

I CORINTHIANS 15

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Corinthians chapter 15 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

This is such an important section of this letter and really, the Bible. The reason being is that this chapter deals with doctrine and specifically the doctrine of the resurrection.

And without the resurrection of Jesus our faith would be in vain and thus, the enemy tries to negate the resurrection and sadly, many believe his lies.

The great 18th century British philosopher, John Locke said this regarding the resurrection, “Our Saviour’s resurrection is truly of great importance. In Christianity, so great that his being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it.”

Also, listen to what one commentator said about this. He wrote,

Timothy Keller has written: “If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?” If Jesus really defeated death, that gives credence to every claim he made. If Jesus did not defeat death, every claim he ever made is proven false. In the words of Jaroslav Pelikan: “If Christ is risen – then nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen – then nothing else matters.”

- Stephen T. Um, 1 Corinthians – The Word of the Cross, p. 255

Thus, this is a very important subject for us to understand and it will take us two weeks to get through this chapter for Paul is going to go into great detail regarding the resurrection and what it is all about.

We are going to see Paul give to us six important facts about the resurrection in this section:

Christ rose from the dead – I Corinthians 15:1-11

Why the resurrection of Christ is important – I Corinthians 15:12-19

The resurrection order – I Corinthians 15:20-28

Moral implications of Christ's resurrection – I Corinthians 15:29-34

The bodily resurrection of the dead – I Corinthians 15:35-50

The bodily resurrection or translation of the living – I Corinthians 15:51-58

And as Paul concludes this section, he gives this powerful edification and it is basically saying, in view of all of this, “**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**” I Corinthians 15:58.

And keep in mind that, as we have seen, most of this letter has been corrective in nature. The reason being is that the church in Corinth was a mess, both practically speaking and doctrinally speaking.

And here in I Corinthians chapter 15 we see this huge error that the Corinthians had. They believed that the dead don't rise, which means that the resurrection isn't true. I don't believe that they were speaking of Jesus, but their own resurrection. But, if you deny your own resurrection, then you are basically saying that the dead don't rise and thus, Jesus didn't rise from the dead!

Do you see how dangerous this is!

And don't think we have learned from what Paul said here in I Corinthians chapter 15, we haven't!

There was a recent survey that showed that only 66% of Americans believe in the resurrection of Christ; and only 40% of the seminaries in our country believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I think it is even getting worse!

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is the only one who has conquered the grave! Yes, people have been brought back from the dead in hospitals, but in the end, they would eventually die again.

But Jesus rose from the grave in a resurrected body that will never die and since He lives, we too will live with Him in resurrection bodies.

Thus, this is an important section for us to read and understand!

With that said let's begin reading in verse 1 of I Corinthians chapter 15 and see what the Lord has for us this evening.

I CORINTHIANS 15

VERSES 1-2

Some may argue, "*Where is the evidence of the resurrection?*"

Paul tells the Corinthians that they themselves are evidence of the power of the Gospel which includes the resurrection of Jesus.

Paul preached the Gospel to them, they received it, placed their feet firmly upon it and through it they were saved.

The same is true today as Paul said in Romans 1:16-17, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'**"

Of this, church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette wrote in the History of the Expansion of Christianity,

It was the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus which lifted his followers out of the despair into which his death had cast them, and which led to the perpetuation of the movement begun by him. But for their profound belief that the crucified had risen from the dead and they had seen him and talked with him, the death of Jesus and even Jesus himself would probably have been all but forgotten.

- Kenneth Scott Latourette, History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. 1, p. 59

They saw the risen Christ and it changed their lives. They were willing to die for what they saw and believed.

And think about it. Mohammed died on June 8, 632 A. D. at the age of 61 in Medina. His tomb is visited by tens of thousands of people each year, but what are they going to see?

They come to mourn his death not celebrate his resurrection!

But we, as Christians, don't go to visit an occupied tomb but we come to see the risen Lord for as He rose from the dead it gives to us assurance of the new life we have in Him, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrected life that is to come!

Here is the thing, do you want to mourn over a dead spiritual leader or rejoice in the risen Lord?

You see, only the tomb of Jesus is empty, only Jesus is risen!

“When the Garden Tomb was discovered in 1885, the godly General Gordon was convinced that this was the place where the body of Jesus had lain. The Garden Tomb, hidden for centuries, was covered with rubbish twenty feet high. When they first cleared the spot, with great caution they gathered all the dust and debris within the tomb and carefully shipped it to the Scientific Association of Great Britain. Every part of it was analyzed, but there was no trace of human remains. If this is the real tomb of Christ, then Jesus was the first to be laid there and he was also the last.” (Source Unknown)

And there are many testimonies to what the resurrection of Christ has done in the lives of believers.

Dr. Simon Greenleaf of Harvard University, a very verbal skeptic of Christianity, had written a set of books called *THE LAWS OF LEGAL EVIDENCE*. He was challenged by his students to apply these books to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He accepted the offer, and in the process, he became a Christian.

His conclusion was “The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the best-established events of history, according to the laws of legal evidence administered in the courts of justice.”

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is there for all to believe and receive, but many reject it, and that is foolish. They are rejecting the good news, the Gospel that God has given to us to save us!

Now, in verse 2 Paul says, “**by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain.**”

From this some have come to the faulty conclusion that we must hold onto our faith for if we don't, we will be lost, we will lose it!

Think about that for a minute with this illustration. Noah's ark is a picture of our salvation. God called Noah to come into the ark and God calls us to come to Christ. God closed the door of the ark once Noah was inside and sealed him in. God seals us into the faith after we believe.

One thing I want you to note is that God did not instruct Noah to put pegs on the outside of the ark and then told Noah and his family to hold on tight and if you can hold on till the end you will make it!

I think The Living Bible gives to us a clear understanding of this verse as it tells us, **“and it is this Good News that saves you if you still firmly believe it, unless of course you never really believed it in the first place.”**

That is the key, did the person really believe in the first place? And that is Paul's point here.

Paul is speaking of people that may be religious, but they are not saved.

Jesus spoke of them in Matthew 7:21-23, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

You see, it is obedience and continuing in the faith that shows we are saved, it doesn't save us, only Jesus can save! And the work that He has begun in us, our salvation, He will complete, He will take us to glory!

VERSES 3-4

As I have said, the Gospel means “*good news*” and it could be any good news but the message of Christ’s life, His death and His resurrection from the dead for the forgiveness of our sins is great news in a world that is dark, discouraging, without hope many times!

Now, let me ask you this. What did Jesus die for?

Paul tells us that Jesus “**died for our sins.**”

Thus, unless we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are not saved! We have not received the Gospel message because Jesus “**died for our sins.**”

Some of you may remember L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction writer and he and another man got together and decided to make up a religion, and they called it Scientology.

And he was right, people are gullible for many today follow this religion that was born out of the heart of man and not from God!

Paul tells us that this Gospel did not originate from his own heart, his own mind, but from the Lord Himself.

Paul, in Galatians 1:11-12 tells us, “**But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

What did Paul receive and then give to the people in Corinth?

The good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is seen in His death for our sins. As Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary the sins of the world were placed on Him.

It is as Isaiah 53:6 says, “**All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**”

He was buried in a tomb as Isaiah 53:9 tells us, “**And they made His grave with the wicked - But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.**”

And what we have here in these verses by Paul is the simplest and most concise presentation of the gospel anywhere in the N.T.

And Paul tells us that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, all in fulfillment of what the Scriptures said.

Now where in the Old Testament does it speak of the Messiah, of Jesus being three days in the tomb before He would rise from the dead?

I believe Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:39-40, “**An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**”

So, Jonah’s experience in the belly of the whale was a type of Christ and what He would do, rise on the third day!

Peter, on the day of Pentecost tells us in Acts 2:25-32 as he quotes out of Psalm 16 for this point, and he tells us, **“For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy one to see corruption. ou have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’ Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.”**

The Jews believed that after four days in the tomb the body was corrupted and thus, Jesus rose on the third day!

The Old Testament is filled with illustrations, pictures of the Messiah and what He would do, even rising on the third day and yet, for many, they don't want to be bothered with the truth, they are happy where they are at, but they won't be happy where they are going if they continue to reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

VERSES 5-7

Let me say this. No one was in the tomb and saw Jesus rise from the dead! That is a fact.

But, even though no one saw the actual resurrection of Jesus, many people saw the resurrected Jesus.

And what Paul is doing here is he is calling forth these witnesses to the resurrection, to establish beyond all controversy that Jesus was raised from the dead in a resurrection body.

By the mouth of two or three witnesses it is to be established and in a court of law, two witnesses are sufficient but here we see over 500 witnesses of the risen Lord.

Not only that, but many were still alive when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians. So what Paul said could be checked out, it was not a friend of a friend was told that her sister's brothers friend saw the risen Lord, they could go right to the source!

Yes, no one saw the actual resurrection of Jesus, as I have said, but many saw the risen Lord!

Of this Spurgeon said, "I suppose, brethren, that we may have persons arise, who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte; and when they do, - when all reliable history is flung to the winds, - then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane."

Frist, we see Paul mention Cephas or Peter who saw the risen Lord.

Then Paul speaks of "**the twelve.**" Now that is speaking of the Apostles and remember, at this time there were only eleven. So, what does Paul mean? I think he is speaking of the group as a whole, they were known as "**the twelve.**"

Of this Clarke makes this comment, "Perhaps the term twelve is used here merely to point out the society of the apostles, who, though at this time they were only eleven, were still called the twelve, because this was their original number."

Then he speaks of over five hundred seeing the risen Lord! And we talked about that group already.

And lastly, Paul speaks of James, probably the half-brother of Jesus who became a believer after the death and resurrection of Jesus. He was also the leader in the church in Jerusalem according to Acts chapter 15 and the author of the epistle or letter of James.

What changed James? The risen Lord!

What changes us? The risen Lord!

Now Paul is going to speak of one more person who saw the risen Lord. Look at what he says beginning in verse 8.

VERSES 8-11

We see over and over again that Paul mentions that he was an apostle. And I agree with that. Paul was an apostle but not numbered with the 12.

Why do I say that? Because Paul says that he was an apostle to the Gentiles, and he was born in God's time.

We see this in Romans 11:13 where Paul wrote, "**For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.**"

Also, in II Timothy 1:11 we are told of Paul, as he said, "**to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.**"

I truly believe that in Acts chapter 1, when they were seeking another apostle because Judas was no longer with them, when the lot fell on Matthias, I believe he was part of the twelve!

I know what some say, "You don't read anything more of him, but you sure do read a lot about Paul. So, it has to be Paul and not Matthias, right?"

Think about the reasoning there. We don't read much about most of the apostles, so are they truly apostles? Of course they are.

Now, it could be that Paul was part of the twelve, but I don't think so, but I am not going to be dogmatic about it.

Of this Clarke makes this point, "This was literally *true* in reference to his being chosen *last*, and chosen not in the *number* of the *twelve*, but as an *extra* apostle. How much pains do some men take to make the apostle *contradict* himself, by attempting to show that he was the very *greatest* of the apostles, though he calls himself the *least*!"

So, Paul saw the risen Lord! (Acts 9:1-9)

Now, we also see here an issue that grieved Paul's heart and caused him to work even harder sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What grieved him?

What grieved Paul was the persecution of the church he perpetrated before he was saved.

In Galatians 1:13 Paul said, "**For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.**"

Listen to how The Amplified Bible translates this verse, "**You have heard of my earlier career and former manner of life in the Jewish religion (Judaism), how I persecuted and abused the church of God furiously and extensively, and [with fanatical zeal did my best] to make havoc of it and destroy it.**"

Now you can let the past paralyze you or you can learn from it and move on. For Paul, please understand that this did not paralyze Paul, it motivated him as he tells us in Philippians 3:13-14, "**Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**"

By God's grace he was saved and by God's grace he was changed just as we are.

Now here is a problem for some Christians. They believe if it is work, then it is not of God!

How foolish! Yes, we are to trust God, rely on His strength, be directed by Him and then we are to work as hard as we can, that is what Paul is saying here.

And the focus of his ministry, the focus of the other apostles was to habitually preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that people may believe for if we don't, then the grace of God in our lives is empty!

And if you struggle with that, just listen to what Paul's life was like and you tell me if it was easy. You tell me if he did not work to bring the Gospel message to people.

We are told in II Corinthians 11:23-28 what Paul's life consisted of, "**Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool - I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness - besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**"

Yes, we are in a battle for the souls of people and there is work to be done, but that work is not accomplished by our strength but by the power of God's Spirit working in us and through us, using our abilities in a powerful way. And it is not easy, but I don't get tired of the work, but the work can be tiring, physically speaking!

As we have seen in I Corinthians 15:1-11, Christ rose from the dead, it is the heart of the Gospel and there were eyewitnesses who could testify of His resurrection, they saw the risen Lord, over 500 people!

Now, in I Corinthians 15:12-19 we will be looking at why the resurrection of Christ is important.

VERSES 12-13

Remember, Paul just showed us that the resurrection of Christ was true, it did happen. And to prove it he listed a bunch of eyewitnesses to the resurrection, many who were still living when Paul wrote this letter. That means they could have checked out for themselves if they did not believe Paul.

But here was the problem. Yes, the Corinthian Christians didn't deny the resurrection of Jesus, but they did deny their own resurrection.

You see, they were influenced either by Greek philosophy (which considered the resurrection undesirable, thinking the state of "pure spirit" was superior), or by the thinking of the Sadducees (which thought the world beyond to be just wishful thinking).

The bottom line is that the Corinthian Christians believed we lived forever, but not in resurrected bodies.

But here is the problem.

Paul is showing them that if they deny their own resurrection then you have to deny the resurrection of Jesus, you can't have one without the other!

This is not pick one and ignore the other. You see, it is all or nothing. And I will stick with what Jesus said in John 14:19, **“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.”**

He lives, He rose from the grave in a glorified body and that means that I too will live and have a glorified body one day!

Now Paul is going to drive home this point and show them the foolishness of believing or should I say not believing in the resurrection of our bodies.

VERSES 14-19

First of all, if Christ did not rise from the dead then what Paul and the apostles were preaching was empty, there was nothing to it, which brings them to an empty faith!

Secondly, if they were preaching a resurrected Christ and knew that He did not rise from the dead, they didn't see Him, they would be liars and people would have believed a lie!

But even worse, if Christ did not rise from the dead then our faith is empty, and we are still lost in our sins!

Martin Luther put it like this, “Everything depends on our retaining a firm hold on this doctrine in particular; for if this one totters and no longer counts, all the others will lose their value and validity.”

And Spurgeon wrote, “If Jesus rose, then this gospel is what it professes to be; if He rose not from the dead, then it is all deceit and delusion.”

Do you see how important the resurrection of Christ is?

You see, if death had power over Jesus, if He was defeated by death, then Jesus is not God and if He is not God then He can't pay the penalty for our sins!

And, as I have said, our sins are still upon us because if Jesus Christ is not risen, He can't save us!

And Paul takes this to the logical conclusion as he continues on here. He says that if Christ hasn't risen from the dead then those that have died in Christ have perished, there is no hope, life is over!

And then the nail in the coffin if this is true. You see, if we have placed our hope in an empty faith, if we are still in our sins, then we are the biggest fools around!

In fact, we are the most pitiable, the most pathetic people around!

But Paul is not going to leave us in this hopeless condition for he tells us, "**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**" I Corinthians 15:20.

We will deal more with that glorious truth in a minute.

But let me share these words from Spurgeon who tells us, "The fact is, that the sliver thread of resurrection runs through all the blessings, from regeneration onward to our eternal glory, and binds them together."

Look at how it is played out in our lives:

The divinity of Jesus rests on the resurrection of Jesus – "**and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**"

Romans 1:4.

The sovereignty of Jesus rests on the resurrection of Jesus - "**For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.**" Romans

14:9.

Our justification rests on the resurrection of Jesus – **“who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”** Romans 4:25.

Our regeneration rests on the resurrection of Jesus – **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”** I Peter 1:3.

Our ultimate resurrection rests on the resurrection of Jesus – **“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”** Romans 8:11.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important that our faith rests in the fact that He did rise from the dead!

Most of you remember Houdini, the great magician. Houdini claimed that on the 50th anniversary of his death he would come back from the dead.

Thus, on that date a group of his followers gathered together at his grave site in San Francisco waiting for him to return, and they waited, and waited and nothing happened, maybe he got lost?

You see, the tomb of Jesus is empty, He did rise from the dead and Paul is going to expound on that now in I Corinthians 15:20-28 as he speaks of the resurrection order.

Not only did Christ rise from the dead but we too will rise from the dead one day, we will get new bodies for our spirit and soul to dwell in!

VERSES 20-23

Paul has given us the facts of Christ’s resurrection, the eyewitness testimony, and now he is just restating that fact – Christ is risen!

Now we need to understand this point that Paul makes regarding Firstfruits.

Firstfruits was a Jewish feast that took place on the day after the Sabbath following Passover.

At this feast, which took place in the spring, they would bring a sheaf of grain and wave it before the Lord and it represented a fruitful harvest that was to come as they gave to the Lord. (Leviticus 23:9-14).

Here is the interesting part regarding this feast. Jesus rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits and thus, as Paul said in Romans 6:5, **“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”**

Trapp put it like this, “As in the Firstfruits offered to God, the Jews were assured of God’s blessing on the whole harvest; so by the resurrection of Christ, our resurrection is insured.”

It is as Paul said in Romans 8:23, **“Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

What a glorious promise that God has given to us, that we will be raised in a new body one day!

Why can’t these bodies be raised up?

Paul explains that as he shows us that through Adam, we have all be born into that sin nature and with it came spiritual death, separation from God. And these bodies of flesh and blood can’t inherit the Kingdom of God because of sin and thus, we must be changed, we must get new bodies for our spirit and soul to dwell in!

You see, Christ has come to give us life once again as Paul said in I Timothy 2:4-6, **“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”**

Now please don't come to the wrong conclusion that Paul is saying or speaking of some kind of universal salvation, where everyone is saved in the end, that is not at all what he is saying here in Timothy or Corinthians.

Listen carefully to what he does say here in I Corinthians. All who are *IN* Adam will die and all who are *IN* Christ will be made alive!

Thus, if you are not in Christ, if He is not your Lord and Savior, then you will not enter into that eternal life with Him, your spirit will remain dead because we have all been born into Adam and thus, we need to be born again!

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:12-21, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned - (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

So here is what we see, that there is an order.

Christ is the beginning, He was the Firstfruits and there is coming a bountiful resurrection from the dead.

The word “**coming**” is PAROUSIA in the Greek and in general terms it speaks of a person’s appearance.

But when it is spoken of Christ, it relates to His Second Coming, as Matthew 24:27 tells us, “**For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.**”

Now for some, they have a hard time with Jesus being the Firstfruits because we read in several instances in the Bible of people who were raised from the dead long before Jesus was!

So how could Jesus be the first?

Think about it for a minute. They died and were resurrected once again in their physical bodies that eventually died once again but Jesus was raised in glory, He received a new body that will never fade away and that is what we are waiting for in our own lives.

Thus, the order is as follows:

Jesus is the start, He is the Firstfruits of the harvest that is coming.

Then there is the harvest of the saints which has an order:

From Pentecost till the Lord comes in the Rapture all the dead and those who are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and receive their new bodies. (I Thessalonians 4:16).

Next are those who come to Christ during the Tribulation Period and are martyred for their faith, they will receive their resurrected bodies at the end of the Tribulation Period. (Revelation 20:4).

The Old Testament saints some feel will receive their resurrected bodies here at the end of the Tribulation Period while others feel it will be at the time of the Rapture. The resurrection of the OT saints, I believe, will occur simultaneously with that of the Tribulation saints. (Daniel 12:2).

Lastly, those who are born during the Millennial Kingdom and those who enter into the Millennial Kingdom after the Tribulation, those who survive the Tribulation Period and are saved will get their resurrected bodies at the end of the Kingdom Age, after Satan's short rebellion.

There is an order!

VERSES 24-28

After all of this; the Rapture, the Kingdom Age, the short-lived rebellion of Satan at the end of the Kingdom Age, Jesus will present the completed work to God the Father.

There will be no more rebellion, God is in control and we will enter into that everlasting life with Him in the new Heavens and the new Earth!

There will be no more death!

But why do we as Christians have to die now?

Because these physical bodies can't enter into the Kingdom of God, we must be changed, we must be transformed and so as these physical bodies go back to the dust of the earth, God will be giving to us a glorified body for our spirit and soul to dwell in at the time of the Rapture, and these new bodies will never fade away!

Now, as some read these verses, they try to say that Jesus is inferior to God the Father and thus He is a lesser God, not Almighty God!

That is totally wrong, and it does not follow what the Scriptures teach. But those false doctrines are nothing more than doctrines of demons!

Hodge put it this way, “The son of a king may be the equal of his father in every attribute of his nature, though officially inferior. So the eternal Son of God may be coequal with the Father, though officially subordinate.”

In John 10:30 Jesus said, **“I and My Father are one.”**

This one verse proves the Deity of Jesus, and of course there are many others.

This verse shows that Jesus is equal with the Father.

You see, the word that Jesus used for **“one”** in the Greek is HEN and it does not speak of Jesus and the Father being one identical person, for all those who are Jesus only people!

It speaks of them being one in essence!

You see, the Father is God, The Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but don’t make the mistake as some do and say that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Father, that is not at all what is being said.

Thus, the Scriptures teach one God manifested in three distinct persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Thus, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the authority of the Father even though they are equal, they are one, they are God!

In regard to this, one writer put it like this, “After He has brought everything into subjection, He will hand the kingdom back to the Father. Creation will be brought back to God in a perfect condition. Having accomplished the work of redemption and restoration for which He became Man, He will retain the subordinate place that He took in Incarnation.” (Source Unknown)

Now Paul moves on to the moral implications of Christ’s resurrection in I Corinthians 15:29-34.

VERSES 29-32

What in the world is Paul talking about here when he speaks of baptizing the dead?

First of all, in our day, we see that the Mormons believe that those who have died outside the Mormon faith can be saved if you are baptized for them, that is why genealogies are so important to them, you don't want to forget anyone!

That is just foolish for Paul tells us in Hebrews 9:27, "**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**"

Then what is Paul speaking of here?

I think Paul's point is simple even though there are some thirty ways this verse here in Corinthians has been interpreted and some go as far as saying there are over two-hundred ways to look at this!

But let's not make this complicated. He is saying, "***If you do not believe in the resurrection of your body then why do you baptize the dead? If there is no life after death your actions are foolish!***"

You see, it was a common pagan practice that he is not saying we should do, only that there is the resurrection of these bodies and if the pagans believe it, why didn't they?

And truthfully, if there is no resurrection why would Paul put his life in jeopardy? He might as well eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die!

VERSES 33-34

These verses seem almost out of place when you read them, but as you look closer, they are not out of place, not at all!

First of all, the word “**company**” could both mean “people you associate with” or it could mean a “lecture” or “sermon.”

Here I think it means both.

The Corinthians were associating with false teachers and listening to their heretical teachings, and this was having a detrimental effect on their walk and on their church.

Was this such a big deal?

You bet because the resurrection is the heart of the Gospel and without it, it led them into immorality!

Paul says they were resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, this transformation process.

Make no mistake about it, denying God’s Word leads to sin.

You see, false teachers, false doctrine does not lead a person to holiness!

Paul wants them to wake-up to this truth and not to travel down this road of sin any longer!

And I will say this. False doctrine and false teachers will come and go, but the Word of God will stand forever.

So why listen to them when you have the truth right before you!

Obviously, we will not be able to finish this chapter tonight so next week we will pick-up with the bodily resurrection of the dead in I Corinthians 15:35-58 and we will finish up this great chapter dealing with doctrine, the doctrine of the **RESURRECTION!**