Reconsidering the Scriptures
A Biblical Study Designed for Full-Preterists
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I have been a student of Scripture for quite some time and there are still many passages that I am puzzled by and many more that I wish I had a better handle on. Nowhere have been so humbled by limits of my knowledge and the limits of my ability to comprehend as when I have grappled with issues surrounding the “end-times.” In my study of preterism, I have been blessed with many new insights into several passages. But despite these insights for which I am thankful, I have been troubled by many of the conclusions drawn by full-preterism (FP). I desire FPs to wrestle with the same texts that I have wrestled with as I have examined FP in the light of Scripture. I want them to ask themselves the same tough questions that I have had to ask myself. Therefore, I have developed this short study for FPs to challenge them to ask the tough questions and to reconsider the Scriptures.

2 Peter 3:1-14
This passage concerns the “coming” of Christ. The coming of Christ in judgment is being compared to God’s coming in judgment in the days of Noah. Full-preterism (FP) presupposes that the judgment of Christ spoken of in this passage occurred in 70 A.D. Therefore, typically FPs take the judgment language concerning the flood literally and the judgment language concerning fire figuratively. Therefore FPs must come up with a consist and well-reasoned interpretation of this passage that explains why one can interpret one part of the passage literally and one part figuratively.

1Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

- The same or similar words in close context to one another often have the same or similar meaning. In fact, they always do, unless there is some contextual reason to take the meaning another direction. Consider this as you answer the questions below.
- In verse 5 are the words “water” and “earth” meant to be taken figuratively or literally?
- In verse 6 are the words “destroyed” and “world” meant to be taken figuratively or literally?
- In verse 7 is the word “earth” meant to be taken figuratively or literally?
- In verse 10 are the words “fire” “destroyed” and “earth” meant to be taken figuratively or literally?
- In verse 13 is the word “earth” meant to be taken figuratively or literally?
• If you are giving different answers to these questions, what within the context of this passage or book allows you to do so?

• If the FP interpretation of this passage is correct and the change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant is in view, once that change has occurred does this exhortation to live holy and godly lives (v.11) still apply to us today after 70 A.D. and if so, on what biblical basis?

Concerning Romans 8:9-11
In this passage Paul is contrasting believers with unbelievers. The key point of contrast is the work of the Holy Spirit that causes the believer to live for Christ rather than follow his sinful desires. In these verses Paul speaks makes a comparison between the raising of Christ from the dead and the Spirit giving “life to your (believers’) mortal bodies.” The problem this passage poses for FPs is that Paul seems to be revealing a promise that believers will be physically resurrected, just as Christ was physically resurrected.

9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

• What does it mean in verse 11 for Christ to be raised from the dead (Is it a reference to physical/bodily resurrection)?

• What does it mean for us to be “given life to (our) mortal bodies”?

• This giving of life is yet future (notice the verb “will”) while the presence of the Spirit of God is in spoken of in the present tense. It would seem that this giving of life to the mortal body cannot refer simply to spiritual life. Is there any relationship between Christ being raised from the dead (11a) and the giving of life to mortal bodies (11b)?

• How are they similar and how are they different?

• How did you arrive at your conclusions?

Concerning Romans 8:18-25
FP teaches that we are now in the new heavens and the new earth. We are now in what Scripture calls “the age to come.” In this passage Paul gives hope to Christians who were experiencing trials that they have glory that will be revealed in them in the future at some point. That revelation of glory includes a liberation of creation from decay and the adoption as sons and redemption of the bodies of believers. This is something Paul was looking forward to experiencing and exhorting believers to do the same. FPs must wrestle with what exactly Paul was hoping for if it wasn’t a physical resurrection.

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

• Has the creation been liberated from the bondage to decay and the frustration it was subjected to in Genesis 3 at the fall?
In Romans 8:15 and Ephesians 1:5 the idea of believers being adopted as sons seems to be something given at conversion. Yet in Romans 8:23 it seems to be a future blessing Paul was hoping in. How do you explain this?

What exactly was Paul hoping for and waiting for—what is the redemption of the body/the adoption as a son (v. 23) that Paul and the rest of the Christians did not have at the time of the writing of the book of Romans?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Paul has just finished rebuking the Corinthians for their self-centered practice of the Lord’s Supper and in these verses he recounts the Lord’s words concerning what the supper is to be about. The FP must grapple with his practice of the Lord’s supper in the light of verse 26 and the reference to the “coming” of the Lord.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

In verse 26 Paul writes that we are to practice the Lord's supper “until he comes.”
When will or did the “coming” that is referred to in this verse take place?
What are the implications of this statement for your practice of this ordinance if the “coming” spoken about here happened in 70 A.D.?

Philippians 1:3-6
Since the day of the Lord or the coming of Christ is uniquely understood in FP to refer primarily and finally to 70 A.D., Paul’s prayer for the church at Philippi poses potential problems for that theological viewpoint.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

When is or was the day of Christ Jesus that Paul refers to in verses 6 and 10?
What will happen or happened on that day?
If the day was in the past, has God “completed the good work” he began in you?
What is the “good work” that Paul is referring to?
Why does Paul pray for the believers be pure and blameless only until the “day of Christ”?
1 Timothy 6:14-15 says something very similar but rather than “day of Christ”, Paul writes “until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Is Paul’s exhortation in 1 Timothy referring to the same day as the “day of Christ” and did Christ “appear” in 70 A.D.?
Philippians 3:10-11
FP denies that Scripture teaches that there will be a general physical/bodily resurrection in the future. In light of this, Paul’s hope of attaining a “resurrection” in Philippians 3:10-11 should be challenging for FPs to interpret in a consistent and coherent fashion.

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

• What exactly is Paul hoping to attain (examine the meaning of “resurrection” and “dead” in this context) and when does/will he attain it?

Philippians 3:20-21
One of the biggest differences between FPs and non-FPs is our understanding about what Scripture teaches regarding the “body” and the change that is said to take place at some point in the future. FP does not believe that Scripture teaches that there will be physical change in the bodies of believers. Non-FPs believe that Scripture teaches that both Christ experienced a physical/bodily transformation and that all believers will also experience such a physical bodily change at the time of his, yet future, coming. This passage that speaks of “bodily” change seems to be at odds with FP and therefore is a challenging passage for adherents of that theological point of view to interpret.

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

• What exactly does Paul mean when he says Christ “will transform our lowly bodies”? How will our “lowly bodies” be like “Christ’s glorious body”?
• When did/will this happen?
• Is your body already like “Christ’s glorious body” in a way that Paul’s body and the bodies of those he was writing to were not?

Acts 1:9-11
This text is a crux interpretum for FP. I believe this is the clearest text that speaks about the manner of a “coming” of Christ. If the expected 2nd coming of Christ is being spoken about here, the text seems to imply that the physical body of Christ will be seen descending in the same visible manner that the disciples had just seen him ascend.

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

• Is this text referring to the “coming of Christ” at 70 A.D.?
• If so, how did He come back “in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”?
• If not, what “coming” is this text referring to? Consider 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 17 (where the Lord Jesus himself is said to descend from Heaven) in your answer.

Ephesians 2:1-7
Many FPs understand the resurrection of the dead to refer to spiritual resurrection or God giving spiritual life to his people. Yet in the FP timeline this giving of life did not really happen until 70 A.D. This
passage certainly talks about spiritual death and life. It even uses resurrection language in verse 6 ("raised us up"). But it seems as if Paul writes about this spiritual resurrection as already having happened to those who believe (prior to 70 A.D.).

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

- Is this text referring to spiritual resurrection that was occurring before 70 A.D.?
- How is this possible, and how does that impact your understanding of Philippians 3:10-11, 20-21?

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50

FP teaches that the revelation of God’s judgment that occurred in 70 A.D. was “the end of the age” and since then we have been in what Scripture calls “the age to come.” The problem is that this passage seems to teach that the end of the age coincides with world judgment at which time all unbelievers will be swept off into hell and the world will only be populated by those who truly love God. This interpretation is clearly at odds with FP and therefore it would seem that FPs must find another convincing way to interpret this text.

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"An enemy did this," he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them.

'Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- Who are symbolized by the wheat?
- Who are symbolized by the weeds?
- What exactly happens at the “harvest”?
- What does it mean for the weeds to be pulled up and burned by fire?
- It says that the harvest and the burning of the weeds happen at the end of the age. Are there “weeds” in the world today that have not yet been “pulled up” and “burned”?
- Has “everything that causes sin and all who do evil” been “weeded out” yet?
- Have the angels come and separated the wicked from the righteous yet (v. 49)?
- If there still are “weeds” or wicked people in the world today, how could the end of the age have occurred at 70 A.D.?

2 Timothy 2:16-18
The charge of “heresy” or even “damnable heresy” is often leveled at FPs. This is not a charge that should ever be leveled at someone lightly. In the light of this passage, FP at least have the appearance of being an heretical system of doctrine and therefore FPs have certainly have some explaining to do. In this passage Paul speaks of two men who believed that the resurrection was a past event as heretics and dangerous. Many FPs teach that the resurrection already took place.

16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

- Does full preterism believe that the resurrection has already taken place?
- If so, how does full preterism differ from the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus?

John 5:28-29
On the face of it, in this text the Lord seems to be speaking of a physical/bodily rising for judgment of every single believer and unbeliever that is physically in the grave. If the surface reading is correct, then this event clearly could not have happened in 70 A.D. nor would it be referring to a spiritual resurrection. Therefore, FP has yet another set of challenges to overcome in this passage.

28 “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

- What do the words “graves” “come out” “rise” and “live” mean here?
- Who does the group “all who are in their graves” consist of (Is it every dead person in the world or is it a reference to a limited group)?
- When will or did this happen?

John 6:41-44
Resurrection language and reference to a “last day” are important issues in our discussion with FP. Non-FPs see this passage as a reference to the physical appearance of the Lord that will occur in the future and the physical resurrection of believers. A FP who encounters this passage needs to define these terms
without being at odds with this same language in passages like John 5:28-30 and without cutting the legs out from under his own FP theological viewpoint.

At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

- What does it mean to “come” to Christ and is that event chronologically separate from being “raised up at the last day”?
- What does “raise him up” mean in verse 44? Consider John 5:28 and the use of the term “rise” in your answer.
- When was or will be the last day? Consider Philippians 1:3-9 in your answer.

1 Corinthians 15

This final text is perhaps the most difficult for FP to interpret in a manner that does not do harm to the Scriptures. On the face of it, this chapter of 1 Corinthians argues for continuity between the physical resurrection of Christ and the physical resurrection of believers. In fact, Paul has traditionally been understood to be arguing that if you deny the general physical resurrection of believers you are denying the physical resurrection of Christ and thereby denying the faith! So FPs must do some hard work at interpreting this text in a responsible manner that will vindicate their system of theology from the charge of denying the faith altogether.

1Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

- In verse 4 when it says Christ was raised, was he raised physically?
- When people saw him did they see his resurrected physical body?

12But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

- Is there a difference between the meaning of “raised from the dead” in 12a and “resurrection of the dead in 12b?

13If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not
For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

- Paul seems to be tying a denial of the resurrection of the dead in general to a necessary denial of the resurrection of Christ. How do you explain this?
- In verse 16 Paul seems to be equating the raising of the dead in general with the raising of Christ first spoken of in verse 4. Is Paul teaching God “raises” “the dead” in the same way Christ was “raised”?
- If not, how are they different and where in the text do you see this difference spoken about?

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

- Does raised from the dead in verse 4 have the same meaning as resurrection of the dead in verse 21?
- If they are different, in what way are they different and what is your basis for making a distinction?
- Does “dead” in verse 20 refer to physical death?
- Do “death” and “dead” in verse 21 refer to physical death?
- If you find a different meaning in the use of the term “dead” or “death” in these two verses, how do you arrive at this different meaning given the close context of the same term?

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

- Verse 23 says that each (will be made alive) in his own turn. Christ is made alive first. In what sense was Christ made alive? Consider verses 3-11 in your answer.
- In what sense are those made alive who “belong to him”?
- It would seem that whatever Christ had a “turn” at, so will (or did) all those who belong to him. It would also seem as if there are only two resurrection or “made alive” days—Christ’s resurrection and then “when he comes” the group of those who belong to him.
- Can this be referring to individual spiritual resurrection whenever conversion happens?
- If so, how can this be supported in the text?

Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- Has the kingdom been handed over?
- Have all of Christ’s enemies been placed under his feet? Consider Hebrews 10:13 in your answer.
- Has death been destroyed?
- What is meant by “death” in verse 25? Consider your answer in the light of previous uses of the term in this chapter (v. 3, 12-17, 20, 21).
- Is the “then” in verse 24 temporally related to the “when he comes” and the “raising” of “those who belong to him” in verse 23?
- How do you harmonize verse 26 as well as verse 54 with 2 Timothy 1:10, which speaks of death being destroyed and life and immortality being brought through the Gospel even before 70 A.D.?

For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done
this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I die every day--I mean that, brothers--just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God--I say this to your shame.

- When Paul says “If the dead are not raised” in verse 32, is he speaking of physical resurrection?
- Is he thinking of all of the dead around the world?
- When does he think this will happen? Consider verses 22 and 23 in your answer.

35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

- What does the question in verse 35 mean?
- When it asks about the manner of the dead being raised and the kind of body they will have, is the focus on the physical raising and the physical body? Again, consider the previous uses of the dead being “raised” as in verse 4 in your answer.
- What does “resurrection of the dead” mean in verse 42? Does “sown” in verse 42-44 refer to physical death or spiritual death? Consider the meaning of buried and dead throughout this passage in your answer.
- Notice the “it” repeated throughout verses 42-44. Is the same “body” (the “it”) changed from perishable to imperishable?
- Is this a physical change?
- Did Christ go through this change?
- What do the terms “natural” and “spiritual” mean in this context? Consider 1 Corinthians 2:12-14, 10:3-4, James 3:15, 17, Jude 19 in your answer.

45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a lifegiving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. 50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
• Is verse 50 saying that corporeal/physical beings cannot be in the presence of God? These seem to be the synonyms in the text:
  
  Flesh and blood = perishable = dishonorable = weak = natural body
  
  Not flesh and blood = imperishable = glorious = powerful = spiritual body


• Was Christ’s body transformed at the resurrection into an imperishable glorious powerful spiritual body that was not flesh and blood but was physical/material? Consider Philippians 3:20-21 and Luke 24:38-39 in your answer.

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

• What does “dead will be raised” mean in verse 52? Is your answer consistent with the rest of the uses of “dead raised” in this passage (v. 4, 12-17, 20, 22, 32)?

• This change seems to be a single event—when did/will it happen and what did/will happen to those individuals who were/will be changed?

53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?
  Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

• What is the meaning of death in verses 54, 55, and 56? Consider the meaning of death in verses 3, 12-17, 20, 21 in your answer.

• What does it mean to have the mortal “clothed with immortality”?

• When this happens (or happened) one can say that Death has been swallowed up in victory. Has the “then” of verse 54 already occurred?

• If so, what specifically is the victory that had not yet occurred at the writing of this letter to the Corinthians?