

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 236 – August 24th – 1 Corinthians 15:29-58

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

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|----------------------|---|
| John Drane | <i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976 |
| Leon Morris | <i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985 |
| Anthony C Thistleton | <i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000 |

Verse 29

Ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ ὄλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;

ἐπει since, because, for

ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν 'what do those people think they are doing who ...'

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ὄλως adv at all; actually

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἐγειρω raise

There are many suggestions as to the nature of this practice which Paul uses here as an illustration. Mathis Rossi devoted an entire book to the subject. Thistleton includes an excursus outlining the major views – 13 of them in his enumeration.

Grammatically, the most natural interpretation would seem to be that Paul is referring to a practice among some at Corinth of getting baptised on behalf of dead relatives. Morris considers other interpretations but concludes that if this is not what Paul is referring to (without condemnation but also without commendation) then we are left to conjecture.

However, Thistleton follows the suggestion of GG Findlay and Marion Raeder, suggesting that "baptism for the sake of (ὑπὲρ) the dead refers to the decision of a person or persons to ask for, and to receive, baptism as a result of the desire to be united with their believing relatives who have died. This presupposes that they would share the radiant confidence that they would meet again in and through Christ at the resurrection of the dead." Findlay, having rejected vicarious baptism writes, "Paul is referring rather to a much commoner, indeed a normal experience, that the death of Christians leads to the conversion of survivors, who in the first instance 'for the sake of the dead' (their beloved dead) and in the hope of re-union, turn to Christ – e.g., when a dying mother wins her son by the appeal 'Meet me in heaven!' Such appeals, and their frequent salutary effect, give strong and touching evidence of *faith in the resurrection*." Thistleton says, "We see no reason to reject this view ... as the least problematic and most convincing of all."

Verse 30

τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν;

καὶ ἡμεῖς 'we also', probably reference to the apostles.

κινδυνευω be in danger, run a risk

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

'every hour of the day.'

Verse 31

καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν

ἀποθνησκω see v.22

Cf. 2 Cor 4:10; 1:9.

νῆ by (with acc. to denote a solemn oath)
 ὑμετερος, α, ον possessive adj of 2 pl your
 καυχῆσις, εως f boasting, ground for boasting

Morris cites the translation of Moffatt, "Not a day but I am at death's door! I swear it by my pride in you, brothers, through Christ Jesus our Lord." Morris comments, "It is interesting to see the expression of Paul's basic satisfaction with his Corinthian converts despite the many things for which he had to rebuke them."

A number of important early MSS include ἀδελθοί, i.e. ⋈ A B 33 ... however it is omitted by the earlier p⁴⁶ and also D F G L ... It is easier to account for its insertion than omission.

Thistleton sums up vv.30-31 saying, "Here is a succinct pastoral theology of the *risks, fragility, and dearest, deepest concerns* of a pastor who is willing to sacrifice all for the gospel in the light of the gathering together of all at the resurrection."

Verse 32

εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, Φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν.

κατὰ ἄνθρωπον 'with merely human hopes' (NRSV), 'with human perspectives' (NJB), 'only with human horizons' Thistleton

ἐθηριομάχησα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s
θηριομαχέω fight with wild beasts

On balance, it seems most likely that Paul is speaking *metaphorically* here of the troubles he had faced in Asia.

ὄφελος, ους n gain, benefit

The argument is not one merely of *personal* interest. Paul has devoted himself to the preaching of the gospel in the hope that he will "have a share in the gathering around the throne of God when the whole reconciled people of God shall enter fully into the purposed eschatological salvation. *Suffering* has its role in this eschatological and corporate context. Otherwise everything becomes empty, fruitless, and profitless, and his tenacity was for nothing." Thistleton

φάγωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl ἐσθίω eat
πίωμεν verb, aor act subj, 1 pl πίνω drink
αὔριον Adverb αὔριον tomorrow, the next day, in a short while

"Hayes observes in his commentary that such scepticism as is envisaged would lead the readers to 'act like the frenzied inhabitants of Jerusalem who faced siege and annihilation at the hands of the Assyrians (Isa 22:12-14): instead of facing their fate with repentance and weeping, they decided to 'party like [i.e., as if] there were no tomorrow' ... quoted from Isa 22:13.' In practice virtually all major commentators assume or argue that Paul quotes from this passage. The question which arises is simply whether this quotation *also* coincides with a quotation from Hellenistic philosophical or ethical controversy. Epicureanism in its sophisticated form is more than crude materialism, but its opponents readily characterised it as such, especially in popular Stoic-Cynic circles ... The two sources together form an admirable, logical, and rhetorical bridge to vv.33-34, as Eriksson points out. Both Isa 22:13 and 'contemporary anti-Epicurean polemic' equally 'designate the libertine life ... Paul uses it to point to the utter futility of a life without the motivation given by the resurrection of Christ.'" Thistleton

Verses 33-34

"These two verses, especially v.34, express the *theological* heart of the chapter and the hinge of the argument. *Knowledge of God* (God's resources, God's grace, God's transformative action through Christ) holds the key to understanding what the resurrection is actually about. The interrelationship between this knowledge of God and daily lifestyle is also fundamental." Thistleton

Verse 33

μη̄ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡ̄θη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαί.

πλανᾶω lead astray, mislead, deceive

Paul seems to cite a popular maxim.

φθείρω corrupt, ruin, destroy
ἡθος, ους n habit: pl morals

'lifestyle'

χρηστος, η, ον kind, loving, good, merciful
ὁμιλία, ας f company, association

"conveys the notion of a *clique*, a *group*, or a '*gang*' who regularly do things together and to which people 'belong.'" Thistleton. Suggests the strong peer-pressure of such a group.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

"The point of Paul's citation is that keeping the wrong kind of company (i.e. that of men who deny the resurrection) may well corrupt good Christian habits, and turn men away from the true position." Morris

"We cannot know whether Paul has in mind a bad gang of complacent and skeptical 'strong' within the church (Hering; cf. D B Martin) or whether he is concerned about the infiltration of non-Christian values through heightened social intercourse and influence from outside. Either or both of these provide practical pastoral warnings based on good social psychology for today. The pressures imposed by 'in-groups' are very strong, and a climate of so-called postmodernity encourages such groups to assume that no shared arbitration is possible or necessary within some larger frame of rationality or worldview." Thistleton

Verse 34

ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε,
ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν· πρὸς
ἐντροπήν ὑμῖν λαλῶ.

ἐκνήψατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl ἐκνηψω
come to one's senses, wake up

A verb originally used of becoming sober after drunkenness: 'wake up from your stupor' (NJB)

δικαίως adv (from δίκαιος) righteously

Here 'as you should' or 'properly'. Paul calls them to regain a spiritual realism.

ἀμαρτανω sin, commit sin
ἀγνωσία, ας f lack of spiritual perception,
ignorant talk

Maybe precisely those who claimed to possess knowledge. But they do not know God nor understand the power of God 'who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom 4:12).

ἐντροπή, ης f shame

Praise and shame were matters of great importance at Corinth.

λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 35

Ἀλλὰ ἐρεῖ τις· Πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί, ποῖω
δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται;

ἐρεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s λεγω
πως how? in what way

'How is it possible?'

ποιος, α, ον interrog pro. what, which, of
what kind

σωμα, τος n body

How can a body be fit for eternity?

Verse 36

ἄφρων, σὺ ὁ σπεῖρεις, οὐ ζωοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ
ἀποθάνῃ·

ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish

Thistleton says that σὺ belongs with ἄφρων
"Recent research on rhetoric has firmly established the rhetorical (not simply emotive) force of ἄφρων σὺ. The phrase functions as an *exclamatio* to intensify the argument." The force is not rude but rhetorical, 'how silly!', or Thistleton's 'you nonsense person!'

σπειρω sow

ζωοποιεω give life, make alive

ἐὰν if; ἐὰν μὴ except

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

Cf. John 12:24.

Verse 37

καὶ ὁ σπεῖρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον
σπεῖρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ
τινος τῶν λοιπῶν·

"The grammar and syntax do not flow smoothly, partly because, in effect, Paul repeats 'what you sow' twice; or, more accurately, the first ὁ σπεῖρεις can be construed in either of two possible ways. Paul probably dictates: 'And what you sow – it is not the body which is to come about that you sow but a bare grain.' He breaks off the construction, and begins again to emphasise 'what you sow,' understanding ἐστὶ to be supplied. However, it is equally possible to construe the relative pronoun as an accusative of respect: 'And as to what you sow: it is not the body which is to come about that you sow ...'" Thistleton

γενησόμενον Verb, fut midd dep ptc, m acc &
n nom/acc s γινομαι

The rare future participle τὸ γενησόμενον is correct; p⁴⁶, F and G appear to read γεννησομενον

γυμνος, η, ον naked, bare

κόκκος, ου m seed, grain

τύχοι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s τυγχανω obtain,
attain, experience; εἰ τυχοι for
example, if perhaps

σιτος, ου m grain, wheat

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining

Verse 38

ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς
ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον
σῶμα.

θελω wish, will

The resurrection springs from the sovereign power of God. Thistleton cites Findlay saying, "The aorist in this context denotes 'not 'as he wills' (according to his choice or liking) but in accordance with his past decree in creation, by which the propagation of life on earth was determined from the beginning (Gen 1:11, 12; for the verb cf... 12:18)."

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
σπερμα, τος η seed, offspring

The singular, σπερμα is used collectively. Hence the plural has the force 'different kinds of seeds' as we might use the terms 'fruits' or 'cheeses.'

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

Verse 39

οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἢ αὐτὴ σὰρξ, ἀλλὰ ἄλλη μὲν ἄνθρωπον, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ κτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ πτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἰχθύων.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

"It is difficult to find a better translation of σαρξ than 'flesh' (as in virtually all English VSS), but the semantic range in Greek is far wider than Eng. 'flesh.'... Rather than referring to some 'part' of the person, σαρξ denotes 'the whole person, considered from the point of view of his external physical existence. Thus Gal 4:13f ('... an infirmity of the flesh ...') (and 2 Cor 12:7 ('... A thorn in the flesh')... refer generally to physical distress.' (Robinson)." Thistleton

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
κτηνος, ους η animal; pl. cattle
πτηνον, ου η bird
ἰχθυς, υος η fish

Each has a body given it to suit its own function. We may be confident therefore that God will give us a resurrection body suitable for glory.

Verse 40

καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλὰ ἕτερα μὲν ἢ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἕτερα δὲ ἢ τῶν ἐπιγείων.

ἐπουραnios, ον heavenly, celestial

The reference is probably to the same celestial 'bodies' referred to in v.41, but could also allude to angelic beings.

ἐπιγειος, ον earthly, of the earth
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
δόξα, ης f glory, splendour

"As there are differences on the earth, so also in the sky. There is a wide difference (ἕτερα) between terrestrial and celestial bodies; and there is a further difference (ἄλλη) between one celestial body and another. The God who made these myriads of differences in one and the same universe can be credited with inexhaustible power ... he has found a body fit for fish, fowl, cattle and mortal man: why not for ... [raised] man? Experience teaches that God finds a suitable body for every type of earthly life and every type of heavenly life. Experience cannot teach us that there is a type of life for which no suitable body can be found." Robertson and Plummer.

Verse 41

ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων, ἀστὴρ γὰρ ἀστέρος διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ.

ἡλιος, ου η the sun

The thought is of the glory or splendour given by God.

σεληνη, ης f moon
ἀστὴρ, ερος η star
διαφέρω intrans. be worth more than, be superior to, differ from

"Some patristic writers interpret this allegorically of the different glories of different raised believers. But this is not Paul's point, even if it suggests the broad principle of dynamic diversified life in the resurrection mode of existence." Thistleton

Verse 42

Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.

The contrast in this and the following verses is between two *living* bodies – the present body and the resurrection body (not between the body of the dead and a resurrection body).

ἀναστασις see v.12

νεκρος see v.12

φθορα, ας f decay, corruption, depravity

"φθορα denotes 'decreasing capacities and increasing weaknesses issuing in exhaustion and stagnation,' i.e., in a state of 'decay'... The semantic contrast to such 'decay' would not be *permanence* or *everlasting duration*, but *ethical, aesthetic, and psychological flourishing and abundance*, even perhaps *perfection*, and certainly *fulness of life*... To be 'raised' by and through *God* in the power of the *Holy Spirit* entails a dynamic of being that corresponds with the dynamic of the *living God* who acts purposively in ongoing ways, never 'trapped' in a timeless vacuum from which all experience of succession is excluded (see further on v.44). This is more than *imperishability* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB) or *immortality* (Collins)." Thistleton

ἀφθαρσία, ας f imperishability, immortality

"The chief objection that the typical Greek had to any doctrine of resurrection was that the body is essentially corruptible. It is, by its nature, subject to decay. He looked accordingly for an existence when the soul would be untrammelled by the corruptible body, when the soul would exist *in incorruption*. Paul associates this very state with the resurrection body." Morris

Verse 43

σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ·
σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει·

ἀτιμία, ας f disgrace, shame, dishonour

'humiliation' cf. Phil 3:21.

δόξα, ης f glory

Signifies 'weight', 'substance', 'radiance.'

ἀσθενεία, ας f weakness, illness

"'Sown in weakness' expresses Paul's realism about the *frailty, fragility, vulnerability, and constraints* of human existence (including that of Christians) without diminishing the power of the cross, which is the presupposition for the triumph of the resurrection mode of existence." Thistleton

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

"If 'weakness,' 'humiliation,' and 'decay' represent the pathos of the dominating *decrecendo* of human mortality 'power' denotes not a static source of competency, but an energising *crescendo* of equipment and capacities for 'splendour' and perhaps unimagined tasks and service yet to come. Such a mode of existence, however, remains *somatic* or *bodily* in the sense described under vv. 42 and 44." Thistleton

Verse 44

σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν.

ψυχικός, η, ον unspiritual, physical

Thistleton suggests 'natural' to avoid the wrong implications of 'physical.'

πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

"This does not necessarily mean 'composed of spirit', but rather 'which expresses spirit', 'which answers to the needs of spirit'." Morris Thistleton argues that Paul regularly uses πνευματικός to denote 'that which pertains to the *Holy Spirit*,' cf. 3:1,3. Hence he here suggests the translation 'it is raised a body constituted by the Spirit' – following Barrett who suggests 'body animated by the Spirit of God,' and Wolff who says "The spiritual body is through and through a body under the control of the divine Spirit, according to v.45 a creation of Christ (cf. also vv. 21-22) who is 'the life-giving Spirit.'"

Verse 45

οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχήν ζῶσαν· ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν.

On Adam/Christ comparisons in Paul cf. Rom 5:12-19 and Dunn *The Theology of Paul* pp. 199-204, 208-12 and 241-42.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
πρῶτος, η, ον first, foremost, earlier
ψυχή, ης f life, 'soul', living being
ζῶσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s ζωω live,
be alive

Cf. Gen 2:7.

ἔσχατος, η, ον last, final
ζωοποιεω see v.36

"The first Adam was merely 'a living human being'... By emphatic contrast, the last Adam is not merely 'living', but 'life-giving'." Thistleton

"Christ's characteristic in this office [of last Adam] is that he is a ... 'life giving *spirit*'. Not only is he the pattern for those who are in Him, but He is the source of that spiritual life which will result in the bodies of which Paul speaks." Morris. But we must not lose the reference to the *Spirit of God*. Christ was raised in the realm of the Spirit, by the agency of the Spirit, and is now the one who gives the Spirit. The resurrection is the hope of a full salvation "by an act of the sovereign God which entails the mediate agency also of Christ and the Spirit." Thistleton

"In saying that Christ is life-giving Spirit in the sense of the Holy Spirit, Paul is not introducing trinitarian confusion. Essential, eternal, intertrinitarian relationships are outside his purview here. Rather his perspective is *historical*. He is speaking about what Christ *became* in his identity as the last *Adam* and second *man* (v.47). The oneness or unity in view is economic, functional, eschatological (resurrection and ascension) Christ, as last Adam and second man, has come into permanent and complete possession of the Spirit that the two are equated in their *activity*. The two are seen as one, as they have been *made* one in the eschatological *work* of giving life to the church, that life which has its visible 'firstfruits' in Christ's own resurrection." Gaffin.

Oliver O'Donovan comments, "When Paul returns a second time ... to the comparison of Adam and Christ [cf. 15:21], he introduces a new thought: 'the first man was made a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit ... The first man was from the earth, made of dust, the second man was from heaven ... As we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man' (15:45ff.). The thought stated in the first contrast is still maintained here. Christ is the life-giver; he restores Adam's children to the life for which they were created. But a new thought is superimposed upon the old one. There is a difference between what was first given, described as 'soul' and 'dust', and what will be given, which is 'spiritual' and 'from heaven'... The categories of 'spirit' and 'heaven' point ... to the authority which belongs to God's reign. Christ, in giving us back our life, has endowed it with authority and power." *The Desire of The Nations*, p. 142.

Verse 46

ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν.

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

Verse 47

ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.

γη, γης f earth

χοϊκος, η, ον made of earth or dust

See Gen 2:7, maybe an allusion also to Gen 3:19.

δευτερος, α, ον second

After δευτερος ἄνθρωπος the TR includes ὁ κυριος. This would seem to be a conflated text reflecting Marcion's substitution of ὁ κυριος for the second ἄνθρωπος.

Verse 48

οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι.

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun of what kind
τοιοῦτος, αὐτη, οὗτον correlative pronoun and
adj. such, of such kind, similar, like
ἐπουράνιος, ον heavenly, that which
pertains to heaven

"Then we shall have the same form and essence which He now has since His resurrection." Luther. Concerning the promise that those who belong to Christ will be made like him in his resurrection life, see also 1 John 3:2 and Phil 3:21

"Paul calls for eschatological realism.

Humankind remains *human and fragile* prior to the resurrection of the last day. Already the new order has begun a transformation at the level of Christlikeness of being 'from the Holy Spirit' in a limited sense that still leaves fallibility and constraint. Those at Corinth must not think and act as if they were already 'there.' Above all, however, the model of the raised mode of being of the raised Christ constitutes a form (σῶμα) and total self (σῶμα) 'from heaven,' i.e., grounded in the reality of God and the new creation. This renders the resurrection 'body' which lies in the future yet more credible and conceivable, and binds together the *somatic* and the process of *growth in holiness* as *inextricably* the mark of a mode of existence *directed by the divine Spirit, anticipated in Christ's raised life, and decreed by God* (cf. 1 Cor 2:11-15; 3:1-3; 15:21-28, 38-44). It is in the future that 'Christians are destined to become heavenly in the image of the heavenly Man,' i.e., the man 'from heaven.'" Thistleton

Verse 49

καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ.

φορεω wear

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image, form

φορεσομεν "The majority of the more ancient MSS read 'let us bear [φορεσωμεν] instead of *we shall bear* in the second part of the verse. If this reading is adopted then Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to put on their heavenly state, progressively make it their own... The context seems to make it clear that *we shall bear* is the right reading." Morris. Metzger and Thistleton also favour the indicative. The subjunctive looks like a primitive corruption which may be the result of mishearing dictation.

Verse 50

Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα
 βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται,
 οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

φημι say, affirm

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
 human nature

αἷμα, ατος f blood

Denotes humankind in its present weakness
 and vulnerability.

κληρονομεω gain possession of, inherit

φθορα, ας f decay, corruption

ἀφθαρσια, ας f imperishability, immortality

Some commentators see here a reference to two groups: flesh and blood signifies those still alive when Christ comes again while 'decay' signifies those who have died. "Neither the living nor the dead at the coming of Christ will go into the kingdom as they are. Both must be changed." Morris. But it is better to preserve the parallelism between the two halves of the verse.

Verse 51

ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· πάντες οὐ
 κοιμηθήσόμεθα πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγῶμεθα,

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

The sense is normally of something formerly unknown but now revealed, but the meaning here seems closer to our English word 'mystery'. "Paul cannot and does not say more about the precise nature of the change." Thistleton

"The textual variants reflect complex concerns of theology." Thistleton. See *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* and Fee for details. The text given here is undoubtedly original. Early amendments seem to have arisen in the wake of Paul's death.

κοιμηθήσόμεθα Verb, fut pass dep indic, 1 pl
 κοιμαομαι see v.18

"Some think that Paul means that the second coming will take place in his own lifetime, but this is to press his words illegitimately... [compare 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:8; Phil 3:11] ... Paul often classes himself with those he is describing without any implication that he is one of them (cf. 6:15; 10:22)." Morris. The meaning is 'not all of us Christians will sleep' cf. 1 Thess 4.

ἀλλαγῶμεθα Verb, fut pass indic, 1 pl
 ἀλασσω change, alter, exchange

"Paul's major concern is *God's orderly plan for humankind* as a corporeity and for believers as the corporate body of Christ. *It does not matter, he urges, whether you have died or are still alive at the end time: all of us (equally) will undergo transformation.*'... This part of Paul's declaration serves to give assurance equally that those who have died lose nothing that will be experienced by those who will still be alive at the parousia, and conversely assures those who might survive that they, too, like the dead, share in the same experience of resurrection." Thistleton

Verse 52

ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ
 σάλπιγγι· σαλπίζει γάρ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ
 ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ, καὶ ἡμεῖς
 ἀλλαγῶμεθα.

ἀτομος, ον indivisible; ἐν α. in a moment,
 in an instant

ῥιπη, ης f blinking (of an eye)

More correctly, the term denotes rapid eye movement – 'shooting a glance' out of the corner of the eye.

ἐσχατος see v.45

σάλπιγγι Noun, dat s σαλπιγξ, ιγγος f
 trumpet, trumpet blast

"In both Testaments (Exod 19:16; Zech 9:14; 1 Thess 4:16) manifestations of God are associated with the sound of 'the trumpet.' Additionally, however, 'the trumpet' awakens a sleeping army to be urgently aroused to activity, including possible battle when *the alert* is sounded... Bruce cites ... the 'great trumpet' for the return of the exiles in Isa 27:13 (cf. Matt 24:31) and that of the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9), as well as the apocalyptic trumpet for the Lord's descent from heaven in 1 Thess 4:16-17." Thistleton

σαλπίζω sound a trumpet

ἀφθαρτος, ον imperishable, immortal

Cf. v.42 "The σωμα will be raised 'without degenerating decay' at the very least; perhaps Paul means also here *the reversal of decay*, i.e., *flourishing*." Thistleton

Verse 53

δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι
 ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι
 ἀθανασίαν.

δει impersonal verb it is necessary

"Paul stresses the continuity between our present and our future states with a fourfold use (in this verse and the next) of the word 'this': 'this perishable'... (NIV omits all four)." Morris. "The same identifiable, recognisable, and accountable identity ... is transfigured into a *radically different form*, but remains 'this' *created being in all its wholeness*." Thistleton

φθαρτος, η, ον subject to corruption
 ἐνδύσασθαι Verb, aor midd infin ἐνδύω
 dress, clothe; midd put on, wear
 ἀφθαρσία see v.50
 θνητος, η, ον mortal
 ἀθανασία, ας f immortality

Verse 54

ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος: Κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.

A number of MSS have a shorter reading ὅταν δὲ τὸ θνητὸν... i.e. omitting the φθαρτον clause. The shorter reading probably arose through an oversight in copying, "The phenomenon of homoioteleuton readily explains an omission of a clause or phrase when the eye of the copyist moves from one occurrence of a similar word or phrase to another." Thistleton

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

On vocabulary, see v.53.

ἐνδύσῃται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s ἐνδύω
 τότε then, at that time
 γεγραμμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
 γραφῶ

Quotation from Is 25:8

κατεπόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s καταπινώ
 swallow, swallow up, devour
 θάνατος, ους m death
 νίκος, ους n victory

Verse 55

ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος; ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

A number of MSS (followed by TR) read ποῦ σου, ἄδη το νίκος in the second clause, reflecting the LXX.

"In language reminiscent of Scripture (Hos 13:14), Paul sings of the triumph to come. He is not basing an argument on Scripture, but using scriptural language for his exultation over the total defeat of death." Morris. However, Stanley and Collins argue that Paul intends that Is 25:8 and Hos 13:14 should shed light on the understanding of each other.

κέντρον, ους n sting, goad

"Paul projects an eschatological vision of a *stingless death* precisely because *Jesus Christ has himself absorbed the sting* on the basis of how his death and resurrection addresses the problem of human sin and the law (vv.55-57). Oscar Culmann has well portrayed the contrast between optimistic views of the death exemplified in Socrates and Plato as mere release of the 'soul' from the 'prison-house' of the body and Hebrew-Christian traditions of death as a tragedy apart from the transformation of death brought about by Christ. Nevertheless, he argues, the agony of Gethsemane as Jesus faces the prospect of death as a cruel God-forsakenness, as a sacrament of the wrath of God, should be kept before our eyes as a reminder of what 'death's sting' entails apart from the victory won by Christ." Thistleton

Verse 56

τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·

"Death is the primal power: it is 'the last enemy' (1 Cor 15:26) within the field of interlocking forces. The antithesis between the two ages can be summed up as 'the reign of death' as opposed to the 'reign of life' (Rom 5:17, 21). And death remains in some way the signature of the world, even after its allies – the law, the flesh, and sin – have been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ." Beker.

"The law,' in spite of being 'holy and good' (Rom 7:12,13) and designed to bring life, comes to perform the very opposite effect in the context of human fallenness, sin, and bondage. Rom 1:18-2:29 and 5:12-21 underline human culpability, which the law appears to intensify as a kind of slavery (Rom 3:20; 6:20; cf. 7:7). However we interpret Rom 7:7-25, and the still sharper critique of Galatians 3-5, a major part of the work of Christ in establishing the new creation 'under grace' is that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Again, however we interpret Rom 10:4, Christ as the 'end,' 'goal,' or 'termination' of the law 'initiates a new eschatological life, where God and humankind meet under new conditions. And yet ... Christ satisfied the righteous requirements of the law (Rom 8:4) as expressive of his holy will, in order to establish a new relationship to God 'apart from the law' (Rom 3:21).' (Beker) Thistleton

Verse 57

τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ δίδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χάρις, ιος f grace, unmerited favour
δίδόντι Verb, pres act ptc, m dat s δίδωμι

Verse 58

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε,
ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ
κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ
ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ.

The conclusion echoes and answers the
concerns expressed in the verses introducing
this chapter, vv 1-2.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved
ἐδραῖος, α, ον firm, steadfast
ἀμετακίνητος, ον immovable, steadfast

Cf. v.1, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἔστηκατε

περισσεύω increase, abound, excel

The Christian is to be immovable but not
static.

παντοτε always
εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand
κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble
κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose,
senseless