

The Man of Dust and the Man of Heaven

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 March 2013

Preacher: Edward Lobb

- [0 : 0 0] Well, let's pick up our Bibles again and continue reading in 1 Corinthians 15. And we pick up at verse 35.
- But someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come? You foolish person. What you sow doesn't come to life unless it dies.
- And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen. And to each kind of seed its own body.
- But not all flesh is the same. There's one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. The heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.
- But the glory of the heavenly is one kind and the glory of the earthly is of another. There's one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars.
- [1 : 0 8] The stars differ from stars in glory. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable.
- What is raised is imperishable. It's sown in dishonor. It's raised in glory. It is sown in weakness.
- It's raised in power. It's sown a natural body. It's raised a spiritual body. If there's a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
- Thus it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it's not the spiritual that is first, but the natural and then the spiritual.
- The first man was from the earth, a man of dust. The second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust.
- [2 : 1 0] And as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
- I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
- Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.
- For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable. And we shall all be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable.
- And this mortal body must put on immortality. And when the perishable puts on imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
- [3 : 1 8] O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Amen. Amen. Amen. And may God bless to us this his word. Well, our title for this morning is The Man of Dust and The Man of Heaven.

and those thoughts or those words are taken more or less from verse 49 of our 1 Corinthians 15 passage. Let's bow our heads together for a moment of prayer.

God, our Father, your ways are beyond our ability to understand fully and yet we greatly rejoice in all that you have revealed to us and we pray that your word will be to us again a joy and a means of illuminating our minds so that we understand the great truth of what happened on the first Easter Sunday and understand something of its glorious implications and we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[5 : 07] Well, friends, let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I expect you've got it open. We'll be looking at almost all the passage that Willie read to us a moment ago but we will be stopping at verse 49.

I wish there was time to do a bit more but that's quite enough, I think. Now, you'll know that sermons that are preached on Easter Sunday morning generally take one of the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus from the four Gospels.

But I wanted to go to 1 Corinthians 15 today for a change. This is a famous chapter and in this chapter Paul deals with both the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of Christian believers.

But there is an angle to Paul's teaching here which it is possible for the unwary reader to miss. And that is that the apostle Paul is not only expounding his own convictions about the resurrection, he's also rebuking the Corinthian Christians for abandoning their convictions about the resurrection.

So let's pick up the scent of this rebuke by looking first of all at verse 12. Now, says Paul, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, which he clearly is by Paul and many others, if he's proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, you Corinthians, that there is no resurrection of the dead?

[6 : 30] So it seems from that verse that there were people at Corinth who were not only denying that Jesus had been raised, they were denying the whole possibility of any kind of resurrection.

There is no resurrection of the dead. Now, is it possible for us to have any sympathy with the idea that resurrection is impossible?

I imagine that a number of people here in this building today who are Christians now, once upon a time found it very hard to believe that the resurrection is possible.

Human beings who don't have the revelation of the Bible are going to find this a difficult idea. We have all of us, I guess, been to funerals. Some of us have been to very many funerals.

But none of us has ever physically met somebody who has been raised from the grave. And none of us here has been able to leave this world and journey into the world to come and then return to report our findings.

[7 : 32] And people like these Corinthians in the first century A.D., living as they did in the thought world of ancient Greece, they'd taken on the old Greek idea of the immortality of the soul.

But the idea that there could be a resurrection of the body was a very strange idea to them. So this chapter 15 of Paul's letter was sent by the apostle to the Corinthians, not only to instruct them, but to rebuke them and to set them straight.

In fact, Paul uses some very choice language as the chapter develops. Look at verse 34. Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning, for some have no knowledge of God.

I say this to your shame. So he's saying to them, you're like drunks who have lost your bearings and lost your way. Wake up. The force of verse 34 is to say that if you deny the resurrection, you don't know God.

You're shamefully ignorant of God. So let's ask this question. Where did Paul himself get his convictions from that Jesus had been raised?

[8 : 38] After all, Paul had not been personally present at the resurrection. He wasn't one of the 12 apostles. He hadn't been there during the 40 days between the resurrection of Jesus and the ascension of Jesus. Where did his convictions come from?

Well, the answer is that Jesus revealed himself to Paul uniquely and spectacularly some two or three years after his ascension when he met Paul on the road to Damascus.

It was the risen, glorious, glorified Lord Jesus who stopped Paul in his tracks. Remember those words that passed between them? Paul, terrified, said, Who are you, Lord?

And the reply came, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now, Paul's experience on the road to Damascus not only converted him, it defined the rest of his life.

He knew that Jesus had been raised, and it was that sure knowledge that gave him the courage to go on preaching the gospel for 30-something years in the teeth of great opposition and hatred.

[9 : 40] Now, you and I, of course, have not met the risen Christ in the way that Paul met him. You and I meet him in the pages of the Bible. But we can accept Paul's testimony to the resurrection of Jesus because Paul is a profoundly truthful man and also because Paul was raised up by God for the very purpose of instructing the Gentiles.

He's the apostle to the Gentiles, which I imagine is the great majority of us. So let's listen to his instruction. First of all, let's look at verses 12 to 19, where Paul shows the pitiable position of those who reject the resurrection.

Now, these eight verses from 12 to 19 show Paul at his most relentlessly logical. He pursues his argument remorselessly. In fact, in this little section, seven times he uses the word if.

If this, then that. If this is true, then that must follow. So it's a developing argument. Let me pick it up at verse 13. If there is no resurrection of the dead, if the resurrection of the dead is not only improbable but impossible, if there's no place in the whole way that God has made everything for the resurrection of the dead, then clearly Christ, not even Christ, has been raised.

That's step number one. Then step number two in verse 14. If Christ has not been raised, if all this talk since 32 AD of Jesus being raised is balderdash, self-deception, and smoke and mirrors, it follows that our preaching, meaning the message that we preach, is in vain.

[11 : 20] The word Paul actually uses is the word empty. Our preaching is empty. It's hot air. It's like the emperor's new clothes. There's nothing actually there. And verse 14, not only is our message a sham, but your faith also is a sham.

Then step number three. Now in verse 15, the if comes towards the end of the sentence, but you'll see that Paul is still using the same construction. We are even found, he says, to be misrepresenting God because we've been testifying about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

In other words, I've been telling lies about God if there is no such thing as the resurrection. Next, verse 16. Now Paul doesn't here develop his argument further.

You'll see that verse 16 more or less repeats verse 13. If the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. But verse 17, although it begins rather like verse 14, shows another consequence of Christ not being raised, and that is that the Corinthians, as well as having a futile faith, are still in their sins.

In other words, they're unforgiven, and there's no way of forgiveness. To be in their sins in this life must mean to be lost in eternity, because sin is the barrier that keeps us from God.

- [12 : 46] And there's another gloomy entailment in verse 18, and that is that without the resurrection of Christ, those who have fallen asleep as Christians, in other words, those who have died as believing Christians, have perished.

They're lost. And then in verse 19, Paul drives his argument home by saying, if in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Now, friends, is that not an undeniable conclusion? Look at us, Christian people. We spend so much time and effort and money on, here comes a list, on supporting gospel work, training Christians in the Bible, sending out missionaries, teaching our children and our young people the gospel, fighting battles over doctrine and ethical behavior, spending time praying and singing and preparing sermons and preaching sermons and supporting each other and loving each other and feeding each other and reading Christian books and organizing conferences, putting on dramas, refurbishing buildings, training apprentices.

You could add a few other things. If Christ has not been raised, all that labor and effort is useless. And we Christians, Paul is saying, are of all people the most pitiable, pathetic bunch in the whole world.

So do you see how Paul is showing us that the resurrection of Jesus is not just some pleasant add-on. It is the cornerstone. It's the linchpin of the gospel. Take it away and everything else collapses.

- [14 : 21] So in this paragraph, Paul is saying, if Christ is not raised, six things follow. First, our gospel preaching is empty. Second, our faith is empty.

Our whole theology is empty. Third, we've been telling lies about God. Fourth, we're still unforgiven and we will always be unforgiven. Fifth, Christians who have died are lost.

Sixth, we are quite the most pathetic, pitiable category of the human race. And look on to verse 32 for just a moment for a final shot of irresistible logic.

If the dead are not raised, says Paul, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. The bistro, the boozier, and the boneyard.

There is nothing else if Christ has not been raised. Now let's move on to the next paragraph where Paul answers those who deny the resurrection.

- [15 : 25] And you'll see that his answer is not only robust, but it also unfolds before us the great future events which are going to bring to an end the history of the world.

So if we've seen first the pitiable position of those who deny the resurrection, we see now the powerful program of the conquering Christ. Verse 20, but in fact, in reality, Christ has been raised from the dead.

And his resurrection on the first Easter morning is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. That means that Jesus is the prototype of resurrected and restored humanity.

His resurrection is the assurance or guarantee of countless others that will follow. Then verse 21 describes the origin of both human death and human resurrection.

Each, he says, came by means of a man. By a man came death. That, of course, is Adam, whose rebellion against God brought the grisly and unwelcome power of death into the world.

- [16 : 34] But, and here's the trump card, by a man, another man, Jesus, has come also the resurrection of the dead. So Adam, whom Paul thinks of as man Mark 1, has brought death, whereas Jesus, who is man Mark 2, has brought resurrection.

And Paul's teaching, both here and in a rather more extended way in Romans chapter 5, Paul's teaching is that all human beings, every last human being, belongs either to Adam or to Christ.

There was a 17th century church leader in England called Thomas Goodwin. And Goodwin said this, In God's sight, there are two men, Adam and Jesus Christ.

And these two men have all other men hanging at their girdle strings. In other words, all of us are attached either to Adam or to Christ.

Those who belong to Christ are those who love him and trust him. Those who belong to Adam are those who have not yet turned to Christ. And what is the end result of our belonging either to Adam or to Christ?

[17 : 43] Well, Paul tells us clearly in verse 22, As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. So if you are in Christ, you're a Christian and you will be raised.

You will be raised if you're in Christ. But if you are in Adam, it means that you're not a Christian and you will die eternally.

If you really want to. But if you're prepared to come to Christ, your allegiance and your identity will be changed and you will be raised in the end.

That's Paul's message. It's really very straightforward. He doesn't mention any other, any third great human being who acts as a representative of the human race.

There's no Moses, there's no Aristotle, there's no Confucius, just two men. And all of us, he says, belong to one or the other. If you still belong to Adam and death, hasn't the time come to move?

[18 : 49] Well, let's look now at verses 23 to 28 where Paul unfolds this powerful program of the conquering Christ.

These are the events that will accompany the end of the world and its history. And this is a very important passage. It's a terrific passage. Not very well known. I don't know why it's not so well known, but it's a very important passage.

So what is Paul saying in verses 23 to 28? He's giving us the history of the end of the world in four stages, the first of which has happened and the other three still remain.

So the first thing, Christ the firstfruits has been raised, verse 23. And that has happened almost 2,000 years ago. Secondly, still in verse 23, at his coming, his return in the future, those who belong to Christ will also be bodily raised as he was.

Then third, and now here we have to read rather carefully because Paul starts verse 24 by saying, then comes the end. But you realize as you read on through verse 24 that Christ is going to have to achieve something else before the end.

[20 : 01] The end when he finally delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. And the thing that he is going to achieve first is that he must destroy every rule and authority and power, every force that is ranged against him.

And that means that Christ, and this is not God the Father, this is the Lord Jesus, is going to destroy, that's a very strong word there in verse 24, he's going to destroy every rule, every authority, notice the every repeated, every authority and power, every godless system of government which opposes him, every atheistic system of philosophy and human thought, every movement of the human spirit that exalts man and defies man's creator.

All these forces will in the end be overwhelmingly subjugated. Their teeth will be drawn, their claws will be clipped, their voices will be silenced by the true king, the Lord Jesus, whom no one in the end will be able to defy.

Now friends, that is a great comfort to us because we live in a world where Christ is so often scorned and where we sometimes feel as we look around us that the forces of hell and destruction are gaining the upper hand.

But in the end, Christ will reign in awesome majesty and every knee will bow before him. And look at what Paul says in verse 25, he must reign.

[21 : 31] There's a divine necessity there in that verb. He must and he will because God has decreed it. He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet, every last one, including, verse 26, the last and fiercest of all of them, which is death.

Death is a kind of usurping tyrant which has insinuated itself into the world and it seems to carry all before it, but its days are numbered. So friends, we must not underestimate our Lord Jesus.

We shall understand his power one day in a way that we've only just begun to glimpse now. Verses 27 and 28 make the point that God the Father has put everything under the authority of Jesus.

And this is rather a trivial parallel to draw, but it's rather like the story of Genesis that we've been reading recently, where Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, puts everything under the authority of Joseph, except, of course, himself as the high king.

And that's what these last two verses are saying about the Father and the Son. When the end comes and Jesus, having done his work of destroying all the opposing powers, then delivers the kingdom back to God the Father, God the Father will then be seen to be supreme all in all.

[22 : 52] And Jesus, although equal to him in deity, will be seen to be subject to him in the working out of his plans and purposes. So do you see in this fourfold, this fourstage outworking?

The resurrection of Jesus that happened 2,000 years ago is only the beginning, but it is the guarantee of all these wonderful things which one day we will see with our own eyes.

And let's look on to verse 35 and we'll pick up the thread from there. In verse 35, Paul is putting on his boxing gloves again and he's getting ready for another round with these skeptical Corinthians.

And in verse 35, he pictures a particular Corinthian asking, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come? Now that question is not just expressing ignorance, it's expressing unbelief or skepticism.

That's why Paul calls this man foolish in verse 36. You foolish person. This person is speaking as someone who will not accept the idea of a bodily resurrection.

[24 : 03] When he says, with what kind of body are the dead raised, he's picturing in his mind the decomposition of the human body after death and burial.

And he's skeptically asking, what kind of a body could possibly arise from a heap of decomposing rubbish? He seems to be thinking that Paul is teaching that moldering bones and decayed horrible flesh are somehow going to be reconstituted and rehydrated.

A bit like one of those films that we sometimes see about zombies coming out of graveyards and lumbering about. Now Paul's reply is to say, how foolish.

I'm not talking about reconstituting decaying flesh and bones. I'm talking about something wonderfully fresh and new. A new, wonderful, God-given body.

And he then takes the man he's talking to into his vegetable garden. And he says in verses 36 and 37, just think of the seeds that you sow in the soil.

[25 : 05] The seed that you plant goes into the ground and the seed then withers and dies and disappears. But from it arises something fresh and new and different.

I imagine we have a few gardeners here. I'm a sort of very amateur gardener and at this time of the year I generally like to plant potatoes. I've had some egg trays full of potatoes in my study for about three weeks.

I've been waiting for warm weather. You can't sow potatoes when it's freezing like this at night so they're still waiting. But you know what happens if you sow a potato? You stick it in the ground about this much below the surface and you heap up earth and so on and then you count off about three months or three and a half months by which time it's probably July or August.

You put the fork in and up comes this lovely cluster of new potatoes and as you look carefully you will see the shriveled skin of the old seed potato which is useless.

You just have to chuck it away. That's the idea that Paul is using here. Look at verse 37. What you sow is not the body that is to be, you foolish Corinthian skeptic.

[26 : 14] Are you thinking that the old discarded decomposing body is the future body? It's not. That old body disappears. It's neither use nor ornament. The new body then arises in its place.

That is the God-given resurrection body. Now in verses 38 to 41 Paul develops the idea of how God differentiates between the various kinds of body that he makes.

And the point is, as verse 38 puts it, that all this is of God's choice. And God chooses to be wonderfully varied in making things. So look at verse 39.

For not all flesh is the same. There is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, another for fish. We have human beings, we have tigers, poodles, turkeys, ostriches, haddock, cod, and mackerel.

They're all different from each other. Haddock and chips, sir, that'll be four pounds fifty. Skate wings, rock salmon, we can do that, you name it, we have it. There's great variety in the blue lagoon.

[27 : 22] And so he goes on in verses 40 and 41. You'll see he moves from vegetable to animal to mineral, ending up with the differing glory of the stars, the moon, and the sun.

And what is his point in taking us through this whistle-stop panorama of the creation? His point is that things differ. And that's the way it has pleased God to make things.

God is wonderfully powerful and varied and creative. And the fact that oak trees and tigers and codfish and stars are all so different from each other prepares us for the main point in verse 42, and that is that the dead body that is put into the grave is entirely different from the new resurrection body that will come out of the grave.

And from verse 42 to 44, Paul shows us four ways in which this difference shows. first, verse 42, the old body, the corpse, is sown, in inverted commas, sown into the ground like planting your seed potato.

And what is sown, says Paul, is perishable. It decomposes and finally disappears. But what is raised is imperishable. The new body can never die again.

[28 : 43] Secondly, verse 43, the old body is sown into the ground in dishonor. Now, I know that we treat the bodies of our dead with respect, but they no longer belong to the sunlight or the fresh air.

They no longer have an honored place on earth. When somebody preserves a body like Vladimir Lenin, is he still about? We think this is ridiculous.

There's something quite absurd about that, isn't there? That the body, when it dies, has to be disposed of. We know that. But Paul says the body sown in dishonor is raised in glory.

The new body will be a glorious body. Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 that the Lord Jesus will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body.

Thirdly, still in verse 43, it is sown in weakness. Now, it's obviously weak when it's dead, but it's weak when it's still alive, isn't it? Think of your body.

[29 : 43] Think of the best kind of body. You imagine a 17 or 18 stone Scotland rugby prop running out onto the pitch to face England. Sorry.

Let's think of an English chap who runs out onto the pitch to face Scotland. Oh, dear. I got that wrong, didn't I? Anyway, here's this English prop forward. He looks a magnificent specimen of humanity, doesn't he?

Bulging biceps and thighs like a thunderbolt. But after five minutes, he has a little knock in his hip and he's laid low and he has to be stretched off, doesn't he? That's the frailty of the human race.

But, says Paul, the body sown in weakness will be raised in power. And then fourthly, verse 44, it is sown a natural body, a body fitted for the life of this world.

That's what he means. But it is raised a spiritual body, still a body, but a spiritual one. That means a body fitted for the realm of God himself. Now, friends, this is very, very encouraging for mortals.

[30 : 47] And this teaching is not just for older Christians. It is for younger Christians as well. The time to start preparing for death is when you're young, not when you get to 60 or 70.

We know that death can come to us in youth or middle age, as well as when we're old. But it's the kind of teaching that enables us to think about death calmly. and even with a sense of happy anticipation.

We cannot keep our healthy, youthful bodies. People kid themselves that they can. You think of the person who goes jogging five times a week, goes to the gym five times a week and does all sorts of stuff, plays five different types of sport per week, and yet that person cannot stop the aging process.

You know, sometimes I look at the mirror, I look at myself in the mirror, especially first thing in the morning, and the words of the old hymn come to me, change and decay.

In all around I see. But why should I worry about getting wrinkly and crinkly and saggy and baggy and lumpy and bumpy if verses 42 to 44 are true?

[32 : 00] In fact, if I do worry about the aging process, it means that I don't really believe what Paul is teaching. God has put these verses here for our comfort and joy. They teach us the truth about the resurrection.

And if we don't believe these words, Paul says to us in the words of verse 36, you are a fool, a foolish person. So the new body is better than the old body.

Much better. Well, now lastly, let's look at one other contrast. The new is better than the old in the body. But lastly, Christ's likeness, Christ's image, is better than Adam's.

When we get to verse 45, Paul is not really changing direction, but he brings in a new element. He brings a new ingredient to his teaching. Up to now, he's been contrasting the old body with the resurrection body.

But now he begins to contrast the image of Adam, which is seen in unconverted men and women, with the image of Christ that shows in Christians. Paul is saying the non-Christian bears the image of Adam.

[33 : 09] And if you look back to verse 22, you know what is involved with belonging to Adam, and that is death, eternal death. But to belong to Christ means that Christians are being remade into the image of Christ so as to bear his likeness.

I just think for a moment of the face of a very young baby boy, who does he look like? The answer is Winston Churchill.

All babies look like Winston Churchill, we know that. But you picture that young baby boy in 20 or 30 years' time. Who does he look like now? The answer is his father, at least to some extent.

And as life goes on, we know that all of us usually show the physical characteristics of our parents and our grandparents. Now, Paul is saying something rather similar in these verses, that those who become Christians lose the image, the features of Adam, and begin to show the likeness of Christ.

And Paul is saying Christians will fully bear the image of Christ in the resurrection. Back in verse 22, Paul has made the point that there are only two groups of people in the world.

[34 : 26] the Adamites, who will die as Adam did, and the Christians, who belong to Christ and who will live forever. And again here in verse 45, Paul is contrasting Adam and Christ.

The first man, he says, the first man, Adam, became a living being. That's a quotation straight from Genesis 2. And the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Jesus is the last Adam. He is the second, the final Adam. Now, let's trace through what Paul says in verses 47 to 49. Verse 47 is about the origins of Adam and Christ.

The first man, that is Adam, or man Mark 1, was from the earth, a man of dust. Remember Genesis 2, 7? Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground.

The Lord didn't speak him into existence as he had spoken into existence the moon and stars. He took the dust of the ground and fashioned it into a human being. Sometimes people are called Dusty, aren't they?

[35 : 31] There was an England full back called Dusty Hare some years ago. He was a good goal kicker. Do you remember him? A bit like Andy Irvin, not as good as Andy Irvin, but Dusty Hare was a good goal kicker. What a name to have, Dusty.

Really, it's the middle name of all of us, isn't it? Edward Dusty Lobb. So, verse 47 explains that Adam originated from the dust.

But, but Paul goes on, the second man is from heaven. Yes, he was just as much a flesh and blood human being as the rest of us, but his origin is heaven.

He came not from the dust, but from God the Father. So, verse 47 is about their origins. Then, verse 48 is about the nature.

You might almost say the consistency, what we're made of, of all who belong to Adam and all who belong to Christ. So, what are we made of? Well, we all start in life as Adam did, made of dust.

[36 : 30] But once we belong to Christ, our nature changes. So that Paul can say, as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

So, the moment we turn to Christ, the moment we become Christians, we are no longer of the dust. We are of heaven. If the person sitting next to you is a Christian, then that person is of heaven.

He or she belongs to heaven. But if the person sitting next to you is not a Christian, then that person is still of the dust. And unless they turn to Christ, at the end, God will have to say to them, as he said to Adam, dust you are, and to dust you will return.

So, verse 47 is about the origins of Adam and Christ. Verse 48 is about the nature of those who are Christians and those who are not. And then lastly, verse 49 is about the certain future of those who belong to Christ.

The certain future. Now, friends, I have a feeling that this verse 49 is not at all a well-known verse, but it deserves to be. It's one of the most joyful, wonderful verses in the New Testament.

[37 : 43] The kind of verse that it would be good to write up on the blackboard in your kitchen. Let me read it again. 49. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

That is about the certain future of all Christians. We started off looking like Winston Churchill. We then began to look like our fathers and our mothers.

But finally, Paul is saying, we shall be the spitting image of the man of heaven, Jesus himself. God's son. Not, I imagine, as far as physical individual characteristics are concerned, but our characters, the people we are, will be changed and shaped to be exactly like his.

This is a process that starts here and now on earth. Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8 that we are being conformed, reshaped to the image of God's son.

So even during this life, the Lord is taking the raw, unpromising materials of our minds and hearts and is reshaping them to be like Christ.

[38 : 52] But what verse 49 is saying is that in heaven, in the end, in the resurrection, we shall be fully like Christ. All the corruption and rottenness of our inner being will be taken away and we shall then bear fully the image of the man of heaven.

Isn't this a wonderful verse? This, friends, is what the resurrection of Jesus leads to in the end. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Let's pray together. Dear God, our Father, we thank you that in the resurrection of Jesus, these great final events of the history of the world were started.

And we thank you so much that they will continue by your decree and by your power. We thank you that Christ must reign until every enemy is put under his feet and subjected to him, even the last enemy, death itself.

God's name is God's name.

[40 : 19] We thank you, and we pray that you'll fill us with joy and assurance as we seek to serve you and to tell the good news about the resurrection. her welcome to our next nation.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.