

# 1 Corinthians 15

## Historical Reasonings (vv. 1-11)

**Verses 1-2**—*Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received* [past tense], *in which also you* [continue to] *stand, by which also you are saved*—Paul proclaimed the saving gospel, and these people believed [received] it.  
—*if you hold fast the word which I preached to you*—don't change the message of the Scriptures, especially the gospel message  
—*unless you believed in vain*—if you change the message, your belief is empty

**Verses 3-4**—*For I delivered to you as of first importance*—central to the message  
—*what I also received*—Paul himself also was saved by this message, and it was the message Jesus gave Paul to tell others. It was not his idea (Eph 3:2-10).  
—(1) *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried*—being buried proved He was actually dead, historical evidence, many people witnessed it  
—(2) *and that He was raised on the third day*—the empty grave, historical evidence  
—*according to the Scriptures*—such as Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:8-10; Matthew 12:40

**Verses 5-8**—(3) *and that He appeared*—witnesses of His resurrection, over 40 days  
—*to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now* [still alive at Paul's writing, about 23 years later, so you can ask them], *but some have fallen asleep* [died]; *then He appeared to James* [Christ's half-brother, the apostle James was already dead at the time of Paul's writing (Acts 12:2)], *then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born* [born at the wrong time, not having witnessed Jesus' earthly ministry], *He appeared to me also*—Paul only saw the resurrected Christ.

**Verses 9-10**—*For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle* [sent one], *because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain* [empty]; *but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me*—Paul's testimony

**Verse 11**—*Whether then it was I or they, so we preach* [proclaim] *and so you believed* [faith]—the testimony of Christ's death and resurrection was proclaimed by many witnesses.

## Logical Reasonings (vv. 12-19)

**Verses 12-14**—*Now if Christ is preached* [proclaimed], *that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* Some believers claimed there was no future resurrection  
—*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised*—but if there is no resurrection, *if Christ has not been raised*, and if Christ also was not raised  
—*then our preaching is vain* [empty], *your faith also is vain* [empty]—Faith for salvation is only a reality if there is a resurrection, especially a resurrection of Jesus. Else, it is faith in a dead martyr.

**Verses 15-18**—*Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised*—then the apostles and witnesses to Christ's resurrection lied  
—(1) *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised*—resurrection from the dead has to be a fact  
—(2) *your faith is worthless*—faith is only as good as the object of the faith  
—(3) *you are still in your sins*—there is no payment made for sin

—(4) *Then those also who have fallen asleep* [are dead] *in Christ have perished*—lost forever

**Verse 19**—(5) *If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied*—the apostles and others have given their lives to proclaim the gospel

**AN APPLICATION**—Believers have no eternal future with resurrected bodies like Christ's if there is no resurrection. Believers have no past if there is not forgiveness of sins. Believers have no present life if there is no advantage over the lives of unbelievers. The entire Christian life is a useless and worthless endeavor if resurrection is not possible.

### **Theological Reasonings (vv. 20-28)**

**Verse 20**—*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep*—first fruits was a guarantee of the harvest (other resurrections) to come

**Verses 21-22**—*For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive*—Both Adam and Jesus were men. Physical resurrection is as inevitable for believers in Christ as physical death is for human sons of Adam.

**Verse 23**—*But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming*—for the church age believers, it will be at the Rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18), for the Old Testament and Tribulation saints it will be at the Second Coming (Daniel 12:1-2; Rev 20:7-10).

**Verse 24**—*then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power*—after the Millennial Kingdom

**Verse 25**—*For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet*—during the Millennial Kingdom reign (Isa 2:2-4; 9:3-7; 49:1-7; Zech 9:10-15). How can He reign unless He's alive

**Verse 26**—*The last enemy that will be abolished is death*—it's not the human body that will be destroyed but the destroyer of human bodies—death itself.

**Verses 27-28**—*For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He* [God the Father, v. 24] *is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him* [Jesus]. *When all things are subjected to Him* [Jesus], *then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One* [God the Father] *who subjected all things to Him* [Christ], *so that God* [the Father] *may be all in all.*

### **Experiential Reasonings (vv. 29-34)**

**Verse 29**—*Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?*—There are many interpretations of this verse. Paul neither recommends nor condemns this practice but is simply using it as evidence to further his argument. If there is no resurrection, why are they being baptized for the dead?

**Verses 30-32**—*Why are we also in danger every hour? I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE*—Why endure danger if there is no resurrection? Enjoy life until you die.

**Verses 33-34—Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame**—What motivates sanctification or evangelism if there is no resurrection of the dead.

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**Verse 35—But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”**—some may think the resurrection is out of the same physical elements that it formerly possessed. They cannot comprehend what that would look like.

**Verse 36—You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies**—resurrection, by its very nature, requires a death first. A seed decomposes in the ground to become a plant later.

**Verses 37-38—and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be**—the body that God resurrects will not be the same type of body that died, even though it is the body of the same person—**but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else**—the plant sprouts from a seed and is directly linked to the seed but very different from it.—**But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own**—What God does with plants and seeds He can do with humans. This is an obvious phenomenon in nature (they were fools to not observe it).

**Verse 39—All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish**—there are different kinds of bodies among animals, which should help us understand that there can be different kinds of human bodies.

**Verse 40—There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another**—heavenly bodies do not adapt to earthly bodies, and earthly bodies cannot adapt to heavenly bodies.

**Verse 41—There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory**—the celestial bodies have variety, fit for their role and place in the heavens.

**AN APPLICATION**—This may suggest differences among glorified believers with differing roles and places in the eternal heavenly kingdom, apparently as a result of the Bema Seat judgment and rewards (2 Cor 5:10). In other words, we will all have a heavenly body, but we will not be exactly the same (similar to now we all have earthly bodies but are not exactly the same).

**Verse 42—So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown** [placed in the ground at death] **a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body**—that cannot die.

**Verse 43—it is sown in dishonor** [we put dead bodies out of sight because they rot and decay] **it is raised in glory**—free from the results of sin  
—**it is sown in weakness** [when it dies], **it is raised in power**—it cannot die

**Verse 44—it is sown a natural** [physical] **body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body**—fit for our future existence

**Verse 45—So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL”**—God breathed physical life into Adam  
—**The last Adam** [Jesus] **became a life-giving spirit**—Jesus, the last Adam, gives life to the spiritual body

**Verse 46—However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural [body]; then the spiritual [body]—**we have the physical body until resurrection and eternity, not before it begins

**Verse 47—The first man is from the earth, earthy [body]—**equipped to live on a physical earth  
**—the second man is from heaven—**equipped to live in a spiritual heavenly place

**Verse 48—As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy—**the bodies we get from Adam are earthy bodies, fit for living on this earth  
**—and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly—**so in heaven we will have bodies suited for heaven, that is, spiritual bodies

**Verse 49—Just as we have borne the image of the earthy—**the tendencies we have as humans  
**—we will also bear the image of the heavenly—**supernatural tendencies in heaven

**Verse 50—Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God—**it is impossible for our present physical forms to enter into the spiritual realm of heaven  
**—nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable—**this physical body that perishes cannot become a body that not perish

**Verse 51—Behold, I tell you a mystery—**something that was hidden or not previously revealed  
**—we will not all sleep—**not all Christians will die and be put into the grave  
**—but we will all be changed—**whether we die or are alive, all physical believers will be changed

**Verse 52—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye [faster than a blink], not a gradual change**  
**—at the last trumpet—**there are other instances of trumpets sounding also (Rev 8:6; 11:15-18), but this is the Rapture trumpet (*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, ...with the trumpet of God*" [1 Thess 4:16]).  
**—for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed—**we die as perishable, but we will be raised imperishable. We die with physical bodies, but we will be raised in spiritual bodies.

**Verse 53—For this perishable must put on the imperishable—**that cannot age, cannot decay  
**—and this mortal must put on immortality—**that cannot die again

**Verse 54—But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory—**Every corpse is death’s victory. Death is the human’s last enemy. But God will defeat death when He raises His people to life. When we get our resurrected bodies.

**Verses 55-56—“O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”**  
Sin is deadly, lethal, and fatal. It sends us to the grave. **The sting of death is sin—and the power of sin is the law—**the sin, which the Law exposes, justifies our condemnation. The Law only condemns, it does not justify (Rom 3:20).

**Verse 57—but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ—**God gives us victory over the condemnation of the Law, sin, and death, through the new birth, as believers in Jesus Christ, confident of His promise of a new resurrected immortal heavenly body.

**Verse 58—Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord—**confidence in the resurrection moves us to spiritual stability and service because of an eternal perspective in serving our Lord.