

## What is Glorification?

There are several places in the Bible that speaks to the concept of glorification; however, most of what is known is from Paul's letter to the Corinthians discussing the resurrection of the Believer (1 Cor 15:1-58).

### 1. Examine 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. How does Paul establish the fact of the resurrection of the dead?

In response to some in Corinth who believe that there is no resurrection of the dead, Paul establishes the fact of the resurrection of the dead by pointing to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds the Corinthian Believers the importance of the gospel as it was passed down to him – that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and raised on the third day. Not only predicted by Old Testament prophecy, the historical reality of the resurrection of Christ was established fact, because the risen Christ was seen by so many witnesses, many of whom were still alive at the time of Paul's letter: the twelve original apostles, over five hundred disciples, Jesus' half brother James and Paul himself (1 Cor 15:1-11).

During the first century, the Jews largely believed in the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6-9); but, it was a mystery to them and its details were unclear. The apostles, on the other hand, based their teaching on what was revealed by Jesus (John 5:28-29; 6:39-44, 54).

The resurrection of Christ is the fundamental basis of faith. It is the only historical event that validated the atoning work of Jesus; without the resurrection, there is no factual proof that Jesus is the Son of God and that He did die for the sins of man (1 Cor 15:12-19). The resurrection was also the means that God glorified His Son so that Christ will draw all men to Himself (John 12:32).

Just as He raised Jesus, God will resurrect Believers (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14).

### 2. How does Paul describe the resurrected body?

To the question how are the dead raised and what kind of body is it, Paul presents an analogy with the natural world. Paul answers "how" by using a comparison to agriculture: the resurrected body is akin to the fruit that naturally results from the growth and death of the seed. Paul answers "what kind" by using a comparison to God's creation of the natural world: the resurrected body is as unique as creation itself (1 Cor 15:35-41).

Paul uses juxtaposition to explain the resurrected body: from perishable to imperishable, from dishonor to glory, from weakness to power and from natural to spiritual (1 Cor 15:42-44).

The use of the term "glory" is significant. The Greek term for "glory" in the passage is "doxa." While "doxa" is often used in the sense of God's majesty and power, Paul introduces an idea beyond that of "honor" - that Believers and creation itself will experience a new creation when taken up with the glory of the end times (Rom 8:18-22; 2 Cor 3:18; Philip 3:20-21; Col 3:4; 1 Pet 5:1).

Given that glory is in part an attribute of God's nature (Acts 7:2; Eph 1:17; 2 Pet 1:17) and linked with His action (Rom 6:4), the revelation of glory takes place from heaven but His objective is the complete transformation of His people and His created world.

In making comparisons, Paul highlights the distinctions between the natural body and the spiritual body: Adam verses Jesus, living being verses life giving spirit and origin from the dust of the earth verses from heaven. With these comparisons, Paul defines two classes of human beings: a) those who are of Adam will bear the body and likeness of the earthly man and b) those who are of Jesus will bear the body and likeness of the heavenly Man (1 Cor 15:45-49). The significance is that only the one with a spiritual body will enter the kingdom of God.

The spiritual body is immortal yet a real body made of a substance that is imperishable and functions differently than the earthly body.

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### 3. When will the resurrection take place?

Paul speaks of the resurrection occurring when the "last trumpet" sounds (1 Cor 15:52).

Jesus associates the resurrection of Believers with the sound of a trumpet (Matt 24:31; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27) and places the time of the resurrection to occur at His future return to earth in physical and bodily form which would herald the end of the present age (John 6:39-44, 54).

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul speaks of an order of ascent: 1) the second coming of Jesus, 2) the trumpet of God and 3) the resurrection of Believers to meet Jesus at His coming (1 Thess 4:14-17).

When the event occurs, the resurrection will be immediate; Believers will receive new spiritual bodies instantaneously (1 Cor 15:51-52).

"Glorification" is the future aspect of salvation and known as salvation from the presence of sin. It is wholly the work of God (Philip 3:20-21; 1 Thess 5:23) and occurs when the Believer receives his resurrected body. It is the final step of sanctification and conclusion of the whole salvation process in which a Believer is made completely pure and enabling complete access into the presence of God (Rev 21:27).

#### References:

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