

# 1 Corinthians 15:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

## Analysis

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**Behold, I shew you a mystery** (ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω)—The word *mystērion* (μυστήριον, "mystery, secret") refers to truth previously hidden, now revealed by God (Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:3-6). The imperative *idou* (ἰδού, "behold, look") demands attention. Paul unveils something startling: not all believers will die before resurrection.

**We shall not all sleep** (πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα)—The verb *koimēthēsometha* (κοιμηθησόμεθα, "we will sleep") uses Christian euphemism for death. Paul includes himself ("we")—he expected Christ might return in his lifetime (1 Thessalonians 4:15). Some believers will be alive at the parousia. **But we shall all be changed** (πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα)—the future passive verb *allagēsometha* (ἀλλαγησόμεθα, "we shall be changed") indicates divine action. All believers, whether dead (resurrected) or living (transformed), will receive resurrection bodies.

## Historical Context

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Early Christians expected Christ's imminent return (Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, James 5:8). Paul writes to clarify what happens to those alive at the parousia—they won't be disadvantaged compared to deceased saints. Both groups receive resurrection bodies simultaneously, though through different processes (resurrection vs. transformation).

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. Why does Paul call this a 'mystery'—what was previously hidden that's now revealed?
2. How does the promise that living believers will be transformed address concerns about 'missing out'?
3. What does it mean to be 'changed'—how does transformation differ from resurrection?

## Interlinear Text

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ἰδού, μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· πάντες μὲν οὐ

**Behold**    **a mystery**    **you**    **I shew**    **all**    **G3303**    **not**  
G2400        G3466        G5213        G3004        G3956        G3756

κοιμηθησόμεθα πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα

**We shall**    **all**    **but**    **be changed**  
G2837        G3956        G1161        G236

## Additional Cross-References

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**Philippians 3:21** (Parallel theme): Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

**1 Corinthians 15:20** (Parallel theme): But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.