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The Resurrection of the Dead

(1 Corinthians 15)

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

The Resurrection of the Dead. (1 Cor. 15).

Topics.

- If there is no resurrection of the dead faith is futile.
- Sleeping in Christ.
- If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are to be most pitied.
- By a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
- God has put all things in subjection under Christ's feet.
- A wedding invitation.
- Adam became a living being, the last Adam a life-giving Spirit.
- We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.
- Death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting.

INTRODUCTION

There is a resurrection of all those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns to gather the faithful to himself and to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Then and at the end of Christ's glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords God Himself descend to earth and there is a great White Throne Judgment. Death the grave and the sea give up all the dead and they stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they had done. Those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total and utter extinction) then ETERNITY begins in all its majestic royal fullness. For the sake of clarity in this study the resurrection of Jesus return is referred to as the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6).

1 CORINTHIANS 15

IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE RESURRECTION CHAPTER

- **1 Corinthians 15:1-8:** Now I would remind you brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

The things of first importance to the Gospel Paul proclaimed is:

- Christ died for our sins.
- Christ was buried.
- Christ was raised on the third day.

- Christ appeared to Peter (Cephas), the apostles, more than five hundred brothers and sisters, to James and to Paul.

The words, "by which you are being saved" (are saved in KJV)" (v2) does not mean that those who have faith in Christ are in the process of being saved, we know this because Paul in the book of Romans clearly teaches that we are counted righteous because of our faith not because of our works and that it is our faith in Christ that saves us to eternal life and not self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. The following are just a few of the verses that show that the King James Bible always presents salvation in Christ as absolute:

Acts: (2:47) the English Standard Bible says:

- The Lord added to their number day by day those who were *being saved*.

The King James Bible agrees:

- The Lord added to the church daily *such as should be saved* (Acts 2:47)

This verse clearly shows that it is the unsaved who are in the process of being saved.

1 Corinthians 1:18: the English Standard Bible says:

- The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to *us who are being saved* it is the power of God.

The King James Bible states:

- For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto *us which are saved* it is the power of God.

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Corinthians 15:2: the English Standard Bible says:

- By which *you are being saved*, if you hold fast to the word, I preached to you unless you believed in vain.

The King James Bible states:

- By which also *ye are saved*, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

These are only a few of the verses that show when referring to eternal salvation in Christ the King James Bible does not give any room to think that salvation in Christ is a process (i.e., not complete in Christ) since it is always stated in the absolute and never uses the term being saved when referring to those in Christ but rather always states, ye are saved or which are saved etc. Strong's concordance tells us that the word (*are*) is only used when something is absolute, assured and definitely decided. The idea of being saved is only applied to those who are being witnessed to and are listening with an open heart it is to this person or group of people that the King James Bible would state, "They are being saved meaning they are in the process of being saved but haven't yet responded to the Gospel message.

Faith that saves to eternal life is absolute meaning it is 100% assured to those who are fully trusting in Christ and faithfully following him. The Good News of the Gospel of Christ does not proclaim that whoever believes and trusts in Jesus will be 95% saved and then they will have to earn the other 5% to be fully saved since Christ's horrific, brutal, cruel and bloody death wasn't quite enough to fully save those who come to him in humble repentance and faithfully follow him. In total contrast to this idea the Bible teaches that righteousness the leads to eternal life is a pure and free gift of God granted to those who put their trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for their righteousness and eternal salvation there

is no room for doubt in believing and trusting in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ it is absolute. This is one of the reasons the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News. In the context of eternal salvation, the Bible speaks of the following three groups of people:

1. Those who are saved.
2. Those who are being saved (i.e., those who are being witnessed to by those already saved).
3. Those who are perishing (referring to those who deny God and the Lord Jesus Christ).

UNLESS YOU BELIEVED IN VAIN

The words, "unless you believed in vain," (v2) means that if those confessing Christ do not believe in a resurrection from the dead to eternal life then their faith is in vain (i.e., its wasted) since it will be of no benefit to them here in this present spiritual Kingdom of God nor will their faith save them to eternal life in the future literal and eternal Kingdom of God to come.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCRIPTURES

The words, "Christ died for our sins was buried and raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (v3-4) refer to the following Scriptures of Isaiah and David.

Isaiah states:

- Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead (Isaiah 26:19) and in chapter fifty three, "They made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth" (Isaiah 53:9).

David wrote:

- For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol (grave), or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:10-11) (See also Acts 2:24-32)

THE THIRD DAY

It is not of importance that the Old Testament Scriptures do not specifically state that Christ would rise on the third day, since the focus is not the day, but that he would rise from the dead nevertheless the following verses do visibly imply that God would raise Christ up on the third day since it is clearly suggested in the following words of Hosea: -

- After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him (Hosea 6:2)

Added to this it is not only prefigured by the deliverance of Isaac on the third day after Abraham had given him up for dead, and received him back, in a figure of Christ's resurrection (Heb. 11:19), but also by Jonah's deliverance out of the whale's belly, after he had been in it three days which even Jesus himself refers to by telling his disciples:

- Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40).

It is interesting to notice that the Jews took particular notice of the third day as being remarkable for many things:

- The third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place he was to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:4-5).
- The third day, Joseph told his brothers to bring their youngest brother to him and they would live (Gen. 42:18-20).
- The third day, Rahab protected the two spies of Israel and tied a scarlet cord to her window and her household was saved (Joshua 2:16-19).
- The third day, Moses took the people to meet God at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Law (Exodus 19:16-17).
- The third day of Jonah (in the belly of the fish three days and three nights) (Jonah 1:17).
- The third day of them that came out of the captivity (Ezra. 8:15).
- The third day of Hosea's prophecy, "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 6:2).

It is clear that the third day has special significance in the Bible and that the prophecy in Hosea of the resurrection of the dead, of Isaac and of Jonah's deliverance on the third day is Scripture types of Christ's resurrection.

PAUL THE LEAST OF THE APOSTLES

- **1 Corinthians 15:9-11:** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them (the other apostles) though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they so we preach and so you believed.

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Paul did not let his past sins stop him from serving God, he knew that as great as his sin was (persecuting the Lords Church) God's grace was greater he accepted his past life and did not try to hide it, his attitude was, "I am what I am" meaning I've done what I have done and since I cannot change it I accept. These verses shine a floodlight on the fact that the saving power of the Gospel of Christ is not limited by a person's past life, since saving a sinner to eternal life is the work of the Holy Spirit and therefore whoever has a right heart attitude will be convicted by the Spirit and drawn toward the Lord Jesus Christ when they hear the Good News of the Gospel. Some may think they are not worthy to proclaim the message of Christ because of their sordid or wicked past, but consider the following:

Luke tells us Paul prior to his encounter with Christ:

- Ravaged the church and entered house after house dragging men and women out and committing them to prison (Acts 8:3).
- Spoke threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord and went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2).

Paul (called Saul prior to his conversion) wanted these letters so that he could have men and women confessing Christ dragged out of the Jewish synagogues and taken captive to Jerusalem to be punished and even put to death (Acts 22:5) (Acts 26:10).

THE WORST OF ALL SINNERS

Throughout the years I have heard people state that they are the worst sinner of all and therefore believe God could not save them, all they have to do is look at the life of Paul prior to his conversion and ask themselves, "Have I broken up Christian families and put innocent men and women into prison and agreed to them being put to death simply because they were devoted to Christ as Paul did,? And then look at what God was able to do with Paul's life.

IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD FAITH IS FUTILE

- **1 Corinthians 15:12-20:** Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* of those who have *fallen asleep*.

Sin: means offence it carries the idea of offending someone and missing the mark and therefore not share in the prize.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the centre and heart: of the Christian faith, the faithful of the Old Testament looked in faith and in hope toward the coming of:

- The promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15).
- The prophet and deliverer Moses said was to come like him.
- The promised seed of Abraham.
- The promised seed of David.
- Israel's promised Messiah the Christ to come.
- The promised King and Saviour the Scriptures and the prophets proclaim is to come in power and glory.

Though a certain number of faithful Jews did recognise and embrace by faith their Messiah the Christ when he appeared the religious leaders plotted his murdered and the nation as a collective whole rejected him. Though at this present time their eyes are still blinded to Christ and they live in spiritual darkness the good news is that Zechariah in prophecy tells us they will recognise him when he returns in glory and not only saves them, but also save God's Holy city Jerusalem from certain destruction.

Zechariah prophesied:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹On that day the mourning and weeping in Jerusalem will be as great the land shall mourn, each of all the families that are left will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:10-14).

The faithful in the New Testament are not only able to look back to Israel's Messiah, the Christ and his death and resurrection, but also able to look with excitement as did Old Testament Israel did toward his glorious return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

THE AWESOME, MAJESTIC AND WONDROUS POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD

God resurrected Christ who is the firstfruits of all those who are to be resurrected when Christ returns. In the next resurrection God is not just resurrecting one man to eternal glory and everlasting life, but multitudes from the Old and New Testament in a twinkling of an eye will rise from the dead to eternal glory and everlasting life as did the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Paul is so excited about the Gospel he preaches and why he basically states that without the resurrection the Christian faith is not worth the paper it is written on. The majestic and awesome day of the resurrection of those in the Old and New Testament who are sleeping in Christ will manifest the breath-taking and overwhelming awe-inspiring wondrous power of Almighty God as nothing else has since the days of creation.

FALLEN ASLEEP IN CHRIST: (V18)

The expression, "fallen asleep in Christ," is used for those who have died in faith because it is only a temporary death for them, death from God's perspective is like someone taking a long nap waiting for the alarm clock to ring, the beauty and wonder of this sleep is that even though a brother or sister maybe sleeping for a number of years in our time zone, the instant they die is the instant they are with Christ. This is because in sleep and in death there is no consciousness of time, thus the moment they wake up is to them the moment they died. It is in this sense that the Scriptures state that the moment we breathe our last breath is the moment we will see the Lord.

A NATURAL EXAMPLE OF SLEEPING IN CHRIST

When a person goes to hospital for major heart surgery they are put to sleep, the surgeon then cuts them open removes their heart and makes the necessary adjustments and after many hours the patient wakes up totally unaware of how much time has passed. Death to the Christian is the same because at the moment of death there is no consciousness of time, which means that the moment of death is the moment of being with the Lord, even though in real time many years may have passed.

To us King David has been dead for thousands of years, but to David the moment he died would be the moment he was received by Christ since while David is sleeping in Christ time is non-existent to him so when he is raised it will seem as though he has just breathed his last breath because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN IS SIMILAR TO A PERSON IN A COMA

A person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead. Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principal as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take bits out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says:

- We are of good courage, and we would rather be away (absent in the KJV) from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

It is a true statement, even though he may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

NOTE: a second reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary, being asleep in Christ means everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God.

Jesus said:

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person, (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ, until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) when all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to everlasting glory and clothed with an eternal and immortal body.

IF IN THIS LIFE ONLY WE HAVE HOPED IN CHRIST, WE ARE OF ALL PEOPLE MOST TO BE PITIED (V19)

The meaning of these words of Paul is obvious, but it also implies that if our primary focus is on what we can get from God in this mortal life and not on the resurrection to eternal glory and everlasting life then we are trading the glory of the Christian faith for the temporal things of this world. Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians does not say that we are to encourage another with the things of this world, but with the following words:

- For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Our innermost desire and supreme hope should be focused on the resurrection because it is eternal and certain since it is based on the promise of God whereas everything in this world can be taken from us in a moment including our homes, our health, those we love and even our own life.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

BY A MAN CAME DEATH, BY A MAN HAS COME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

- **1 Corinthians 15:21-26:** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the *firstfruits*, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

The expression, "Being in Adam" carries the following two ideas:

1. Being separated from God and being mortal and therefore destined to eternal death.
2. The thought of belonging to this world, meaning that those who are referred to as being in Adam are led and influenced by self, ego and pride and their only focus is on the things this world has to offer (i.e., riches, wealth, material possessions and such like things).

In contrast to the expression, "Being in Adam" is the expression "Being in Christ" which carries the following two ideas:

1. Belonging to the family of Christ and being destined for eternity and everlasting glory.
2. Having the mind and heart set upon things that honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of Christ and upon the things that extend his Kingdom.

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

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These verses are awe-inspiring since they give a panoramic view of the entire history of God's plan from the beginning of mortal mankind; to our death; to the end of death; to the end of the world as we know it and the introduction of eternal life upon this planet called earth. Through Adam death came into the world, but through Jesus death has lost its stronghold and its power since God has shown that a human man can be raised to eternal glory and everlasting life.

FOLLOWING IS THE ORDER OF PAST AND FUTURE AGES FOR EARTH AND FOR MANKIND

1. Adam and eve created.
2. Adam brought death into the world.
3. Christ was raised from death (the firstfruit) to eternal glory and everlasting life.
4. Those in Christ will be raised from death when the Lord returns.
5. Christ will rule on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.
6. Every rule, authority and power against Christ and God will be destroyed.
7. All Christ enemies will be put under his feet.
8. Death the last enemy will be destroyed.
9. Christ will deliver the Kingdom to God his heavenly Father.

10. God will be ALL in ALL and ETERNITY will begin in all its majestic royal fullness.

For further information see the title:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

GOD HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER CHRIST'S FEET

- **1 Corinthians 15:27-28:** God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸When all things are subjected to him then the son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him that God may be *ALL in ALL*.

These verses clearly show that God has exalted Christ as the head above all things, but they also tell us something more and that is, "When all things are subjected to Christ then he will also be subjected to God so that God will be ALL in ALL. The expression, "God will be ALL in ALL in this context lifts the mind of the ardent Bible student at lightning speed and transcends it forward in time to the glorious and majestic vision of a godly man on the isle of Patmos who wrote:

- I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the *dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.* He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "*Behold, I am making all things new*" (Revelation. 21:1-5).

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This is the splendour the glory the wonder of the climax of God's promise to Abraham made many thousands of years ago and the inheritance of all who are children of Abraham by faith and brothers and sisters of Christ. Is there any other religion on earth that proclaims such a glorious eternal hope? (This author has not found one).

The Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in sharp clearness proclaims that the stunning splendour of this glory is not dependent on our abilities and talents or our lack of them since God in His wisdom has made salvation to eternal life and everlasting glory available to all, not by our own self-effort, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace can there be any better news than this, "I think not" clearly another reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News, but the Good News doesn't stop here there is another great insight we gain from the words, ALL in ALL.

Paul wrote a similar statement in his letter to the Ephesians:

- God seated Christ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come and put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills ALL in ALL (Ephes. 1:22-23).

These verses show us that Christ is also the HEAD of the church and has dominion, rule and authority over all things in the church and the words, "Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills ALL in ALL (v23) shows us the following two things:

1. All those who trust in Christ form the body of Christ.
2. It is God's Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) that fills Christ's body (the church).

NOTE: God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit are in perfect unity, perfect love and in perfect harmony of mind in will and purpose therefore the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ can be viewed as being identical since those in Christ have fellowship with both the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3).

To attempt to dissect down to microscopic detail the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as a spiritual surgeon with a scalpel is (I think) to do God and the Lord an injustice since there is nothing in prayer we can say to Christ that God does not hear neither is there anything we say to the Father that the Son is not also listening to and there is nothing we can hide in deed or action from either God or the Lord Jesus Christ this is the reason God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit can be seen as being identical especially in prayer since they are united together in perfect love, mind and purpose and both God and Christ dwell in the heart of every brother and sister in Christ by faith and by God's grace.

A TORCH ITS LIGHT AND GOD AND CHRIST

If we were to attempt to explain the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ in simple material terms (howbeit very limited) the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ could be likened to a golden torch, its light and its batteries. The torch gives brilliant light that dispels darkness and allows all who walk in its light to clearly see, but without batteries the torch has no power since they are the source of its light. In this analogy Christ could be likened to the torch and God to the batteries since God is the source of all life, but the batteries without the torch or the torch without the batteries cannot give light.

This is another reason we should not try to dissect in microscopic detail God's Spirit from Christ's Spirit or Christ Spirit from God's Spirit, but always allow a certain amount of mystery since they are together united in perfect unity, perfect love and perfect mind will and purpose. Added to this there is nothing the Father wouldn't do for us that Christ wouldn't also gladly do, nor is there anything that Christ would gladly do for us that the Father would not also be pleased to do.

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BEING BAPTISED ON BEHALF OF THE DEAD

- **1 Corinthians 15:29:** otherwise, what do people mean by being baptised on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptised on their behalf? (ESV).

The King James Bible translates it this way:

- Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?"

NOTICE: the KJV does not add, "On their behalf." This is a difficult verse since it seems to imply that people can be baptised for those who have already died, but anyone who knows the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life will also know that no-one can be baptised for those who have already died so what is Paul saying? The following two steps will help us answer this question: -

1. The word, *otherwise* (in the ESV) and *else* (in the KJV) link (v29) back to (v25-28) which talk about death being destroyed and God being ALL in ALL, so what Paul is talking about is a shared hope in death, in resurrection and in eternity for all those that belong to Christ (i.e., the shared hope of those who are asleep in Christ, those beginning to believe in Christ and those being baptised into Christ) all have the same shared hope which is the resurrection from the dead, eternal life and God being ALL in ALL.
2. If the word *otherwise* is replaced by the words, "If there is no resurrection" it then puts the verse in the context of the resurrection which is what Paul is talking about in this conversation.

The following four suggestions may also help explain what Paul is saying:

1. It may mean; otherwise, if people are prepared to put their lives in danger of persecution and give up eating and drinking to support and baptise others why would they do that, if they are not going to be raised at all, supporting this idea is verse thirty in which Paul says:
 - Why do we stand in jeopardy every hour (to baptize people) and verse thirty-two in which Paul said, "What do I gain (by baptising people) if the dead are not raised, we may as well eat and drink, if our end is simply death."

Meaning why should he suffer preaching the Gospel and baptising people if the dead are not raised, what does he gain everyone might as well eat and drink because tomorrow they may die." Paul is saying, why would he and others risk persecution by baptizing people into Christ if the dead are not going to be raised to eternal life (even today Christians in extreme Communists and radical Moslems countries risk prison, torture and death if they are seen baptizing people into the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It may mean; "Otherwise, why do people who are alive get baptised?" When people who are alive get baptised it supports what the dead in Christ have died for, if the dead, are not raised at all, why are people being baptised in the hope of those already dead being raised?
3. It may mean; "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptised in the hope of the dead being raised, if the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptised in this hope?"
4. It may mean; "Otherwise, why bother at all to be baptised and fill up the ranks of those taken from us by death, if the dead are not raised at all, why bother to be baptised to be united with the dead if they are not going to be raised."

The important thing here is not which of these four interpretations is the right one since they are all true statements, what is important to see is that verse twenty-nine is not teaching that Christians can be baptised on behalf of people who have died.

I FOUGHT WITH BEASTS AT EPHESUS

- **1 Corinthians 15:30-32:** Why am I in danger every hour? ³¹I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Paul's words, "I fought with beasts at Ephesus?" (v32) no-doubt refer to the time Demetrius who made silver shrines of Artemis told workmen in similar trades that Paul's teaching, that gods made with hands are not gods had not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia turned away a great many people from the temple of the great goddess Artemis. The silversmiths for fear of losing their business and their wealth stirred up the whole city of Ephesus and for about two hours they cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:23-34), but it made little difference where Paul was since his life was in constant danger because of his message of the resurrection and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the reason he says he dies everyday meaning he is fully aware of the dangers he faces but nevertheless is willing to put his life on the line for the sake of the Gospel. Paul is using the persecution and the danger he lives under to make the following point to the Corinthians: if there is no resurrection why would he put his life in such danger every-day instead of choosing to eat and drink and enjoy all the pleasures this would have to offer?

A SPIRITUAL WEDDING INVITATION

Symbolically speaking God has sent out a wedding invitation to all mankind inviting them to come to a wedding banquet that the Lord is planning to hold at some future date. This wedding invitation comes to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who accept the invitation receive God's favour and be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life, but for those who have absolutely no interest in the invitation Paul's advice for them is to eat drink and be merry, meaning they may as well enjoy this life and the pleasures of the world as much as they can since that is all they have.

From these verses it is clear that when witnessing our mindset should be to invite people into the Kingdom of God, not force, demand or impose it on them and if they reject the invitation we should not get upset or treat them as enemies, but rather allow them to eat drink and be merry meaning find as much joy in this world as they can since that is all they will have.

NOTE: this does not mean that we should not stand up for injustices inflicted on the innocent nor sit idly by while the poor and less fortunate are being oppressed by others for selfish gain and profit nor does it mean we should not do whatever we are able to help those who are being abused, verbally, physically, financially, sexually, emotionally and spiritually, but this world has many pleasures to offer without hurting and inflicting harm onto others, (i.e., fame, travel, material possessions, selfish ambition, riches and wealth etc.).

BAD COMPANY RUINS GOOD MORALS

- **1 Corinthians 15:33-34:** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."
³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

Paul's words, "Bad company ruins good morals" no-doubt refers to the man sleeping with his mother, those boasting and exalting each other and those who were causing divisions, strife, contentions etc., amongst the Corinthian congregation, but obviously includes any type of bad behaviour. It is a sad fact of human life that those who have good standards and ethics (especially the young), but are not strong in themselves are in danger of being enticed to wrong-doing when they keep constant company with people whose conscience lacks any form of integrity and has no established principles or conviction of doing what is right or what is wrong.

SOME HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The statement, "some have no knowledge of God," (v34) in this context does not mean they are not confessing Christ or even believing in him, rather it carries the idea that they have no knowledge of God's ways and His will they have no comprehension of what is important to the heart of God and what delights Him. Many in the Corinthian church believed in Christ, but they were still acting in worldly ways. Paul in chapter three refers to them as spiritual infants in Christ acting in a worldly manner and who still need to be fed with milk since they have never grown up (only babies need milk to grow).

For further information concerning milk and solid food see:

- 1 Corinthians chapter 3.
- In, Bible Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- **1 Corinthians 15:35-44:** But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There 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. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Earlier in this letter Paul asked, "How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:12) and now in response to their disbelief answers two questions:

- How is it possible that the dead should be raised?
- With what body will those resurrected have?

THE FIRST QUESTION

"How are the dead raised?" It is certain that Paul is mindfully aware that whoever believes or disbelieves in the resurrection has at some stage pondered the following questions: -

- When our body decays and becomes entirely disorganized and returns to its native dust how will it be re-collected if the dust has been scattered?
- If our body is burned at the stake, how will the particles which composed our bodies be recollected and re-organized?
- If our body is devoured by the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, or the fish of the sea, and their flesh may have served to constitute the food of other animals, and to form their bodies; how can it be re-collected and re-organized?
- If our body has been the food of plants and like other dust has been used to constitute the leaves or the flowers of plants and the trunks of trees how can it be remoulded into a human frame?"

These are all common questions that have been asked throughout all ages.

THE SECOND QUESTION

"With what kind of body will those resurrected have?" And, "With what body do they come?" (v35) may be understood to mean, what will be the form, the shape, the size and the organization of the new body? Throughout all ages people have pondered the following questions regarding the eternal, immortal resurrected body:

- Will all the matter which made up the composition of our body be recollected and renewed to rebuild a new body?
- Will our body be the same as it is here, with the same organization, the same necessities and the same needs?

- Will the aged be raised as aged, and the young as young, and the infant raised in the same state and remain such forever?
- Will our bodies though immortal need food and nourishment?
- Will there will be an entirely new arrangement of the body altogether?

All these and numerous other questions have been asked throughout all generations, in regard to the body at the resurrection Paul without giving specific detail to both the first and second questions beautifully answers them by pointing out three facts:

1. There are already many different types of bodies existing even now in this mortal world (i.e., humans, animals, fish, birds etc.), and they all have their own unique glory.
2. When a seed of grain is planted in the earth and dies it always rises up in a form far more glorious than it was before it died.
3. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies and though both have their own unique glory, they are totally different from each other.

But, Paul does not stop here but rather goes on to say that, "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable" (v42) here is the glory and Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, our natural human mortal body with all its weakness, sinful dysfunctions and aberrations will perish, but we will be raised in glory and in power with an immortal and eternal spiritual body.

ADAM BECAME A LIVING BEING, THE LAST ADAM A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

- **1 Corinthians 15:45-49:** Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being" the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As 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. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

The first Adam: the words, "Thus it is written, the first man Adam became a living being" (v45) refer to the following verse from Genesis, "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" (Gen 2:7). The first Adam was created from the dust of the earth and became a living being and therefore his offspring (i.e., all mankind is from the dust of the earth since we are all borne in the image of the man of dust) (v48).

The second Adam: The Lord Jesus Christ the second and last Adam in contrast to the first Adam is from heaven (meaning God is his Father) and became a life-giving spirit and therefore those who trust in him for eternal life will be clothed in the image of his resurrected and glorified eternal body.

It is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual: (v46) simply mean that all of us are firstly born through a natural human birth as children of Adam, from the earth mortal corrupted and perishing offspring of dust, and in the second birth (the resurrection) we will be raised with a heavenly spiritual immortal uncorrupted body.

The second man is from heaven: (v47) this expression does not mean Christ pre-existed as a conscious Spirit in heaven before he entered the womb of Mary, it is Jewish language which means he was sent from heaven meaning sent from God, it carries the idea that Jesus was

approved of God and had God's favour with him in every way. The words, "From heaven," and "Came from Heaven" is the same as saying "Came from God" and "Sent from God" while the words, "Those who are of heaven" (v48) refer to those who belong to Christ. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED

- **1 Corinthians 15:50-54:** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in 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. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When 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."

Flesh: refers to the natural corrupt fallen nature that we have all inherited from our earthly father Adam (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed, lust, jealousy, envy etc.), and our human mortal body.

Blood: refers to the blood flowing through our heart and veins.

The Perishable: refers to our decaying and mortal body.

THE PERISHABLE DOES NOT INHERIT THE IMPERISHABLE

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The perishable does not inherit the imperishable means that the natural corrupted human body cannot inherit the eternal and literal coming Kingdom of God in the state it is in. The human body as we know it today will be changed in a twinkling of an eye (v52) to something stunning, majestic, spiritual, eternal, immortal and heavenly glorious.

Imagine for a moment: an early model car built over one hundred years ago full of rust, a seized-up motor and broken windows parked alongside today's newest Rolls Royce with its motor gentling and quietly purring and the warm rays of the sun sparkling on the fourteen layers of its perfectly coloured paintwork. There is no-doubt (in my mind at least) that our old mortal body will look to us like this rusted out car when we are clothed with our new resurrected and eternal body that in contrast to decay and wearing out will be constantly full of energy, vitality, life, and vigour and absolutely pain-free (in colloquial language one beautiful and well-oiled magnificent machine).

NOTICE: Paul says, "I tell you a mystery" (v51) referring to the resurrection and our mortal body being transformed to an immortal body, even Paul with all his revelations and visions still viewed the resurrection as a mystery which implies that not even Paul himself fully understood every detail regarding the form our new resurrected body will take other than that it will be glorious, immortal and eternal.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Paul's statement, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (v50) refers to the Kingdom God promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the nation of Israel our faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, Israel and God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ, unites us to the faithful of Israel and we all become partakers of the promises that God originally made to our father Abraham. For Further information, see the title:

- Promises (ON WEBSITE MENU).

WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP

The words, "Behold! We shall not all sleep (v51) refers to those who are sleeping in Christ when the Lord returns, Paul in the book of Thessalonians states this awe inspiring and breath-taking event in the following words:

- For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have *fallen asleep*. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that *we who are alive*, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep, because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then *we who are alive*, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-17)."

When a person who belongs to Christ dies the Bible says they have no knowledge and know nothing they are totally unaware of it and are in a perfect state of peace, this state is called sleeping in Christ they have no consciousness, so there is no time. It is very similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes, they have no idea of whether four, seven or twelve hours have passed. Likewise, because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world's time. Another reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary. For further information concerning sleeping in Christ see the title, "Fallen asleep in Christ following (1 Cor. 15:12-20) (above).

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DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY

The majestic moment for the faithful in Christ when "Death will be swallowed up in victory" (v54), will be when the Lord returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING

- **1 Corinthians 15:55-58:** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

Paul in a triumphant and joyful exultant cry boldly make the statement, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (v55), for the following two reasons:

1. God through the resurrection of Jesus has shown to all humanity that human bodies can be raised from the dead.
2. This glory shines a brilliant spotlight to all mankind on the truth that God's power is far greater than the destructive power of death.

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

The words, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but God gives us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ" (56-57) carries two spiritual laws that are unchanging laws of the universe (like the law of gravity) one of these laws dwell in the nature of our fallen corrupted human body, the other is in Christ.

The first of these law states: -

- Whoever sins must die (Rom. 6:23).

Since we all sin the law has every legal right to condemn and sentence us to eternal death which it does without mercy or compassion, but there is second and higher law that supersedes this lower law that proclaims with majestic glory:

- Though the wages of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

This is one of the reasons the Gospel of Christ is called, the Good News since it triumphantly proclaims to all who trust in Christ that they have been granted:

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

This means that the universal law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him.

Another reason the Gospel is called the Good News is because:

- Faith is counted as righteousness to whoever believes in God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:22-25).

This means we are not saved because of our own self-effort in striving to attain to the perfect standard the law demands and to God's perfect standard of Holiness, but because of our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ and our belief in his heavenly Father.

This is the reason Paul says:

- Since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1)

This means that we have mental and spiritual peace with God because we do not have to strive to attain God's favour or eternal life by self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days, or by keeping religious customs and traditions.

YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN

The words, "Knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain," is contrasting work we do for self, ego and pride which is vain because whatever it gives in rewards will be taken to the darkness of the grave and remain there contrasted to what we do for the Lord and by extension for others will be rewarded with heavenly and eternal rewards.

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THE MAJESTIC BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Ponder for a moment the majestic beauty of the following Scripture:

- If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10).

This is a breath-taking statement and should be an overwhelming comfort to every brother and sister of Christ since it carries an astoundingly and perfect example of love and is one of the most splendid and humbling of all Scriptures since it clearly shows how much Christ loves us. The apostle Paul wrote the following to the brothers and sisters at Rome:

- While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

This means that even though we were full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within our bodies (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed and lustful thoughts etc.) Christ died for us he laid down his life that we could be made righteous by faith apart from the law, self-effort and works. In spite of our corrupted fallen nature God not only counts our faith in Christ as our righteousness He also imputes righteousness to us as a pure and free gift. This verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God loved us long before we loved Him. Though some of us might die for a friend or loved one, Christ died for us while we were ungodly and indifferent to God and His ways and in many cases blasphemers. Because of a lack of perceiving this great love God has toward us some in the Christian faith tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them,

but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes, they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world. When anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with a royal and majestic robe of righteous so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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