RULES FOR LIFE IN THE COINCIDENT STATE

Copyright, J. Michael Strawn

From 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. RULES FOR LIFE IN THE COINCIDENT STATE, PART 1

Life is a continuum—it begins here in time, and in the body. Eventually comes the passage through death, and finally there is heaven (v. 50).

"The kingdom of God" (v. 50) is a spiritual reality. We do not live in the physical body in heaven: "flesh and blood cannot inherit" it. The fear of death is predicated on a false unity that we can call "the supposed necessary unity " between life --> and --> the body.

The Apostle breaks this false belief. This supposed necessary unity does not exist! The real, the only necessary, unity is between GOD --> and --> LIFE.

The *continuum of life* is expressed in 3 parts:

* A) There is the beginning condition of life in a state of *coincidence* with the flesh, the body.
* B) In the great scheme, there will come an overwhelming "change" "at the last trumpet" at which point "the dead will be raised" (v. 52).
* C) Finally, unfettered life is to be accorded to those who obeyed the rules for life in the coincident (v. 58.) No more struggle against the flesh; time will have come and gone. True life, spiritual life is stronger than time and stronger than death! It is therefore stronger than our difficulties and troubles. So stipulates the apostolic witness.

Generalization: *The coincident state (*your life in the flesh) is not meaningless. It is supremely important! Then and therefore, our reasoning and behavior and the particular episodes and incidents of our coincident lives are equally meaningful. Life in the coincident holds determinant significance! It does not matter how hard it is! Life is not dependent upon materiality. Unbelievers uniformly reject this revealed truth. Because of Christ, our present life is coincident with, but discontinuous, from materiality. There are rules.

From 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. RULES FOR LIFE IN THE COINCIDENT STATE, PART 2

Rule #1. BE STEADFAST (v. 58):

The rule requires resolution of mind to see life in the coincident through to the revealed end. Three Hebrew young men threatened with immediate execution believed that life transcended death (Daniel 3)--where they would have entered the realm of unfettered victory. This resolution of mind founded upon faith must necessitate a change of definition and of connotation regarding "the end.”

What is it? This linguistic effect comes with behavioral consequences. It moves "the end" from physical death to the revealed end, which is heaven. The rule of steadfastness covers everything from

THE MIND --> TO--> THE FLESH;

FROM REASONING --> TO--> INSTANTIATION OF BEHAVIOR;

FROM REVELATION --> TO --> MATERIALITY.

There is no disassociation between these things. It's all inclusive.

Rule #2. Be immovable (v. 58):

Consecration to a single rule: revealed truth. So, it means consecration to implacable loyalty to "our Lord Jesus Christ. On some occasions there is the need to fortify trust in God and minimize the influence of the "perishable"/material. This is dealing with temptation. It can move us if we let it.

The coincident state is not peaceful; but a state of testing.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58. THE RULES FOR LIFE IN THE COINCIDENT STATE, PART 3

Rule #3. DILIGENCE: "Always abounding in the work of the Lord" (v. 58.)

This rule calls for the investment of the whole being in the coincident state: body, mind and soul. "The work of the Lord" holds inherent risk, sacrifice, loss, pain, tears. But the rule does not allow us to be occasional in our efforts. A public identity and persona in the society results in being associated with "the work of the Lord.”

The world is hostile to the Lord. Persecution may spring forth. Yet we cannot relent, desist in diligence. Generalization: There is no exception to these rules governing our presence in the coincident state.

#4. WHY? Because "your toil is not in vain" (v. 58.) Believers think beyond the immediate time, the material, problems, situation, circumstance, conditions and consequences.

#5. HOW? By displacing human reason and human experience with the Word of God. All this hinges on confidence, belief, trust in revelation.

#6. THE POINT IS TO PUT PHYSICAL DEATH IN A NON-TEMPORALCONTEXT! Rip death out of the time/experiential context. The revealed context, if believed, will in effect change our understanding of death and rob us of the fear of it.

The greater context of the death we face is "the kingdom of God." Death is not our limiting context!