

Parson to Person
1 Corinthians 15
(The Resurrection) – Part 4

“Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?³⁰ And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?³¹ I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.³² If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

³³ Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:29–34).

Baptism for the Dead?

It appears that some people in Corinth were practicing baptism for the dead. Paul used this mention illustratively to contrast the so-called purpose of such a practice with the denial of a physical resurrection. The two concepts are in clear contradiction.

Baptism for the dead is not a Christian practice and should be rejected. However, without some considerations, we would be remiss to dismiss the notion or practice without examination. Therefore, allow me to make a few observations:

1) Deception begets deception.

Those who are deceived generally embrace multiple forms of deception. For example, many who think child sacrifice/abortion is an acceptable practice also work diligently to “Save the Whales” or work to rescue the world from “climate change.” According to Scripture they are fools

and blind. They worship and serve the creation while denying the Creator.

Mormons practice baptism for the dead while suggesting that nearly all people will live in one of the three dimensions of heaven/glory: telestial, terrestrial and celestial. In their system of belief, only those who commit the unpardonable sin will be “cast into outer darkness.” Moreover, they deny that Jesus is the incarnation of the one and only invisible God.

Mormons do believe in the afterlife but deny other key essential doctrines that must be embraced if one is to inherit eternal life.

Deception breeds deception. Paul knew this and mocked those in Corinth who were denying a physical resurrection and nevertheless practiced baptism for the dead. Moreover, why would the Mormons practice the pagan ritual of baptism for the dead if they also believe that nearly all people will escape the depths of hell?

- 2) Baptism is non-salvific. Baptism does not save and never will. Salvation is by grace, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Salvation is received by those who transfer their trust from self, good works, or faith in anything else, to trust in Christ alone. Trust in Christ must be in Christ alone—not in Christ and any human prerequisite or post-salvific act. Therefore, the practice of baptism in any form, when thought to be salvific, becomes heresy. Therefore, baptism for the dead is a false gospel and must be rejected (see Galatians 1:6–9 and Ephesian 2:8–9).

- 3) Baptism for the dead was practiced by occultists in Corinth—not by Corinthian Christians. Some of the Corinthians had blurred the otherwise distinct lines between the occult and idol worship with Christian practice. This infiltration into truth must be completely rejected (see 1 Corinthians 10).

Far too many Christians blend Biblical practice with other non-biblical and occultic activity. For example, many Christians practice “yoga”—a “yoking” with the universal non-physical and thus may open one to self-deception and spiritual interference. Another habitually blending is Christians who rely on “birth signs” and horoscope reading. This is a form of witchcraft that likewise generates deceptions of many forms. Further I might mention the confession practices of the “word of faith” movement. Confessions when thought to generate activity metaphysical or physical are akin to mantras and incantations—a practice also known and exercised in a variety of occultic religious systems.

- 4) After death there is no further opportunity given for salvation. Every opportunity to trust Christ for salvation is given in this life. Once a person has passed into the eternal state, all opportunities to change your mind and/or make choices has passed. It is indeed appointed unto men once to die, but after this—the judgment (see Hebrews 9:27).
- 5) When addressing the Corinthian Christians, Paul never said “you” or “we.” When mentioning baptism for the dead, he said “they!” Therefore, we should understand this to suggest that the Corinthians were not practicing the “ritual” but that Paul was simply pointing out the absurdity of

“baptism for the dead” if one is in denial of the coming resurrection of the saints.

Why Stand in Jeopardy

Paul’s continuing argument was rhetorical, illustrative, metaphorical, and sarcastic. He said, *“And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’ ”* (vss. 30–32).

If there is no life but the one we now live, he would be right. It’s like saying, “Let’s just party and get all we can get from this world.” The statement of the humanist/atheist harmonizes with a once famous nationally recognized beer company slogan: “You only go around once in life. So grab all the gusto you can.” Adding to the foolishness, as I recall, it was Schlitz. They went out of business in 1982. LOL!

Don’t Be Deceived

Finally, Paul recognized and warned that the evil resurrection-denying influencers should be rejected. He wrote, *“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame”* (vss. 33–34).

We should take the above command—and include a rejection of any doctrine that denies a coming physical resurrection along with any and all false teaching. We should also be on guard against sinful behaviors, woke agendas, etc. Christians can be deceived—and/or compromised! The high and righteous standards of the Word must

be upheld. Any form of deconstruction must be rejected. Never let down your sword and shield.

It is a shame to those who allow themselves to be deceived. It is a shame that so many believers are compromised.

May the Lord grant us abundant grace to contend earnestly for the faith.

I love you all,
Pastor Paul