

1 Corinthians 15:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Analysis

For this corruptible must put on incorruption (δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν)—The verb dei (δεῖ, "it is necessary, must") indicates divine necessity. The clothing metaphor endysasthai (ἐνδύσασθαι, "to put on, clothe oneself") depicts transformation as putting on new garment over the old. To phtharton (τὸ φθαρτόν, "the corruptible") must be clothed with aphtharsia (ἀφθαρσία, "incorruption, imperishability").

And this mortal must put on immortality (καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν)—Similarly, to thnēton (τὸ θνητόν, "the mortal") must put on athanasia (ἀθανασία, "immortality, deathlessness"). The repetition with synonyms (corruptible/mortal, incorruption/immortality) emphasizes certainty. The clothing metaphor indicates transformation adds to rather than replaces—continuity in transformation. Our bodies don't cease to exist but are gloriously upgraded.

Historical Context

Greek philosophy sought immortality through soul's escape from body. Paul teaches bodily transformation—the mortal body doesn't die but is swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:4). This parallels Christ's resurrection—His body wasn't discarded but glorified. The empty tomb proves bodily resurrection; so will believers' resurrection involve transformed, not discarded, bodies.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the 'putting on' metaphor help us understand resurrection as transformation rather than replacement?
2. What is the difference between 'incorruption' and 'immortality'—why use both terms?
3. How does divine necessity ('must') assure believers that transformation is certain, not merely possible?

Interlinear Text

δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ
must For G3588 corruptible this must put on incorruption and
G1163 G1063 G5349 G5124 G1746 G861 G2532

τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν
G3588 mortal this must put on immortality
G2349 G5124 G1746 G110

Additional Cross-References

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Ephesians 4:24 (Parallel theme): And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Romans 2:7 (Eternal Life): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Galatians 3:27 (Parallel theme): For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

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