

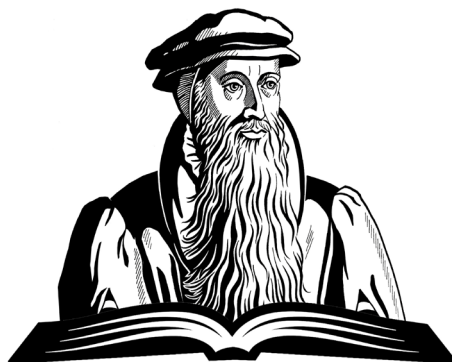
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**VIDEO LECTURE MODULE:  
THE APOSTLES' CREED**

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*LECTURE 12*  
**ARTICLE 11: THE RESURRECTION  
OF THE BODY**

Lecturer Presenter: Rev. Cornelis Harinck



**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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## *Module*

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# THE APOSTLES' CREED

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Lecturer Presenter: Rev. Cornelis Harinck

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# THE APOSTLES' CREED

Rev. Cornelis Harinck  
*Transcript—Lecture 12*

## Article 11: The Resurrection of the Body

In Article 11 of the Apostles' Creed, the Christian confesses, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." When Jesus, after the death of her brother Lazarus, met sorrowful Martha, he said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:23–24). She misunderstood the words of Jesus. She did not think that Jesus had presently come to raise her brother from the dead. Instead, Jesus's words prompted her to think of the general resurrection of the dead, at the end of the world. Yet, her answer reveals that the resurrection of all the dead was widely believed among the Jews.

Based on the words of Moses and the prophets, the Jews believed in the truth of the resurrection of all the dead. We must acknowledge that the doctrine of the continued existence of the soul and body after death is revealed less clearly in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. The apostle argues, in 2 Timothy 1, verse 10, that this truth has been revealed more clearly in the New Testament, due to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He says, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The gospel of the New Testament is a clearer revelation of the truth of the resurrection of the body, than the Old Testament. Let us only think of what is said, in Revelation 20, verse 13: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." The New Testament gospel message speaks very clearly of the existence of soul and body after death. Believers expected a glorious resurrection of the body. The resurrection of Christ gave the Christians a hope that reached beyond death and grave.

Christ, their Savior, is called the firstfruits of the resurrection. This implies that the full harvest will follow and that the resurrection of the people of God will be like that of their heavenly Lord. His resurrection was a bodily resurrection, and theirs will be of the same kind. In Romans 8, verse 11, we are told explicitly that God, through his Spirit, will raise up the mortal bodies of the believers. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you."

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer is the warrant of a glorious resurrection of their mortal bodies. The same Spirit which quickened them out of their spiritual death, and is now dwelling in them, shall raise up their bodies from bodily death. With his divine energy, the Holy Spirit will quicken our mortal body. He will remodel, reanimate, and reenter his former abode, replenishing it with his glory through eternity.

Although the godly, in the Old Testament, focused very much on experiencing God's favor in this life, the belief in the resurrection of the dead is not absent from the Old Testament. The Old Testament speaks of the conscious and continuing existence of man's body and soul, in a place of either eternal happiness or of eternal misery. We already read of Enoch: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"—Genesis 5, verse 24. He was taken from the earth in both body and soul, and where else could he have gone, but to heaven? However, the life of the ungodly will end in eternal darkness. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"—Psalm 9, verse 17. They have no part in the salvation of the godly. The godly of the Old Testament professed their expectation of a blessed eternal life after death in both soul and body.

The resurrection of the dead is an essential component of what is called "the hope of Israel."

When Paul was summoned to testify before the Jewish council, knowing that one part of the council was made up of Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the other part of Pharisees who did believe in the resurrection of the dead, he exclaimed to the council, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question”—Acts 23, verse 6.

The hope of the resurrection was, for Israel, the hope of immortality, that is, the hope of one’s continued existence in body and soul, in God’s eternal kingdom. In Psalm 16, David speaks of this hope, saying, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”—Psalm 16, verse 11. In Psalm 17, he testifies, “As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness”—Psalm 17, verse 15. We also think of Job, who declared, “For I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”—Job 19, verses 25 and 26. Asaph confesses, in Psalm 73, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (verse 24). Isaiah proclaims, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body, shall they arise.” He then even exhorts the dead that have returned to the dust to rejoice, saying, “Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead”—Isaiah 26, verse 19. These Old Testament Scriptures speak of experiencing joy in communion with God after death.

Death was not the end for Old Testament believers. The end of life did not culminate in destruction, but rather, in resurrection. In Daniel 12, verse 13, God says to Daniel, “But go you your way till the end be: for you shalt rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days.” The Old Testament declares the resurrection of the dead to be an act of God’s omnipotence. This is set before us very graphically, in what Ezekiel saw in his vision. In Ezekiel 37, we read that the prophet stood before a valley filled with the bones of dead people. Regarding these dead bones, it is emphatically stated: “And, lo, they were very dry” (verse 2). Not a trace of life could be detected. In response to the Lord’s question, as to whether these dead could again live, he could only answer, “O Lord GOD, Thou knowest” (verse 3). It seemed so impossible! However, the Lord raised these bones to life by saying to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD”—Ezekiel 37, verses 5 and 6. Upon God’s command, the dead will be made alive, so that all creatures might know that he alone is the Lord. The resurrection of the dead is a supernatural work that only God can accomplish.

As for the resurrection of the dead in the New Testament, we must say, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is taught emphatically and abundantly in the letters of the apostles. The faith and hope of the Christians were that, one day, they, like their Lord and Savior, would bodily arise from the dead: “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you”—2 Corinthians 4, verse 14. In the Book of Revelation, John testifies, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works”—Revelation 20, verses 12 and 13. The witness of the New Testament is pervasive and irrefutable regarding the fact that a day is coming, when there will be a general resurrection of the living and the dead, and a final judgment.

In Matthew 22, we read of a debate between Jesus and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were a political and religious association within Judaism, during the time of Jesus’ sojourn. It was a modern movement in Judaism, consisting mainly of aristocrats, scholars, and the wealthy. Many priests were found among them. For example, Annas, the high priest, was a Sadducee. They were enlightened Jews, who were strongly influenced by Greek philosophy. Like the Greeks, they regarded the mind as the primary part of man. The body was just ballast. The body, material matter, was evil. It was the prison of the soul. The Sadducees, like the Greek philosophers, they viewed death as the liberation of the spirit, for the spirit was then set free from the body. Therefore, they neither believed in the resurrection of the dead, nor in the existence of angels and spirits. A phys-

ical resurrection would be regression rather than progress. After all, the soul would then have to return to the dungeon of the body.

These Sadducees came to Jesus and asked him a trick question, “Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother”—Matthew 22, verse 24. It was the so-called levirate marriage, spoken of in Deuteronomy 25. They then said to Jesus, “Now there were with us seven brethren,” all of whom died after their marriage to this woman. Thus, that woman had had all seven brothers for a husband. Then they asked Jesus the question, “Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her”—Matthew 22, verse 28. It was a question designed to render belief in the resurrection of the dead, and life after death, to be absurd. And what did Jesus answer? “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (verses 29 and 30).

Life in heaven is not like life on earth. The levirate marriage law is for this life, and not for the life hereafter in heaven. The mutual bonds of love are no longer carnal, but spiritual. Jesus, therefore, said to them, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.” He was thereby saying, “You are ignoring the many statements of Scripture that speak of the resurrection of the dead. And you also do not realize the power of Almighty God, who is able to raise up the dust of the bodies that lies in the earth.” Jesus then proceeded to say, “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”—Matthew 22, verses 31 and 32. What a profound answer! Jesus said Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead. They live! They live, as to their souls, with God in heaven. They expect a glorious resurrection of their bodies in the future. This is how we should think of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the believers who have passed away. They live as their souls in heaven and wait for the resurrection of the body.

The unbelieving world mocks the idea that one day all the dead will arise. When Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead in Athens, he was ridiculed. In Acts 17, verse 32, we are told, “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.” Many consider it utter nonsense to believe that all dead humans will be resurrected. What has already happened to all of these bodies? Some people have been eaten by wild animals, others have been burned to ashes, and their ashes have been scattered on the earth. There is nothing left of them. Some bodies have been buried in the depths of the seas. Others have died long ago. What is left of the human body after these thousands of years? It contradicts common sense to believe in the resurrection of all the dead.

Indeed, many questions surround the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Is such a thing possible? What sort of body will all these people receive? These questions were also prevalent among Christians. The apostle addresses this matter in the mighty resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15. It is the most detailed account of the resurrection of the dead in the Bible. The apostle addresses the questions that were on the front burner in the church of Corinth. These are questions that were asked then, and are also asked today, in the discussion about the resurrection of the dead.

Therefore, the apostle starts his defense of the resurrection of the dead with the question, “But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 35. The question is, what sort of body will people have when they shall arise from the dead? It cannot possibly be the same body. How much will have happened to the body? And what will then be left of it? This was the question in Corinth. The question was not about the resurrection of the soul in regeneration and conversion, but how can flesh rise? A spirit would be capable of rising, but how can matter rise? We observe here that a pagan, philosophical, and rational mindset caused some Christians to deny the resurrection of the dead.

Today is no different. Pagan thoughts about the body, philosophical considerations about the liberation of the spirit through dying, and intellectual reflections about the possibility of the resurrection of the body make people, then and now, deny and mock the resurrection. We could suffice with Jesus’ response to all those human considerations, and say, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”—Matthew 22, verse 29. After all, nothing is impossible for the Lord. Is it that much more impossible for God to resurrect a body from a little matter, than it is to call forth all things from nothing? However, that argument is not sufficient for the apostle. God’s

Spirit has compelled him to shed light on the resurrection of the dead, and specifically to speak of the blessed resurrection of the children of God.

Paul begins his statement with a rebuke. He says, “You fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it die”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 36. Seed first dies in the field and only then comes to life. He who denies the resurrection of the dead will ridicule and deem impossible that which occurs regularly in nature. The kernel of wheat that dies in the field will bring forth new grain. We think the sown grain is gone. We can find nothing back of it. But it will germinate and bring forth new grain. The apostle says, “So also is the resurrection of the dead”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 42. A dead body that has turned to dust in the earth will God raise from the dead. The cemetery is not a garbage dump, but a sowing field—a graveyard—a yard with seed in it.

Next, Paul argues how the body is sown, and how it is raised. He says, “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption”—verse 42. The body is given over to destruction—the beautiful body of man, the crown jewel of creation—a body in its upright stature, so different from the bodies of other creatures—a body with a regal stature. That body dies and returns to the dust. It is given over to destruction. What a disgrace! It is God’s sentence on man’s sin: “For dust you are, and unto dust shall you return”—Genesis 3, verse 19. This is how our bodies will be sown: “It is sown in corruption”—it is given over to destruction. However, it has not disappeared and vanished forever. The apostle says, “It is raised in incorruption.” The dead body has not merely been disposed of in a garbage dump, but rather, lies dormant in a field called earth. God will one day raise it up in incorruption. The body will then no longer be subject to corruption. It is the same body, but now no longer subject to the consequences of sin. It will no longer be subject to illness, infirmity, suffering, pain, and death. Jacob will limp no more, and Lazarus will no longer be covered with boils.

The apostle continues by saying, “It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 43. It is a judgment from God when a man is not buried. It was God’s curse on Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab: “The dogs shall eat Jezebel”—1 Kings 21, verse 23. When seen in this light, it is an honor to be buried. However, in light of our glorious creation, it is a dishonor. Our body is subjected to the greatest dishonor imaginable. The body of the man who has been created to rule as king over God’s creation is placed in a tomb for the purpose of its decomposition. What a dishonor! It is indeed “sown in dishonor.” However, it will be “raised in glory.” The body with which believers will arise shall be glorious, for God “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body”—Philippians 3, verse 21. Our decomposing body will not be annihilated, but rather, it will be transformed. The Bible teaches that the bodies of believers will be made like unto the body of the resurrected and glorified Christ. Jesus will clothe their bodies with his own glory. What a grace! The body of a wretched sinner made like unto the body of God’s Son! It shall be a body of flesh, blood, and bones—a body as Jesus had after his resurrection, and presently has in heaven. It shall be a glorious body clothed with immortality and holiness. The body will be restored more gloriously than it was sown into the earth. It will be, as the apostle says, “raised in glory.”

The apostle is not finished yet. He continues, “It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 43. The body is dismantled. The body is “sown in weakness.” But, as the apostle writes, “it is raised in power.” A strong body returns. It will be a body that is no longer weak, mortal, and perishable. It will be a body that is no longer dependent on food and drink. It will be a body that is no longer subject to the weaknesses of our fallen nature. It will be a body suitable for life in heaven, and the enjoyment of communion with God.

Thus, the apostle highlights the difference between the bodies of God’s children at death, and when they are resurrected. He contrasts corruption and incorruption, dishonor and honor, and weakness and strength. He concludes by saying, “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 44. What does the apostle mean by this? Does this mean that believers, in the resurrection, will not have a physical body, but will be like unto the angels? No, the apostle does not say that. The body that is entrusted to the earth after death is only natural and material. There is neither soul nor life in it. However, the resurrected body will indeed have a soul. Soul and body will be reunited. Therefore the apostle says, “it is raised a spiritual body.”

This union will mark the completion of the restoration of fallen man. God’s children will receive a glorious body indwelt by a redeemed soul. They will be equipped to serve and glorify

God, in both soul and body. We must therefore conclude by saying, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”—1 John 3, verse 2. God’s children will receive a body gifted with all those perfections that are necessary to live in the celestial world. No longer weak and mortal, but glorious and imperishable. They will never get tired and never hunger or thirst: “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”—Revelation 7, verses 16 and 17.

The resurrection will be twofold. The final resurrection will not be the same for everyone. Jesus spoke of a twofold resurrection of the dead: a resurrection unto life, and a resurrection unto eternal death. He said, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”—John 5 (28–29). Since the fall of Adam in Paradise, humanity consists of the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; of the righteous and the wicked; of believers and unbelievers. In the resurrection of the dead, this distinction will become visible, in a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto death. Believers will go up to heaven with soul and body, and the wicked will go to hell with soul and body.

There will be a general resurrection of the dead. Earth will return the dead to life. The dead will come to life. 1 Thessalonians 4 teaches that there will be a specific order in the resurrection of the children of God. The bodies of dead believers will rise first. Those believers who will still live on earth on that day, will then, without having to die, be taken to meet the Lord in the clouds. They shall be caught up in the clouds and united with the saints, who will have been raised from their graves already. We read in verse 17, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” The apostle concludes, “And so shall we ever be with the Lord”—1 Thessalonians 4, verse 17.

What a day that will be! It is the great Day of the Lord. John Calvin says, “It is the day for which all other days are made.” It will be the end of world history. All the dead who have died from the day of creation will arise from their graves. They will be judged, every one according to his works. We will all experience the reality of that day. We shall belong to those who will rise unto life or who will arise unto damnation. The decisive factor will be whether, in this life, we have been united to Christ by a true faith. In the resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle points to this essential union with Christ and says, “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming”—1 Corinthians 15, verse 23. You must be Christ’s—not affiliated with either Paul or Cephas, or any church, but rather, we must be Christ’s. A glorious resurrection awaits God’s children because they are Christ’s.