriage.** Jesus affirms that there will be *no* marriage.

- Our situation, after the resurrection, is not simply an extension of the way things are *now* (though without sin's influence). We will not have a reason for marriage.
- God created humans "in his image"; and an aspect of that image is "male and female." (Genesis 1:27.) The full aspect of God's "image" cannot be expressed in just one of them (male or female).
- This being the case, perhaps there will be something similar to what we call "maleness" or "femaleness" – but if so, it will be for expressing, to the fullest extent possible, the "image of God." (It won't be for marriage and procreation.)
- Whatever the situation, there will be no regrets or disappointment. We may desire marriage *now* – and in this life, it can be a *good* desire – but we are going to be *changed* at the resurrection. In the *future*, we will have a different set of desires – and they also will be good.

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⇒ **"HEAVEN ISSUES."**

- ? In the book of Revelation (and perhaps some other places), we read about the inhabitants of heaven – and sometimes resurrected people – doing specific things. Are we going to be doing those things?

⇒ Though it's possible that we may be doing *some* of those things, nowhere in Scripture does it say we will be doing *all* of them. Besides, our whole perspective on this matter is flawed, because of *this* issue:

✓ **Heaven?** Where are we going to spend eternity?

- Scripture does NOT say we will spend eternity in heaven! Our residence will be on the earth! God is preparing a place for us that will be *on earth* (though, at present, it is located in heaven, waiting for the earth's renewal).

Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, ...

Revelation 21:2a (GW)

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### ✓ Heaven? (continued)

- There are many verses that tell us about things God has stored for us in heaven (such as an inheritance – 1 Peter 1:4); but that doesn't mean those things will *stay* there in eternity.
- It seems that, at the present time, God's people who have died are in heaven... but they will be *returning* when Jesus returns. (1 Thessalonians 4:14.)
- This does not necessarily mean we will have *no* access to heaven. But why would we need it? *God will be on earth, in the New Jerusalem!* (Revelation 22:3.)

- ✓ **Harp?** These are mentioned twice, in Revelation 14:2 and 15:2.
  - These verses mention music and praise, and the existence of harps. They do not say that harp playing and singing are the *only* activities that will occur in eternity. The description of the New Jerusalem suggests that there will also be *other* types of activity. (Revelation 21:24-26.)

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### ✓ Crowns? Rewards? Yes. Many passages mention these; but they don't go into much detail in describing them.

- Rewards are based on our conduct in this present life. Crowns are also based on our conduct.
- Crowns are described by a variety of terms – crown of life (James 1:12); crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8); crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4); etc. [Are these one crown or many?]
- Motives will also be an important factor in these matters. (Is our ultimate goal to get crowns and rewards, or to love and serve God and neighbor?) Those in God's presence will have the attitude that is described here:

And they lay their crowns before the throne and say,  
 "You are worthy, O Lord our God,  
 to receive glory and honor and power.  
 For you created all things,  
 and they exist because you created what you pleased."  
 Revelation 4:10b-11 (NLT)

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### ⇒ THE BIGGER ISSUE: CHANGE.

- ? What will we be like? Paul writes extensively about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. What does Paul say?
  - ⇒ He simply states that our bodies will be *changed* at the resurrection. He does not focus on all the details we tend to ask about!
- ✓ **What will happen to the dead at the resurrection?**
  - They will be changed. Paul focuses on the need for change, why that change is possible, and the end result: complete victory over death. (1 Corinthians 15:35-58.)
- ✓ **What about those who *aren't* dead when Jesus returns?** Do they need to die first, or do they miss out on something?
  - They will be changed *without* having to die first. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; also 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.)
  - If there are any differences, because they didn't die, we are not told. (It doesn't matter, or we would have been told.)

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### ⇒ THE BIGGEST ISSUE: CHANGE.

- ? People tend to look at the *physical* changes that will take place; so that is what we have emphasized here. **But what does Scripture focus on?**
  - ⇒ Though it mentions some of the details we may ask about (not always to the extent that our curiosity may want), it has **a much greater, more important focus.**
  - ⇒ Scripture focuses on the effect that the *future* resurrection will have on God's people *now*. To see this:
- ✓ **WE need to go back to the verse we *began* with.**

... what we will be has *not yet been made known*.  
 But *we know* that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.  
 1 John 3:2b (NIV)

- **If we look at the context, we will discover a mission for us to pursue.** →

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## Our Mission: CHANGE!

Read the *context* of 1 John 3:2, and *take it to heart!*

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

1 John 2:29-3:3 (NIV)

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