

1 Corinthians 15:54

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Analysis

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality (ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θυητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀθανασίαν)—The temporal conjunction hotan (ὅταν, "when, whenever") with aorist subjunctive indicates future certainty—not "if" but "when." Paul envisions the moment of transformation/resurrection as accomplished fact.

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος, Κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῖκος)—Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8 (LXX): "He will swallow up death forever." The verb katepothē (Κατεπόθη, "was swallowed up") uses divine passive—God swallows death. The phrase eis nikos (εἰς νῖκος, "into victory, unto victory") indicates complete, decisive triumph. Death, the devourer, is devoured. The hunter becomes prey. This is Christianity's stunning claim: death doesn't have final word—God defeats death through resurrection.

Historical Context

Isaiah 25:6-9 depicts eschatological banquet where God destroys death forever. Jewish apocalyptic expected this at the eschaton. Christianity proclaims it has

begun in Christ's resurrection and will be consummated at His return. Death's defeat is inaugurated eschatology—'already' begun in Christ, 'not yet' completed until the parousia.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the imagery of death being 'swallowed up' indicate about resurrection's finality?
2. How does Isaiah 25's banquet imagery connect to Christian hope and the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9)?
3. In what sense is death already defeated, yet awaiting final destruction?

Interlinear Text

ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ
when So G3588 corruptible this shall have put on incorruption and
G3752 G1161 G5349 G5124 G1746 G861 G2532

τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀθανασίαν τότε
G3588 mortal this shall have put on immortality then
G2349 G5124 G1746 G110 G5119

γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος Κατεπόθη
shall be brought to pass G3588 the saying G3588 that is written is swallowed up
G1096 G3056 G1125 G2666

ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῖκος
G3588 Death in victory
G2288 G1519 G3534

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 25:8 (Parallel theme): He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Revelation 20:14 (Parallel theme): And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 21:4 (Parallel theme): And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

2 Corinthians 4:11 (Parallel theme): For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Luke 20:36 (Parallel theme): Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

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

Romans 8:11 (Parallel theme): But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 (Parallel theme): When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Romans 6:12 (Parallel theme): Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

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