



## Will We Really be Raised from the Dead?

The Bible tells us that when Jesus returns to earth, he will physically raise all those who have died, giving them back the bodies they lost at death. These will be the same bodies people had in earthly life—but our resurrection bodies will not die and, for the righteous, they will be transformed into a glorified state, freed from suffering and pain, and enabled to do many of the amazing things Jesus could do with his glorified body (see 1 Cor. 15:35–44, 1 John 3:2). The resurrection of the body is an essential Christian doctrine, as the apostle Paul declares: “If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (1 Cor. 15:13–18).

Because, as Paul tells us, the Christian faith cannot exist without this doctrine, it has been infallibly defined by the Church. It is included in the three infallible professions of faith—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—and has been solemnly, infallibly taught by ecumenical councils.

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), infallibly defined that at the second coming Jesus “will judge the living and the dead, to render to every person according to his works, both to the reprobate and to the elect. All of them will rise with their own bodies, which they now wear, so as to receive according to their deserts, whether these be good or bad [Rom. 2:6–11] (constitution 1).

Most recently, the Catechism of the Catholic Church reiterated this long-defined teaching, stating, “We believe in the true resurrection of this flesh that we now possess’ (Council of Lyons II). We sow a corruptible body in the tomb, but he raises up an incorruptible body, a ‘spiritual body’ (cf. 1 Cor 15:42–44)” (CCC 1017). As the following quotes from the Church Fathers show, this has been the historic teaching of the Christian faith on the matter since the very beginning.

### **Pope Clement I**

“Let us consider, beloved, how the Master is continually proving to us that there will be a future resurrection, of which he has made the Lord Jesus Christ the firstling, by raising him from the dead. Let us look, beloved, at the resurrection which is taking place seasonally. Day and night make known the resurrection to us. The night sleeps, the day arises. Consider the plants that grow. How and in what manner does the sowing take place? The sower went forth and cast each of the seeds onto the ground; and they fall

to the ground, parched and bare, where they decay. Then from their decay the greatness of the master's providence raises them up, and from the one grain more grow and bring forth fruit" (Letter to the Corinthians 24:1–6 [A.D. 80]).

### **The Apostles' Creed**

"I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead. Amen" (A.D. 125).

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