

THE RESURRECTION: THE HOPE OF A CHRISTIAN

BIBLE TEXT : I Corinthians 15:1-58

LESSON 379 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Easter

Paul wrote to the Corinthians to remind them of the value of the Gospel; to freshen their memory concerning Christ — His life, His death, and His resurrection. It is good for us to consider what Christ has done for us and what He means to us. We have been studying the examples that Christ gave us by His life. Many times during the year we recall that Christ gave His life for the sins of the world (**Hebrews 9:28** ²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.) **Peter 2:24** ²⁴ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.) We sing about the cross and the power in His Blood. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we commemorate the shedding of His Blood and His broken Body. At this Easter-time, let us set our thoughts especially upon His resurrection. We are not serving a Christ who is dead, but ours is a living Saviour who arose for our justification (Romans 4:25).

Unbelievers

In the days of Paul, there were some people who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Among them, of the Jews, was a group called the Sadducees (Luke 20:27). Paul preached about the resurrection because he believed it. According to his own testimony when he stood before Agrippa, Paul received from Heaven his belief about the resurrection (**Acts 26:13** ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me **Acts 26:22-23** ²² Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: ²³ That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.) Paul preached the resurrection that souls might be saved. It is important that we believe Christ's resurrection in order to be saved. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:8, 9).

Old Testament Believers

There were men in the Old Testament times who believed in the resurrection of the dead. They believed because it was revealed to them by God. David spoke about awaking in the likeness of the Lord (**Psalms 17:15** ¹⁵ As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.) Job said, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (Job 19:25-27).

Paul mentions the writings of the prophets when he says that Christ arose the third day according to the Scriptures. Many of the Old Testament prophets believed in the resurrection, for they

resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

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

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the

wrote concerning it. Their prophecies are witnesses of the resurrection.

Christ's Appearances

Besides the simple faith that is in the hearts of the saved, we today have also the historical facts that Jesus arose from the dead. The angel told the women who went to the empty tomb that Jesus was risen (**Mark 16:6** ⁶ And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.). Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (**Mark 16:9** ⁹ Now when Jesus was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils), and to two of His followers on the way to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13-15** ¹³ And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.), as well as to Simon Peter (**Luke 24:34** ³⁴ Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.). The eleven disciples saw Him and talked with Him (**Mark 16:14** ¹⁴ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.). Many saw Him as He ascended into Heaven (**Acts 1:9** ⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.). All these are witnesses that Christ arose.

Paul was concerned about establishing the fact of Christ's resurrection for it is the foundation of the Christian belief. It is the basis of our faith and hope.

First Fruits

In our study of the special feast days of the Children of Israel, we learned that on the day following the Passover Sabbath, an offering of the first fruits was given unto the Lord to sanctify the harvest and make it certain. At the beginning of the harvest before the Children of Israel ate any of the crops, the first fruits were offered unto God. This offering was made the third day after the paschal lamb was slain. In I Corinthians 15:20 we read that Christ is "risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead in such a manner. His resurrection is a pledge of our resurrection -- the hope of a Christian.

During Jesus' ministry here upon earth, he raised the dead (**Matthew 11:5** ⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.). Jesus stood by the tomb of Lazarus who had been dead for four days. Lazarus arose (**John 11:43-44** ⁴³ And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴ And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.) when Jesus said "Lazarus, come forth." We read about others whom Jesus brought to life -- Jairus' daughter (**Matthew 9:25** ²⁵ But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.), and the son of the widow of Nain (**Luke 7:15** ¹⁵ And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.); but Christ arose to live again and die no more (**Romans 6:9-10** ⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. ¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.). He was crucified, "yet he liveth by the power of God . . . we shall live

Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

35 But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.

40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.

41 *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another*

with him by the power of God toward you" (II Corinthians 13:4). Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

The First Resurrection

Death is the judgment that has been pronounced upon men as a result of the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:19** ¹⁹ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.). Because Adam sinned, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Since death came by Adam, the resurrection of the dead came by Christ (**1 Corinthians 15:21-22** ¹ For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.), who is called the second or last Adam.

The theme of a Christian's life is that he be ready for the first resurrection. Paul's ambition was to have the righteousness of God by faith, that by any means he might attain unto the first resurrection (**Philippians 3:9-11** ⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.). May we have the same ambition in our hearts to make the goal whatever may be the cost! Paul had that wonderful hope in his heart.

The resurrection is in this order: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming," whether they be dead or alive. "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: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17). This is the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." But the rest of the dead shall not live again until after the thousand years (**Revelation 20:5-6** ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.).

Resurrection of the Dead

Paul's testimony before Felix, the governor, included, "So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:14, 15). Jesus taught that "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). The prophecy of Daniel states that some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt (**Daniel 12:2** ² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.). This is the judgment that will be theirs who fail to prepare to meet God.

In His Likeness

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

star in glory.

42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

In the twinkling of an eye, God's people will be changed. Instead of having an earthy natural body — subject to pain, sickness, accident, and weakness -- they will be like Him (**1 John 3:2** ² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.), with a spiritual, heavenly body which shall die no more (**Luke 20:36** ³⁶ Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.). The mortal body has been compared to the resurrection body as the bare grain that is sown without any of the rich clothing which afterwards appears; blade, grain, and harvest.

A Christian has a wonderful hope — to be with Jesus and to be like Him, through the victory that He gives. If that hope is yours, be steadfast, unmovable, watching, waiting, and working until the Lord comes.

QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that Christ is risen from the dead?
2. What is the resurrection?
3. How can one prepare for it?
4. Why will some be raised to shame while others are raised to everlasting life?
5. What will happen when the trump of the Lord sounds?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.