

Concerning the Resurrection

By Daniel Yordy - August 28, 2010
PDF Version for printing and distribution

I would like to have a better understanding of a scripture. Perhaps you can help?

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the *dead in Christ* shall rise first:

I cannot accept the idea that this has any reference to the physically dead, the corpses buried in the ground. The difficulty is the idea of simultaneously being IN Christ and yet DEAD. To be IN Christ is to be alive. I think the dead referred to are people sitting in church pews but are stalled or immature. Also, are the dead to be distinguished from those that are asleep in Christ? What is your understanding?

Jim

Jim,

Thanks, Jim, I appreciate the heart in which you ask me this question and I will attempt to shape an answer in like heart. In searching for understanding on a different, though similar, question, I came across the comparison Paul gives between love and knowledge. Knowledge gets rid of love as it puffs itself up, but love does not get rid of knowledge, rather, it brings knowledge into the spirit that says, "Whatever I may know now, I can't possibly see or understand clearly; there is so much more that I ought to know' that makes my present knowledge quite limited indeed." 1 Corinthians 8:1-2

It is in that vein that I write. I share as if God has given me some measure of understanding both because He has and because Peter commands us that if we speak, we should speak as if we are the mouthpiece of God. But God is meek and of a humble spirit; He never "puffs" Himself up. And so in sharing whatever it is that fills my heart, I do so with the full conviction that I know so very little, I see things dimly, just barely, God is far beyond my present knowledge and will be throughout eternity.

I enjoy reading historical stories, usually set in England because most stories of the middle ages are set in England. So death and burial often appear in those stories. To the Catholic medieval mind, where and how one was buried was a big deal. In one such story, a beloved pastor was buried with his back to the east facing his congregation so that when his congregation jerked up out of the ground, they would see him first and not be frightened out of their wits. Because the physical churches of England are surrounded by gravestones and all the motifs are about demons torturing people or corpses jerking up out of the dirt, the modern mind looks at all that and concludes that Christianity was a cult of death.

So I understand and share the revulsion to that whole way of thinking, knowing that it cannot be in line with the gospel of Jesus Christ. That view of resurrection has to go the way of praying to the knucklebones of Saint Albert.

In reaction against that way of thinking, that exalts the natural, that comes out of the limited thinking of fallen man upon this earth in his utter ignorance, many in recent years have adopted a method of interpreting passages in the Bible that seeks a "spiritual" interpretation only. I have sat for years under many teachers of the word who give a "spiritual" and "deeper truth" interpretation only of many such passages.

But for some reason, although I believe fully in the Spirit of the Word, that is, that the Holy Spirit inside of us takes the Word God speaks as a seed of life and makes that Word our life in power, I have never

really bought into "spiritualizing" the word God speaks. In other words, I can see that "spiritualizing" a passage such as you refer to here could be inside the same game as the historical "naturalizing," just on the opposite end of the same spectrum.

Now, in saying that, I fully recognize and use the Bible's own definitions of metaphors and symbols. God uses metaphors and symbols from beginning to end, and He gives us the interpretations of every metaphor and symbol He uses inside the Bible itself. Yet, for myself, I find a distinct difference between using metaphors as God uses them and "spiritualizing" the word. I see that difference, though I may not be able to explain what I mean.

And so I have to ask the question. Could there be a completely different way of understanding God and His ways than either of these two limited approaches? We see that whenever Jesus was asked a question, He gave an answer that seemed to have nothing to do with the question. Yet as we come to know God and His ways, we come to see that Jesus' answer was the only possible answer to the question, that it answered the question perfectly.

Here is one.

Question: "We would see Jesus." Answer: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it will bear many more grains."

We know that understanding Jesus' reply does not take us into "spiritualized" realms that dilute the meaning of His words. We know that Jesus meant that seeing Him as an individual man would do no one any good, but that if He "died," that is, if He entered into us in our earthy condition, becoming Christ as us, the Holy Spirit would form Him in many and that we would see Christ growing to full fruit both in ourselves and in one another. We understand this reality to be substantial and practical; there is nothing ethereal about it.

So let's look at God's creation. We know that creation has two parts, that is, everything God created is made up of one or the other of two forms of substance. One form of substance is the physical - matter, atoms, molecules, moving through space. The other form of substance is the spiritual - spirit, frequency. Spirit is a substance as real as matter. Angels are created out of a spirit substance, though we know from the Bible that they can take on themselves a physical form that is, in that moment, as substantial as any rock or human body. Yet they can leave it in a moment and it vanishes as if it never was. Animals, on the other hand, are created out of physical matter, though they have a measure of spirit that ceases when they cease.

[You may have read my article "The Science of Electricity"; I can envision the possibility (though I claim no exact knowledge) that an angel, consisting of spirit substance, at the frequency of spirit, can cause that frequency to lower and thus the angel's "body" appears at the frequency of physical matter. Then, when the angel disappears, it simply releases the substance of its body back into its normal spirit frequency. In other words, nothing is spooky or "miraculous"; everything works in the harmony of laws created by God to govern all things. Laws of true science are laws created by God.]

The Bible uses two metaphors to speak of these two sides of creation. Heaven and Earth. And so Mars, because it is physical, is on the earth side of creation. Angelic spirits of all kinds, even though they may find themselves in earth's atmosphere, are on the heavenly side of creation. All that is spirit is heavenly. All that is matter moving through space is earthy.

Everything God created, however, is found in one realm or the other. Animals are completely physical; their spirit is tied completely to the earth. Angels are completely spiritual, that is, their substance is completely spirit, and they are tied always to the heavenly side of God's creation. If angels materialize, they do so only temporarily; it is not their normal state.

Man is unique.

Man is the only creature God made that is fully earth and fully heaven, fully physical matter and fully spiritual substance both at the same time. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Genesis 2:7

This is man's substance in perfection before the fall or any sin. In other words, you and I are a living soul. And we express ourselves and communicate with others through two different bodies both at the same time. We have a physical body through which we interact with the physical side of God's creation and we have a spirit, a spiritual body through which we interact with the heavenly side of God's creation. Both bodies are completely real and both are completely integral to who and what we are as humans.

The human is the union between spirit and dirt. Christ is the union between God and the human. I more and more believe that the "image of God" aspect of things is centered in the heart, and that heart is a unique element found only at the juncture of God and dirt.

And then comes the fall. The fall shatters both realms, heaven and earth. But it affects man the most by cutting him off from knowledge of his spirit and normal interaction with the heavenly elements, the heavenly side of God's creation. And so man sees only a blighted earth with no knowledge of the heavens he was created to walk in as well. If he could see those heavens, he would see that they are just as blighted as the earth, if not more so, and he would have known only despair. He would see the nastiness of the evil spirits that drive him and he would succumb to horror.

But then there comes into the thinking of man upon this earth, especially after the resurrection of Jesus, in the church age, when spirit is re-introduced into the human experience by God, a philosophy, a view of God's creation that says something along these lines.

Heaven good - Earth bad.

The most extreme is known as Manichaeism, that is the belief that a greater God created heaven and the realm of spirit and a lesser god created the earth and the realm of matter moving through space and that these two "gods" are at war with each other. Gnosticism is similar. Gnosticism argues that since the physical realms are tainted and evil, then Jesus could not possibly have appeared in a body of physical substance. Therefore Jesus made Himself "look like" He had a physical body, though He had nothing of the kind.

This view forgets the fact that heaven is also shattered and blighted, that it is unclean in God's sight, and that He intends to destroy it and create a completely new heaven. Heaven is in as much need of redemption as earth.

The fascinating thing is that the New Testament teaches us that we fight evil and wickedness in heaven more than we fight it in the earth. In other words, we have greater enemies in heaven and in the spirit than we have in the flesh or upon the earth. Heaven is more likely to pull us down and away from Christ than earth is.

It is a normal reaction against the carnality with which the gospel has been interpreted and applied in Christendom to seek a spiritual understanding of the things God says. But I would submit that to "spiritualize" what God says is almost the same as to "carnalize" what He says. Rather, let's look through God's eyes and see the creation as He sees it.

You see, there is an enormous pressure and effort all through human history to demonize the earth and to mock and ridicule the human. May I suggest that not one ounce of this pressure comes from God, but that every bit of it comes from the evil one? Satan hates man because man is the image of God and not himself. God intends to reveal Himself through man and not through any angelic being. All angelic beings, even the greatest and most powerful, were created for an ultimate purpose - to serve the image of God, which is man. Just as God created animals to serve man, to be our beasts of burden and to work for us upon the earth, so God created angels to serve man and to work for us in the heavens.

Why? Certainly not for our self-exaltation or self-pleasure. No. Man is created to be the image of God. That is, God intends to reveal Himself as He really is through man. God is invisible, no one can see or know Him, neither in heaven nor on earth. God is not satisfied with that arrangement. He wants to be seen, to be known, to be handled, to be touched. Therefore God created man weak. We have the capacity to be filled with all that God is and to release God as He is through us to creation. But we have no ability in ourselves whatsoever. That is the nature of man. Infinite capacity, zero ability.

Faith is the mechanism, the door, the passage, by which infinite capacity - God - moves through zero ability - man - to touch and bring life and healing and joy to all created beings, whether in heaven or on earth, that is whether beings created out of the substance we call spirit, or beings created out of the substance we call matter. Faith is Christ living in our hearts.

Now, we know that God created all things that are spirit substance, and God created all things that are physical matter. And in the day that He created all things, He pronounced all things "good."

Let me bring in some verses that are definitive for me, that is, they are substantial underlying verses that are there to rule our understanding of God and His ways.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"The glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

"The meek shall inherit the earth."

"He who overcomes shall be My son and shall inherit all things."

Now, there is a strong belief in "deeper truth" circles that the physical side of the universe, physical matter moving through space, is a problem with God, that it is the source of all our trouble, and that God intends to dispense with it as soon as He can. There is the belief that when God finishes with the earth, there will be heaven only, there will be no physical matter anywhere in the universe. The universe will revert to spirit substance and we, as overcoming saints, will exist before God as spirit beings only and never again know anything of the physical matter side of God's creation.

I would contend that this belief is as much Medieval Catholicism as corpses jerking up out of the dirt on "judgment day." It is the statement "heaven is our home," something God never says anywhere in the Bible. Because, you see, I am as much the seed of Abraham as I am the seed of God.

But in fact, heaven is the same as earth as regarding good and evil. A good man who brings good out of his heart can live on the same street on earth as an evil man who brings evil out of his heart. The problem is not the street. In exactly the same way, evil spirits and good spirits fill heaven and often live and work side by side. We know this is so. And again, the problem is not "the street." To say that heaven is good and earth is evil is to miss the whole point of what causes something to be of God or not of God. Spirit substance is not "more holy" than physical matter. In fact, it is man only who is created like God. Angels, though they are of spirit substance and are heavenly creatures are NOT like God. God fashioned the physical human body with Himself in mind - an essential part of man, His image. He did not think that way when He formed angels. In fact, the writer of Hebrews indicates that, while God was thinking of Himself when He formed man, He was thinking of man when He formed the angels as the servants of those who are the heirs of salvation.

Now, God does say that He intends to create a new Earth. That means to me that He intends to create once again a physical side to the universe, that is, physical matter, atoms and molecules, moving through space. This is not a "spiritual" earth, that is, it is not an "earth" made out of the substance of spirit. The substance of spirit is heaven, not earth. Earth is the substance of physical matter moving through space. All the universe that is seen by the naked eye and by present human instruments is physical matter. None of what is seen out there is spirit or "heaven." In fact, the part of heaven with which we have to do is

right close around the earth, not out there somewhere. The belief that the stars and planets are literally "heaven" and not a symbol of the heavens has led to most pagan religion on earth.

The testimony of the Bible is that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." The idea and accusation that the realms of physical matter are low or "down-pulling" or a hindrance to achieving a knowledge of God, this is simply not found anywhere in the Bible (1 John 1:1-2), rather it is imposed on the Bible from outside. Nowhere does Paul say that the flesh is our problem or that God wants us to "get rid of the flesh"; he says that walking according to the flesh is our problem. There is a huge difference between those two things. In fact the whole plan of God is found in the extraordinary difference between those two ideas. The victory of Christ in us is Christ revealed in the flesh, not Christ revealed in spirit only. John says that it is the spirit of anti-Christ that claims that Christ is spirit only.

Now, further, we know that the terms "eternal" and "eternity" were completely absent from the thinking and context out of which Jesus and the Apostles wrote and spoke. Those concepts came into the church hundreds of years later. Then we have the ridiculous mis-translation which the King James has too many of, "Time shall be no more." Time is the measurement of the movement of matter through space. Hence, no time means no physical matter in God's re-created universe, no planets spinning, no water flowing, no wind blowing, no children playing happily, no family sitting around the table together enjoying the abundant harvest of the earth.

It is clear that John wrote, "There shall be no more delay, but that when the right time is come, the mystery of God - God manifest in the flesh - will be completed."

We know that Jesus and the Apostles wrote continually out of the concepts and understandings of a series of future ages of time. That is, an unending succession of distinct periods of time, ages that have a beginning and an end. That is the only concept of the future that they held and everything they said and wrote came out of that understanding of the future.

Let me blow us away with this thought. God is eternal. That means He is. To say "God was before His creation," or to say, "God will be after His creation," is to speak blither. God is and nothing else. Time words have no meaning when describing God.

God is normal. Eternal is normal. Time, then, is possibly the most fantastically bizarre thing that God ever invented out of Himself. If eternal is normal, how on earth could something begin or end? The creation of time is a far greater demonstration of God's incredible abilities than the simple extension of normal eternity.

Eternal is easy for God. The creation of time is one of the greatest proofs of His ability to do the impossible!

In other words, I personally do not see the purpose or point in banishing any physical matter moving through space from God's re-created universe. Are we to be offended if God likes both sides of His universe, if He likes the physical side just as much as He likes the spiritual side? Does not God love animals and the earth as much as He loves angels and the heavens? Do not God's bowels yearn over all the works of His hands? Is it not His intent to bring victory and resolution and the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ into every part of His creation - into all things?

Now, I will not impose on you the conceit that I know or understand your view of the resurrection. So I will write generally for the sake of conversation.

Let us assume that God does, in fact, recreate a fully restored physical side to the universe, stars and planets, rivers and hills, plants and animals, fire and air, all functioning in perfect harmony according to the laws of physics instituted by God, without the presence of sin.

If someone believes that the resurrection is spirit and heaven only, with no reference to physical matter, as an overcoming son of God (I speak that by faith), I am forever banned from that side of God's creation.

I will not, in fact, inherit the earth, I will never walk its gardens, I will never explore its mountain streams, I will never taste its fruit. By that belief, I am cut off from that entire half of my inheritance. More than that, God can never reveal Himself through me to any part of His creation on the physical plane.

In fact, the idea that God would reduce His creative exuberance by eliminating time, His most bizarre and incredible invention, and physical matter and thus eliminating all the many types of created beings He could form in those realms just does not speak to me of the God I know and see.

Let me stop here, and bring in another defining verse from Isaiah.

"Of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

I do not take this to mean, "of the increase of His control over us there shall be no end," that is the very opposite of God's nature, He does not "control" us, He walks in harmony with us and we with Him. I take it to mean that God is as He shows Himself to be, reckless in His exuberance to create. God loves to create, to fill the universe with created beings of all kinds, sizes, shapes, and functions. To increase the number of His children without end. Any "sane" creature would cry "Stop - enough," when God is just getting started creating. He is always too much.

Now, by the belief that the resurrection places us in the heavenly realms of spirit only, as I reveal God to creation, I can do that only in heaven. My ministry in future ages will be only on the heaven side of God's creation. I will never walk the planets or minister Christ to those whom God creates in the physical realms. I will never be able to give a cup of cold water, to place my hand on someone's shoulder, to take them by the hand and show them Christ.

No, that belief has banished me from half of God's creation and from half of my inheritance.

But if God wanted to show Himself through His image in heaven only and not within the physical parts of His creation, why on earth did He create us as His image as humans? Why did He create us perfect with a physical body through which we could reveal God to all the physical side of His creation and with a spiritual body through which we could reveal God to all the heavenly side of His creation? Why, then, did God make man different? Why are we the union of God's Spirit and dirt?

Was dirt evil in the day that God created it? Quite the contrary, the only evil upon the earth was the evil found in the heavenly creatures, spirit beings, one of whom materialized into a physical form. In fact, the extraordinary thing is that in the day that Adam was created, evil was found in heaven only, in the realm of spirit only, there was no evil on the physical side of the creation.

So the idea that the spirit side of the creation is "better" than the material side of the creation clearly does not hold up. The truth that "flesh" is passing away refers to that which comes out of the tree of knowledge, man anointed by demons, not to that which is made of physical atoms and moves through space.

Now, the main point of my website and my teachings is that God intends to reveal Himself in the earth, that Jesus will win in this age on this earth in my body. My teaching circles around the reality that God is proving His glory within the physical part of His creation. This is Christ. Anti-Christ is that which limits Jesus to heaven, that is, to spirit form only, and denies His appearing in physical matter.

The whole point of Christ and of the mystery of God is God manifest in the flesh. The central driving point of the mystery of all that is God in creation is God manifest in the flesh, that is, in the focal point of all physical matter - the human body.

To walk in heaven, I must have a heavenly body. I do.

To walk in the realms of physical matter, I must have a physical body. I do.

I walk in both bodies at the same time. I am human; I am the revelation and image of God on earth and in heaven, both at the same time - and forever!

This earth is my inheritance, and I will not be robbed of it. In the same way, heaven is my inheritance, and it belongs to me fully. I own it and more, as Paul says.

Having laid this basis of understanding, let's return to your original question concerning this statement of Paul to the Thessalonian church.

God centers the entire gospel of Jesus Christ around the redemption of the physical body, that it will be transformed into one just like the glorious body of Jesus - as He walked the earth after the resurrection. God says so many times and in so many ways that this is the focus and goal of the gospel - the defeat of death and the resurrection of the physical body that, as far as I am concerned, to cut the resurrection of the physical body out of the New Testament is to engage in the prolific practice of almost all Christians - gleefully cutting as many verses out of the New Testament in as many ways as they can.

But I will concede this point. As I created the documents I have posted containing every verse in the New Testament speaking about heaven and earth, flesh and spirit, I found one passage that supports the understanding of the resurrection as a "spiritual" body only. It is this passage in 1 Corinthians 15, plus a few more verses either side of these.

All flesh is not the same flesh, but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds. *There are* also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another. *There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, "*The first man Adam became a living being.*" The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

Verse 44, "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," in particular supports the understanding of the resurrection being a spiritual body against the limited physical view of historical Christianity.

This brings us to our definition of God.

I am discovering a critical truth about God more and more in recent months. God is contradiction. Let me explain.

The human mind in its present state, particularly the Christian (religious) mind, cannot stand contradiction. We reject it and do not allow it into our theology. We demand a "summa theologica," that is, a clear, easy-to-understand, easy-to-grasp explanation of everything with no inconsistencies or obvious contradictions. We do not allow God to say things that oppose each other to our minds.

Joel Osteen teaches only things that God says. He doesn't teach anything that God does not say. But he teaches only a few of the many things God says. Someone else teaches the things God says that Joel does not teach - AND does NOT teach the things God says that Joel does teach, but ignores those things utterly. I know of many preachers who refuse ever to teach Ephesians 3:20 to their congregation, they don't want their congregation to believe that God's goodness and favor is all over them.

[It is God's order for His church that each of us should give that portion to the body that He has given us; it is not a "fault" to stay within those things God has made real to us personally. But when the motive for refusing to teach certain things God does say is control over the congregation, then we have evil working in the church. And that control thing works all too much in "deeper truth" circles.]

Here is how we reject God's prerogative to say things that we have decided God ought not to have said. We accuse our brother of heresy. And so, when I look at the teachings of those who accuse Joel of heresy

(I use him as an example because he is my pastor), I see that they clearly reject the things God says that Joel teaches. God says those things, but it is the one who teaches them that is accused of heresy. But we know that the accusation is not against Joel, but against God.

And this is the problem with following the revelations of the Spirit we receive apart from the Word God speaks that was written down upon the page. We are so limited and earthy in our understanding and we can't stand the idea that God would say two things that to us completely oppose each other. And so some see the hundreds of jeopardy verses in the New Testament and conclude that the gospel is jeopardy only and that those who teach grace are deceivers and heretics. And others see the hundreds of grace verses in the New Testament and conclude that the gospel is grace only and that those who teach jeopardy are deceivers and heretics.

This is the church. And our understanding of the resurrection follows the same path. Some, receiving a revelation of the Spirit of God through these statements of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, then find it impossible to receive or accept other statements God makes that speak of an actual transformation of our physical body, that we will continue forever in a body that corresponds to the physical side of God's creation, that we will be sent by God to reveal Him to all the physical realms He will yet create - as well as to be sent by God to reveal Him to all the heavenly realms He will yet create.

So here is what we do. At some point along the road, we make a decision which side of contradictory verses we intend to take. Then we spend the rest of our lives twisting and pushing and massaging and making all those other verses say something other than what they actually say, something that agrees with the contradictory verses we decided to light upon. And - we call our brothers "heretics," who have lighted upon the other verses and who twist and push and force the verses we have embraced, trying to make them say something other than what they actually say.

This is a game. It is religion. And I have stopped doing it. I used to do it. I hated it like hell even while I was doing it. When I forced myself to look honestly at what I was doing, that was the key point of decision to leave the move and the Christian communities I had been a part of for many years. And I made a firm decision never to twist what God says again, by God's grace. To understand it as He means it, yes, but never to force it to fit my view of what God ought to have said.

God does not make sense. To want a God who makes sense is to want a God who is not God. It is to want a God who is created in our image, not the other way around.

And so I believe what God says as He says it. I know that some passages are mis-translated and mis-contrued. I also know how God uses symbols and metaphors. But other than those things, I have no need to practice mental strangulation to force a verse that does not fit my "revelation" to say what I want it to say. I will not do that to these verses in 1 Corinthians 15 that fully support a spiritual take on the resurrection, and I will not do it to the verse you mention in 1 Thessalonians.

But I will point this out. Paul was dealing with questions that deeply concerned new Christians then and now. What is the resurrection? What will happen to us? How does it work? What will we look like? (Today's church, however, has mostly abandoned the resurrection, replacing it with the rapture - everyone going to heaven at once.) Paul gave answer to those questions that brought the thinking of the Corinthian church out of the carnal limitation of life as it is known in this present age and into a grasp of the power of the Spirit and how God actually works, by sowing Christ into weakness, that is, by Jesus living as us in this world, He would transform us from the inside out.

But, truthfully, I can embrace this truth that Paul shares here with all of my heart as he speaks it, without needing, at the same time, to exclude the resurrection from the physical side of God's universe, whether in the next two ages of time, that are, in my understanding, the ages of the ages, the greatest of all the ages, when salvation and the ministry of Christ come to their full completion, or whether in the ages to come after that when all of creation is made brand new, a new heavens and a new earth.

Now, there is a strong desire to claim that the new heavens and the new earth have already happened. And this is true - as a seed. But only as a seed. Jesus was the Lamb slain before the beginning of creation. But that reality did us no good whatsoever until the red blood cells of a human Christ mixed with the dirt of this earth. Just as with all things that God does, the new heavens and the new earth begins with the planting of a seed. But the planting of the seed must never be confused with the completion of the finished state.

So, the truth of the matter is, this teaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 also refutes completely the idea that the new heavens and the new earth are already as completely manifested as they ever will be. On the contrary, they are planted as a seed, and that seed does its work in our lives, pressing up out of the soil, transforming the dirt into living tissue, and bearing the full fruit, all that was in that original seed. But it is the plant, the life of the church in the present age, that has a different body to the original seed, the fruit that comes out of the completion of the plant is identical in every way to the seed that was planted, just many more of them.

Also in this passage, Paul says that the LAST enemy to be defeated is death. Death is not "spiritual," it is physical. Physical death was the condemnation of God against sin.

Gnosticism wants to claim that all that God speaks is proven in spirit only, that it makes no difference what is manifest visibly upon this earth in the flesh. That the death and sorrow and cruelty and emptiness of this earth will just go on until all that is physical and therefore "bad" just vanishes.

But we know that heaven can be worse than earth and spirit can be more evil than physical matter.

It is this belief, spirit only, that John opposed all through His epistles. It is anti-Christ, and I oppose it as well.

I will not rest until I see God manifested in all of His fullness in my human body of flesh right here on this earth. I will not rest until I see God move through me in mighty rivers of living water that actually and permanently heals and transforms this physical planet, that brings all that is upon it into the glory and experience of God. I will not rest until I see the curse lifted from off this planet, the animals free, the plants shining His glory, the rocks singing His praises without restraint or shadow. I will not rest until I see Hades empty and heaven clean and all the evil of the spirit realms bowing under the love and kindness of Jesus, and all creation free and rejoicing in the proof that God's Word wins, that He triumphs over all who oppose Him, and that Jesus, gathering all that exists into Himself, turns and gives all things back to the Father.

So let's get back to this verse in 1 Thessalonians that you are asking about.

I have no idea what it means (I am chuckling here - what, after all that!).

There are a number of odd things Paul and others say that, really, just don't make good sense. It's very hard to fit them into all the things God says that are clear. This is definitely one of those. I could say this or that, but I would not go very far before I would find my "explanation" hitting a whole crock of pickles.

What do I do with this verse? I will not literalize it - there are clearly metaphors here. I will not spiritualize it; you tried that and came up with even more confusion.

I will do the only thing God wants us to do with every word He speaks. I will believe it - as God says it, regardless of my understanding.

God says it; I receive and believe what God says with all my heart. The Word God speaks is planted in my heart by the Holy Spirit and the power and genetic code of my Father that is in that Word will bring forth all the fulfillment of everything God meant when He said it into my experience upon this earth. This word is spoken into the earth and into this age, it must be fulfilled in this earth and in this age.

But I am convinced of this. Those who have died, who have lost their physical bodies and who exist in the heavenly realms, in their spirit body only, are not complete. I am convinced they are not all there, that they are missing part of themselves. The writer of Hebrews tells us that they are waiting for their completion upon us who are here walking this thing out upon the earth. I believe that they will, once again, walk upon this earth in bodies that are compatible with physical phenomena.

Though many sons of God in the resurrection will prefer to walk mostly in the heavens, as they wish, yet when they come upon the earth, they will be perfectly normal and completely compatible with the earth. Other sons of God may wish to walk mostly upon the planets and within the physical side of God's creation, yet when they visit the heavens, they will be perfectly normal and completely compatible with heaven. And all will walk in the Spirit, in the heavens, all the time, whether they are upon the earth or wherever they find themselves in God's exuberant unlimitedness.

I believe that I will live in heaven in my spiritual body and upon the earth in a body compatible to the earth, that I will go back and forth as I wish and God wills (what I wish and what God wills are always the same). I believe that all the glory and fruit of the new heavens, after God through us cleans all the darkness and evil out of heaven and out of that which is spirit by bringing it into submission to Jesus, belong to me. I believe that all the glory and fruit of the new earth, after God through us cleans all the darkness and evil out of the earth and out of that which is physical matter by bringing it into submission to Jesus, belong to me. I believe that God sends me forever into all the heavens that we create together and fill with beings - as His glory and revelation. I believe that God sends me forever into all the realms of physical matter, upon all the planets we create together and fill with beings - as His glory and revelation. All the creatures of the spiritual realms will know God by knowing me, and all the creatures of the physical realms will know God by knowing me.

That is the glory of man, the glory of Christ. That is what human means.

You see, the future is utterly fascinating, mind-blowing to the extreme. God is never dull. He is adventure beyond measure.

But those new heavens and new earth, the age that is to come, all the purpose and victory of God in Christ will come out of a single point, a "pinch" when all the contradiction is met here upon this planet, in a final showdown, a final answer to everything that opposes God and to every voice that calls into question what He says.

It is the point where the Lamb overcomes the Beast, where Christ proves anti-Christ false, where love trumps hate, where light banishes darkness, where the mystery of godliness overturns the mystery of iniquity, where undeserved forgiveness is extended to the basest of cruelty. It is the love of God and the wrath of God ever entwined, the absolute purity and the deepest compassion, judgment and mercy met together. It is the revelation of God through us.

It is the resurrection from the dead. It is God proving Himself in our mortal bodies. It is God filling His temple with all of Himself.

What that looks like, I am the last to claim understanding.

But I believe it with all of my heart.

Be blessed in Christ,
Daniel Yordy