

C & C: If the dead rise not at all?

Connections and Comparisons is an ongoing weekly series that deals with many scriptures in the Bible, some of which are not commonly addressed. The purpose of this series is to examine the scriptures at hand comparing what is said and looking at the connections within.

Many people have questioned what the Apostle Paul was speaking of when he made the statement, “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?” (1 Cor 15:29)

In this lesson I will show you from the scripture what the Apostle Paul is speaking of. Let us take a closer look at chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:1-29

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.

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:

The topic of this chapter has been laid out. The topic of Jesus Christ dying for our sins, being buried, and that he rose again the third day.

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Here the Apostle Paul has given testimony of the witnesses that seen Jesus Christ after he was risen from the dead.

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.

Here the Apostle Paul has explained that if the dead rise not at all then we are still in our sins. And they themselves are also found false witnesses of God because they testified of God that he raised up Christ from the dead. And if there be no resurrection of the dead then Christ did not raise and our faith is in vain.

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.

Here the Apostle Paul reaffirms the truth that Christ is risen from the dead and that he is become the firstfruits of them that slept. Meaning Christ is the first begotten of the dead. (Rev 1:5)

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.
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.
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?

After explaining the order of the resurrection of the dead the Apostle Paul explains that death is the last enemy to be destroyed. And then the Apostle asks the question "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?" Remember the topic of this chapter is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some people were saying that there wasn't any resurrection of the dead. So the Apostle has instructed them that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen from the dead and your faith is in vain, if the dead rise not at all.

"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?"

Something many people fail to realize is that we are baptized for the dead.

Colossians 2:10-14

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

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

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

You don't bury the living you bury the dead!! We are baptized for the dead that the body of sin might be destroyed. Remember the topic of this chapter is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person repents of their sins they must also be baptized in Jesus name for the remission of their sins. Because as we just read in Colossians this is where "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses".

So the Apostle Paul asks the question, "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?"

Romans 6:1-9

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?

Notice carefully the question asked here, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The Apostle Paul goes on to explain how we become dead to sin.

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.

We are baptized for the dead. We must die out to sin in repentance and then be baptized into

Jesus Christ by invoking his name as we are being baptized that the “circumcision made without hands” might take place “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him”

Therefore we are baptized for the dead that the circumcision of Christ might take place which destroys the body of sin which we inherited from birth. This takes place in water baptism whereby our sins are remitted or washed away upon the invoking of the name of Jesus Christ through the faith of the operation of God. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”. But you must be planted together in the likeness of his death by being “baptized into Jesus Christ” where we are “baptized into his death”. Or we will not be in the likeness of his resurrection because the body of sin was not destroyed.