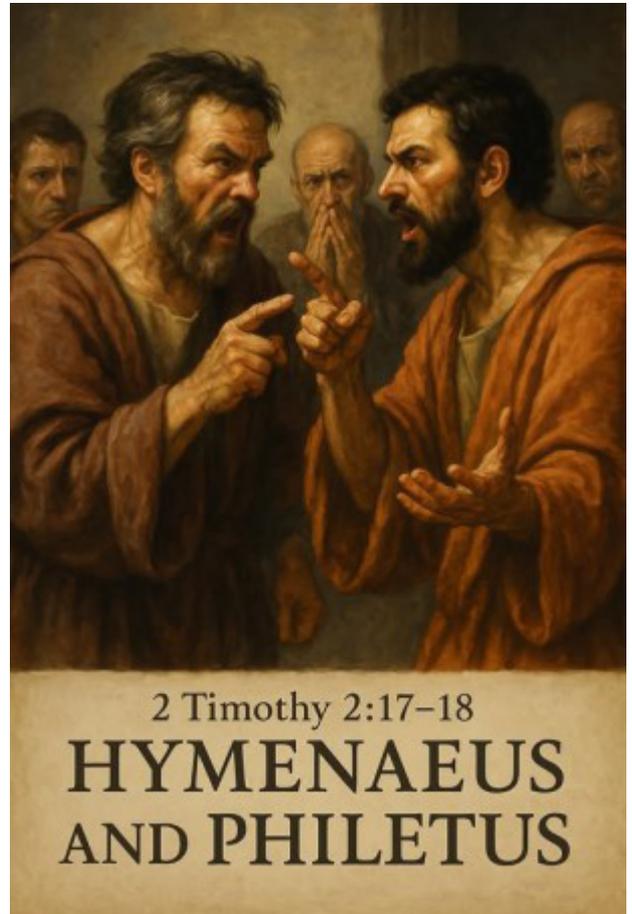


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## Hymenaeus and Philetus - The Nature of the Resurrection and the Error of Hymenaeus and Philetus



By Dan Maines

### **The Nature of the Resurrection and the Error of Hymenaeus and Philetus**

As a Preterist, I believe the resurrection spoken of in scripture was not physical, not the reanimation of corpses or the return of flesh and blood from the grave. The dead were raised in new, individual, glorious, spiritual bodies, not the same bodies that were laid in the dust. As Paul explained, "what you sow does not come to life unless it dies... you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain" (1 Corinthians 15:36-37).

Let me address the common question raised from 2 Timothy 2:17-18, "Were Hymenaeus and Philetus right?" The answer is: **They were wrong in timing, not in nature.**

**2 Timothy 2:17-18 (NASB):** "and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some."

Paul condemned their teaching because it said the resurrection had already occurred **while the Temple still stood**, implying the Old Covenant and New Covenant systems overlapped completely. That was the error, mixing Law and Grace.

But Paul did **not** rebuke them for claiming the resurrection was **spiritual**. If Paul had taught a physical resurrection, he could have easily exposed them. He could have said, "Go to the cemetery, the bodies are still there." But Paul gave no such argument. That silence reveals that the resurrection was **not** expected to be seen with the physical eye.

**2 Corinthians 4:18 (NASB)** says, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The resurrection was eternal and unseen, not subject to physical verification.

**1 Corinthians 15:44 (NASB)** teaches, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." That is the resurrection Paul taught.

**1 Corinthians 15:49 (NASB)** says, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly." It is a transformation into the image of Christ, not a return to life in the same fleshly body.

If the early church believed in a physical resurrection, no one would have listened to Hymenaeus and Philetus. Their claim would have been absurd. The fact that some believers were shaken shows that the early church expected a **spiritual** resurrection, and that it would not be confirmed by physical evidence.

They also must have believed that life on earth would continue after the resurrection. They did not expect to live on a new physical earth. If they had, Hymenaeus and Philetus would have been easily refuted.

The resurrection was real. It was a spiritual body, given by God, not the one buried. It was the raising of the dead out of the Old Covenant system into the life and immortality of the New Covenant in Christ.

**2 Timothy 1:10 (NASB):** "but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,"

That is the true hope we now live in.

Here is a further clarification for those who ask:

Yes, the dead were not raised in the same physical bodies. They were raised in spiritual bodies, new, individual, glorious, immortal, and imperishable.

**1 Corinthians 15:36-38 (NASB):** "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain... but God gives it a body just as He wished."

The natural body was sown in death. God gave each one a new spiritual body as He determined. It was not flesh and blood,

because:

**1 Corinthians 15:50 (NASB):** "Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

That is why there were no eyewitnesses. The spiritual body is not visible to the natural eye. Paul wrote:

**2 Corinthians 4:18 (NASB):** "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The resurrection was not seen because it belonged to the eternal realm, not the visible one. But it was real, and it fulfilled the hope of Israel.

Amen.

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