

Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection (Academia Biblica (Series) (Brill Academic Publishers), No. 22.)

Michael F. Hull



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Although 1 Cor 15:29 ("Otherwise what are they to do, who have themselves baptized on account of the dead? If the dead are not really raised, why are they baptized on account of them?") has received a vast amount of attention in the biblical academy, there is no scholarly consensus as to its meaning. In order to break the current impasse, this volume reviews and critiques the over forty different interpretations of 15:29, then examines the verse anew in terms of its literary, historical, and theological contexts within the writings of Paul. On the basis of this study, Hull concludes that 1 Cor 15:29 is a dual rhetorical question in which Paul holds up one group within the Corinthian community as a laudable example for the entire community. Specifically, those who have themselves baptized are undergoing the rite of baptism because of their steadfast faith in the resurrection of Christ and, concomitantly, of Christians. They undergo the rite of baptism "on account! of the dead"—on account of the fact that the dead are destined for life—and thus shame the arrogance and ignorance of those among the Corinthians who deny the resurrection (1 Cor 15:12).

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