

## Great Exchange and Great Reversal

Two great events mark the divine calendar: the Great Exchange and the Great Reversal. The former refers to the exchange of death for life facilitated by Christ on the cross. The second refers to future cosmic transformation, even now in process (Matt 19:28). Someday, God will undo the curse of sin, right all wrongs, heal all diseases, restore all minds, mend all hearts, revive all broken relationships, restore the environment, and destroy death (Rev 21:1-4).

In 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 Paul describes the existential aspects of the Exchange and Reversal. He contrasts the similarities and differences between our present bodies and our current existence with our future resurrection bodies and heavenly existence in response to the question, "With what kind of body do they come?" (v. 35):

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is 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 is 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, 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.

The various contrasts between our present fallen, earthly physical existence, and our future resurrection life in God's eternal sanctuary can be summarized in this way:

### Present

sown in corruption  
sown in dishonor  
sown in weakness  
sown in a physical body  
first man, Adam  
a "living being"  
natural (first)  
from earth  
man of dust  
image of the man of dust

### Future

raised in incorruption  
raised in glory  
raised in power  
raised in a spiritual body  
last Adam (Christ)  
a life-giving spirit (Christ)  
spiritual (second)  
from heaven  
man of heaven (Christ)  
image of the man from heaven

According to the biblical worldview, we are waiting for God's Great Reversal to be fully implemented. Until then, we live in the "present evil age" (Gal 1:4) that is typified by finitude and fallenness (Ps 90:1-11). In this age human beings are frail and corrupt, hence dishonorable in comparison to the "spiritual" beings of the "age to come" (Mark 10:30; 1Tim 6:19). In "this age" (1Cor 3:18) we are all "dust creatures" and earthly, conformed to the image of the first Adam, who sinned. But, in the "renewal of all things" (Matt 19:28) we shall be like Jesus Christ and "conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29).

For now, therefore, when we are blessed and bless others, we participate in the heavenly world that is coming. Even now, every little restoration we experience in this life (forgiveness, joys, hopes, healing) points forward to the great restoration (reversal) yet to come. When we love, we bring the heavenly "world of love" to earth, at least provisionally. When we benefit from God's Great Exchange in Christ, we also participate in His Great Reversal that is already progressing towards its final goal.