

The First Epistle to The Corinthians

Chapter Fifteen

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see how the resurrection of Jesus is the basis of our faith
- 2) To determine why we believe that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead
- 3) To notice the sequence of events which will occur at the end of time as presented in this chapter
- 4) To understand what is revealed about our own future resurrection from the dead

SUMMARY

In this chapter Paul deals with problems the Corinthians were having concerning the resurrection of the dead. Evidently there were teachers at Corinth claiming there would be no resurrection. Paul answers this false doctrine by reminding them of the gospel which they received and which proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (1-11). He then proceeds to verify the resurrection with several different lines of argumentation (12-34). The last half of the chapter is devoted to answering anticipated questions concerning how the dead will be raised and with what body will they come (35-58).

OUTLINE

I. THE RESURRECTION: PROCLAIMED IN THE GOSPEL (1-11)

A. **THE GOSPEL IN RELATION TO THE CORINTHIANS (1-2)**

1. Paul proclaimed it and they received it (1)
2. By it they are saved, if they hold fast to it (2)

B. **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GOSPEL (3-8)**

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (3)
2. He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (4)
3. He was seen by many eyewitnesses (5-7)
4. He was seen by Paul himself, who by the grace of God was able to preach the gospel (8-10)
5. Such was the gospel preached, and the Corinthians had believed it (11)

II. THE RESURRECTION: VERIFIED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL (12-34)

A. **CONSEQUENCES IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION (12-19)**

1. Christ is not risen from the dead (12-13)
2. The apostles' preaching and the Corinthians' faith is vain (14)

3. The apostles are false witnesses (**15-16**)
4. They are still in their sins (**17**)
5. Those who have died in Christ have perished (**18**)
6. Those who hope in Christ are the most pitiable of all men (**19**)

B. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OUR RESURRECTION (20-28)

1. Christ is the "firstfruits" (**20**)
2. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive (**21-22**)
3. A brief description as to when this will occur (**23-28**)
 - a. At the coming of Christ (**23**)
 - b. This will be the end, when Christ delivers the kingdom to God (**24-28**)
 - 1) When He has put an end to all rule, authority and power (**24**)
 - 2) For Christ must reign till God has put all enemies under His feet (**25**)
 - 3) The last enemy being death itself (**26**)
 - 4) When all is made subject to Christ, the Son will also be subject to Him Who put all things under Him (**27-28**)

C. ADDITIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE RESURRECTION, WITH A WARNING (29-34)

1. Why are some being baptized for the dead if there is no resurrection? (**29**)
2. Why do the apostles and others suffer harsh persecution if there is no resurrection? (**30-32**)
3. Beware of evil influence and those who do not have the knowledge of God (**33-34**)

III. THE RESURRECTION: DESCRIBED BY PAUL (35-58)

A. IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?" (35-49)

1. It will be different from the one sown, just as the plant is different from the seed (**35-38**)
2. Illustrations of the different types of bodies in the physical world (**39-41**)
3. Thus the resurrected body will be different from the physical body, though it is the same as the one sown (**42-49**)
 - a. The weak, dishonorable, corruptible body will be raised in incorruption, glory and power (**42-43**)
 - b. The natural body, patterned after the first Adam, will be raised a spiritual body patterned after the Last Adam (**44-46**)
 - c. Those who have borne the image of the man of dust from the earth, will one day bear the image of the Man of heaven (**47-49**)

B. IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP" (50-58)

1. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption (**50**)
2. The mystery of the resurrection as revealed by Paul (**51-57**)
 - a. All shall be changed, whether dead or alive (**51**)
 - b. It will occur in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (**52**)
 - c. The corruptible, mortal man will put on incorruption and immortality, and we will be victorious over death through Jesus Christ our Lord (**53-57**)

3. A final exhortation to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (58)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

1) List the main points of this chapter

- The Resurrection: Proclaimed In The Gospel (1-11)
- The Resurrection: Verified By Paul (12-34)
- The Resurrection: Described By Paul (35-58)

2) What are some of the key elements of the gospel? (1-8)

- Christ died for our sins
- Christ was buried and raised the third day
- Christ was seen by eyewitnesses

3) What type of proof is offered for the resurrection of Jesus? (5-8)

- Eyewitness testimony by numerous witnesses

4) If Christ was not raised from the dead, what would it mean? (14-19)

- The preaching of the apostles and our faith is vain
- The apostles are false witnesses
- We are still in our sins
- Those who died in Christ have perished
- We who hope in Christ are to be pitied

5) What will happen when Christ comes again? (23-26, 51-53)

- The resurrection from the dead
- The kingdom delivered to God the Father

6) What does Paul refer to when he speaks of "baptism for the dead"? (29)

- Of the many different explanations that have been offered, the one making most sense to me is that Paul is speaking of the inconsistency of those who deny the resurrection while at the same time practicing a form of "vicarious baptism". Notice that Paul refers to "they" who were doing this, not "we" (i.e., the apostles). Paul in this passage is neither openly condemning or justifying the practice. He simply uses the practice of others to demonstrate the inconsistency of such practice when denying the resurrection of the dead. Whether we should practice such a rite as "baptism for the dead" today must be determined from passages elsewhere. All we find elsewhere concerning baptism is that it requires faith and repentance of the one being baptized. This would preclude the practice of "vicarious baptism."