

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (ESV)

In Adam all Die

21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Like the expanded parallel passage in Romans 5:12-21, these verses have been used by some people to say that animals did not experience death before Adam's sin. These two verses nicely summarize the more theological discourse of the Romans passage. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is proving the resurrection from the dead. In verse 13 he claims that if the dead are not raised then neither has Christ risen from the dead. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then our faith in Him is worthless and we are still in our sin (v. 17). Paul brings home the point that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead in verse 20, thus putting an end to the debate.

In verse 21 we find a reference to Adam though not by name: by a man came death. In the Greek we read *di' anthropou thanatos*. The word *thanatos* is the same word for "death" we find in Romans 5:12 and it is the same word used in the LXX in Gen. 2:17. God had warned Adam that if he rebelled he would surely die. Adam did indeed rebel and now Paul teaches that through Adam came *thanatos* just as God had promised. Knowing that God had also promised a savior in Gen. 3:15, Paul counters with the statement by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead (*di' anthropou anastasis nekron*).

It is clear from the parallelism in this sentence in verse 21 that the *nekros* refer to those who have experienced *thanatos*. What happens if we say that through Adam's sin all death, including animal death, entered the world? If that is true and animals are included in the first part of verse 21, then they must be included in the second half. That is to say that animals will experience the resurrection of the dead. That notion is not supported elsewhere in Scripture. If that is not quite clear in verse 21 it will become abundantly clear in verse 22.

The verse states for just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. The use of the comparative *hosper* (just as) forces the reader to interpret the two halves of the verse as parallel. There is another interesting word choice here. Paul uses the word *pantes* which is the plural of *pas* meaning "all". Is Paul using the word "all" as collectively referring to humans and animals as most YECs claim? If one believes that there was no death in the animal kingdom before the Fall, then the logical interpretation would be to lump humans and animals together here. Let us pay careful attention to the implications of just such an interpretation. If in Adam all [animals] die, so also in Christ all[animals] will be made alive. As mentioned above, such a notion of Christ dying for animals is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, I believe it is a dangerous position to take. In Matthew 12:12, Jesus preaches that we (*anthropos*) are distinct and more important than the animals. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul tells us that it is a trustworthy statement that Christ came into the world to save sinners. Nowhere in the Bible does it mention that animals have the capacity to sin. It stands therefore that Christ could not have died to save animals. If Christ did not die to save animals, then the first half of the verse does not include animals either. Adam's sin may have ushered in death, but this death is unrelated to animal death. If it is unrelated, then it stands very possible that animals experienced death for some time before Adam's sin.

Based on the words and mission of Christ Himself, I believe it approaches heresy to say that Adam's death ushered in death for the animal kingdom. By necessity we are forced to say then that Christ died for animals because animals sinned. By a simple perusal of Scripture will find that this is not at all the case. Animals were offered on the alter as a sacrifice for the sins of the people (Lev. 4:3, 28; 5:6; 19:22, etc...). Notice that the sacrifices are for the sins of the people (Heb. 5:3; 7:27) and there is no mention of animal sin. There is no passage in the Bible that speaks of animal sin. Likewise there is no passage that speaks of the initiation of animal death. It is complete eisegesis to speak of these verses and Romans 5:12 as including animal death as a consequence of the Fall. We must be very careful to let the text speak for itself and not read anything into it just to try and find evidence for a specific doctrine that is not there. It appears that Paul is going out of his way to state that Adam's sin brought about death for humans and humans only, just as he states in Romans 5:12. The notion that animal death originated as a result of the Fall is unbiblical.

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