

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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Flesh and Blood Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom #1

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(50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53 KJV)

Paul's defense of the resurrection of not only Christ but of all mankind in their own troop or rank is one of the most profound and important chapters in all of Scripture. In his day, there were some who denied the resurrection of Christ and the hope of mankind to be resurrected; there were some who actually believed in resurrection but believed it had already come; others simply spiritualized it. Not much has changed over the years, for we have the same type of detractors in our day as well.

However, Paul went beyond simply defending the resurrection to linking it directly to inheriting the kingdom, as something to receive or have a part of in the future, not the present. There are some Christians who downplay or ignore the future aspect of the kingdom of God and demand that Christians have all the power and authority of the kingdom today and need to start exercising it. I do not think Paul would agree. After all, Paul wrote his epistles with the kingdom-future in view (2 Timothy 4:8) and exhorts us that we need to live in such a manner so as to be worthy of this coming kingdom. This is what the inheritance and the adoption or placing of sons are all about. We even see this in John's Patmos vision of New Jerusalem when He who sits on the throne declares: **"He who overcomes [conquers] will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son"** (Revelation 21:7 NASB). **Inheriting is about immortality and reigning as a son of God.** The first troop to receive this inheritance is the conquerors, the anointed firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:23).

In the above verses, Paul declares that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, meaning that the mortal (corrupt) body of man cannot and will not have any part or allotment in the kingdom of God. Consequently, if we expect to have a part in God's kingdom, we must put off our mortal bodies and put on immortal bodies in the image and likeness of the last Adam, the second Man, the Son of God. We must be changed, and this change comes about with resurrection and transfiguration.

Paul called it a mystery. Appointed times are coming when an atomic change will occur in the dead; first, at the close of our present age, in those asleep in Jesus, specifically, the ones who conquered through His life while occupying bodies of death, and then, 1,000 years later, in the dead believers that did not conquer, followed by the rest of the unbelieving dead. Also, the conquerors that are alive on earth at the end of the age will be transfigured as well. **This mortal must put on immortality.** This is our hope, and the greatness of **Christ in you, the expectation of glory** (Colossians 1:27 CV).

The point that needs to be underlined is the fact that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Inherit means to take part in the kingdom through immortality, possessing a new body, a dwelling from heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1-4). Flesh and blood will have no part in the kingdom. It also means that if we still have flesh and blood, that is, have mortal bodies subject to death or corruption, then we have not inherited the kingdom of God. Do you know of anyone on earth that is beyond death? As a believer, are you beyond death? Do you occupy a body that is immortal? Of course, the answer is that, even for us who believe, death continues to be our enemy, and it will continue to be the enemy of all mankind until Christ Himself abolishes it. He has defeated it, but He must abolish it at the consummation of the eons when He delivers up the kingdom to God the Father so that **God may be all in all** (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

In his defense of resurrection, Paul contrasted the mortal body to the immortal body.

(42) Thus also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is roused in incorruption. (43) It is sown in dishonor; it is roused in glory. It is sown in infirmity; it is roused in power. (44) It is sown a soulish [psuchikos] body; it is roused a spiritual body. (45) If there is a soulish [psuchikos] body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written also, The first man, Adam, “became a living soul [psuche]:” the last Adam a vivifying Spirit. (46) But not first the spiritual, but the soulish [psuchikos], thereupon the spiritual. (47) The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. (48) Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. (49) And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial. (1 Corinthians 15:42-49 CV)

The Concordant Version is a strange read, but I have chosen it because of its use of the word *soulish*. Most translations use the words *natural*, *physical*, or *animal*. But the word *soulish* is the more accurate word and best contrasts mortal and immortal bodies.

The word *soulish* is translated from the Greek word *psuchikos*, which comes from the word *psuche*, which is most often translated as *soul* or *life*. The *New Englishman's Greek-English Concordance and Lexicon* [George Wigram, Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1982] defines *psuchikos* as “an adjective pertaining to the soul as the animating force in man and animals; thus, non-spiritual, natural, sensual.” Its meaning is further proven in the two other places that it appears in the New Testament (James 3:15; Jude 19).

Adam becoming a living soul is a quote from Genesis and, as such, establishes the meaning of the Greek word *psuche*, as well as the meaning of *psuchikos*. In Scripture, the Hebrew meaning generally establishes the Greek meaning; therefore, *psuche* (Greek) is the equivalent of *nephesh* (Hebrew).

And Jehovah Elohim formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living soul [nephesh]. (Genesis 2:7 DNT)

Moving forward to the days of Moses, we are told that the soul is in the blood.

For the soul [nephesh] **of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls** [nephesh], **for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul** [nephesh]. (Leviticus 17:11 DNT)

Contrary to some teaching, the soul is not immortal; it is connected to the mortal body and has no life apart from the body. When the body dies, the body goes to the grave (back to the soil) and the soul goes to the unseen or Hades (Sheol). It has no consciousness in death. The soul is connected to the blood, and when the blood is gone from the body, so is the soul.

Another wording for “the soul of the flesh is in the blood” is “the fleshly soul is in the blood.” Paul exhorted the Corinthians that they were fleshly, which is a description of the natural or carnal man (1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 3:1-3). The soulish man of the first Adam is carnal or fleshly. He is called the old man [self] (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), the fallen man of Adam that has all the weaknesses and failings that result from a mortal body or, as Paul called it, a **body of death** (Romans 7:24 DNT/ESV/NKJV) and **humiliation** (Philippians 3:21 ASV/CV/YLT). Sin came into mankind through death (Romans 5:12), and carnality is the result of this death sentence upon mankind.

By the way, life comes through the spirit. Remove **the breath of the spirit of life** (Genesis 7:22) from man, and the body and soul die. **The body without the spirit is dead** (James 2:26).

According to Paul, the **mortal body** is a **soulish body**, and the **immortal body** is a **spiritual body**. The former is of the **earth**, and the latter is of the **celestial**. The first Adam became a **living soul**, and the last Adam is a **life-giving Spirit**. The first is in the image of the man **from the earth**, and the second is in the image of the Man **out of heaven**. Becoming like the second Man is our inheritance and what it means to inherit the kingdom of God.