



Pastor W. L. Brown, Sermon notes, Carmichael Baptist Church, 2011

Error Exposed, A Mystery Revealed

I Corinthians 15:51-52, *“⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

Before we get to that mystery we need to understand the contents and the construction of the chapter. Paul has just finished correcting the misuse of the miraculous spiritual gifts and their primary purpose in furthering the preaching of the gospel. In chapter fifteen he introduces the topic of the gospel and how you cannot divorce the bodily resurrection of Christ from the facts of the gospel. He emphasizes it very clearly; *“he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”* vs. 4. He died, he was buried, and he rose again. All are essential elements of the gospel.

I. The Error Introduced, vs. 12

A. Was internal

1. This is a common error from the Sadducees who rejected Christ. Paul had been attacked on this issue in Athens, (Acts 26:8-23; vs. 8, 15-16, 19).
2. The Greeks disputed the reality of the resurrection Paul taught in Acts 17:30-32.
3. *“Some among you;”* an error had been introduced into the Corinthian church by members.
4. There was a denial of the literal bodily resurrection of departed saints.

B. Was infernal

1. This may appear to be a simple doctrinal error but it is diabolical, devilish.
2. Someone was denying the resurrection and in particular the resurrection of the body; *“how say*

some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead” vs. 12. The saints rise not?

3. The removal of the supernatural fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most destructive errors that can enter into a church or a person’s faith and practice.
4. To deny the resurrection is like gangrene in our body, it destroys; it overturns the faith of some, (II Tim. 2:14-18).
5. Gill said it spreads swiftly and endangers the whole body. It will eventually take away the spiritual vitality of a church.

II. The Error Analyzed, vs. 13-19

A. By logical conclusions

1. Paul was emphatic in the logical end of this serious and sadly defective doctrine, vs. 13-19.
2. To deny a literal physical resurrection is to deny the literal physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, vs. 13. One conclusion demands the other.
3. If Christ is not raised then the logical conclusion is; we are liars, and your faith is misplaced, vs. 14.
4. If that is true then we are actually false witnesses (vs. 15 see also Acts 3:15; 5:32); Christ is still dead (vs. 16); and your sins have not been atoned for and you remain condemned, (vs. 17).
5. By removing the literal physical resurrection of Christ you leave the sleeping saints in the grave and we who are alive without hope and miserable. (I Pet. 1:3; I Th. 4:14, we have a lively hope)

B. By practical deductions

1. Paul taught Timothy that this heresy would lead to other heresies which would affect the practical expression of (II Tim. 2:16) our godliness, (I John 3:1-3). (Contrast with I Cor. 15:32-33).

2. This doctrine is a central and significant influence in our Christian experience, (Phil. 3:10) righteousness, (Rom. 4:24); justification, (Rom. 4:25); hope (I Peter 1:3) and in redirecting our life goal and aims, (Rom. 1:3-4).

III. The Error Evicted

A. By the central issue, vs. 1-11

1. The gospel we preached, you believe, and we all understand emphatically teaches the resurrection of the dead, vs. 1. It is the only sign given to that generation, (Luke 11:29).
2. The gospel is the foundation of their faith (“*wherein you stand*”). I preached it, you believe it and you are still standing on this same ground unless your faith was empty (“*vain*”).
3. The gospel of salvation is the gospel of the resurrection; Christ was “*raised again for our justification*” (Rom. 4:25).

B. By the central facts, vs. 20

1. O. T. saints, (Heb. 11:19, 35; Job 19:25-26)
2. His resurrection was prophesied and taught in the Old Testament; “*according to the scriptures.*” (Psa. 16:10; Hosea 6:1-2; Acts 2:22-27). It was a promised fulfilled, (Acts 13:32-34).
3. The Spirit was promised and when he came he reproved the world “*of righteousness*” or of their slander against the Son of God by the resurrection, (John 16:10). Righteousness comes by and through Jesus Christ.
4. Christ showed himself alive after his death on Calvary “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3).
5. It was impossible for the Son of man to remain in the clutches of death, (Acts 2:24). Death did not have the strength to hold him.

IV. The Mystery Revealed

A. The revelation of transition, vs. 50-51

1. The fact of transition “*must*” (vs. 53) and the kind of transition; changed from corruptible to incorruptible; I Cor. 15:35-38, 42-44, 50-51. Our body will like Christ’s, vs. 49. (Death will be swallowed up)
- ✓ Benjamin Franklin’s Epitaph; “The body of Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book its content torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding lies here food for worms. But the work will not be lost for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition revised and corrected by the author.”
2. If we are believers and alive (in the body) we are absent from the Lord; out of the body or dead, we are with the Lord, (II Cor. 5:6-8). This body goes to the grave, we to the Lord, (II Cor. 5:1-4).
3. There will be living saints at the second coming of Christ; they will have an immediate transition without death because the natural body cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Dead or alive, that physical body you have must be changed from corruptible to incorruptible. (I Cor. 15:20-26).

B. The revelation of time, vs. 52

1. It is a divine summons; “*at the last trump*” the final summons for all earthly believers, a call to assemble, (I Th. 4:14-18); it will come from God at his specific time known only to him.
2. It is an immediate change; “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*” This is not a process as is our current practical sanctification. The word notes the smallest known indivisible portion of time that cannot be divided, “*atomoi.*”
3. It is a universal change “*we shall be changed*” everyone of us; whether alive or asleep.
4. It is an eternal change; sin has been dealt with, Christ has removed the sting of death. Death only separates for a while and cannot delay the inevitable literal physical resurrection.