

Drunken Idiots or Jesus Freaks?  
1 Corinthians 15:32-58  
June 6, 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Let us dedicate ourselves to the public reading of Scripture.

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:32-58

32 What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 34 Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But

thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58  
Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the  
work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

#### 4 TRUTHS FROM THIS TEXT THAT APPLY DIRECTLY TO YOU

##### **1. What you look like when your body is raised from the dead cannot be imagined, by you or anyone else. You can't know this. But you can know that it will be a great thing.**

Paul poses the objection again that the dead are not raised. He imagines someone saying to him, "Well, if the dead are raised, what kind of body will they have? After all, they rotted away and there is nothing left but bones. Who wants to be walking around as bones and rotting flesh?"

Paul responds to the question he has posed with, "You fool! You idiot! Are you stupid? Don't you realize that no one who plants a seed in the garden expects that seed to come up the same way he planted it, does he?"

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If I have flower seeds up here, and I plant them, I'd be a fool if I expected them to come up just like I planted them. But the cool thing about seeds, is that God has assigned each of them a body that will show itself when it grows. From a little tiny brown seed grows a huge plant, thousands of times its size, with many colors. It looks nothing like the seed, but without the dead seed it would not be here. Likewise, Paul says, these bodies we carry around are seeds, nothing more. God will assign to each one a body as He has appointed. But no one has seen what the body will look like.

Someone might say, "Well, the apostles could guess because they had seen the body of Jesus, raised from the dead. It can't be that different from the bodies we have now." Yes it could. Jesus was always veiling His glory when He was on the earth. One time, in what is called the mount of transfiguration, Jesus took His three closest men and said, "Come with me." He took them up onto a mountain and there He was changed into a glorious being, and visited with Elijah and Moses, and all three shone with glory, so much so that Peter was tempted to worship them.

When Jesus appears at the end of things, the visions of Him, unveiled, as described in Revelation, are breathtaking. He has a way of toning things down to show us what we can handle. No one has really ever seen with his eyes what God has in store for us, and for our bodies.

Romans 8:18-19 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not

worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

If I gave you a handful of seeds, and you didn't know your flowers, you'd have no idea how they were going to look later. You'd be a fool if you said to me, "You're planting those so you can grow them? Why would you want more of those?" I wouldn't. But if you could see the kind of bodies these will have when they grow, you wouldn't say that. Likewise, the glory that we will have when He returns is something no one has seen, no one can imagine, and is akin to the difference between a flower and its seeds.

## **2. Humanity is being reinvented, and the obsolete man will be done away with, and the new model will remain. There will be two groups.**

In Adam, all humanity exists today. We are all children of Adam. To be a child of Adam is to be a child of the dust. To be a child of Adam is to have a body that cannot live forever, that cannot live in the presence of God. It is dust bound. But Jesus, who though bearing the form of a son of Adam, by His resurrection from the dead, has re-created the human race. He is the second man, the man not made of dust, but of heaven stuff. Like Him, we will have moved from being a man from the earth to being a man who is heavenly.

45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

## **3. The change from this body to the next is not gradual, but comes quickly, in an instant.**

Your body now is kind of breaking down, deteriorating, and fading quickly away. But the new bodies, when they come, won't fade in. You won't be gradually changed into your heavenly body. It will come all at once, in an instance:

51 Behold! I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

There will be a trumpet sounded. You will hear it with your ears. The Lord will return. Then, those who have died in Christ will instantly spring from the earth in their new bodies that no one has ever before seen. Then, many Christians will still be alive and they too will be changed

instantly. I know that some of you think that this moment happens when Jesus secretly snatches us all away, but try as I might; I have never found the slightest evidence of this event in the Bible.

This doctrine was first made popular in the early 1800's and before that had been virtually unheard of. It is based not on direct scriptural reference, but on the idea that Israel and the Church must have separate destinies in the end times. As your pastor, I cannot, in good conscience not let you know this. Paul's point in this text is its suddenness and unexpected arrival. That is the mystery. Not everyone will have to die. There will be Christians alive at the very end of all things. You might be one of them. Not everyone dies in the tribulation. And can you imagine that day when this happens. When the oppressors, using their might and power, see the ones they are oppressing, changed, and meeting with the God of heaven in the sky and coming back to rule them! My brothers and sisters, many of us here might be alive at that time. We might see it ourselves. If you get discouraged by this world, remember that the game will change in an instant!

#### **4. The Victory won on Easter Morning is realized at the return of Christ**

There is victory in Christ, over all the sorrows of this world. It was won for us at the cross and at the resurrection. The problem prosperity preachers have is they have "an over-realized eschatology." What that fancy term means is that they think that the realization of the victory of Jesus over death and this world is ours right now, rather than at His return. They promise people many of the right things, but at the wrong time. They promise riches, safety, health, and comfort in this age. They are right. We will get those things; but not now, later. They have been won, but we must wait until the proper moment.

54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death is not yet swallowed up. Therefore we die. Therefore, sickness and poverty and pain and war are not yet swallowed up. Therefore disease and sorrow and trials are not yet swallowed up. But they will be. And this leads us to the last point I'd like to make, and I think this is the application that Paul wants you and I get out of this text. It is this:

#### **5. STOP SINNING, KEEP WORKING EVERY DAY FOR THE DAY TO COME**

In this life, you will be doing either one of two things, with every second of your life: living for this world, or living for the next. People who know Jesus will live for the life they haven't seen yet. They will live urgently, because they don't know how much time they have left. They will live to a set of values that this world doesn't understand. They will tell the truth when it hurts them. They will forgive when it makes no sense. They will pay prices to bring the message of salvation to the globe. They will love beyond what is reasonable. Why? They are not living under the old power system, but under the new.

And they will turn away from the sin that acts like chains to this world. Sin glues you to this dying dust. But serving the Lord grounds your feet in the world to come. Look how Paul makes this application:

33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 34 Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. ...

...58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Folks, we might be living in the generation that sees Him return. What are we doing with our lives? Are we wasting them on our sins? On our "I just can't quit, I'm too weak" excuses? Are we wasting them on feeding our fat faces with more and more self-indulgence with our endless vacationing, our endless eating, our endless drinking, our endless sexual gratification, our endless racing after the stuff? If so, "Wake up from your drunken stupor!" Don't you realize the change that is about to take place? But do you wonder around in a drunken worldly stupor, drunk on the possibilities of the entertainment and vacationing and comfort and playing, and foods, and riches and pleasures and indulgences this world brings? Make no mistake, if you hang out with people who live for this world only, you will run with them, and you will be a fool. Wake up! The end is coming.

Instead, you who are giving for the Lord, give more. Those who are being bold for the Lord, be bolder. Those who struggling and fighting for what is right in every area, fight more. Those of you, who have given all you know, give more. Sell what you have and give more of your life. Sell out your hobbies and habits and take the energy and life you put into that and put it into doing the good works of the Kingdom. Fight for His righteousness, declare His name everywhere, be kind to the oppressed, oppose the proud, and bring the gospel to all nations. Why? Every ounce of energy given to the Lord's service is not wasted. It is not in vain. Not a bit of it.

### **FINAL ILLUSTRATION**

In the Book of Daniel, there is a king named Belshazzar. He was the last ruler of the Babylonian empire. His city was under siege, surrounded by his enemies, the Medes and Persians. But, enjoying the long time of comfort and wealth and power of his kingdom, he decided to have a party with all his friends and leaders. Then, he ordered that the gold cups taken from the Jews' Temple years ago be brought into the party to be used for drinking. Then, a hand wrote words on the wall and he was struck with fear. (Daniel 5:25 MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN.) He called for all the religious leaders of the kingdom. He promised them royal clothing, wealth, and power if they would interpret these words. They could not. He was in fear. Then, his mother came in and said, "Your father had a wise man of the Jews that he used to listen

to. Daniel. Ask him.” So he called in Daniel and said, “I will give you power and wealth if you will interpret these words.” Daniel, the man of God, replied like this: “I don’t want your riches or your power. But I will tell you what those words say. Your father, Nebby, was made head over this empire and made all nations quake before him. This was because of God. But he was proud. So God humbled him and made him crazy like a beast for years. Then your father was wise enough to repent and give glory to the God of heaven. You knew this, but you refused to learn that lesson.

This is what those words mean: God has numbered the days of your kingdom, and you are out of time. God has weighed you on the scale and found you wanting. Instead of repenting before God, Belshazzar gave Daniel a royal robe and riches and went back to the party. That night, the Persians broke through and killed him.

Brothers and sisters, the lesson of that story should be heeded by you. We know there is a God who is righteous who has punished sinners and given grace to the humble. The end is near. The writing is on the wall. This world’s days are numbered. But instead of Persians at the gates, it is the angels of God and His Captain, Jesus. Will you repent of your sins and serve the King or will you go back to the party and return to your drunken stupor?