

384 Resurrection of the body – AI generated

Thinking about one of the responses I received,^[383] about the previous article,^[382] I felt that most of us probably haven't a clue what we mean by one of the credal statements we repeat, so I asked an AI!

What do Christians believe about 'the resurrection of the body'?

In Christian belief, 'the resurrection of the body' refers to the future event when, at the end of time, God will raise the dead and reunite each person's soul with a transformed, glorified version of their physical body. This isn't just a metaphor or spiritual idea – it's understood as a real, bodily resurrection, modelled after Jesus' own resurrection.

The Apostle Paul describes it vividly in 1 Corinthians 15: the body that is 'sown perishable' will be 'raised imperishable', meaning it will no longer decay, suffer, or die. Christians believe this resurrected body will be physical yet perfected – free from weakness, pain, and sin, and fully suited for eternal life with God.

This belief affirms the goodness of the physical world and the human body, and it's a key part of Christian hope: not just life after death, but a full restoration of the whole person in a renewed creation.

It's a pretty powerful idea – eternity not as disembodied spirits, but as whole, renewed beings.

What does N T Wright believe about 'the resurrection of the body'?

N T Wright, a prominent New Testament scholar and former Bishop of Durham, holds a robust and nuanced view of 'the resurrection of the body'. He argues that early Christians believed not in a disembodied afterlife, but in a bodily resurrection – a transformed, physical existence in God's renewed creation.

Here are some key points from his perspective:

Historical and Jewish roots: Wright emphasizes that resurrection was a Jewish belief rooted in the hope that God would one day restore justice and renew creation. He contrasts this with Greek ideas of the soul escaping the body, which he says early Christians rejected.

Jesus' resurrection as the prototype: For Wright, Jesus' bodily resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian hope. He insists it was a real, historical event – not a metaphor or spiritual vision – and that it inaugurated the new creation. Christians, then, will follow in that pattern: raised bodily into a new mode of existence.

Not 'life after death,' but 'life after life after death': Wright famously distinguishes between the intermediate state (where souls rest with God) and the final resurrection, when bodies will be raised and creation renewed. The ultimate Christian hope, he says, is not going to heaven, but being raised to new life in a renewed world.

Commented [PB1]: 'Reunite soul and body'?! NTW says this soul/body dichotomy comes from Plato, not the Bible, but AI is right: this IS what Christians have been told to believe.

A new creation: He sees resurrection as part of God's plan to redeem not just individuals, but the entire cosmos. It's not about escaping the world, but about God transforming it – and us – completely.

Wright's view is both deeply traditional and refreshingly radical. He challenges modern Christians to recover this ancient hope: not just survival after death, but full bodily renewal in God's future.

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