CoreGroup Guide | Afterlife - Part 2
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Welcome

Hello friends and welcome to the second week of our series called *Afterlife: What Comes Next*. In this series, we are looking at what the Bible says about God's plans for us when our time on Earth is done. In our first week, we looked at different descriptions of what paradise could be, from anything like the Garden of Eden to cities of gold shining with the glory of God. This week, we will focus our discussion on resurrection and what we can expect our bodies to be like in the afterlife.

Resurrection is usually a Jesus topic, not something we consider when talking about ourselves. But the Bible says otherwise. This week might evoke some wild thoughts, but the theme of this series is otherworldly and kind of meta. Plus, there are no wrong answers because we are discussing something truly mysterious and there's lots of gray involved. So queue those fog machines, open your imaginations, and trust that the Holy Spirit will help guide us through good conversations.

Opening Prayer

Hey God, we are about to discuss a difficult topic. We ask for your presence as we navigate resurrection. Please grant us new insight and peaceful thoughts. Help us to understand these concepts and to find ways toward gentle communication. It is in your name we pray, amen.

Ice Breaker

We are now in the month of November which is a time that usually includes really good food and tasty leftovers. What is your favorite way to tackle leftovers? Do you simply reheat or do you create something new?

The Head

Our scriptures this week are organized in a way to frame an understanding of resurrection.The first two verses are from Genesis, which is the first book of the Bible located in the Old Testament. It's important to recognize first that we humans are a creation of God's design.

> **Genesis 1:31**
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> *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*
>
> **Genesis 2:7**
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> *Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

Next, we look at the time after Jesus was resurrected. In these verses from the New Testament Books of Luke and John, Jesus is proving to his disciples that his body was truly resurrected from the grave.

Luke 24:39-43

"See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.

John 20:26-27

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you. " Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Finally, we look at the Apostle Paul's letter to new believers in the ancient city of Corinth. This provides some of the most insightful descriptions of what happens to our being in the afterlife.

1 Corinthians 15:37-40

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. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55

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 be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

- What are your key takeaways from the verses in Genesis?
- What aspects of God do you recognize in the verses from Genesis?
- Turning to the scriptures from Luke and John, why was it important for Jesus to show others that he was physically resurrected, not just spiritually?
- In Luke, Jesus pivots in almost a comedic way by showing his disciples the wounds that are still present from crucifixion, but then saying, "Hey, I'm hungry!" To be fair, he had not eaten in at least 3 days, but what does this interaction demonstrate to his disciples?
- In 1 Corinthians, Paul states that there is a physical body and a spiritual body that will join together, using the words "imperishable" and "immortal." What jumps out to you about these verses? What questions do you have?

The Heart

It is really wild to think about how God's plans for us don't end after life on Earth. How this works for us is a true mystery. God created spiritual bodies within us that thrive in divine harmony after our physical bodies die. Then those spiritual bodies merge back with our physical bodies at a time only God knows. We are assured, though, that our physical bodies will resurrect in a way that erases pain, death, and suffering; that is a true blessing.

What we know from Genesis this week is that God was happy with creation. Humans were special in that creation, and God sought a relationship with humans. Once sin changed that relationship, God created a plan to restore what was lost. The birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus defeated sin and provided a path to a reconciled relationship with God. Resurrection was key because Jesus made it possible.

- What aspects of our physical bodies vs. our spiritual bodies stir up the most reflections in you right now?
- From our creation through our own personal resurrection, what role does Jesus play?
- What are your thoughts, feelings, hopes, and/or concerns about resurrection?
- If you are not sure about any of this, for any reason, what questions do you have?

The Hands

The word resurrection comes from the Latin noun *resurrectio*, meaning "a rising again." This makes sense in the context of our discussion today, but there has been plenty of talk so far on the afterlife. So, in this section, reserved to be the hands of the church, let's focus on the Latin verb to rise again, in this life.

- Relying on our Biblical understanding of resurrection, what area of life could use that Harry Potter-like *ressurectio*?
- What steps are needed to implement that *ressurectio*?
- Who in your life right now could you help to begin a rise-again spirit?
- What can our group keep in our hearts and on our minds as we pray this week?

Closing Prayer

A prayer from 1 Peter 1:3-4

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You have a pure and enduring inheritance that cannot perish—an inheritance that is presently kept safe in heaven for you.

Amen, God be with us.