

THE RESURRECTION: THE HOPE OF A CHRISTIAN

BIBLE TEXT : I Corinthians 15:1-58

LESSON 379 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Corinthians 15:17).

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Fact of Christ's Bodily Resurrection

1. Paul had preached the Gospel to the Corinthians, by which they were saved, I Corinthians 15:1, 2;

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

2. According to the Scripture salvation is dependent upon the death and resurrection of Christ, I Corinthians 15:3, 4;

Isaiah 53:5

⁵ But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Job 19:25-27

²⁵ For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

²⁶ And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Luke 24:46

⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luke 24:47

⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

3. The Apostles and disciples were eyewitnesses of His resurrection, I Corinthians 15:5-11

Luke 24:33-43

³³ And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

³⁴ Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

³⁵ And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

³⁶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

³⁷ But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

³⁸ And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

⁴⁰ And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

⁴¹ And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

⁴² And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

⁴³ And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

Acts 9:3-5

³ And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am

some among you that there is no 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.

Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

II The Denial of Christ's Resurrection by Some

1. If Christ be not risen, the preaching of the Gospel and faith in Him is vain, I Corinthians 15:12-14;

Romans 4:2

² For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

2. If Christ be not risen, the Apostles and disciples are found false witnesses, I Corinthians 15:15

Acts 10:39-41

³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

⁴⁰ Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

⁴¹ Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

3. If Christ be not risen, believers are yet in their sins and the dead in Christ are perished, I Corinthians 15:16-19;

1 Thessalonians 4:13

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

III The Assurance of the Resurrection of Christians

1. Christ is become the firstfruits of them that slept, I Corinthians 15:20;

Leviticus 23:10-11

¹⁰ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

¹¹ And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Matthew 27:52

⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

Matthew 27:53

⁵³ And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

2. Afterward every man is raised in his own order who is Christ's at His coming, I Corinthians 15:23

Philippians 3:10-11

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.

Revelation 20:6

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.

3. As by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, I Corinthians 15:21, 22

Isaiah 26:19

¹⁹ Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is* as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

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

John 5:28

²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

John 5:29

²⁹ 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.

IV The Ultimate Victory of Christ over All Enemies

1. When Christ shall have put down all rule and authority, the last enemy to be destroyed is death, I Corinthians 15:24-26;

Psalm 2:8-9

⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Revelation 20:7-15

⁷ And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

⁸ And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of* life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

2. When all things are put under His feet, Christ Himself is exempt, I Corinthians 15:25

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. Then shall the Son be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all, I Corinthians 15:28

John 14:28

and another glory of the moon,
and another glory of the stars: for
one star differeth from *another*
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
quickenning 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

²⁸ Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come
again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I
said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

V The Christian's Hope of the Future Life

1. Water baptism is a type of death, burial, and resurrection
with Christ, I Corinthians 15:29;

Romans 6:3-4

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into
Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:
that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory
of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of
life..

2. Paul died daily that he might be conformed to Christ's
death, I Corinthians 15:30-32;

Philippians 3:10-11

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.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are*
not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be
revealed in us.

3. The hope of the future life awakens the Christian to
righteous-ness, I Corinthians 15:33, 34.

VI The Manner of Body with Which the Dead Are Raised

1. As seed is sown and grows, so to every seed is given his
own body, I Corinthians 15:3-38;

Luke 24:39

³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle
me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see
me have.

2. As the glory of the terrestrial is to the celestial, so is the
natural to the spiritual body, I Corinthians 15:39-44;

1 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man, the things
which God hath prepared for them that love him.

3. The first man is of the earth earthy: the second man is the
Lord from Heaven, I Corinthians 15:45-49;

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.

Philippians 3:20

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we
look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Philippians 3:21

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned
like unto his glorious body, according to the working
whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

VII The Transformation Necessary to Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven

1. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom, so we must all
be changed, I Corinthians 15:50-54;

John 18:36

³⁶ Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my
kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,
that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my
kingdom not from hence..

2. The grave has lost its victory and death has lost its sting
which is sin, I Corinthians 15:55, 56.

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?
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.

3. Victory through Jesus Christ prompts a faithful service here
below, I Corinthians 15:57, 58

NOTES:

The Apostle Paul devotes an entire chapter to the subject of the literal resurrection of the body. The **Resurrection**, in fact, is one of the great themes appearing in the most of his epistles. In his missionary journeys he preached the resurrection fearlessly to both Jews and Gentiles.

And why did the Apostle put so much stress on this subject? Because, first of all, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Corinthians 15:17). There is therefore no hope of salvation, no hope of eternal life, no hope of Heaven, unless the fact that Christ came forth from the grave, and thus broke the bands of death and hell, is unquestionably established in the heart. For upon the fact of Christ's resurrection, as well as upon the fact of His death, hangs all the Gospel teachings and the whole Christian Faith. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19).

The Fact of Christ's Resurrection

For this reason the Apostle proceeds to confirm Christ's resurrection: First, on the authority of the Scriptures. Paul wrote this First Epistle to the Corinthians about 57 A.D., and at this time he had access to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, both of which have much to say about Jesus' resurrection. He also had access to the Old Testament, which likewise abounds in prophecies concerning Jesus, including His death and resurrection.

And secondly, he summons as trustworthy witnesses of Jesus' resurrection the eleven Apostles and also above five hundred brethren, all of whom had walked and talked with Jesus, off and on, for forty days after His resurrection. The most of these witnesses were yet alive in Paul's time, although some had fallen asleep. And of these witnesses Peter also spoke in his sermon to Cornelius and his house-hold: "And we are witnesses of all things which he [Jesus] did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, **who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead**" (Acts 10:39-41).

And last of all, as one born out of due time, Paul himself, on the road to Damascus to arrest the followers of this Man of Nazareth, was himself arrested by Jesus, the risen Christ. And this was more than a vision: he saw Him and talked with Him in Person, shining in glory. And thus Paul, too, became an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord, fully qualified, after his wonderful conversion, for his apostleship among the twelve.

Christ's Resurrection Denied by Some

Even though the resurrection of Jesus Christ is indisputably established by a great company of witnesses of good character whose testimony cannot be questioned, and which would be immediately accepted in a fair-minded civil court of today, yet in Paul's time there were those who in the face of this testimony point-blank denied the resurrection. The Areopagites on Mars' hill in Athens heard the Apostle's address, until he touched upon the resurrection, and then some mocked.

But the unbelief did not end with Paul's day. The modernist of today not only denies the resurrection, but has flatly rejected the supernatural and cast aside all the miracles in the Bible. And as far as that religion is concerned, the whole framework of the Christian Faith has collapsed. This the modernist himself knows, but in defence of his position he has pronounced the great

fundamental doctrines of the Bible, which were the bulwark of the early Church, mere superstitions of the past. And these fatal teachings of modernism are rapidly invading the churches, which once believed and stood for the early teachings of Christ and His Apostles. The apostate church of the last days is swiftly taking form.

The Assurance of the Resurrection of Christians

The salvation of the Christian begins when he as a sinner, under pungent conviction for sin, repents with godly sorrow and is justified by faith. But his salvation does not end with this experience, nor with the deeper experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. His salvation continues through his entire Christian walk, until he is perfected and made ready for the heavenly Kingdom. As the Apostle Peter expresses it: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: **receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls**" (I Peter 1:8, 9).

And this "so great salvation," we learned, is sealed by the death and **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Christ's literal resurrection assures more than our eternal salvation. That miracle of miracles also makes certain the resurrection of the body of him who obeys the Author of our eternal salvation. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **firstfruits of them that slept**. . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; **afterward they that are Christ's at his coming**" (I Corinthians 15:20, 23). This promise of the resurrection of the body has been the hope of Christ's Church down through the ages. The church, which has lost this hope is dead. All true Christians are looking forward to that great Day of Redemption: "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). "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. **And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure**" (I John 3:2, 3).

The Redemption of the Body

A mysterious change takes place in the mortal body of a Christian on the Day of Redemption, even after it has returned to the dust whence it came, undergone corruption, and lain for centuries in the grave. "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; . . . the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:26, 28, 29). "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). And Paul likens this mysterious change to seed that is sown: "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 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: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (I Corinthians 15:36-38). Whatever that miraculous change is when the trumpet sounds, we are assured that these mortal bodies shall be changed into the likeness of His glorified body: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to

the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:20, 21). And no longer will there be the pain and sorrow and death, which has accompanied us while tabernacling in these mortal bodies. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

"I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger;

I can tarry, I can tarry but a night;

Do not detain me

To where the fountains are ever flowing.

"Of that city, to which I journey,

My Redeemer, My Redeemer is the light;

There is no sorrow, nor any sighing,

Nor any tears there, nor any dying."

QUESTIONS

1. What did Paul devote a whole chapter, the longest chapter in the Epistle, to the subject of the resurrection?
2. What vital teachings of the Gospel are dependent upon the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ?
3. What eyewitnesses did Paul summon to prove the literal resurrection of Jesus?
4. What religious sect of today has denied the resurrection? And what effect does this have on the Christian Faith?
5. What assurance does the literal resurrection of Jesus give Christians?
6. To what does Paul liken the change which the resurrection brings about in the body that is raised up?
7. What are some of the blessings which attend the glorified body?