

# OUR FINAL CHANGE: FROM PHYSICAL BODIES TO SPIRITUAL BODIES

## Lesson 12

### I. Seeking Perfection

- A. In the world today, there is an obsession with physical beauty.
1. Countless beauty products, exercise programs, and diets are available to help us get our bodies to a "perfect" condition.
  2. Plastic surgery is booming because we want our imperfections removed permanently.
  3. We have allowed Hollywood, fashion models and The Miss America pageant to determine what "perfection" is.
  4. Eating disorders are a result of an obsessive compulsion to have a "perfect body"
  5. Many women are dissatisfied with their looks and are left feeling inferior because they know they know they will never have that perfect body.
- B. Christian women, however, have no need to feel inferior because we know that one day we will actually have a "perfect body".

**Philippians 3:20-21** – *"<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."*

### II. We Will ALL Be Changed.

- A. The biggest mystery of all is what happens to us when time on earth is over.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** – *"<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

1. The word "sleep" actually refers to death, just as it does in **I Thessalonians 4:13-16** – *"<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."*

2. Those who are alive on the last day will NOT precede those who have died.
  3. When you think of it, using the word "sleep" instead of death is another way to confirm that there is truly "life after death".
  4. The connotation of "sleep" is that the one sleeping will eventually awaken.
  5. Those who don't believe in God see death as the END, when it is really just the beginning of the life God has planned for His children (those who are asleep in Jesus).
- B. Our new bodies will not be anything like our earthly bodies.
1. **Philippians 3:20-21** also reminds us that our "citizenship" is not in this earthly life, but in Heaven. We are pilgrims simply passing through this territory on our way home.
    - a. The bodies we were given to use on earth were designed to survive in earth's atmosphere for a limited amount of time.
    - b. Our earthly bodies are constantly decaying from the time we are born until we die.
    - c. Our Heavenly body will be one designed to live in Heaven's atmosphere for all eternity, so obviously it won't be anything like our earthly body.
    - d. This change will occur in an instant – "the twinkling of an eye"

### III. How Will Our Bodies Be Changed?

- A. Paul knows his teaching in will spur two questions:

**I Corinthians 15:35** – "<sup>35</sup> *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"*

1. How will God resurrect our bodies?
  - a. Many ask this question because they are concerned that not every body is buried.
  - b. What about those whose bodies are destroyed by fire, or in disasters so that their body is not intact?
  - c. When we grasp the fact that "nothing is impossible with God" (**Luke 1:37**), then we accept by faith that He will be able to reconstruct every dead body to accomplish His purpose.
2. What does a resurrection body look like?
  - a. Paul uses a common example from earthly life to try to explain this final change.

**I Corinthians 15:35-38** – "<sup>35</sup> *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"*<sup>36</sup> *Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.*<sup>37</sup> *And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.*<sup>38</sup> *But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.*

- b. Our earthly bodies are like seeds.
  - 1) When a seed is planted (buried), as it dies, it produces a NEW body that doesn't look anything like the seed itself.
  - 2) The body that it creates depends upon the kind of seed that was planted. Corn produces corn, wheat produces wheat, etc.
  - 3) Likewise, when we are buried in the ground and resurrected, our bodies will not look anything like the one we have now.
- 3. Paul points out that not all flesh is alike (just as all seeds are not the same).

**I Corinthians 15:39-41** – <sup>39</sup> *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.* <sup>40</sup> *There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* <sup>41</sup> *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory."*

- a. one flesh is of mankind – the only kind that will be resurrected
  - b. one flesh is of beasts
  - c. one flesh is of birds
  - d. one flesh is of fish
  - e. These kinds of flesh are all mentioned in the account of creation in Genesis, but only man is then said to be a "living soul". (**Gen. 2:7 KJV**)
- 4. In verses 40-41 Paul says there are "celestial" bodies and "terrestrial" bodies and the glory they receive is each different.
    - a. Celestial means – heavenly or divine
    - b. Terrestrial means – living or growing on land rather than the sea.
    - c. Not only is the glory of the these two different, the glory of the celestial bodies are different from one another.
      - 1.) The glory of the sun is different from the glory of the moon
      - 2.) The glory of each of the stars is different from all other star.
    - d. We can conclude from this that our resurrected bodies will each be different from one another – we will not ALL be identical.
    - e. We might speculate from this that we may be able to recognize each other in heaven. This seems to be confirmed by the story Jesus told of the rich man who died and was taken to Torment, and Lazarus who died and was taken to Abraham's Bosom.
- B. What are the differences between our earthly bodies and our resurrected bodies?
    - 1. Just as the earthly body is compared to a seed, the resurrected body is the fruit of that seed.

2. The bodies seem to be directly opposite each other:  
**I Corinthians 15:42-44** – “<sup>42</sup> *So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. <sup>43</sup> *It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**
  - a. the earthly body is mortal – the resurrected body is immortal  
mortality is temporary – immortality is permanent
  - b. the earthly body is corrupt – the resurrected body is incorruptible  
Corrupt means contaminated or poisoned. Incorruptible is purity which can never be corrupted.
  - c. the earthly body is sown (buried) in dishonor – the resurrected body is raised in glory. Dishonor is to be shamed. Glory is to be exalted and praised for an achievement – in this case for being found faithful.
  - d. the earthly body is sown (buried) in weakness – the resurrected body is raised in power
  - e. the earthly body is a natural (fleshly) body with many weaknesses– the resurrected body is a spiritual body free from those earthly weaknesses.*
3. These two bodies are personified in Adam and Jesus.  
**I Corinthians 15:45-49** – “<sup>45</sup> *And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> *The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup> *As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."***
  - a. Adam was created from dust on earth by God and became a living being.
  - b. Jesus has always existed in Heaven and became a life-giving spirit.
  - c. For mankind, the natural body must come first and afterward the spiritual body.
  - d. We are born in the image of Adam, and so will we be resurrected to bear the image of Jesus.**
4. Nothing corrupt can ever inherit the kingdom of God
  - a. Our resurrected bodies will be incorruptible
  - b. Our resurrected bodies will be immortal
  - c. When this occurs, death will have been defeated as the last enemy of Christ.

#### IV. What Else Do We Know About Our Resurrected Bodies?

- A. In **Matthew 25:23-33** Jesus speaks to the Sadducees about the resurrection.
1. Sadducees were a sect of the Jews who did not believe there would ever be a resurrection.
  2. They gave Jesus an hypothetical situation that they were sure would be impossible for Him to solve regarding resurrection. Their example is:
    - a. Moses taught that when a man dies, having no children, his brother was to marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.
    - b. But suppose that there were seven brothers and the first died after he had married, but he had no offspring.
    - c. Likewise the second, and the third even to the seventh.
    - d. Last of all the woman died also.
    - e. Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?
  3. Jesus said, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures **nor** the power of God.
    - a. In the resurrection there will be no marriage.
    - b. In the resurrection, we will be "like" the angels of God in heaven.
    - c. Had they not read that God said, "I **am** the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" He didn't say I **was** the God if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
    - d. God is not the God of the dead, but the living – meaning that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob continue to live, though they have been dead for centuries.
- B. How will we be "like" the angels?
1. Please remember the verse says we will be "like" the angels – NOT that we "will be angels".
  2. No man can see the face of God and live: Exodus 33:20 – "*But He said, "You cannot see My face; for **no man** shall see Me, and live."*
  3. Angels stand in the presence of God, therefore, they are NOT flesh and blood like man.
    - **Matthew 18:10** – "*Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.*"
    - **Luke 1:19** – "*And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.*"
  4. Because angels are in the presence of God, at times their faces will shine like lightning, just as Moses' face glowed when God passed before him as he stood in the cleft of the rock on Mount Sinai, in Exodus 33:22.
    - **Matthew 28:1-2** – "*Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to*

*see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow."*

5. Angels can appear and disappear, as in the angel who appeared to Zacharias, the priest, to give him the good news that he and Elizabeth would have a son, named John.
  - **Luke 1:19** – "Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense."
6. Angels can take on the form of a man: Genesis 18:1, the Lord and two angels who appeared to Abraham were described as "three men".
  - **Genesis 18:1-2** – "Then the LORD appeared to him (Abraham) by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> So he (Abraham) lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,"
    - Vs. 21 - Two of these men left Abraham and the Lord and went toward Sodom.
    - Chapter 19:1 plainly calls these two men "angels".
  - **Judges 13:16** – "And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, 'Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.'" (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.)
7. Angels are very powerful:
  - **II Kings 19:35** – "And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead."
  - God used an angel to kill the first born in Egypt:  
**Exodus 12:23-29** – "<sup>23</sup> For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you."
8. Angels can appear as flames of fire.
  - **Hebrews 1:7** – "And of the angels He says: 'Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.'"
  - **Exodus 3:1-2** – "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. <sup>2</sup> And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

9. His clothing is white as snow:

- **Matthew 28:1-2** – *"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow."*
- In the resurrection, we will also be clothed with white garments:  
**Revelation 3:5** – *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

C. Mankind is ranked below angels while on earth, but in the resurrection we will be ranked above the angels as heirs with Christ. We will even "judge" the angels.

1. **1 Corinthians 6:2-4** – *"<sup>2</sup> Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? <sup>4</sup> If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?"*

2. Jesus became human in order to be able to suffer death – which He could not as a God in Heaven. While he was a man, he was "lower than the angels". At His resurrection he shed that earthly body and returned to His natural state as God.

**Hebrews 2:9** – *"<sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."*

D. The work of angels is to be "ministering spirits" to Christians:

**Hebrews 1:13-14** – *"<sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"*

V. **In the beginning, the angels were capable of sin which resulted in condemnation:**

A. **II Peter 2:4** – *"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;"*

B. **Jude 1:6** – *"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;"*

C. After the judgment, that will no longer be true, since all will be perfect in heaven.

1. **Revelation 21:4** – <sup>14</sup> *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*”
2. **Revelation 21:23** – <sup>23</sup> *The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*”
3. **Revelation 21:27** – <sup>27</sup> *But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.*”
4. **Revelation 22:3-5** – <sup>3</sup> *And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.* <sup>4</sup> *They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.* <sup>5</sup> *There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*”

**CONCLUSION:** While we don’t have all of the answers to the wonders that await us in heaven, or exactly what we will look like, we have certainly been given enough information to make us long for that perfect eternal home.

The trials we experience in this life should only increase our longing for a time when we will have none of the problems we now face ever again. Also, knowing that we have loved ones who have already begun this journey, we long to be reunited with them as well as all other faithful Christians whom we have never met. AND we don’t want anyone we love to miss out on this great reward.

Fear of the unknown can prevent some people from looking forward to the passage to heaven. The earthly process may be fearful in some cases of severe diseases or injuries, so God gave us something magnificent to look forward to:

**Romans 8:15-18** – <sup>15</sup> *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."* <sup>16</sup> *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,* <sup>17</sup> *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

<sup>18</sup> ***For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***”