

Study Series 14 Lesson 2: The *Parousia*: the Resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 5 and Acts 24

Here is an overview of what Paul talks about here in 1 Cor. 15:

- The gospel had been preached to the Corinthians, and they had believed it.
- But now, some there in Corinth were denying that the dead would be raised out of Hades, and questioning the idea of a bodily afterlife.
- Paul argues that if the dead cannot be raised out of Hades, then neither was Christ raised out of Hades.
- The resurrection deniers raised two big questions for Paul to address (in vs. 35):

1. First Question: possible ways to translate it:

- How can the dead be raised? – or – How do the dead rise? (gnomic question of principle) – this gnomic sense seems to work the best in connection with the second question. That means their two questions could be stated this way:
 - "How in the world can the dead ones be raised back out of Hades? And if they do rise out of Hades, what kind of body do they have when they come forth from Hades?"
- How are the dead to be raised? (futuristic present tense)
- How are the dead being raised? (iterative series of individual resurrections)

2. Second Question: With what kind of body do they come?

- Paul answers both questions using a **SEED ANALOGY**.
- After proving that the dead will be raised (future tense), and that they will have a new kind of body that is suited to life in heaven, Paul then turns his attention to those living saints who would remain alive at the time of the *Parousia* when the dead would be raised.
- Paul reveals another mystery to the Corinthians about the bodily CHANGE that the living would experience at the *Parousia*. The dead would be RAISED, but the living saints would be CHANGED.

Who Were These Resurrection Deniers?

It seems that the main problem here at Corinth seems to have been coming from a Greek philosophical perspective. The Greeks had real difficulty with any kind of "bodily" afterlife since they viewed the body as an evil prison which they wished to be rid of in the afterlife. They viewed the body as necessarily evil, therefore an afterlife would not be in a body.

Paul agrees partially with them that the bodies we now have cannot be used in the afterlife ("flesh and blood cannot inherit the heavenly kingdom" and "corruption cannot inherit incorruption" 1 Cor. 15:50). But he shows their fallacy when he states that there are different kinds of bodies, and that their afterlife would be in bodies that were made in the image of the Heavenly Man (Christ Jesus).

Not all bodies are subject to corruption. Jesus was the first to have an incorruptible body, and he gives all of His saints an incorruptible body just like His for their afterlife in heaven. This was a possibility the Greeks had not thought much about. They rejected any kind of body in the afterlife since they viewed all bodies as necessarily evil and corruptible. But Paul says there are different kinds of bodies (some corruptible and others incorruptible), and that their afterlife would be in an incorruptible and immortal body (not a corruptible or evil body).

We certainly do not take our corrupted and corruptible bodies to heaven with us, but we do get a new uncorrupted and incorruptible body like Christ's to dwell in heaven with. This is Paul's whole point in 1 Cor. 15:37-41.

There are several indicators within the chapter (1 Cor. 15) which point toward the probability (if not the certainty) that Paul's opponents there at Corinth were coming from a Greek-oriented philosophical framework:

- 1 Cor. 15:32 – The Greek Epicurean philosophers were well-known to often say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." If Paul's opponents were Jewish, this quote of Greek philosophers would have made no impact upon their arguments. It would only be effective against Greek opponents. Quotes of Greek authors and philosophers like this would be totally out of place and meaningless in a debate about whether the Old Testament dead were going to be included in some Collective Body resurrection.
- 1 Cor. 15:33 – Paul appears to be quoting from or alluding to the teachings of the Greek philosophers Menander, Aeschylus, or Diodorus Siculus, when he says, "Bad company corrupts good morals." Again, if Paul's opponents were Jewish, this quote of Greek authors would have had no effect against their arguments.
- 1 Cor. 15:36-44 – The seed analogy was used by Greeks and Jews alike, but the particular way he constructs his analogy looks more like he is using the Greek form of it as developed by Plato, and then turning it against his Greek opponents.
- 1 Cor. 15:36 – Paul calls his opponents "foolish" (Gk APHRON) which was one of the labels Greek philosophers loved to slap on their opponents.

Many of the Greeks in the first century held to the idea of "immortality of the soul" which advocated a conscious afterlife, but in a disembodied pure spirit state without a body. They saw no value in having a body in their afterlife. They viewed death as liberation from the evils of life in a body.

Corinth was only 40 miles away from Athens. Both cities were strong centers of Greek culture and philosophy. Whatever was believed in Athens was almost always found in Corinth as well. So, it would be no surprise to learn that the resurrection deniers in Corinth were coming from the same Greek philosophical perspective as Athens.

Explanation of 1 Corinthians 15

With all that in mind about who Paul's opponents were there in Corinth, and who it was that was confusing the saints there to think that the dead were not going to be raised, let us look through the whole chapter of 1 Cor. 15 to see if it will make better sense for us now.

- 15:1-11 – Notice the four occurrences of the phrase “He was seen” (vs. 5-8). These are eyewitness confirmations of the reappearance of Jesus in His self-same crucified body. These reappearances were not a ghost out of Hades, or just a docetic (seeming) resurrection of Jesus for evidentiary purposes. Nor were they merely metaphorical references to His collective body (the Church) being raised out of covenantal sin-death into the life of the Kingdom. Instead, Paul said that Christ was raised (out of Hades) and reappeared in His self-same individual “flesh and bones” body that had died. Notice verse 11b: “. . . so we preach and so you believed.” This is the gospel that Paul had preached to the Corinthians—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—which they received, stood in (v. 1), and believed (v. 11). Paul hoped that they had not “believed in vain” (v. 2).
- 15:12-19 –There were some at Corinth who were saying that “there is no resurrection of the dead” (v. 12). But Paul reminded them that they already believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead, so why did they now doubt that others could be raised? If Jesus was raised, as they supposedly believed, then others also could be raised.

Conversely, if the “dead ones” in Hades could not be raised out of there, then neither was Jesus raised out of Hades. Yet, they believed that Jesus had been raised. Paul said their faith in the resurrection of Christ was “in vain” (v. 2), “empty” (v. 14), and “futile” (v. 17) if there was no resurrection of the dead. This would also mean that the dead saints had simply “perished” (v. 18), that all saints were “still in their sins” (v.17), and that their Christian lifestyle was “the most pitiable” (v. 19). This is why he later says: “. . . If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (v. 32b).

- 15:20-23 – Since Christ was the firstfruit of the Resurrection harvest, His resurrection guaranteed that the rest of the dead would be raised. When Christ ascended, the firstfruit was presented to God, making it possible for the rest of the dead to be raised. Notice what Paul wrote in verses 22-23 regarding when the resurrection would occur. The dead saints had not yet been raised when Paul wrote (AD 57), but they “shall be made alive (future tense) ...at the *Parousia*.”

This proves that the Resurrection was not an ongoing process at the time Paul wrote, but rather a future event that would occur at the *Parousia*. This future tense “shall be made alive” does not work in the Collective Body View (CBV) of the Resurrection, but it fits perfectly with the Individual Body View (IBV).

- 15:24-28 – Paul says that Christ was already reigning in some sense at the time he wrote (AD 57), and “must continue to reign until all His enemies were put under His feet” (v. 25). What reign is this? It certainly is not His eternal reign which did not begin until the *Parousia*. So unless we want to posit two different reigns of Christ before His eternal reign, it means that this reign must be His millennial reign, during which He put down all His enemies (like David had done, cf. 1 Kings 5:3), took the kingdom away from the Jews (Luke 20:16; cf. Matt. 21:43), gave it back to the Father to whom it belongs (1 Sam. 8:7; 12:12), and then sat down with the Father to **co-reign** with Him eternally (cf. Rev. 11:15, Chpt. 21-22).

When the Israelites rejected God as their King and demanded a king like all the other nations, God allowed them to set up Saul as their king (1 Sam. 8:7). But soon afterwards God sent Samuel to anoint David as successor (1 Sam. 13:14),

from whose descendants a King (Jesus) would arise to take the kingdom away from the Jews and give it back to God (Acts 13:22-23; Luke 20:16; cf. Matt. 21:43 and Luke 19:12-27). But there is something even more interesting here in these verses which directly relates to the whole question of what kind of resurrection is under discussion here in 1 Cor. 15. Notice the reference to the putting down of all enemies by Christ, the last of which was Death itself. The commentaries connect this defeat of Death with the casting of Death and Hades into the Lake of Fire mentioned in Revelation 20.

When we compare Paul's words here with John's words in Rev 20, the similarity between them is significant and clear. It appears that both texts are talking about the same defeat of Death at the *Parousia* when the dead were raised. This means that we can use the information in Rev 20 to help us understand 1 Cor. 15. Rev 20 mentions the raising of the dead ones out of Hades, and the emptying of Hades before it was cast into the Lake of Fire. So the resurrection that occurred at the end of the millennium was a resurrection of the dead ones out of Hades. It was that resurrection of the dead saints out of Hades which fully and finally defeated Death and Hades once for all.

Unless we want to posit a different final defeat of Death in Rev 20 than the final defeat mentioned in 1 Cor. 15, it means that Rev 20 is talking about the same final defeat of Death that 1 Cor. 15 is. And notice that the resurrection in Rev 20 was the emptying of Hades. There is not the slightest hint in Rev 20 that it is talking about a collective body being raised out of dead Judaism. Instead, it is easily and clearly talking about the resurrection of the dead out of Hades. And if 1 Cor. 15 is talking about the same final defeat of Death in connection with the *Parousia* and the Resurrection that Rev 20 is, then it means that 1 Cor. 15 is ALSO talking about the resurrection of the dead ones out of Hades, just like Rev. 20 is. Do you catch the power of that (pun intended)?

- 15:29 – What was this baptism for the dead? Several commentaries suggest that it refers to the Jewish burial custom of washing (purifying) a dead body before burial to insure that this individual would be resurrected. In the case of dead relatives whose bodies were lost at sea, consumed by fire, or eaten by wild animals, a very close blood relative was allowed to be washed (baptized) “on behalf of” that dead relative to ensure his/her resurrection. Paul is neither approving nor condemning this burial custom, but rather wondering why the Corinthians practiced it if they did not believe their dead relatives were going to be raised.

- 15:30-32 – Furthermore, if the dead are not going to be raised, and there was not going to be any conscious afterlife, why suffer persecution and deprive oneself of this life’s benefits? Why not rather indulge in all life’s pleasures to the maximum?
- 15:33-34 – Paul rebuked the Corinthians for hanging around with “evil company” who were corrupting them, and for listening to “some who do not have the knowledge of God.” The Greek philosophers in Corinth and nearby Athens would certainly fit that description. When Paul visited Athens, he noted how the city was full of idols, one of which was dedicated to the “unknown god.” The Greeks did not have a correct understanding of God, so it is not surprising that the Greek philosophers in Athens scoffed at Paul when he taught the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, it seems likely that it was Greek philosophers there in Corinth who were confusing the Corinthian saints by denying that the dead will be raised.
- 15:35-38 – “Some” there at Corinth, who had been influenced by Greek philosophy to deny the resurrection, were asking these two questions:
 - 1) How are the dead raised up? And,
 - 2) With what body do they come? Both questions suggest a strong Platonic influence. Paul answers both questions by using several analogies. He begins by comparing the Resurrection to the sprouting of seed: “What you sow is not made alive unless it dies.”

In essence, Paul was saying that a seed does **not** receive its new plant body until **after** the old seed body breaks open and is laid aside (**dies**). It is the same for the saint. We cannot get our new immortal bodies until after our mortal bodies have died. That is true, except for those saints who happened to still be alive at the time of the *Parousia*, at which time the living were CHANGED without having to experience death first.

Some commentators are puzzled by Paul’s statement that the seed does not die until after it is sown. Since they think the sowing of the seed is the burial of the body, the implication is that people were being buried alive! However, other commentators remind us that the sowing is referring to the birth of the person into the world.

Thus, Paul is saying that humans are sown into the world at their birth, and their physical bodies have to die before they can receive their new immortal bodies. In verses 37- 38, Paul clearly says that the body in which we are sown is not the same body that we will have after the Resurrection. Instead, “God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.” In other words, we are born, live, and die in one kind of body, and come to life in a different kind of body, just like seeds do.

Futurists who take the “bodies-out-of-the-graves” (BOG) view of resurrection, have difficulty explaining these two verses. Paul, at the least, is teaching two different kinds of bodies, if not two different bodies altogether. The latter concept is clinched in verse 38 where Paul says that God gives a new body to “each of the seeds.” Thus, when the seed sprouts, the old seed body dies and returns to dust, while the new plant body rises up from the inner germ of the seed. Note also that each of the seeds (individuals) receives its own body. This does not work in the Collective Body View, but it perfectly fits the Individual Body View.

- 15:39-41 – These three verses further illustrate the point about the differences between seed bodies and plant bodies. There are different kinds of flesh, and different levels of glory between terrestrial and celestial bodies, as well as between the sun, moon, and stars.
- 15:42-44 – Verse 42 picks up once again on the concept expressed in vs. 37-38. Just as seeds are not sown in their final plant body that they will have after they sprout, so it is with human resurrection. God gives “it” (each individual “seed” or person) a new body at the Resurrection. The seed is sown into the world in a body that is subject to corruption, dishonor, and weakness. But it is raised in a body that is incorruptible, glorious, and powerful. The seed (individual person) is sown in a natural body, but raised in a spiritual body. Notice again that Paul is speaking of individual seeds here, not about a collective body.
- 15:45-49 – Paul again emphasizes the fact that there are two different kinds of bodies, and that the natural body precedes the spiritual. The First Adam was earthy and made of dust, just like we are in our natural bodies. The Last Adam is from heaven and has a heavenly spiritual body, which is the bodily image the saints “shall bear” (future tense) after they are raised at the *Parousia*.

Note the **future tense** here: those saints were **not** already bearing the image of the heavenly Man **while they were still in their earthy (natural) bodies of dust**. They did not have two bodies at the same time. They would not put on and bear their new heavenly spiritual bodies until the Resurrection. Clearly this heavenly image is referring to a new kind of body that they each would receive at the *Parousia*, one that would enable them to live in heaven with the heavenly Man Christ Jesus. It is interesting here in verse 49 that Paul does not distinguish between the living and the dead in bearing the image of the heavenly Man. The implication is that both the dead and the living would put on their new heavenly spiritual bodies at the Resurrection event. This implication becomes explicit in the next five verses.

- 15:50-54 – Some commentators believe verses 50-53 are talking about the effect of the Resurrection event upon both groups, the living and the dead. Others think it is mainly a discussion about the bodily change of the living that occurs “in the blink of an eye” immediately after the dead are raised. It really does not make much difference.

Both views have the living and the dead “put on” their new immortal bodies at the resurrection/change event. However, the key points that we must not overlook are the bodily change of the living, and when it occurred. Note verses 51-52 in particular. Not all of those saints who were alive at the time Paul wrote (ca. AD 57) would die. Some of them would remain alive until the Last Trump when the dead “will be raised” (future tense) and those living saints “shall be changed” (future tense).

Notice the **future tense** here for **both** the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living. And both the resurrection and the change occurs at the same time: “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” at the *Parousia*. This was not an already ongoing process of resurrection and change, but rather a future resurrection and change that would occur “at the last trump” in concert with the *Parousia*.

- There is a future tense here: "the dead WILL be raised" – 1 Cor. 15:50-54 – is a contrast in kinds of bodies (**flesh and blood vs. immortal**) – **both** the resurrected dead ones AND the changed living saints get their new immortal bodies at the **same time** ("in a moment...") – notice "this corruptible" and "this mortal" (**reference to their individual physical bodies**)
- 1 Cor. 15:52 – The "dead ones" (plural) – notice the **plural** number of **individuals** who are raised. If this was talking about a Collective Body, it would be singular (i.e., "the dead one"). It is not talking about a singular COLLECTIVE BODY who were (present tense) being raised out of dead Judaism. It is instead a group of **individual** "dead ones" (**plural**) who "will be" (future tense) raised from out of the place where the "dead ones" were (i.e., *Hades*).

This does not fit the Collective Body View at all, but it perfectly fits the Individual Body View of resurrection and change. We know what the Resurrection did for the dead saints: It raised them out of Hades and put them in heaven with their new immortal bodies. But what about the living saints?

What was the bodily "change" that the living were going to experience at the *Parousia*? Whatever it was, it was supposed to occur "at the last trump" right after the dead were raised (v. 52). Unless we want to stretch out the sounding of the last trump for millennia or eternity, then it means that the bodily change of the living took place in connection with the resurrection of the dead at the *Parousia*, and is not ongoing after AD 70.

But what was this change of the living? Verses 53-54 explain what it was: It was the "putting on" of incorruption and immortality. For the dead, whose bodies were already consumed in corruption, it meant "**putting on**" new bodies of incorruption. For the living **who were still wearing their "flesh and blood" mortal bodies**, it meant "**putting on**" immortality which **swallowed up** (or **changed**) their mortality **into immortality**.

- 15:54-56 – **Important point:** notice that Paul does NOT say “the resurrection would remove the sting of death (sin).” Instead, he says that the resurrection of the dead ones out of Hades, and the bodily change of the living saints, would prove that Death and Hades had been conquered: “When this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).

Notice he does NOT say, “the **sting** of death (**sin**) is swallowed up in victory,” but rather that **Death itself** (The Death Angel and the waiting compartment of Hades along with it) is swallowed up. That is a significant difference. But what is far more interesting is that those 1st century living and remaining saints, whose bodies were changed in the twinkling of an eye at the *Parousia* from mortal to immortal, did not experience physical death. And it was their escape from physical death which proved that the **Death Angel** (“Death” personified) had been defeated. He was from that very moment on no longer an enemy who could imprison us in Hades and separate us from the Presence and Fellowship of God in heaven forever.

This means that 1 Cor. 15:54-56 had a unique application to the pre-70 saints that it does not have to saints after AD 70. They were the generation who experienced the bodily change which robbed **Death** (personified) and **Hades** (personified) of their victims, and proved once and for all that Christ had conquered Death (personified) and Hades (personified).

Paul clarifies this further in his second epistle to the Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-4):

- 2 Cor. 5:1 – If the physical body is destroyed, no problem, we have a new immortal body **reserved in heaven** for us (**not** the self-same body, but a **new body** that is **like** Christ's glorious body. (Also see: 2 Cor. 5:16; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).
 - Notice what Apostle John had to say about some kind of change at the *Parousia* in 1 John 3:2-3:
 - “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” [NKJV]

Notice that John includes himself in the "we" who are children of God, and speaks of their individuality in verse 3 by saying "everyone" and "himself." Each of these individuals would "see" Jesus at His *Parousia* (1 John 2:28) and would be changed to "be like Him." Notice also that John uses two "sight" words here: "**see** Him as He is" and "when He is **revealed**." Why does John use the word "revealed" if no one was going to "see" Him at His coming? This implies a **visible** return of Christ, at least visible to the saints. And notice the exhortation to moral and ethical purity in verse 3, which is based on their "hope" of **seeing** Christ at the *Parousia* and **becoming like Him**.

- 2 Cor. 5:2-4 – The saints who remain alive at the *Parousia* have their new bodies "**put on over**" them **without** taking the old bodies off first, so that their mortality is swallowed up (or **changed**) by the life or immortality that is **put on**.

Furthermore, we need to see the contrast in both of these texts (1 Cor. 15 and 2 Cor. 5) between those who have already died versus those who live and remain until the *Parousia*. Jesus is both the RESURRECTION [for the dead ones in Hades] and THE LIFE [for those who “live and remain until the *Parousia*”](John 10:25-26). The dead ones in Hades were raised out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies, while the “living and remaining ones” had immortality “put on over” their old mortal bodies without experiencing death or disembodiment, so that the mortality of their old bodies was “swallowed up” or “changed.” Their old mortal bodies were changed into immortal bodies without ever having to experience death and disembodiment.

Notice in 2 Cor. 5:4 that Paul shudders at the thought of physical death and disembodiment (“nakedness” of the soul) and prefers not to have to go through that “nakedness,” but rather to be one of those who remains until the *Parousia* when Christ will put their new bodies on over the top of their old ones without having to experience the disembodiment of physical death. An amazing concept!

Those who “live and remain until the *Parousia* “do not die” (experience physical death and disembodiment or “nakedness”), but rather have their new bodies “clothed upon” them so that their “mortality” (subjection to death and Hades) is swallowed up (consumed, eliminated) by the new immortal bodies that Christ “puts on” them (or clothes them with) at the *Parousia*.

Now we can easily see how this “change” of bodies (without experiencing the disembodiment of physical death) fits the rapture idea perfectly. Those who “lived and remained until the *Parousia*” (1 Thess. 4:15-17) (We will look deeper into 1 Thess. 4 in our next study in this series - lesson 3) would not have to experience physical death because their bodies would be “changed” right after the dead ones were raised out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies, then both groups, the resurrected dead and the “changed” living saints, would be “caught up together” as one group to meet the Lord.

The Book of Acts and the Resurrection:

Acts 24:14-15 – "there is **about to** be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked." This does not fit the collective body resurrection view which teaches a resurrection of only the righteous (the collective body of the church). This text instead says that **both** the righteous and wicked are raised. Furthermore, this means that when Paul mentioned a resurrection during his trial before Ananias (Acts 23:1-8) that he was talking about this same kind of **individual** resurrection of both the righteous and wicked, since he does not indicate that he is talking about a different kind of resurrection than what he had taught previously (cf. Acts 17:18; 17:32; 23:6; 23:8; 24:15; 24:21). And this word ANASTASIS is the same word used in reference to the individual resurrection of Jesus. Notice also that this resurrection was an event which was still future, **NOT** a process that was already ongoing. When was this resurrection of the dead ones out of Hades supposed to occur? i.e., "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (at the *Parousia*) cf. 1 Cor. 15:52.

Acts 24:25 A key point that we do not want to overlook in this passage, is Paul's statement on trial under oath that "there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:15), and that the Judgment was also "about to be" (Acts 24:25). This closely matches Paul's preaching to the Athenians eight years previously about God having "fixed a day in which He is about to judge the world" (Acts 17:31). These statements are interesting for a lot of reasons, not only because of their affirmations of imminency, but even more so in regard to the nature of this "about to be" resurrection of both the righteous and wicked. This perfectly fits the idea of the **disembodied souls** of the dead being raised up out of **Hades** for the judgment (just like we see pictured in the Sheep and Goat Judgment in Matthew 25).

In the above section we have seen the kind of resurrection Paul had in mind when he affirmed at his trial that "there is **about to** be a resurrection of **both** the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:15), and that the "Judgment was about to be" (Acts 24:25). The Greek word **MELLO** is used in both of these verses. Note that this resurrection that was about to occur, would be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Paul also left the clear impression with the Pharisees that he was teaching the same kind of resurrection that they believed in. He said that he was **STILL** (not "used to be") "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees," and that he was "on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead," the same kind of resurrection that the Pharisees believed in (Acts 23:6). The Pharisees held to the **individual body view resurrection**, especially when referring to a resurrection that would include both the righteous and the wicked, as Paul does here.

Furthermore, he said later in his defense before Agrippa that this particular view of the resurrection, which he shared in common with the Pharisees, was the SAME promise of resurrection that God made to the patriarchs, and to which all twelve tribes hoped to attain (Acts 26:6-8). Later in that same speech before Agrippa, Paul stated that all of his preaching and teaching about the resurrection (and everything else) came straight out of the Old Testament prophets and Moses (Acts 26:22-23).

Speaking on the clear imminence of the resurrection spoken of by Paul, Don Preston states:

- “[Ed] Stevens is correct to say that we have no [patristic] authors who point to AD 70 as the time of Christ's final coming, the judgment and resurrection of the dead. **This silence is indeed perplexing** ...for which we have **no** easy answer...how in the name of reason did they fail to **see** that the *Parousia* had indeed occurred? ...Are we to suppose that the post 70 saints were so ignorant that they could not see that connection?” [We Shall Meet, p. 286, 287, 291, 299. boldface mine].

Indeed, there is no easy answer, but there is a biblical answer, if we are willing to believe it. And we have seen what that answer is, as we looked at 1 Cor. 15 above. It requires no stretch of credulity to understand that the disembodied souls of the dead

saints were raised up out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies. This resurrection occurred in the unseen realm. They were **NOT** raised back into their **physical** bodies in the seen realm. Their disembodied souls were raised out of Hades and given their **new bodies**, all of which occurred in the unseen realm. Then the resurrected dead were gathered together with the **changed living saints** and caught up to be with Christ in the unseen realm above. This very kind of resurrection and catching up in the unseen realm seems to have been witnessed and recorded by Josephus and others.

Look at the following - Historians Mention This Very Kind of Event Occurring:

See especially the boldfaced, underlined, and highlighted material down below (following pages). Note what the priests in the temple on Pentecost (AD 66) heard and experienced. Who were those folks in the unseen realm, whose voices were heard saying that they were leaving the temple? Where had they come from, and where did they go? What was this event, if it was not the resurrection and rapture?

Josephus *The Wars* (Whiston, Book 6, Chapter 5, Sections 2 and 3) [AD 66] War 6:286 (6.5.2)

Now, there was then a **great number of false prophets** suborned by the tyrants to impose upon the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God: and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes.

War 6:288 (6.5.3) Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these **deceivers**, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend, nor give credit, to **the signs** that were **so evident** and did so **plainly foretell their future desolation**; but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see, or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

AD 65-66

War 6:289 (6.5.3) Thus there was a **star resembling a sword**, which stood over the city, and a **comet**, that continued a **whole year**.

Start of Passover week AD 66

War 6:290 (6.5.3) Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], and **at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light** shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which light lasted for half an hour. [Notice "the day and the hour" are given]

War 6:291 (6.5.3) This light seemed to be a good **sign** to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to **portend those events** that followed immediately upon it.

About 5 days after Passover AD 66

War 6:296 (6.5.3) So these publicly declared, that **this signal foreshowed the desolation** that was coming upon them. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the twenty-first day of the month Artemisius [Jyar],

War 6:297 (6.5.3) a certain **prodigious and incredible phenomenon** appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it,

War 6:298 (6.5.3) and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to **deserve such signals**; for, **before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen** [notice "the day and the hour" are given]

War 6:299 (6.5.3) **running about among the clouds**, and surrounding of cities.

Moreover at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, **they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise**,

Night of Pentecost AD 66

War 6:300 (6.5.3) and after that **they heard a sound as of a great multitude**, saying, **"Let us remove hence."**

Sepher Yosippon: A Mediaeval History of Ancient Israel. Trans. from the Hebrew by Dr. Steven B. Bowman. Excerpts from Chapter 87 "Burning of the Temple" [AD 65-66]

AD 65-66 For one year before Vespasian came, a single great star shining like unsheathed swords was seen over the Temple.

Passover week AD 66 And in those days when **the sign** was seen it was the holiday of Passover and during that entire night the **Temple was lit up and illuminated like the light of day**, **and thus it was all seven days of the Passover**. All the sages of Jerusalem knew that it was a **malevolent sign**, but the rest of the ignorant people said that it was a benevolent sign.

Face in the Sky ...**Now it happened after this that there was seen from above over the Holy of Holies for the whole night the outline of a man's face**, the like of whose beauty had never been seen in all the land, and his appearance was quite awesome.

Moreover, **in those days were seen chariots of fire and horsemen, a great force flying across the sky near to the ground coming against Jerusalem and all the land of Judah, all of them horses of fire and riders of fire**. When the holiday of Shavu'oth came in those days, **during the night the priests heard within the Temple something like the sound of men going and the sound of men marching in a multitude going into the Temple, and a terrible and mighty voice was heard speaking: "Let's go and leave this House"**.

Pseudo-Hegesippus. Translated from the Latin by Wade Blocker. This excerpt taken from Chapter 44 in the *Latin critical text* edited by Vincente Ussani.

Also, after many days a **certain figure appeared** of tremendous size, which many saw, just as the books of the Jews have disclosed, **and before the setting of the sun there were suddenly seen in the clouds chariots and armed battle arrays, by which the cities of all Judaea and its territories were invaded.** Moreover in the **celebration itself of the Pentecost** the **priests** entering the interior of the temple at night time, that they might celebrate the usual sacrifices, asserted themselves at first to have **felt a certain movement and a sound given forth, afterwards even to have heard shouted in a sudden voice: "we cross over from here."**

Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 8, Sections 1-6

1 Taking, then, the work of this author [i.e., Josephus], read what he records in the sixth book of his History. His words are as follows: "Thus were the miserable people won over at this time by the **impostors and false prophets**; but they did not heed nor give credit to the **visions and signs** that foretold the **approaching desolation**. On the contrary, as if struck by lightning, and as if possessing neither eyes nor understanding, they slighted the proclamations of God.

2 **At one time a star, in form like a sword, stood over the city, and a comet, which lasted for a whole year;** and again before the revolt and before the disturbances that led to the war, when the people were gathered for the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth of the month Xanthicus, at the ninth hour of the night, **so great a light shone** about the altar and the temple that it **seemed to be bright day**; and this continued for half an hour. This seemed to the unskillful a good sign, but was interpreted by the sacred scribes as **portending** those events which **very soon took place.**

3 And at the same feast a **cow**, led by the high priest to be sacrificed, **brought forth a lamb** in the midst of the temple.

4 And the eastern gate of the inner temple, which was of bronze and **very massive**, and which at evening was **closed with difficulty by twenty men**, and rested upon 10 iron-bound beams, and had bars sunk deep in the ground, **was seen at the sixth hour of the night to open of itself**.

5 And not many days after the feast, on the twenty-first of the month Artemisium, a certain **marvelous vision was seen which passes belief**. The prodigy might seem fabulous were it not related by those who **saw it**, and were not the calamities which followed deserving of such signs. For before the setting of the sun **chariots and armed troops were seen throughout the whole region in mid-air, wheeling through the clouds and encircling the cities**. [AD 66]

6 And at the feast which is called **Pentecost**, when the **priests** entered the temple at night, as was their custom, to perform the services, **they said that at first they perceived a movement and a noise**, and afterward a **voice as of a great multitude**, saying, **'Let us go hence.'** [AD 66]

Tacitus, *Histories*, Book 5

Prodigies had occurred, which this nation, prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice. **There had been seen hosts joining battle in the skies**, the fiery gleam of arms, **the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds**. **The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the gods were departing**. At the same instant there was a **mighty stir as of departure**.