

# RESURRECTED

# REJUVENATED



Our human ideas of “superior” and “inferior” are inferior comparisons 😊

“Coca-Cola is superior to Pepsi”, “The Beatles are superior to the Rolling Stones” (they really are by the way 😊), “Land O Lakes is superior to I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter”, “Starbucks is superior to Dunkin’ Donuts”, “Democrats are superior to Republicans”, “America is superior to other countries”.

Our human idea of the “superior” and “inferior” is inferior to the superiority of God!

God’s idea of the “superior” and “inferior” is superior to the inferiority of humankind’s mind! It’s incredible! The heavenly view is so different! So much more powerful! So much more robust than anything we see!

And in 1 Corinthians 15:29-49 Paul attempts to scratch the surface of the heavenly view by the power of the Holy Spirit.

First he starts with a reference to something weird as he speaks to the Corinthian Jesus followers;

*<sup>29</sup> Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them? (1 Cor. 15:29)*

Up to 200 explanations have been given of this verse! Most of these interpretations are inane, prompted by a desire to conform this verse to an orthodox doctrine of baptism. It is clear from the context, however, that Paul distinguished his own practice and teaching from that described here. He merely held up the teaching of being **baptized for the dead** as a practice of some who denied the Resurrection.

Just across the Saronic Gulf, north of Corinth, lay Eleusis, the center of an ancient mystery religion lauded by Homer (*Hymn to Demeter* 478–79) and widely popular (cf. Cicero, himself an initiate, in *De Legibus* 2. 14. 36). Part of the rites of initiation into this pagan religion were washings of purification in the sea without which no one could hope to experience bliss in the life hereafter (cf. Pindar *Fragment* 212; Sophocles *Fragment* 753). A vicarious participation in the mysteries was not unknown either (cf. Orphica *Fragment* 245). Given the Corinthian propensity for distortion in matters of church practice (11:2–14:40), it was likely that some in Corinth (possibly influenced by the Eleusinian mystery) were propounding a false view of baptism which Paul took up and used as an argument against those who denied the Resurrection. No interpretation of this text is entirely satisfactory, but this view has as its chief strength the natural reading of the Greek verse, an asset singularly lacking in other explanations.<sup>1</sup>

Among some other possible interpretations were also:

- a) being baptized above the graves of the martyrs (but this is unlikely as there were not yet many martyrs when Paul wrote this letter),
- b) being baptized out of respect and affection for the dead (this is possible, but there is nothing in the text or anywhere in the NT to support it),
- c) being baptized to fill up vacant places in the church left by the dead (a lovely thought, but how many of the believers at Corinth had died by the time Paul wrote this letter?) or
- d) being baptized on behalf of the dead, that is, being baptized on behalf of someone else who had died.<sup>2</sup>

It's also possible that **“being baptized for the dead”** was a reference to washing the bodies of the dead. The idea may have meant that Christ followers were being baptized in honor of unbaptized deceased believers.<sup>3</sup>

It's interesting to speculate and all, but whatever 1 Cor. 15:29 means, Paul was ultimately seeming to say that the practice that was going down in Corinth in reference to being “baptized for the dead” was not necessary or even necessarily good.

Then Paul went on to talk about his street cred as a disciple of Jesus and advocate for the resurrection of the body;

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<sup>1</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 544). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

<sup>3</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:29). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

*<sup>30</sup> Why are we in danger every hour? <sup>31</sup> I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>32</sup> If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.** <sup>33</sup> Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” <sup>34</sup> Come to your senses and stop sinning; for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame. (1 Cor. 15:30-34)*

Harriet Tubman (born Araminta Ross, c. March 1822 – March 10, 1913) was an American abolitionist and social activist. After escaping enslavement, Tubman made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, including her family and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. During the American Civil War, she served as an armed scout and spy for the Union Army. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the movement for women's suffrage.<sup>4</sup>

Harriet Tubman, after the arduous, crazily dangerous and difficult journey out of slavery<sup>5</sup>, could have rested on her laurels and lived her best life. But instead, she was so driven, by God Himself, by her own experience of being rescued from the perils of it all, had to wildly go back into the center of the hornet's nest and rescue others out of it. She advocated for the same her entire life, to the point of working for the Union Army against the cause of slavery in the Civil War, and didn't even quit at the end, desiring for women's rights as well in her later years.

Tubman is a woman driven by principle. She was inspired by her own experience and story to risk her safety and entire life to help others experience the same.

The apostle Paul had been saved from sin, death, hell and the devil. He was a saved, sanctified, ex-murderer and religious fanatic once on the wrong side of God's history, and flipped onto the right one! This man that deserved God's wrath, God's justice poured out on him for all the bad he had done, had instead been rescued eternally and had hope of living forever in a resurrected body! He wanted others to experience the same!

Paul's own suffering as a Christian was meaningless if Christ had not been raised. After all, why should he have endangered himself to such an extent that he could describe it as dying every day if he had no hope of a future life (15:30-31)? Paul assured the

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet\\_Tubman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Tubman)

<sup>5</sup> For inspiration from Harriet Tubman- watch the 2019 movie “Harriet” <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4648786/>

Corinthians that he was not exaggerating when he said this – just as he was not exaggerating his pride in and love for them (15:31).<sup>6</sup>

Paul's own lifestyle was also an obvious forceful statement of his conviction about the certainty of the resurrection. Some of the Corinthians may have accused Paul of duplicity (cf. 2 Cor. 1:12–14; 2:17; 6:8), but no one thought him a fool even though he affirmed that he would be one if he ministered without certainty of the Resurrection.<sup>7</sup> In 2 Corinthians, Paul listed some of the specific dangers he faced (2 Cor 11:23–33).<sup>8</sup> The book of Acts testified to many of these trials as well, and they were straight up crazy happenings! Paul would've had to have been a nutball to endure this kind of stuff under some sort of delusion! But like Harriet Tubman was compelled by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to risk her life to free fellow slaves from bondage, Paul was compelled by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to risk his life to see jacked up, hopeless, messed up people redeemed, written in the book of Life, and infused with the hope of eternal bodily resurrection under the Kingship of Lord Jesus!

Paul had endured experiences like having to fight with *wild beasts in Ephesus* (15:32). There was no reference to such an incident in the book of Acts, so it was possible that Paul was speaking metaphorically, expressing how threatened he was by his fierce struggles with Jews and Gentiles in that city.<sup>9</sup> Though this was probably not an arena experience like those depicted in the movie “Gladiator”, it was like it in that Paul saw no hope of deliverance.<sup>10</sup> “**Wild beasts**” probably referred simply to intense opposition. Paul was perhaps using this phrase figuratively since there was no evidence of Christians enduring this specific type of persecution until the second century AD.<sup>11</sup>

Why would Paul face that craziness if this life were all there is?<sup>12</sup> Why would Paul put up with these dangers if there were no resurrection? He would be much more sensible to enjoy life in the way advised by a popular saying (Eccl 2:24; 3:21; Isa 22:13).<sup>13</sup> In this case, the Epicureans (and less philosophical people before them; see Isa. 22:13)

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<sup>6</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

<sup>7</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 544–545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:30). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>9</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

<sup>10</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 544–545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>11</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:32). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>12</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 544–545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>13</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

would've been right—pursue pleasure and avoid pain (cf. Epicurus *Letter to Menoecus* 128). “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”. But Paul knew there was more, and again, his life testified to that fact (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Cor. 4:16–18).<sup>14</sup>

I can testify to what it's like to live that Epicurean way. I pursued pleasure head on for a good four years of my life, and at the end of it, nothing pleased me anymore. No sexual encounter, drug high, crazy adventure or drunken escapade could satisfy me like it once did. The party was over. The pleasure wasn't pleasurable. The psychedelics made me think I was going insane. The speed made me delusional. The weed made me paranoid. The nights of wild so called freedom became a prison. Beck portrayed something like what this experience feels like in the song “We Live Again” from his “Mutations” album;

*O hungry days  
The footsteps of fools  
Gazing alone  
Through sex-painted windows  
Dredging the night  
Drunk libertines  
Stink like a colognes  
From the newfangled wasteland...*

*The end  
O the end  
We live again  
O I grow weary of the end<sup>15</sup>*

Seeing life's meaning as a pursuit of pleasure inevitably ends up being both meaningless and pleasureless.

With all that in mind, Paul's concluding advice with reference to those who continued to deny the Resurrection was like his former counsel concerning immoral people in the church in chap. 5 of 1 Corinthians—don't associate with them. Previously he had compared immorality in the church to yeast in bread (5:6). Here he quoted the pagan writer Menander (*Thais* 218) to the same effect: **Bad company corrupts good character**. False teachers should be avoided (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1) because though they claimed great knowledge they were in fact **ignorant of God** (cf. 1 Cor. 8:2). The

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<sup>14</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). *1 Corinthians*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 544–545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>15</sup> Listen to Beck's “We Live Again” here: [https://youtu.be/MI3w4H5nZ\\_g](https://youtu.be/MI3w4H5nZ_g)

Corinthians claimed to be so wise, but were the “wise” Corinthians this easily deceived? (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3)<sup>16</sup>

As Tony Evans noted, The Corinthian believers needed to stop hanging out with those who were promoting false doctrine, denying the resurrection, and living unrighteously. We cannot make flagrant non-Christ followers our constant, intimate companions and think we will escape unscathed. Cozying up to heretical teachings and lifestyles is dangerous.<sup>17</sup>

It's important as followers of Jesus to have connections to and relationships with those who don't believe in or follow Jesus. (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Cor. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:5; Mark 16:15) In fact, it's a requirement of being a Jesus follower because it's the same way that He lived! (Matthew 9:10-17, Mark 2:15-22, and Luke 5:29-39) People who claim to follow Jesus but only hang out in cliques with other followers of Him just simply aren't listening to the Holy Spirit, because guaranteed the Holy Spirit is constantly prompting them to build relationships with their neighbors, co-workers, and people that surround them.

I'm not saying everyone has a primary gift of being an evangelist (Eph. 4:11), but I am saying that all Christ followers must engage in evangelism as part of their faith because it's simply part of who Christ in us is!

However, there is an important tension. In John 17:14-19 Jesus prayed for his disciples, and while speaking directly to God the Father on behalf Jesus said this;

***14** I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. **19** I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*

“Bad company corrupts good morals”. It's a wild tightrope walk, but Christ's disciples must be both a:

- Robust influence on those who don't believe in Him, and
- Robustly not influenced by those who don't believe in Him!

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<sup>16</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>17</sup> CSB Tony Evans Study Bible Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.

**The Corinthians needed to “come to their senses and stop sinning!”** Paul chastised the Corinthians for their arrogance; in this context, their sin was the denial of the resurrection. **Some of them were ignorant of God**, and as uninformed about God as the pagans around them. Paul said this to the Corinthians’ shame because they prided themselves on their knowledge, but obviously were proving themselves foolish and undiscerning (1 Cor 8:1–13).<sup>18</sup>

Again, it’s very weird to me how many in the Church of Western context are. Many will occasionally attend a Sunday gathering, and many folks in healthy Church communities will yet still constantly critique and tear everything down about their community. And some of these same folks will then go off on their own and proceed to live however they want to live. They’ll proceed to spend hours upon hours consuming TikTok, YouTube and Instagram videos, movies, music, food, conversations and relationships, and will remain biblically illiterate because of a simple unwillingness to commit to one ounce of time in the Word of God! It baffles me, and baffles God even more I’m sure!

And guess what? Those outside the Church are 100% unimpressed by this kind of half-hearted, loose, selfish discipleship. It’s really not discipleship at all! If those outside the Church actually experienced disciples of Jesus who are saturated with and living in the presence of Christ, soaking in His Word and applying it more and more, then they might say that “God is really among us”. (1 Cor. 14:24-25) But if we don’t invite God to be among us, then, guess what? He won’t be! And I say all this to encourage those who belong to Him that He **is** among us in power!!!! Those of us who really know how much He has pursued us can’t help but pursue Him back! What better thing can there be than to be enveloped in the presence of God, allowing Him to fully have His way in our lives?

Paul goes on to describe the nature of the resurrected body to the Corinthian Church;

*<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?” <sup>36</sup> You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And as for what you sow—you are not sowing the body that will be, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he wants, and to each of the seeds its own body. <sup>39</sup> Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup> There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. <sup>41</sup> There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor. <sup>42</sup> So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; <sup>43</sup> sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; <sup>44</sup> sown a natural body, raised a*

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<sup>18</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:34). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

*spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* <sup>45</sup> So it is written, **The first man Adam became a living being**; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> Like the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; like the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor. 15:35-49)

As a good teacher, Paul was anticipating another question the Corinthians would have: *How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?* (15:35). Paul strongly corrected this thinking and considered these deniers of the bodily resurrection foolish. In the OT, a fool was someone who rejects or ignores the idea of God (Psa 14:1; compare 1 Cor 1:19, 20, 26).<sup>19</sup> Paul then used everyday examples to explain the answer as to why the resurrection was a reasonable and logical fact.<sup>20</sup>

The seeds that we plant look very different from the plant that grows out of the soil. God mysteriously gives a different body to *each kind of seed* that is sown (15:37-38). And it is not just plants that have different types of bodies. So do humans, animals, birds and fish (15:39) and even heavenly objects such as the sun, moon and stars (15:40). Both heavenly and earthly bodies have splendor, but not the same splendor (15:41). Our resurrection bodies will not be identical to our present bodies, but will have the shape God has determined to be appropriate for them.

Paul then outlines the differences between our current bodies and our future heavenly ones. The present body is perishable, treated with disrespect and weak; the resurrection body will be imperishable, honored and powerful. While there is a connection between the resurrection body and the natural body, just as there is between a plant and its seed, there will also be differences as great as those between a plant and its seed.<sup>21</sup> **“So it is with the resurrection of the dead”** The Corinthians expressed skepticism about the transformation of a dead body through resurrection. Paul used an example from nature to show that such transformation already takes place within creation. We are **“sown in corruption”**, and the corruption of the seed corresponds to the mortal bodies of people.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:36). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

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<sup>21</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

<sup>22</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:42). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



Stop and think for a moment about our personal experiences of existence itself. We are living, breathing, talking, thinking, reasoning, feeling beings on a round planet that is spinning on its axis as it spins in orbit around the sun in a vast galaxy. Think about the fact that one aspect of our existence is the reality of corruption. We have imperfect bodies that malfunction, stall, break, and ultimately die. We experience this within our existence. Corruption is a part of our reality.

And now imagine for a moment what the personal experience of an incorruptible existence would actually be like. It's astounding to think about, and hard to believe for many. But imagine... Isn't that longing for an incorruptible existence a genuine longing inside of you? Don't you ultimately wish that incorruptibility was an actual reality?

That's what Paul is pointing to in these words- the reality of the corruptible becoming incorruptible! We are sown in the dishonor of sin and corruption, but we are raised in glory! When God raises the dead in Christ, we will receive glorified spiritual bodies (see Phil 3:21). Thus, our bodies will become honorable before the Lord.<sup>23</sup> We are sown in the weakness of sickness, aging, frailty, struggle, and ultimately death, but we will be raised in power and completely experience the health, power, vitality, and eternity of the body that God bestows on us! We are sown with a natural body made of the stuff of the earth, we will be raised with a spiritual body infused with the stuff of heaven!

A basic principle of life is that there is a development. *The first man Adam became a living being* (15:45; see also [Gen 2:7](#)) but *the last Adam* (Christ) became a *life-giving spirit*. The first Adam (natural) came before the second Adam (spiritual). Paul then extended this comparison: the natural man is *from the dust*, while the other is *from heaven*. The man *from the dust* leads the old creation, while the *man from heaven* leads the new creation (15:46-48). We are all like the first Adam in that we are human, but in the new creation we will become like Christ (15:49). The resurrection enables a transition from the old creation to the new.<sup>24</sup>

The struggle may be real now. We will feel the temptations to medicate ourselves, and pursue our desires even when they're destructive or just plain unnecessary distractions. We will be tempted by the lure of money and fame, and be bewildered in the struggle for significance and purpose. We will struggle to operate in flawed relationships because we are flawed people dealing with other flawed people. We will struggle to find motivation and momentum. We will battle the reality of difficulty regularly.

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<sup>23</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:43). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>24</sup> Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

But we will continue to long in our hearts for an unmedicated existence, one free of destructive or distracting desires, one where we can't be bought or sold or exploited, one where we are perpetually content and joyful, one where harmony within, without, and between each other is finally achieved! One where an eternal, peaceful, fiery motivation of existence is constantly fueling our lives! One where difficulty and pain no longer exists and freedom and peace reign!

Via the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His resurrection of our bodies, and His installment of heaven into earth finally once and for good, ***we will experience all these things!!!!*** This is the primary hope and joy of what it means to live for and follow Christ from now into eternity! Trust Him! Believe Him! Know He will resurrect you and let Him live through you into that resurrection!