

# [Bodily under these auspices that paul answered the](https://assignbuster.com/bodily-under-these-auspices-that-paul-answered-the/)

Bodily Resurrection and 1 Corinthians 15: 42-54By: Joe ScholarOne of the most significant issues concerning nearly all religions, Christianity among them, concerns the fate of men following their death. Believing in an inevitable resurrection of the body among the faithful, Paul, aprinciple founder of Christianity, asserted his beliefs on the nature of bodilyresurrection in 1 Corinthians 15: 42-54. As eternity tends to last a long time, believing Christians (even agnostics such as myself) would likely be somewhateager to arrive at an accurate interpretation of Paul’s message found in theabove verses, so as to glean insight as to what might await them following theirlast heartbeat. The approach I will take in analyzing 1 Corinthians: 42-54 willbe to: 1) explain how the verses fit in with the overall structure of the book; 2) to explain and paraphrase the meaning behind the passage; 3) relate theverses to similar passages expressed elsewhere by Paul; 4) and lastly to touchupon some of the controversy associated with the verses. 1 Corinthians was written around 54 C.

E. and was addressed to thecongregation which was made up primarily of gentiles and was located in Corinth. At the time, Corinth was a highly urbanized and religiously diverse city whichmade it very conducive to the early Christian movement. Paul’s first letter tothe Corinthians was written as a response to a letter he had received (which didnot survive) from the Corinthians in which Paul was asked to settle variousdisputes that were arising within the struggling congregation.

Writing inapostolic fashion to the congregation he had founded, Paul’s letter whilepastoral, answered numerous questions and demanded numerous changes rangingfrom: the rich eating with the poor at the church suppers (11: 18-22); to curbingthe acceptance of sexual immorality (5: 1-13); to abstaining from taking fellowChristians to court (6: 12-20); to answering the question on the acceptability ofeating meat begot from pagan sacrifice (8: 1-13); to the role of women in thechurch (11: 2-16); to the importance of prophesying (14: 1-40); and much, muchmore. It was under these auspices that Paul answered the question of whetherman would be with or without a body following resurrection. Although all ofthe 15th chapter deals with issues of resurrection, the place of the body iscurtly addressed in verses 42-54 and is prefaced with the 35th verse which asks,” But someone will ask, How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do theycome?'”(15: 35). Paul believed that at the time of the resurrection the perishable bodywould be transformed into an imperishable body, that would neither be a ghost-like spirit nor a fleshly body, but rather some sort of combination of the two. As Sanders phrases it, “…resurrection means transformed body, not walkingcorpse or disembodied spirit.

” As William Wrede describes Paul’s transformationof the body, “ He says that they are dead’ or are risen again’ with Christ’; or more specifically they are dead to sin, to the Law,’ crucified to the world’; the body of sin is destroyed’; they are no longer in the flesh’; or else hesays simply that they are dead'” Paul, whether because he does not recognizethe need for further elaboration, or equally as likely, as he does not know howto accurately elaborate further, does not offer any greater explanation as tothe nature of the new imperishable body. Seemingly similar to changing one’s clothes, Paul simply explains thetransformation, in the capacity of the mortal body putting on’ immortality. The nearly tautological backbone behind Paul’s reasoning is that the since themortal, by definition isn’t immortal, in order to gain an eternal life, themortal must necessarily become immortal. As Wrede interestingly interprets it, “ If the misery of man consists in his habitation in the flesh, his happiness mustdepend on his liberation from the flesh, that is, on his death.” Moreover, onceimmortality is put on, death, the previously inevitable enemy of the mortal, will be destroyed. As Paul crisply writes in verse 54, “ When this perishablebody puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then thesaying that is written will be fulfilled: Death has been swallowed up invictory.

‘”(15: 54). The single implied description Paul does make sure to include regardingthe body, is the notion that the resurrected imperishable body will bear alikeness and similarity to the fleshly body that preceded it. Having believedhe had seen Jesus’s resurrected body (as he wrote in 1 Corinthians 9: 1) whichpresumably outwardly appeared as