

## 1 Corinthians 15:29-58

### Verses 29-32:

--(29) This is a very difficult verse and has numerous different interpretations. I think a few things can help us.

--First, Paul is going back to the “*if’s*” of the previous section. We must still realize that he is making arguments *as if* Christ was not risen.

--Also, there is a **they** and **we** contrast between 29+30. **They** being those in the situation of Christ not being risen and **We** being those that know that He is.

--The most common interpretation is that this was some type of ritual or custom that we don’t know anything about. Paul is simply showing them that to do so is foolish if Christ is not risen.

--The three problems with that are: 1) Paul never speaks of baptism as something that is not baptism. 2) Paul would surely have corrected an ungodly usage of something as important as baptism—just as he did in the case of communion. 3) We have no historical or Biblical record of any type of custom like this.

--Another common interpretation is that Paul is speaking of a believer taking another believers place who has died or been martyred in the line of Christian history. This tends to make better sense of the rest of the section.

--The problems with that interpretation are: 1) Paul doesn’t use baptism in that way. 2) Believers wouldn’t be spoken of as **dead** but as **asleep**. 3) Being baptized **for** other believers still really doesn’t make sense.

--So, I am adding my own personal interpretation into the mix. My interpretation is much simpler.

--When Paul says, **what will they do who are baptized for the dead**, he is simply saying: *Why should anybody be baptized in the name of a dead man?* The whole point of baptism is to *rise out of the water* in newness of life!

--Paul has been assuming that Christ was not risen since verse 16: **For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen**. He placing Christ among **the dead** in the logical conclusion that there is no resurrection. So they are being baptized—not for someone risen—but for **the dead**.

--To me, this fits the context, keeps baptism as Biblical baptism, and leads naturally into the application of the following verses.

--(30-32) Paul is here referencing himself, no doubt the other apostles as he did in 4:6-13, and other believers of the day. If Christ was not risen, how foolish was it for them to be living the life that they were living!

--We can forget how Paul lived with constant threat of personal danger. He had to leave multiple cities for his own safety because of his witness for Christ! \*Just imagine having to be driven out of your home now—once—let alone constantly!\*

--Paul affirms that he must die daily to live the life he is living. What is the point of that if there is no resurrection? What was the point of the battle he had at Ephesus—which they must have known something about.

--It is possible that Paul was thrown into an arena and delivered miraculously by God but it is not likely. As a Roman citizen it would not have been likely, and we have no mention of anything like that in the infamous list of **2 Corinthians 11**.

--If there is no resurrection, then we have only this life to live for. It changes everything.

**\*Hebrews 11:35+38: Other were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. . . of whom the world was not worthy.\***

### **Verses 33-34:**

--Now, Paul finishes this section of his letter with application. Belief determines behavior.

--**Do not be deceived** could be translated *Stop allowing yourselves to be misled!* Paul knows that a deceitful lie often proceeds a wicked lifestyle.

--**Evil company corrupts good habits!** This has been true in every age but has it ever been more clear with the current wicked influence of the internet?

--You have the ability to choose the influence and company around you. **And being let go, they went to their own companions (Acts 4:23)**. Who are the godliest people in your life? \*C.S. Lewis' The Inner Ring. . . They/We. . . How many been corrupted, not because they love sin, but because they love **evil company**. . . the fellowship of it—not just the person.\*

--**Awake to righteousness!** The Greek has the idea of a drunk waking out of sleep into sobriety. It could be translated *Sober up!*

--Life is not our own to eat and drink and have fun with until we die. Our life is God's, on loan to us, and we will give an account of every single word we speak on the day we die. **And do not sin!**

--Paul is calling the Corinthians to wake up from their drunken sleep of moral sinfulness! \*How many Christians have had that moment where they are awakened to their morally insensitive and sinful lifestyle?! It is a blessing if it comes!\*

--Most of the time, when that moments comes, you will have to change your company.

--**For some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak to your shame.** Paul is saying that the Corinthians should be ashamed of their behavior in tolerating anyone among them that would question the resurrection.

### **Verse 35:**

--Here the discussion begins to change. Some think Paul is still addressing the false teachers who deny the resurrection. I think the tone shifts enough to say that he is anticipating the next level of the discussion from sincere inquirers.

--Their issues seem to be that bodies disintegrate, so what will be raised? How do the dead **come**? Because the dead are *coming* back!

### Verses 36-38:

--Paul begins to answer these anticipated (and probably regular in his experience) questions.

--He begins by saying, **Foolish one**. . . which gives the idea of dullness or a senseless object more so than an insult. See Jesus with the two men on the road to Emmaus in **Luke 24:25**.

--He begins by pointing out that they hold in their very hand—**what YOU sow**—an answer to their doubts.

--A seed can die in one “body” and have that body perish in the earth, yet the organic life can continue to live, can collect nutrients, and emerge after a period of time with another more glorious “body”. Seeing that is true, then what can the life of God in us do?!

--Notice, the end of the process is that **God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body**. The corruption of our bodies is God’s way of moving the body along to its ultimate goal. But in death, our body is beyond the power of anyone by Him!

--Every seed has a preparatory bodily existence the end of which is another bodily existence determined by God. We are of more value than any seed or plant.

--Resurrection is not just a “law of nature”. Resurrection is an act of God. **God gives!** We will each have personal touch and intelligence in our individual resurrection.

### Verses 39-41:

--Here Paul makes the point that there are different types of bodily existence in the natural world. And that each body differs in glory and is properly fitted to its environment.

### Verses 42-44:

--The resurrection of the body is similar. Our present earthly bodies are **sown** as a seed is sown. Though there is continuity in what is raised: notice what is sown is likened to what is raised in all of Paul’s “*It’s*”. **It is sown. . . It is raised. . .**

--(42) Are bodies are sown in **corruption**. \*We are all corrupting in various ways!\*

--The same body will one day be raised with **incorruption!** \*Nothing breaking down!\*

--(43) Are bodies are sown in **dishonor**. \*Shame comes upon us in various ways until we must be put away from sight and buried.\*

--The same body will one day be raised in **glory!** \*Just think of the reflection of Moses’ face that had to be covered after spending 40 days in the Lord’s presence. What of an eternity?!\*

--Are bodies are sown in **weakness**. \*They can no longer do. They can no longer accomplish.\*

--The same body will one day be raised in **power!** \*To test, and push, and serve to the limits!\*

--(44) Are bodies are sown a **natural body** but it will be raised a **spiritual body**. This doesn’t mean that our bodies will be immaterial or ghostly. It is not a description of what the body is made of but what the body is driven by.

--Think of someone saying they have a “water bottle” or “coffee mug”. We don’t think they are made of water or coffee. It is like asking if a car is a gas or electric. That is the basic operating power of the car’s design.

--So a **natural body** is one that is adapted to a certain type of life in this world. We will be raised with a **spiritual body** which is one that is adapted to a higher type of life and purpose.

**\*Philippians 3:20-21: For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.\***

#### **Verses 45-49:**

--Here Paul is making it clear that our starting point was Adam but our ending point is Jesus Christ. We are not going back to Adam's earthly innocence. We are moving forward to Jesus' perfect, spiritual, resurrection life.

--(45) Paul makes it clear that Adam was **the first man** who received and passed on earthly life but Jesus is **the last Adam** who possesses and gives eternal life. Our ending state in Jesus Christ is much higher than Adam's beginning state. In all our thoughts and theology about resurrection we are to look at Jesus and not Adam!

--Jesus is **the last Adam** because in Him, humanity can reach its highest point at which there will be no loss or change or other option. This is how man reaches perfection. In Christ alone!

--(46-47) Here Paul contrasts the process and origins. In our resurrection we take on the "seed" or "natural body" first and then after comes the "plant" or "spiritual body".

--The life of Christ that is offered to us comes from a much different source than the dust of the earth. It comes from heaven!

**\*John 3:13: No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.\***

**\*John 8:23: And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.\***

--(48-49) Here Paul gives such great hope! We have all born the image of our physical, dusty, earthly life.

**\*Genesis 5:3: And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.\***

--It will be just as true, that in the resurrection, we will bear the image—the life—of our resurrected and ascended Savior. Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is the bright Original and we are all soon to be lesser copies of His image and eternally reflect His glory.

**\*Bonhoeffer (Life Together): "The fact that Jesus Christ died is more important than the fact that I shall die, and the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is the sole ground of my hope that I, too, shall be raised on the Last Day. Our salvation is "external to ourselves." I find no salvation in my life history, but only in the history of Jesus Christ. Only he who allows himself to be found in Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, his Cross, and his resurrection, is with God and God with him."\***

### Verse 50:

--This idea here was likely the confusion of **35**. How can a body that is dead and decomposed rise again? Here Paul makes it clear, flesh and blood is not what rises!

--***Flesh and blood*** is simply a description of what this life provides (**Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14**).

**\*Matthew 16:17: *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.\****

--This doesn't mean that our eternal existence is immaterial. In fact, the Bible is clear that Jesus was ***flesh and bone*** as we see in **Luke 24:30 + Eph. 5:30**.

--Interestingly enough, Paul is saying that the living and the dead are unfit for God's eternal kingdom! The change of resurrection needs to happen to everyone.

### Verses 51-57:

--(**51**) The ***mystery*** is something that could not have been known by *flesh and blood* but now is known through the revelation of God. That mystery is that at some point, there will be those who are in Christ that will be miraculously changed into their resurrection body without having been ***sown*** in death.

--That will happen at the ***last trumpet***. There is a lot of unnecessary end times discussion around that phrase. Does the ***last trumpet*** have to literally be the very last trumpet that will ever be sounded? \*This is a modern and popular argument from our Amillennial brothers and sisters in Christ\*

--Is it the very last trumpet ever? No! It is the last for a particular people. The ***we*** that Paul is referring to in this passage is no doubt the ***we*** spoken of in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** at the rapture of the Church.

--This is very much like me saying to someone; *That guy is the last one on the elevator, or in the room*. It doesn't mean the last one ever. It just means the last one at that particular time with that particular group.

--When the Scriptures say that Jesus ***breathed His last (Mk. 15:37)*** it certainly doesn't mean that Jesus never breathed again. It means, on the cross, in His earthly body, He took a last breath at that time. The Last Supper does not mean that Jesus never ate again. We are looking forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! The word ***last*** is used numerous times through the Scripture in such ways.

--This passage does nothing to establish the Amillennial position. Really that theological discussion is decided in hermeneutics and not specific isolated passages.

--Now, back to the good stuff! What will happen at that trumpet?

--(**52-55**) ***The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.***

--Notice again the continuity of the body being changed here. ***This corruptible + This mortal...***

--Let me tell you what word I love in these verses: **must!** Heaven will have such beautiful *musts!*

- 1) I must be raised incorruptible, immortal, glorious, powerful, and heavenly.
- 2) I must join the society of an innumerable company of angels, the entire Church of the firstborn, and the spirits of just men made perfect.
- 3) I must find rest from all my pain and toil in my prepared dwelling place in the New Jerusalem.
- 4) I must reap the harvest of all my labor, and prayers, and sowing in eternal treasures.
- 5) I must serve my God in light and joy and glory and power.
- 6) I must eat of the tree of life and drink from the crystal river of the water of life.
- 7) I must see the face of God.

--***For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality!***

--You see? Paul quotes from **Isa. 25:8 + Hosea 13:14**. But when will the saying be brought to pass? When we have already put on incorruption and immortality. When we know—know beyond a shadow of a doubt—that you are beyond—BEYOND!—all death, sorrow, crying, or pain! No more corruption. No more dishonor. No more weakness.

--Death would have no power or sting without sin or the law. But we have been *given*—What a gift!—the victory in Jesus Christ. Take all of your problems and worries and fears and see if there is not power enough in the resurrection of Jesus Christ to answer them!

--Without this incredible gift men have only fear! **\*Hebrews 2:14-15\***

\*Kreeft (Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Heaven):

*“What will we be after we die? Six Answers*

The human race has come up with five basic answers to the question, and God has come up with a sixth. (He is always coming up with odd things, like planets and people and platypuses; He is “the Great Iconoclast”.)

- 1) Annihilation. Nothing. Death ends it all, except our reputation, our works, and our children, which live on after us—but we know and enjoy nothing of them if we are annihilated forever.
- 2) We survive death, but only as ghosts. We become pale shadows of the living selves we once were.
- 3) Reincarnation. We come back to earth in another mortal body.
- 4) The natural immortality of the soul. Each individual’s disembodied spirit, liberated by death, survives as a pure spirit, like an angel. This spirit had been imprisoned in an alien thing, a body, until released forever by death.
- 5) The only thing that survives death is the only thing that was real before death; cosmic consciousness, the One, Atman, the Buddha-mind, perfect, eternal, transindividual spirit...

Only in Christianity do we become more than we were before death. It is the startling, surprising idea of a new, greater resurrected body.”\*

**Verse 58:**

--Paul cannot let a doctrinal lesson go without application. The resurrection gives meaning to all our service and every act of our life here and now.

--So be ***steadfast***. The Greek word is used only here and in: **7:37 + Col. 1:23**. It seems to reference an inner steadfastness. Don't allow your heart or faith to be pushed aside.

--***Immovable***. The word is used only here in the NT. This seems to be literally physically moved.

--There is so much pressure in the end not to stick it out in the Christian life! Each phase of life has its challenges and temptations. Just stick with Jesus and His people and His hope!

--Why? ***Knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord***. It's worth it!