

According to the Scriptures, the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation for our belief in our own resurrection. Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 15:17, that "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Paul's argument is that the hope of our own bodily resurrection is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Jehovah's Witnesses, however, do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. They believe Jesus was raised as a spirit. The body the disciples of Jesus saw, the Witnesses claim, was a fabricated body that God produced for Jesus. God produced another body for Jesus in order to prove to the disciples that Jesus arose from the dead; it was not the body Jesus had while on the earth prior to His death. The basis for this claim is the inability of some of the followers of Jesus to immediately identify the risen Jesus upon first sight. In this letter to my friend who is a Jehovah's Witness, I will deal with the three texts from the Gospels that they use to support their view. I want to demonstrate that the Witnesses have ignored what these Scriptures clearly reveal about the inability of some of the disciples to instantaneously recognize Jesus.

Hi

I am looking out my little window at the second story of my house being built. It is very hot and the men started at 6 AM to beat the heat. Tomorrow they will start at 5 AM because it will be 100 degrees during the day. The air conditioner in our little camper does not do a very good job, but it does keep the humidity down. We have to close most of the shades to keep the sun from beating in and "cooking" us. The progress of the house, though, keeps me hopeful!

In answer to your question, friend, yes, I do believe that I will be resurrected in the body I have now, just as you, too, believe. On the other hand, unlike Jehovah's Witnesses, I believe that my resurrection is based on the bodily resurrection of Jesus. According to the writings of the Witnesses, Jesus was raised a spirit being—without a body. Jehovah, then, manufactured a different body for Jesus. The evidence given in your writings is that, on three occasions, some of the disciples of Jesus did not recognize Jesus immediately. I would like to inspect these texts.

Along the road to Emmaus, three days after the death of Christ, two disciples of Jesus encountered the risen Jesus whom they did not recognize (Luke 24:13-27). Was it because Jesus had been raised a spirit being? The text itself gives the answer: "Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him" (v. 16). They did not recognize Jesus, not because He had another body, but, because they had purposefully been prevented by Jesus from recognizing Him.

Mary Magdalene, a female follower of Jesus, imagined that Jesus was merely a gardener when He appeared to her following His resurrection (John 20:1-18). The text gives us clues why this was so. It was "early" and "still dark" when the encounter occurred (v. 1). Four times the text relates that she was crying when she saw Jesus (vv. 11 twice, 13, and 14). Finally, when Jesus spoke her name, she had to turn in order to look at him (v. 16). These three bits of information provide the answer for her lack of recognition. Not once does the text inform us that she did not know Jesus because He was in another body.

John reports that, after the resurrection, "Jesus made Himself visible again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius" (John 21:1-8). Peter and the other disciples had gone fishing when Jesus appeared on the beach. The text relates that "the disciples did not know that it was Jesus" (v. 4). Was it because Jehovah had given Jesus' resurrected spirit another body? On the contrary, Jesus was immediately recognized as soon as the disciples breached the 100 yard (the space of a football field) distance between them. Additionally, their vision had been hampered by the fact that "the day was now breaking"—it was not light enough to see clearly (v. 4).

In each of the three proof-texts given in your writings, not one asserts that Jesus was raised a spirit-being clothed in a unique body. On the contrary, ample evidence is given in the text to explain the disciples' inability to identify Jesus. Furthermore, at all other appearances of Jesus, when there are no visual hindrances, Jesus is recognized instantaneously.

Barbara