

QUESTIONS:

But what is a BODILY resurrection without the flesh? And doesn't this indicate that the flesh (the corpse) didn't matter anymore and could be left behind, rotting and decomposing? Isn't it all about the spirit finally getting this new, better, perfect, divine 'body'?

Addendum: The Greek for 'spiritual' (like in spiritual body) is pneumatikos, right? According to Strong's that means: pertaining to wind or breath, windy, exposed to the wind, blowing. Now those wouldn't be obvious words to describe something physical or made out of matter, would it? They seem to rather define something 'intangible'

RESPONSE:

OK, I've been getting a lot of questions along these lines (some on the blog itself). So I need to try to clarify the whole matter. It's not easy, for a variety of reasons. But I'll do my best.

First thing to stress: the ancient apocalyptic view of the human that Paul had is not the view of the human that WE have. This is one instance where it becomes crystal clear that we have to try to think in a way that we are decidedly not accustomed to if we want to understand Paul. For US, the body is made of flesh, so when we speak of flesh, we speak of the body. For Paul, the flesh and the body were two different things. That's because, for him, "flesh" does not refer to what WE refer to when we refer to flesh. That is, we think of it as the meat that is hanging on our bones; but that is not what Paul is referring to. He does, of course, know that there is meat hanging on our bones, but that is what he thinks of as our body. It is not our flesh. "Flesh" is a technical term for Paul. It is the bad side of being human. It is that part of the human that has been corrupted by sin and is alienated from God. The flesh is the reason we cannot please God even by keeping the Law. Because sin, using the flesh, forces us to do things in opposition to God. The flesh needs to be destroyed. But since the flesh is not the same thing as the body, that does *not* mean that the body has to be destroyed. The body has to be redeemed, not destroyed. (See how Paul talks about "flesh" in Romans 6-8)

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