

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Introduction:

The title of this article may not contain the meaning that one might surmise. It **does not mean** that the dead in this chapter are no more. It **does mean** that the dead in 1 Corinthians 15 are not dead. To truly understand the scriptures one must think outside the box or in this case the box of a coffin. I believe that this chapter is one of the most misunderstood in the Bible. Despite the fact that excerpts of this passage of scripture are used at funerals throughout the land, the context of the meaning is a proclamation of life **in this life**. It is not about death at the end of this life and then subsequent life. It is about death before the life of Christianity. Like us, the Apostle Paul (the author of 1 Corinthians) had a particular way of expressing himself. Our jargon is drawn from our family, local culture, religion, etc., but if we are spiritually minded then the Holy Spirit filters through individual minds (souls) to flavor our expressions. As our minds are progressively changed, (taken from glory to glory) into the mind of Christ, then our understanding and our expressions change. Paul expressed this concept in an earlier chapter in 1 Corinthians:

1 Cor 2:13-14

13 Which things also **we speak, not** in the words **which man's wisdom teacheth**, but which the **Holy Ghost teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the **natural man receiveth not** the things of **the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them**, because **they are spiritually discerned**.

The Holy Spirit must be active in a person to accurately understand the scriptures. The above verses are taken from the King James Version of the Bible and I have underlined phrases in these verses for emphasis. We will use the same version and technique throughout this study. Jesus used parables in expressing Himself. The disciples asked Him why He used parables. The answer He gave them also applies to the disciples of this day:

Mark 4:11-12

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the **mystery of the kingdom of God**: but unto **them that are without**, all these things are done in parables:

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

With just a little study we can ascertain that the kingdom of God is the Holy Spirit working in us and through us. The kingdom does not come with observation, but the kingdom of God is within. That is what Jesus declared in Luke 17. Then if the kingdom is within us, what is it that is within us? Remember the story of Nicodemus? He was initially one that was without. He would only be able to **see** (understand) the Kingdom of God when he came within. The way that he came within was to be born again then he

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

would be able to ascertain the mystery of the Kingdom of God. The mystery of the kingdom is Christ in us the hope of glory.

To properly understand the “dead” of 1 Corinthians 15 we must study all the writings of the man Paul and determine how he consistently used terms throughout his epistles. We must not only understand the meaning of words, we must also understand the context in which they are used. Briefly summarizing before the study begins, Paul wrote of two types of death. He stated that we were dead in sins **prior** to our being born again. He wrote that we were dead in Christ **after** our being born again. He rarely referred to physically dead saints as being dead, but labeled them as being asleep. If we do not understand these concepts then some of the verses (verse 29 in particular) in the subject chapter do not compute. We will see as we proceed. Let’s begin our study of this most enlightening and captivating chapter:

VERSES 1-2

1 Cor 15:1-2

15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the **gospel which I preached** unto you, which also ye **have received**, and **wherein ye stand**;

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

The gospel that Paul preached was the same as Jesus proclaimed. The gospel is not about heaven and hell. The gospel is about life and death. The gospel that Paul preached was that if we believed in Jesus we would never die. The reference point in time from not being dead is from the **point of belief** and not from the point of physical death. Jesus proclaims this concept in John 5:

John 5:24-25

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life**, and shall not come into **condemnation**; but **is passed from death unto life**.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and **now is**, when the **dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live**.

Verse 24 is directly tied to and explains verse 25. The dead that Jesus refers to in verse 25 are those that are physically alive. They have believed and have passed from death (sin) unto life. If we have heard the voice of the Son of God then we have passed from death unto life. This is the same concept that Paul expresses throughout 1 Corinthians 15. Jesus and Paul proclaim the same things about this gospel. Isn’t that amazing! Paul verifies the words of Jesus that we were dead in trespasses and sins:

Eph 2:1, 5

2:1 And you hath he quickened, **who were dead** in trespasses and sins;

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

5 Even when **we were dead** in sins, hath **quickenen us together** with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Col 2:13

13 And you, **being dead** in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he **quickenen** together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

2 Cor 1:9-10

9 But we **had the sentence of death in ourselves**, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God **which raiseth the dead**:

10 Who **delivered us from so great a death**, and **doth deliver**: in whom we trust that he will **yet deliver** us;

2 Cor 5:14

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that **if one died for all, then were all dead**:

These are just a few samples of the many proclamations by Paul that we were dead just as Jesus proclaimed in John 5. As observed, to truly understand the intent of the man in the writing of 1 Corinthians 15 we must examine all his writings to arrive at his intent. As we will see later in our subject chapter, we died when Adam died and he passed on that sentence of death to everyone that would live physically. This is the first death as opposed to the second death. If we believe the gospel of 1 Corinthians 15:1 then we have passed from death to life and no longer have the sentence of death in ourselves. He has already delivered us from so great a death. This is the understanding with which we must approach 1 Corinthians 15 for correct interpretation.

1 Corinthians 15:2 contains the phrase, “Unless ye have believed in vain.” Paul was concerned that we have not believed in vain **in this life**. His immediate concern in this writing is not in a life to come. Is this resurrection from the death of sin in this present life? He mentioned this having “believed in vain” in three subsequent verses in this chapter:

1 Cor 15:14, 17, 30

14 And if Christ be not risen, then **is our preaching** vain, and your **faith is also vain**.

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith **is vain**; ye are **yet in your sins**.

30 And why **stand we in jeopardy every hour**?

In these three verses along with the second verse of this chapter all of the underlined phrases are in the present tense. It is essential that we understand the present reality of this chapter in order to rightly divide the word of its contents. As we have seen by previous quotes of Paul, we were dead in our sins and have been made alive (quickenen) so that it is not us who lives, but it is Christ who lives in us. We have been translated from the death of sin to be dead in Christ but alive unto God:

Gal 2:20

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Have we been crucified with Christ as Paul was? If we have, we have actually found life. Jesus said that he who seeks to save his life shall lose it, but he who seeks to lose his life for my sake shall find life. We seek to save our lives in so many ways. We seek to save our lives through wealth, position and even our Christian doctrines. If we are dead in Christ then we do not have to fear natural death:

Heb 2:14-15

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Verses 3- 4, 12-18

In this particular study we will not delve into the appearing of Jesus, so we will not investigate verses 5-11. I believe that the appearing of Jesus in the present and future is greatly misunderstood by a majority of Christians. We will save that subject for a later date and continue with the subject at hand:

1 Cor 15:3-4, 11-16

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ **died for our sins** according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, **so we preach**, and **so ye believed**.

12 Now if **Christ be preached that he rose from the dead**, how say some among you that there **is no resurrection of the dead?**

13 But if there be **no resurrection of the dead**, then **is Christ not risen**:

14 And if **Christ be not risen**, then is our **preaching vain**, and your **faith is also vain**.

15 Yea, and we **are found false witnesses** of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: **whom he raised not up**, if **so be that the dead rise not**.

16 For if the **dead rise not**, then **is not Christ raised**:

17 And if **Christ be not raised**, your faith **is vain**; **ye are yet in your sins**.

18 Then **they also** which are **fallen asleep** in Christ **are perished**.

In verse 3 Christ died for our sins. His death was a propitiation for the sins for all men who would accept that sacrifice. His death would satisfy the sin issue between God and man, but as we will find His death would not give us life. Let's re-establish that His death remitted our sins:

Phil 2:7-8

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Rom 3:24-26

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness **for the remission of sins** that are past, through the forbearance of God;
26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of **him which believeth in Jesus.**

His death gives those who believe a right standing between God and the believer. We are righteous or made right by His death. The death of God in the flesh satisfied God in the Spirit for the remission of sins for those that believe. We **do not have to wait until our physical death** to be made right with God. We are “right” right now because of **His death**. This is an important concept to grasp for us to rightly understand this chapter. Not only do we not have to wait until our death to obtain righteousness, we do not have to wait until our physical death to **obtain resurrection**. This is that to which Paul is ascribing in this entire chapter. This is the gospel that he preached in verses 1 and 11 and because he and Jesus preached that gospel we have believed and we **now** live eternally. Let’s continue by repeating verse 12 for clarification:

1 Cor 15:12

12 Now if **Christ be preached that he rose from the dead**, how say some among you that **there is no resurrection of the dead**?

Most of us Christians would agree that Christ rose from the dead. The fly in the ointment would come from what Paul is expressing with the last phrase of verse 12. What “resurrection” and what “dead” is he addressing in this verse? Is he writing of some resurrection in the future of physically dead bodies or is he signifying a **resurrection from the death of sin in this life**? We can readily ascertain that he is embracing the latter concept by that which he writes following verse 12 in the remainder of the chapter, but primarily through verse 18:

1 Cor 15:13-14

13 But if there be **no resurrection of the dead**, then **is Christ not risen**:
14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our **preaching vain**, and your **faith is also vain**.

Paul’s thought in these two verses are a continuing concept and not two different subjects. Our faith is **also** vain because the **preaching** was in vain. Our faith is **not** “also” vain because there is no resurrection of the future. Our faith is vain if we have not been resurrected from the death of sin. Reiterating, the resurrection of the dead in verse 13 is from the death of sin and not from the ground at some point in the future. If we have not already been resurrected then Christ is not risen, Paul’s preaching is vain (present tense) and our faith is vain (present tense). Remember that was his concern in verse 2, “Ye have believed (past tense) in vain.”

1 Cor 15:15-16

15 Yea, and we **are found false witnesses** of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be **that the dead rise not**.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

16 For if the **dead rise not**, then **is not Christ raised**:

Like Paul, if we are not presently raised from the dead then we are also found as false witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. This **is the gospel** that Paul preached in verse 1 and 11. The “dead rise not” in verses 15 and 16 are in the present tense. We know that the “sleeping” saints were not presently rising in the day of Paul nor are they presently rising today. They rose in resurrection life before they “slept”. We will see in the next two verses a **comparison** that Paul makes between those that have been resurrected from the death of sin (those alive and walking on the earth) and those also who have participated in that resurrection but are now “asleep” (physically dead). **By him making this comparison in these two verses, he verifies the supposition thus far presented:**

1 Cor 15:17-18

17 And **if Christ be not raised**, your **faith is vain**; ye are **yet in your sins**.

18 Then **they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished**.

We are not presently raised in resurrection life if Christ is not raised. Our faith is in vain and we are yet in our sins. Paul then makes the **comparison** between those presently living in resurrection life and those who have physically died in Christ. If Christ is not raised then they that have physically died in Christ have already perished. Can we now see that Paul is writing about being resurrected in this present life in this chapter? If not, then we will again let the Bible interpret the Bible. No one can make a supposition about a particular passage of scripture without scriptural verification. In other words there should be no private interpretation of the scripture. Let all things be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. The first witness that we will call is Jesus. I believe that He would be a qualified witness. We have already looked at a portion of the following scripture:

John 5:25, 28

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The hour is coming, and now is**, when **the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God**: and **they that hear shall live**.

28 Marvel not at this: for the **hour is coming**, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice**,

In these two verses Jesus makes the comparison as Paul did between the dead in sin and the dead in the graves. He said in verse 25 that now is the hour that those that are dead in sin shall hear the voice of the son of God and they shall live eternally. Remember His proclamation to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, “**I am** the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, **though he were dead**, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and **believeth in me shall never die**. Believest thou this?” He is the resurrection and life for those who were dead in sins and now believe. If we now believe we are presently resurrected and we will never die. In John 5:28 above He says that the hour is coming (but is not yet) when those that are in the graves shall hear His voice. Not **all** will be in the graves, but **all those that are in the graves** shall hear his voice. Those that have heard His voice while in the death of sin, but prior to their physical death will not be in the graves. This is another debatable subject that we will look into briefly a little later, but

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

we can't go there in depth or we will stray too far from our present subject. The next witness that we will call is the Apostle Peter in determining that we were dead in sin, but now we are resurrected in life:

1 Peter 4:6

6 For for this cause was the **gospel preached also to them that are dead**, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, **but live according to God in the spirit.**

The gospel that Jesus and Paul proclaimed is also preached by Peter. It is easily determined that the dead in the above verse are physically alive and now is the prince of this world judged in their flesh. Because they have been resurrected they now live according to God in the Spirit. We now have three witnesses, Jesus, Paul and Peter, that tell us that we were dead in sin, but because of His death and resurrection we now live a resurrected life. I believe that we have sufficiently established the "dead" to which Paul was referring in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul was a difficult man to understand even to his contemporaries who were full of the Holy Ghost. How much more so to those of this day who are not led by the Spirit? Peter speaks concerning this:

2 Peter 3:15-16

15 And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother **Paul** also according to the wisdom given unto him **hath written unto you;**

16 As also **in all his epistles**, speaking in them of these things; in which are **some things hard to be understood**, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Verses 19-24

We continue in 1 Corinthians 15. Verse 18 will be repeated for continuity of understanding:

1 Cor 15:18-24

18 Then they **also** which are **fallen asleep** in Christ are perished.

19 If **in this life only** we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of **them that slept.**

21 For since **by man came death**, by man came also the **resurrection of the dead.**

22 For **as in Adam all die**, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive.**

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at **his coming.**

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when **he shall have put down** all rule and all authority and power.

In verses 18 and 19 we again see the comparison of those that have physically died (those fallen asleep) and those that have been resurrected in this life. The Old Testament saints slept waiting for the death and resurrection of Jesus. David said that his soul would

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

not be left in hell (the grave). Job proclaimed the same thing. The writer of Hebrews embraced this concept when addressing the hall of fame (faith) in the 11th chapter:

Heb 11:13, 16, 39-40

13 These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for **he hath prepared for them a city**.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, **received not the promise**:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that **they without us should not be made perfect**.

The place that was prepared for them was the New Covenant via the cross. As the writer of Hebrews states, “The New Covenant has better promises than the old one.” The old one was merely a type and a shadow in the natural of what was to come in the spiritual. This city that they are now living in is the New Jerusalem. If we have accepted Christ we also live in that city. All which are in heaven and earth will be brought together in one when we ascend (not literally but spiritually) to that heavenly realm (Eph. 1:10). The realms of heaven and earth are not separated by space and/or distance, but by holiness and righteousness.

Paul stated in verse 21 of our subject chapter that by man came death and by man comes the resurrection of the dead. Again we must understand that he is not referring to a physical death in this verse, but spiritual death. Recall that God had told Adam in Genesis 2:17 that the day he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he would die. He did not die physically in that 24 hour period, but he died a spiritual death on that day. He lived to be 930 years old. His physical death was the result of his spiritual death many years before. I know that to the Lord a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day, but I do not think that is to what God is primarily referring to in Genesis 2:17.

Adam did not fall on his head. He fell in his head. Science tells us that man uses only 10% of his brain and that is all that he is capable of using in his own power. A Dr. Peterson from Oral Roberts University has done a study and proven whereby when we speak in tongues in the Spirit that these utterances originate from an area of the brain that cannot be accessed by man in his own power. If we can consciously use only 10% of our brain then it stands to reason that 90% is reserved for God. That 90% can only be tapped by learning to operate in the Spirit. Adam did not fall on his head. He fell from being able to utilize 100% of his brain to 10%. He fell in his head. The second man Adam has made it possible for man to again operate in the full capacity of his original creation. As verse 22 of our text chapter indicates, we will be made totally alive in Christ. This is not about a dead body coming forth from the ground, but is about the body of Christ ascending to heavenly places on the ground.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Verse 23 of subject chapter speaks of the coming of Christ. The coming of Christ in this verse does not refer to the physical return of Jesus. His coming in this verse refers to His coming in power in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit:

John 14:16-18

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may **abide with you for ever**;

17 Even **the Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for **he dwelleth with you**, and **shall be in you**.

18 **I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.**

The Christ, the anointed One, dwelled with them, but there was a day shortly coming when the anointed One would live in them and they would be anointed as He was. Where He was there would they be also. Where was Jesus when He made the statement, "Where I am?" He gives us the answer in that chapter of scripture:

John 14:3, 11, 20

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that **where I am**, there ye may be also.

11 Believe me that **I am in the Father**, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

John 14:20

20 At **that day** ye shall know that **I am in my Father**, and ye in me, and **I in you**.

To what day was Jesus referring? He was referring to the day of Pentecost when He would **come** to live in them. The entire chapter of John 14 is about Jesus **coming** to live in us. It is not about mansions in the sky. We are the mansion that God dwells in, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God." The Greek word for "mansions" is the same word used for "abode" in verse 23. This is the coming to which Paul is referring in 1 Corinthians 15:23. Verse 24 will be repeated for clarity:

1 Cor 15:24

24 Then **cometh the end**, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when **he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power**.

"Cometh" in this verse is not in the original text. I believe "the end" is also the end of the Mosaic Law (70 A.D.); otherwise the following verses do not coincide in content. I believe the "end" in this verse can be the same as the "end" in Matthew 24:14:

Matt 24:14

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the **end** come.

Corinthians was written in the transitional period between the cross (about 30 A.D.) and the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). Jesus had given the Jewish nation a generation to repent just as He stated in Matthew 24. He put down the rule, authority and

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

power that governed them in 70 A. D. along with having put down all rule, authority and power of satanic influence at the cross and subsequent resurrection. The gospel would have had to be preached throughout “all the world” for the “end” to come if this is true. Was it? Paul said that it was:

Rom 10:18

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, **their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.**

Rom 16:26

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations** for the obedience of faith:

Verses 25-28

1 Cor 15:25-28

25 **For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.**

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For **he hath put all things under his feet.** But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when **all things shall be subdued unto him,** then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Verses 25 and 27 may appear to be a bit contradictory, but with understanding we find that they are not. Jesus has put **all things** under **His** feet. In Revelation 1:18 He proclaims that He has the keys of hell and death. Jesus has already made the way for the last enemy to be defeated. **All things** are yet to be subdued unto Him by His body. He waits for His body to take the keys and eventually defeat the last enemy. We are the body of Christ as declared in Ephesians:

Eph 1:22-23

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The writer of Hebrews made the same proclamation that is seen above in 1 Corinthians 15:

Heb 2:8

8 Thou hast put **all things in subjection under his feet.** For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now **we see not yet all things put under him.**

How did Jesus put all things under His feet? The answer is easily explained by most Christians as to how Jesus put **all things** under His feet. Practically all proclaim that by

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Page 10

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

the cross and the Spirit that dwelled within Him did He defeat the last enemy. But, most Christians do not understand that all things are to be put under their feet by the same method. Yes, the last enemy is to be defeated by the same method in which Jesus defeated it. The transformation and restoration of mankind will only be done through this method, the cross and the Spirit. We have not been properly taught the complete power of the cross and the Spirit that comes to dwell within us due to the cross. There is not an event of the future that will miraculously change, transform or restore mankind. We will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye when we are completely changed by the power of the cross and the Holy Spirit:

Phil 3:21

21 Who shall **change** our **vile body**, that it may be **fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.**

What is the working (method) whereby He is able to subdue **one thing** unto Himself? Whatever method that is, by the same working will He subdue all things unto Himself. This would include changing our vile body to be fashioned like unto His glorious body. But, now we see not yet all things subdued unto Him.

Col 1:20

20 And, having made peace **through the blood of his cross**, by him to reconcile **all things** unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

2 Cor 3:18

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as **by the Spirit of the Lord.**

There is no cataclysmic event of the future whereby men fly through the air to be changed. I fear if we believe that then we have trampled on the blood of the cross and have denigrated the power of the Holy Spirit to change, transform and restore mankind.

Rom 8:11

11 But if the **Spirit of him** that **raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also **quicken your mortal bodies** by his **Spirit that dwelleth in you.**

Let me be quick to point out that “mortal bodies” are not dead bodies in the ground. The definition of “mortal” is that which is apt to die. It is not a dead body already in the grave. Thus, the context of the above verse is the same that Paul explains in our subject chapter. The quickening (resurrection) is from the death of sin and not from “terra-not-so firma.” Only through the cross and the Holy Spirit will we be completely resurrected (transformed).

VERSE 29

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

1 Cor 15:29

29 Else what shall they do which are **baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?**

We will isolate this verse for study due to the mass confusion it has created down through the ages. To gain understanding we must approach this verse as we do the entire chapter. Paul is **not** addressing dead people in the graveyard. He is **not** stating that living people should be baptized for dead people. He is making a statement that coincides with the theme of the entire chapter. The ones that are baptized are the ones that were dead in sin. The very ones that were baptized are the very ones that were dead. They have been baptized into the death of Jesus. If they have been baptized into the death of Jesus and if they were dead in sin prior to this baptism then they have done so in vain if the dead rise not at all. This rising from the dead is also in context with that which we have seen thus far. Let me add that when the word “baptism” is used our minds should not immediately turn to water. There are several types of baptisms of which we cannot readily address in this writing. Let’s look at a passage of scripture that Paul had written to the Romans which coincides with the above verse.

Rom 6:1-15

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are **dead to sin**, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**

4 Therefore **we are buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**.

5 For if we have been **planted together in the likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the **likeness of his resurrection**:

6 Knowing this, **that our old man is crucified with him**, that the **body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For **he that is dead is freed from sin**.

8 Now **if we be dead with Christ**, we believe that **we shall also live with him**:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, **he died unto sin once**: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin**, but **alive unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body**, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead**, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

These verses amplify 1 Corinthians 15:29 so well and are self explanatory, but nevertheless I will make a few comments. Verse 2 is in the present tense as is the remainder of this passage of scripture. Reiterating, Paul wrote of two types of death: One,

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Page 12

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

we were dead in sin prior to our resurrection: Two, we are dead to sin after our resurrection. Verse 3 directly explains the 1 Corinthians 15:29 verse. It is readily seen here that Paul is not addressing dead people in the graveyard. Verse 4 states that we have been resurrected into a newness of life. As we will see, if we have participated in this resurrection there will never be another. Verse 5 is not future tense but is a statement of fact in the present tense. Verse 6 says that if we were crucified with Jesus then the old nature of the body of sin is destroyed (present tense) and we should walk (present and future tense) in a newness of life (resurrection). In verse 7 we know that Paul is not referring to the dead in the graveyard because **everyone** of that status is freed from sin. That is a given without the need of explanation. He is addressing being dead with Christ or dead in Christ.

Verse 8 addresses this being “dead with Christ” or as another one of his writings states, “dead in Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says that the “dead in Christ” shall rise first. If Christians truly understood these words then their understanding of eschatology might be a little different. Again, the dead in Christ are not those in the graveyard. The word “rise” in this verse may not be what we have been led to believe. There were three primary Greek words that were translated into the English word “rise.” “Anabaino” means to rise up into the air. “Egeiro” means to awake from the dead. Neither one of these are used in the 1 Thessalonians 4 scripture. The Greek word “anistemi” is used which simply means to stand up. Those that are dead in Christ are going to stand up first on the earth. Four times in John 6 Jesus says that in the last day he will raise (anistemi) us up. This is not to awake from the dead, but to stand up on the earth.

In Romans 6:11 above we are dead unto sin, but alive unto God. In verse 12 we should not let sin reign in our mortal body. Again mortal body is not a dead body, but one that is apt to die. Verse 13 goes along with verse 11. We are alive from the death of sin. We are alive only because Christ lives in us and not because it is anything that we have done. Paul put it this way in another of his books:

Gal 2:20

20 **I am crucified** with Christ: **nevertheless I live; yet not I**, but **Christ liveth in me**; and **the life which I now live** in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Gal 3:27

27 For as many of **you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ**.

We should now understand 1 Corinthians 15:29. Let’s not take one verse out of context and attempt to make it say something that it does not state. We must not “hang” ourselves with verses taken out of context. “Judas went and hanged himself, do likewise.” NO! Don’t do it. These are two phrases of two verses which are put together out of context. Let’s move on in the study of our chapter. We will repeat verse 29 for continuity.

Verses 29-32

1 Cor 15:29-32

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Page 13

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And **why stand we in jeopardy every hour?**

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.**

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, **what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?** let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

Referencing verses 29 and 30 we again see the theme of the chapter. If we are not baptized into the death of Christ we stand in jeopardy every hour because we have believed in vain. In verse 31 Paul is not addressing dieing daily to himself. We have already proven that he was dead in Christ so there was no more dieing to do. His natural life was in jeopardy every hour because of the perils he faced daily. Verse 32 again supports our supposition by itself. What advantage did Paul have if he was not already raised from the dead? Can we see that all of this verse is in the present tense? He knew that he had risen from the dead so he wasn't going to jeopardize his spiritual life. At the end of his physical life he would step out of this present dimension into the next with a body that the Lord had already given him. Let's skip to verse 34.

Verses 34 – 38

1 Cor 15:34-38

34 **Awake to righteousness,** and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

35 But **some man will say, How are the dead raised up?** and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, **thou sowest not that body that shall be,** but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But **God giveth it a body** as it **hath** pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

A dead body planted in the ground is never going to bring forth anything except dust. In verse 34 the awakening to righteousness is that resurrection from the death of sin that we have previously discussed and supported with several scriptures (Eph. 2:1, 5-6 etc.). In verse 35 Paul states that one without understanding would ask (he would never ask this question), "How are the dead raised and with what body to they come." We will find later in this chapter that if we have been quickened then there are two bodies. We lived in a body of sin, but we are sowing to a spiritual body. In verse 36 he explains again that which we have already seen and supported with scriptures such as Romans 6:1-12. If we have died with Jesus on the cross then we have been quickened with him at His resurrection. He further supports this supposition in Romans 8 which then ties in with the remaining two verses above, verses 37 and 38:

Rom 8:10-11

10 And if Christ be in you, **the body is dead because of sin;** but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

11 But if the **Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also **quicken your mortal bodies** by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

To comprehend the writings of Paul we must understand the man and how he wrote in all his epistles. Remember Peter said that it was hard for the unlearned to understand Paul. Before our resurrection in awakening to righteousness we were in a body of sin and destined to sin. It was our nature to sin. Once we were resurrected from the death of sin we began sowing to a new body plus the Spirit will even quicken this mortal body while we live in it. Remember “mortal” means apt to die. Once the seed of God is planted, the old body of sin dies. We are not killing ourselves, but the old man Adam dies in all of us. The seed springs forth into a new body and produces much fruit. Again we will see shortly that there are two bodies. This new body is not a body of sin, but is a body which progressively reveals the glory of God. We are quickened by the seed of the Spirit that now dwells in us. We may commit an offence but we are not predisposed to sin. John said this in his writings which are also at times misunderstood:

1 John 3:8-10

8 **He that committeth sin is of the devil**; for the devil **sinneth from the beginning**. For this purpose **the Son of God was manifested**, that he might **destroy the works of the devil**.

9 **Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him**; and he cannot sin, because **he is born of God**.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God**, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Here John writes about the same seed that Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15. In the immediate passage above we see that this is all in the present tense just as Paul was writing in our subject chapter. Jesus has already provided a way for the works of the devil to be destroyed, yet we see not all things subdued unto Him. All of the works of the devil will be destroyed which includes the last enemy death. We will see later that there will be a generation that will not physically die, but will be changed. As we have comprehended, there is only one way that complete restoration and transformation of mankind will take place and it is not by some event of the future, but by that which Jesus has already done in the past. Reiterating:

Phil 3:21-4:1

21 Who shall **change our vile body**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, **according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself**.

Col 1:20

20 And, having made peace through **the blood of his cross**, by him **to reconcile all things unto himself**; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

2 Cor 3:18

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord**.

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Verses 39-44

1 Cor 15:39-44

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also **celestial bodies**, and **bodies terrestrial**: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one **glory of the sun**, and another **glory of the moon**, and **another glory of the stars**: for **one star differeth from another star in glory**.

42 So also is the **resurrection of the dead**. It is **sown in corruption**; **it is raised in incorruption**:

43 It is **sown in dishonour**; **it is raised in glory**: **it is sown in weakness**; **it is raised in power**:

44 It is sown a **natural body**; it is **raised a spiritual body**. There is a **natural body**, and there is a **spiritual body**.

Paul's explanation of these verses is contained within the verses that follow them in this chapter. We will apply them to these verses when we get there. Briefly, we were all born of Adam who was terrestrial. If we are born again we are born of Jesus or from above, thus we are celestial. Paul continues instructing in the same light with which he has previously written in this chapter. In verse 40 he is addressing our two bodies that presently exist. In celestial bodies he is not referring to stars, angels or a body that we will obtain **only** in the future. He is addressing the spiritual body we obtained at our resurrection when we **were** translated:

Col 1:13

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and **hath translated us** into the kingdom of his dear Son:

We have already been translated into the Kingdom if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. Heaven is defined as the abode of God, specifically salvation. We ascend higher as we progress through the required feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. He is Spirit and we are the temple where He dwells. The terrestrial body (mortal) is the one seen by natural eyes. The spiritual body is the one that is seen by spiritual eyes:

2 Cor 5:16-17

16 Wherefore henceforth **know we no man after the flesh**: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The glory of the sun, moon and stars in verse 41 are seen in this fashion. The sun represents the favor of God on a people as it does in so many scriptures. The moon is a reflection of the sun as is the church a reflection of God's favor in the earth. From our vantage point on earth the stars differ in intensity. So it is with each of us individually. Several scriptures refer to us as stars and light, but we will only look at a couple:

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Dan 12:3

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and **they that turn many to righteousness as the stars** for ever and ever.

Isa 60:1, 3

60:1 Arise, shine; **for thy light is come**, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the **brightness of thy rising**.

In verse 42 above of our subject chapter we again see this “resurrection from the dead.” This is the same resurrection that we have seen in Romans and other of Paul’s writings:

Rom 6:5, 11

5 For if we have been planted together in the **likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the **likeness of his resurrection**:

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord**.

Eph 2:5-6

5 Even when we were dead in sins, **hath quickened us together with Christ**, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath **raised us up together**, and made us sit together in **heavenly places** in Christ Jesus:

The resurrection of the brightness of our rising is a process individually and corporately. The corporate man is growing brighter and brighter in the earth despite the declaration of the “defeatist” who desire to be rescued:

Prov 4:18

18 But the path of the just is as the **shining light, that shineth more and more** unto the **perfect day**.

In verse 43 of our chapter the spiritual body is contained within this natural body. It is raised in power and is not subject to the weakness of the flesh:

Matt 9:8

8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such **power unto men**.

Luke 10:19

19 Behold, **I give unto you power** to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Acts 1:8

8 But **ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you**: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Verse 44 of our chapter declares that there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. At physical death we step out of this natural body **with** our spiritual body. We do not have to wait until physical death to obtain a glorified body. We do not have to wait for some resurrection of a body from the ground in the sweet by-and-by. If this belief is true then we should pity those who were born inseparable Siamese twins, those ripped apart by disaster and beasts, those consumed by fire and those vaporized by atomic warfare. Paul supported this concept of two bodies in another of his writings:

2 Cor 5:1-4

5:1 For we know that if our **earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 **If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.**

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: **not for that we would be unclothed,** but clothed upon, **that mortality might be swallowed up of life.**

If we have been resurrected with Him then we have obtained a better resurrection. Remember the definition of mortal. Our mortal body (individually and corporately) is even now being swallowed up in life. There is another resurrection for those who have not participated in the first resurrection. This is the only one that Martha knew about when speaking with Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus told her of a better resurrection when He informed her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Verses 45-50

1 Cor 15:45-50

45 And so it is written, The **first man Adam was made a living soul;** the **last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**

46 Howbeit that was **not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural;** and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, **such are they also that are earthy;** and as is the heavenly, **such are they also that are heavenly.**

49 And as we **have borne the image of the earthy,** we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;** neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Paul is not introducing a new subject in these verses. He is reiterating by example that which we have previously discovered. As discussed, he is not addressing the dead in the graveyard in this chapter. He is addressing those that were dead in sin and are now made alive by being dead in Christ. We see him beginning his summarization by the first two words of verse 45, "And so." As we have seen we need to be resurrected from the death of Adam which is sin:

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

Rom 5:14-15

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression**, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also **is the free gift**. For if through the **offence of one many be dead**, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which **is by one man**, Jesus Christ, **hath abounded** unto many.

As are the verses in 1 Corinthians 15 above in the present tense so are these two verses in Romans. The gift has already abounded unto many. The Greek word for “abound” means that it is super abundant. As discussed previously, we do not have to wait to attain everlasting life. We have attained from the point of belief. For us to understand his writings Paul has gone over and over the same concepts using different phrases. How could we have missed the meaning of this chapter? If one is only in Adam then that one is of the earth or earthy. If we have been born again then we bear the image of the one from Heaven, thus we are heavenly:

Eph 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **hath blessed us** with all spiritual blessings **in heavenly places in Christ**:

In 1 Corinthians 15:50 above it is stated that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. This does not mean that one has to physically die in order to get to a kingdom in outer space. Jesus said these same words to Nicodemus in the 3rd chapter of John. Paraphrasing, “Unless you are born of the Spirit you cannot enter the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is not measured in distance by light years from the earth. The kingdom of God is within you as Jesus proclaimed in Luke 17. Through Adam (corruption) no one can inherit the kingdom, but through the second man Adam (incorruption) can one enter the kingdom.

Verses 51-58

1 Cor 15:51-58

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all **sleep**, but **we shall all be changed**,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Again, to keep us from being confused about “being dead” in this chapter the Apostle Paul does not use the word “dead” for those that have physically died in Christ. He wanted us to understand so he differentiated between the dead in sin and dead in Christ from being physically dead. He used the words “sleep” and “slept” to denote the physically dead saints. In another one of his writings (1 Thessalonians 4) he used the same concept. We have previously seen this word usage in verse 18 (Then they also which are fallen **asleep** in Christ are perished.) and now we see it again in verse 51. There is coming a time when there will be those who do not physically die (sleep). But, whether we sleep or don't sleep we will eventually all be changed. I was taught that it took flying through the air to be changed, but that is not what the bible teaches. It states that we are changed only by the cross and the Spirit of the Lord.

I was involved in two prophecies at two different churches at two different times where the Lord stated that we do not understand the power of the cross. We understand redemption, justification and sanctification, but we do not understand complete restoration and transformation that comes via the cross. These words were instrumental in changing my thinking. I quit thinking about being rescued and became a part of the body of Christ that will do the rescuing. We are not going to be changed until we are changed into the image and likeness of Jesus individually and corporately. This brings us to verse 52.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump the dead shall be changed. What dead shall be changed? The dead in Christ that are alive and walking around on terra firma will be changed spirit, soul **and body**. This verse does not state that those that are “asleep” will be changed. Those that are “asleep” are already changed so that they will not be found “naked” just as Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 5. The “dead in Christ” being changed will complete the manifestation of the Sons of God on the earth. All will be changed, but despite that which I was taught all will not be changed at the same time. God has always brought forth a remnant in advance of the main party. The resurgence of Pentecost at the turn of the 20th century is an example of a remnant who understood. The main stream church vehemently rejected this small remnant. Now one hundred years later Pentecost is experienced to a degree in all churches. So will it be with the full manifestation of the Sons of God.

The last trump in verse 52 is the trump that blows in the Feast of Trumpets which is a part of the last feast (Tabernacles). I can hear the notes of this trumpet sounding even now. It is sounding a message of atonement (cleansing). In fact the Feast of Atonement comes right after the Feast of Trumpets. This atonement will be the change whereby a remnant will be changed spirit, soul and body. Shortly thereafter the Feast of Tabernacles (ingathering, harvest) will begin in earnest. The great harvest will be reaped throughout the world. As verse 53 states for this to happen, “This mortal must put on immortality.” Reiterating, a mortal person is not physically dead, but one that is apt to die. Those that hear the message of the last trump and are atoned will not be apt to die but will put on the

THE DEAD OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15 ARE NOT! by GL Parks

incorruptible. Death will have been swallowed up in victory as verse 54 states. This word “death” in this verse is not the same Greek word for dead that Paul used earlier in the chapter. Those that are changed will triumph over physical death and the grave.

The sting of death is sin which is strengthened by the law. Sin is strong because people attempt to obey the law by their own power and might. Concentration is on sin therefore they are more apt to commit sin. Victory over sin is only accomplished through our Lord Jesus Christ. So states verse 57. Our concentration should be on Him. As we behold Him the propensity to commit sin departs. In conclusion I encourage us to live a resurrected life in this life. If we are dead with Him then we also are raised with Him to live as Him, the body. Verse 58 is repeated for our encouragement:

1 Cor 15:58

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

END