

# DEAD CHRISTIANS

THE BLESSED, POWERFUL REALITY OF ONE DAY BEING RAISED UP  
AND MEETING JESUS IN THE AIR ...



**WARNING: FOR YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY AND WELLBEING  
DO NOT STAND OVER GRAVES AS OCCUPANTS WILL SOON  
BE RISING UP TO MEET JESUS IN †HE AIR.**

1. It is very important (and even urgent) for our spiritual health that we have the correct information as to the reality of Christians who are dead, 4:13.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:13 ESV) **But we do not want you to be uninformed**, brothers, **about those who are asleep**, that you may **not grieve as others** do who have no hope.

A. Do not be uninformed: Those who are referred to as asleep are believers in Jesus who have died.

B. Our information as to what is going on with these people must be based on sound doctrine.

2. We need this information so that our grief is tempered and we do not grieve as people who have no hope, 4:13.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:13 ESV) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, **that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope**.

A. Uninformed Christians may succumb to grieving as people who have no hope.

B. Grieving without hope undermines our faith in the good plan of God for our lives.

C. Grieving without hope distorts our spiritual eyesight and so diminishes our ability to see life as it is.

3. Our information regarding the position of Christians who are dead is based on the gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus, 4:14.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:14 ESV) **For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again**, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
- (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: **that Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, **that he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures.

**Excursus: Establishing the powerful link between our resurrection and Christ's resurrection ...**

Our resurrection from the dead as believers in Christ is powerfully, certainly, effectively, necessarily and personally linked to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's eternal plan and purpose ...

I. Scripture teaches us the significance of the connection between our resurrection and Christ's.

Just as it is certain that Christ has been raised from

the dead, so it is just as certain that he is the first fruit of a great harvest of those who fall asleep.

- (1 Corinthians 15:12–13, 17–20 ESV) Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 **Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished**. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**.

II. The Bible explains dead people being raised to life with the simple example of putting a seed in the ground and growing a plant.

- (1 Corinthians 15:35–37 ESV) **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.

III. The power accomplishing our resurrection is the same immeasurable greatness of power by which God raised Jesus from the dead.

- (Ephesians 1:19–20 ESV) **And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might** 20 **that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

IV. This outworking of the immeasurable power of God is absolutely **effective** in the necessary transformation of our bodies of dust to one day bearing the image of Jesus.

- (1 Corinthians 15:42–49 ESV) **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**.

V. The transformation of our perishable bodies into imperishable bodies ready to inherit the kingdom of God is our final and total victory over death.

- (1 Corinthians 15:51–54 ESV) 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.”**

VI. Knowledge of our great victory in Christ should fill us with thankfulness and powerfully move us to be steadfast, immovable and abounding in the work of the Lord.

- (1 Corinthians 15:57–58 ESV) **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.

VII. We need to understand two things with respect to the powerful, spiritual reality of our death and resurrection in Christ: **1) We were baptized into death with Christ. 2) We were (and will be) resurrected to life with Christ.**

- (Romans 6:3–5 ESV) Do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** 4 We were buried therefore with him **by baptism into death**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For **if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his**.

A. Being united with Christ as we are baptized into the death of Christ happens at our conversion and is a real, factual supernatural event.

B. Being united with Christ in a resurrection like his

happens at our conversion and is a real, factual supernatural event that will be fully realized when the trumpet sounds and we receive our immortal bodies.

We need to be familiar with the various uses of the word baptized to understand this correctly.

*Baptized* ... βαπτίζω [baptizo] – to dip, to immerse, to submerge; to cleanse by dipping or submerging; to be or become initiated, conceived of as being immersed (into the group or the leader of the group); to wash, to make clean with water.

Water is not involved in Romans six except by the traditions that humans have added which has brought much confusion into the biblical instruction. This is not the human work of water baptism but a work of the Spirit whereby we are immersed into Christ. The Bible speaks of us as now being in Christ.

C. At the moment of our faith in Christ the Spirit puts us into one body—that being the body of Christ.

- (1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV) **For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
- (Galatians 3:27–28 ESV) **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ** have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus**.

D. Scripture also teaches the aspect of baptism that is a literal, physical event where a person is immersed in water, such as the baptism of John.

- (Matthew 3:11 ESV) **I baptize you with water for repentance**, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- (Acts 8:38 ESV) And he commanded the chariot to stop, **and they both went down into the water**, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

E. Baptized is used in this text to demonstrate how the Israelites were so closely identified with Moses.

- (1 Corinthians 10:1–2 ESV) For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2 and all were baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea.

**–END EXCURSUS–**

4. Here is what is going to happen one day soon based on a word from the Lord, 4:15-17.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 ESV) **For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord**, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

A. The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, the voice of an archangel, the sound of the trumpet of God.

B. The dead in Christ will rise first .

C. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

D. And so we will always be with the Lord.

**CONCLUSION: So how do we encourage people in a meaningful, lasting way? What is our plan? What have we learned today?**

1. Give them good information that lasts forever.

- (Isaiah 40:8 ESV) The grass withers, the flower fades, **but the word of our God will stand forever.**

2. Determine to come alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ with sound doctrine taught by the plain, simply stated words of the Lord.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:18 ESV) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

*Encourage* ... παρακαλέω [parakaleo] – to come alongside; to comfort, to alleviate sorrow or distress; give emotional strength to; to call to one's side, speak to; to admonish, exhort.

3. Love them enough to be courageous in our truth telling.

