

" For As In Adam, All Die! "

A Seemingly Easy to Understand Reference in 1st Corinthians 15:22 Lays Before the Believer a Profound Consideration. Without Question, All Die and All Without Exception, Unless they are Found 'In Christ'!

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In discussing the matter of being resurrected to life, in the 15th chapter of First Corinthians, the Apostle Paul draws a rather clear distinction between those who have cause to share this hope and those who clearly do not. It seems rather obvious, that absent of the experience of True Conversion, a person has no hope of Eternal Salvation.

This is profoundly disturbing! So much so, that many in the evangelical world disagree with Paul's clear statement of fact. Their rejection is because it **violates their concept** of a loving God. Surely God wouldn't consign those such as innocent little children to an eternal hell fire, would He?

All of Those Little Children

In commenting on the Tsunami that hit southeast Asia, in December, 2004, that took some quarter million lives, with such a high percentage of them being young children, Hal Lindsey, on his weekly television program, explained that these thousands of children were now in Heaven, in that those under the age of twelve (or so) hadn't reached an 'age of accountability', and thus weren't held accountable for having committed sins! I have to admit it's been years since I'd heard that kind of thing explained. It triggered old memories.

You see, the fundamentalist evangelical world realizes something that many religious people do not: that there must be some more acceptable explanation for what happens to an infant or a little child, who has never had opportunity to repent and become converted prior to their untimely death. So, the above explanation is offered, or one like it.

Because the religious world, for the most part, does not accept or hold the fundamental biblical doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, as taught in the Bible, there is a void in their understanding of the situation, that frustrates a logical explanation. They neither understand the part the resurrections

play, nor their ultimate purpose, nor even how many of them there actually are!

Under the common religious persuasion where each individual enters his or her eternal reward immediately upon death, a huge question is generated as to the **need** for any resurrection. Yet, there are to be resurrections, and more than one! The New Testament makes that abundantly clear: Hebrews 6:2 and most of 1st Corinthians 15, John 5:28 and **Revelation 20:5**, to give a few references. Paul even goes so far as to say that if there is no resurrection, that "*if the dead rise not...(our) faith is vain ...we are of all men most miserable*". This, interestingly, just before the passage referred to in the title of this article!

But under Mr. Lindsey's opinion, which many share, (not so much a result of hard biblical proof, as of extra-biblical deduction, based on human compassion), it overlooks the obvious. Because, to hold that opinion, one must deduce that we do not become sinners until we begin making conscious decisions to sin. That we are born pure and sinless **until** the time we reach that age at which we become 'accountable'! The thrust of Paul's statement is that being born of Adam, of and by itself, dooms each one of us, of any age, to a hopeless condition. What the religious deduction requires is that we are born 'pure' and only later do we 'earn' condemnation. Paul's clear statement is to the contrary. By saying, "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*", he affirms that we are born that way, and only thru a regeneration process, becoming then 'in Christ', is that condition changed! The evangelical version effectively says, 'We are originally born in a state effectively equivalent to being 'in Christ', but then, only later, as a result of our deliberate sinfulness, do we become 'in Adam', needing to be restored to that pristine birth state! Such is the conclusion of those brands of Christianity which disregard the

need for, even the important purpose of, the resurrections from the dead. Accepting the popular religious belief system of those deceased 'going to heaven or hell' immediately at death, and spending all eternity in either place, dismisses the need for the essential biblical doctrine of the resurrections from the dead, a subject so inescapably intertwined with New Testament doctrine.

So, to address the question, What happens to those who die, never having had a chance for salvation, (and I want to broaden the question out beyond just the little children), What about all those who have died not having ever heard of Christ? What about those who died BEFORE Christ's sacrifice? Those who never even had a chance to hear and believe?

More than Sinlessness

Another oversight of those who share Mr.Lindsey's opinion, is the required process thru which we must go to 'enter into' Christ's sheepfold. **It isn't just a matter of being 'sinless'**. This is something else evangelical Christianity doesn't correctly understand. If it were, heaven, as they explain it, would be populated, by and large, by sainted babes, as there are far more young children who have died than True Christians, perhaps a thousand to one, perhaps ten thousand to one! And as Mr.Lindsey's explanation so generously offered, infants, irrespective of their birth religion are so accepted. (These in Indonesia were largely of the Muslim faith!)

If it were a matter of being pure and sinless, then Christ's sacrifice would not be necessary for those who have not yet reached an 'age of accountability'. Nor would anything more be necessary of those who receive forgiveness of sins, thus re-attaining the sinless state! Yet, Paul makes clear, that it isn't a result of having been forgiven, **by itself**, that we are saved, it also requires His Life! "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life.*" (Romans 5:10) Though forgiveness (reconciliation) is essential, that isn't all there is to a True Christian Life! We become 'saved' BY His Life! In other words, not only must we attain forgiveness, we also MUST be imbued with His Life.

This alludes to the potent statement in 1st Corinthians 15, that if Christ is not risen, then we are still in our sins! Paul says, "*if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: you are yet in your sins.*" (1st Cor.15:17) Think about this statement. If Christ's death absolved us of all sin, then why would His **not being resurrected** leave us still in them? Understanding the answer involves other aspects of the Fundamental Doctrines set forth in Hebrews 6.

Important Fundamentals

Not only does Mr. Lindsey's explanation expose an ignorance of, or a devaluation of, the need for our personal resurrection from the dead, it also overlooks other vital components of True Christianity. Hebrews 6 lays out the fundamental doctrines as it regards the process of conversion and salvation. It lists them in order: repentance, faith, baptism, hands-laying, resurrections and eternal judgment. These are not minor components. We should not accept any redemptive scenario that ignores them.

But, traditional religion does not fully understand, and thus can not correctly explain, the process.

Repentance: We must come to know what sin is, and see to its elimination, by the application of Christ's blood sacrifice, **and** its exclusion from our lives. Effectively living as Christ would: Sinlessly!

Faith: Notice, this Faith follows repentance, not that first kind that precedes it! This is that Faith which is not of ourselves (Eph.2:8): Living the life of Christ, by being given His Faith. The Faith OF Christ, as opposed to that which comes before, a rudimentary (though necessary) faith IN Christ.

Baptism: We symbolically must die to sin. We must bury the old man and emerge from the watery grave a new man. Our life 'in Christ' begins here!

Laying on of Hands: A lesser consideration in today's religious world. An un-necessary formality to many. Yet, this represents the most vital component of all: symbolic formalization of the receipt of God's Spirit, which indwelling makes the life of Christ in us possible.

The **Resurrection:** That restoration to life, spoken of in Revelation 20:5 and 1st Corinthians 15:49-57 and 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17, etc. Without which,

we remain in a hopeless original corruptible state. (1st Cor. 15: 42 & 49) Christ's resurrection illustrates to the Christian this essential doctrine. Only after we receive our new Spirit bodies are we acceptable in God's presence! (1st Cor. 15:50) That receipt occurring at the precise moment of Christ's return. (1st Cor. 15:52) (Apparently, these fundamental components are not necessary for one to be acceptable into heaven, according to the theological position held by most in today's world!)

But, it's a good question. One that typical Christianity can not adequately explain, without understanding the Resurrections Doctrine of the Bible. How do we regard those who die without having become truly converted? Especially, those who never were **afforded** any opportunity? Here, the 'Heaven or Hell' persuasion faces a most difficult question. And, one THEY CAN NOT adequately or Biblically answer! Not unless, and until, they accept the Fundamental Doctrine of the resurrections from the dead. (Some tacitly accept that there is to be a resurrection, though their 'eternal reward immediately upon death' position precludes any real need for one!)

More Than Just ONE!

It is very clear. There is to be a 'better resurrection' for the Saints, and there is a 'later resurrection' for 'the rest'! "*Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, ... But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished,*" (Rev.20:6 &5) This "First Resurrection" involves God's True Saints only. The rest are dealt with later! In fact, as it says in this same place, a thousand years later! Without understanding the resurrections, who can explain there being a thousand year delay between the 'first' and the subsequent resurrections?

*"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not **precede**¹ (precede into the presence of the Lord) them which are asleep. For*

¹ An old English word, meaning 'come before', or in more modern English, '**precede**'. From the Latin: venio, which means: 'to come to'! That meaning is graphically illustrated in the passage following it.

the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1st Thess. 4:15 & 16)

(Ponder this statement! If Paul himself believed, or if he remotely thought his readers believed, that one 'in Christ' goes to be with the Lord at death, then why would he think it necessary to clarify the point that we who are alive and remain wouldn't be caught-up into the presence of the Lord BEFORE those who had already 'gone to be with the Lord'?)

It remains only through understanding of the resurrections that we can answer the question of, 'What about all those who never had a chance?'

There is a 'first resurrection' which raises to immortality all of God's First True Saints. After the millennial age, an era which religion in general also does not understand, there's another. In fact, another two! That can be seen by harmonizing Christ's own statements in John 5:25-29 with Revelation 20:5-6 & 11-15. The timing and purpose of each of these is dealt with in detail in my articles: *The Resurrection From the Dead, The Rejected Resurrection, The Millennial System* and *The HOPE of the Last Great Day*.

The point here is, that traditional religion is blocked from understanding God's Plan for those who die in infancy, or who have died throughout history, who never had opportunity for salvation. That Plan is specifically revealed through the Doctrine of the Resurrections from the Dead.

No one attains salvation by any means other than through living Christ's Life, through the power of His indwelling Spirit. That is why Paul states so plainly, that we become **reconciled** through His death, but we are **saved** by His Life! This is now, for the living, and there eventually will be an opportunity to do so, for all who died not ever having had opportunity. This is where the Millennial Age and the Great White Throne² each come to bear. Both being essential parts of God's Plan for all who were born 'in Adam', bar none! **Ω**

² Revelation 20:11 Notice, this event 'opens the Books' to those raised at this time, and their names can become added to the Book of Life! Sentencing then follows: Rev. 20:13.