

Vicarious Sacrifice: The Human Body Is Corrupted by the Sin Nature & Must Be Made Incorruptible for Group A; It is Mortal and Must Become Immortal for Group B; when These Things Occur at the Rapture, Then Death Is Annihilated by a Single Consummative Gulp of Divine Victory, 1 Cor 15:54

1 Corinthians 15:54 - But when the perishable will have put on the imperishable, and the mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written [Isaiah 25:8], “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (NASB)

- (1) It is fine to translate *phthartós* “perishable,” but we choose to go with “corruption” in order to emphasize why the human body perishes which is the presence of the sin nature.
- (2) The absence of the sin nature in the resurrection body is what makes it incorruptible.
- (3) In verse 53, Paul indicates that the bodies of those in Group A and Group B must be transformed in order for them to conform to the status acquired at salvation.
- (4) The status acquired is eternal life, but the body of corruption is mortal and cannot sustain itself for eternity.
- (5) Physical death is required to make the transition from a decomposing body over to a body that is capable of enduring eternal life.
- (6) The exception to this formula is with Group B, a far smaller population than Group A’s, which is privileged to obtain incorruption and immortality in the “blink of an eye.”
- (7) Paul indicates the certainty of these future transformations by introducing verse 54 with the conjunction **ὅταν (*hótan*)**: “When.”
- (8) What follows is a synopsis of the Rapture and its eternal impact on Church-Age believers.
- (9) The first impact is on deceased believers who are presently classified as *phthartós*: “corruption.”
- (10) This is followed by the third person singular, aorist middle subjunctive of the verb **ἐνδύω (*endúō*)**: “shall have put on.”
- (11) This subjunctive mood is in an indefinite temporal clause:

The subjunctive is frequently used after the temporal conjunction **ὅταν** [when] with the meaning, whenever. It indicates a future contingency from the perspective of the time of the main verb.¹

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 479.

- (12) “When” Group A “shall have put on incorruption” and “when” Group B “shall have put on immortality, then”
- (13) “Then” is the adverb **τότε (tôte)** followed by the main verb, the future middle subjunctive of **γίνομαι (gínomai)**: “will come to fruition.”
- (14) The future tense is prophetic indicating the certainty of the two transitions. However, when the action of these two events will occur is indefinite, again emphasizing the imminency of the Rapture.
- (15) Paul now goes back into the Tanakh to pull a quote from Isaiah 25:8. This quote is part of a chapter in which Isaiah offers thanksgiving to Jehovah for the promise of the millennial kingdom. The subtitle for chapter 25 in the Scofield Bible is “Triumphs of the Kingdom Age.”

Isaiah 25:8a - He will swallow up [**Piel perfect of the verb בָּלַע (bala')**: “to consume”] **death for all time.** (NASB)

- (16) The Piel stem is intensive and the perfect tense indicates a completed action. The rapidity with which the transformation of the body occurs at the Rapture indicates a singular consummative gulp.²
- (17) This sentence is paraphrased by Paul in verse 54, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” The verb “swallowed up” is the aorist passive indicative of **καταπίνω (katapínō)**: “to swallow down.”
- (18) The aorist tense is constative indicating the action of consuming death in its entirety.
- (19) The passive voice means that death receives the action of the Lord’s annihilation of death.
- (20) The indicative mood is an established fact prophesied by Isaiah and reasserted by Paul.

² “To swallow hurriedly in one swallow” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “gulp”).

- (21) This carries the sense of the annihilation of death, both physical and spiritual, for all time.

καταπίνω, “to drink down,” occurs in pre-classical Greek, to a large extent apart from the idea of drinking, usually in the more general sense “to gulp down,” “to swallow.” (p. 158)

The New Testament use of καταπίνω is along the same lines as that of the Old Testament, which it follows in different ways, 1 Corinthians 15:54 [cf. Isaiah 25:8]. With no sense of drinking, the word means “to swallow,” to gulp down.” The literal and figurative meanings merge into one another. In line with its root it denotes swallowing whole rather than grinding or consuming. It is thus a total and definitive process, in the negative sense of hostile destruction. (pp. 158–59)

When we are clothed upon [“shall have put on”], death will be swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:4),³ the body of death being changed into that of glory (1 Corinthians 15:52 ff.). According to 1 Corinthians 15:54 death, which reigned over the body that had fallen subject to it (1 Corinthians 15:44–49), will perish in the victory of life won through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57); it is no more (Revelation 21:4).⁴ (p. 159)

- (22) What results from the consuming gulp is **νίκος (nikos)**: victory. The victory is actually won at the moment of salvation, but the body is not in compliance with the newly acquired spiritual nature.
- (23) To bring the body into conformity with the soul and human spirit, physical death must occur so that the perfect resurrection body can replace it.
- (24) This is accomplished in two phases. Those that die before the Rapture must await the event in interim bodies while those alive at the Rapture are instantly transformed.
- (25) In each case, death is defeated in a consummative gulp with the resultant perfection lasting forever.

1 Corinthians 15:54 - But when corruption will have put on incorruption, and the mortal will have put on immortality, then will come to fruition the saying [written in Isaiah 25:8a], “Death is annihilated by a single consummative gulp of divine victory. (EXT)

³ “For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life” (2 Corinthians 5:4, NASB).

⁴ Leonhard Goppelt, “καταπίνω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 6:158–59.