

1 Corinthians Chapter 15 Continued

1 Corinthians 15:19 "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

Many religions of the world do not offer life after death. Paul is saying here, if Christianity did not offer everlasting life, the hardships that we face in this life would make us miserable. He even goes so far as to say, that he would be leading the list of those who would be miserable.

This is because of the sacrifices made in this life in light of the hope of life to come. If there is no life to come, we would be better "to eat, drink and be merry" before we die.

The last lesson dealt with the resurrection of our bodies after death on this earth. It would be worth trusting in Christ, if it were just for this earth, but praise God, Christ brings us everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 15:20 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept."

The fact of the death of the body of Jesus Christ is not argued by anyone. Paul also established the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, by all the witnesses who saw him after he arose. A witness is someone who tells something that they have seen with their very own eyes. Just the word "firstfruits" tell us that there was more to come.

This speaks of the first installment of harvest to eternal life, in which Christ's resurrection will precipitate and guarantee that all of the saints who have died will be resurrected.

Slept or fallen asleep is a common euphemism for death. This is not soul sleep, in which the body dies and the soul, or spirit, supposedly rests in unconsciousness.

1 Corinthians 15:21 "For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead."

Adam and Eve first sinned, "For since by man [came] death", but all of mankind since Adam and Eve have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The punishment for sin is death. All of mankind was dead in trespasses and sin, until the Lord Jesus Christ took on the form of man and came to the earth and took our punishment for our sin on His body.

"By man [came] also" (meaning Jesus). In the first Adam, all have sinned. In the second Adam (Jesus Christ), we have been made free from sin. Jesus took our punishment and set us free in His righteousness. Jesus defeated sin on the cross and defeated death when he rose from the dead. We should all memorize this last statement. We are free from sin and death, if we continue to place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and live accordingly.

1 Corinthians 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The two “alls” are alike only in the sense that they both apply to descendants. The second “all” applies only to believers and does not imply universalism.

By Adam and Eve, sin entered into the world, and death in payment for that sin entered also. Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life. Those who have partaken of Jesus have partaken of Life. We are no longer dead to sin, but alive in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Because He lives, I will live also. Jesus had to open the door to heaven for us. He did that very thing, when the curtain was torn from the top to the bottom, as He gave His body in death on the cross. The way to the Father had been forbidden, until that happened. Now the way to the Father is open to all who believe in the name of Jesus.

Revelation 15:5 "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:"

Revelation 4:1 "After this I looked, and, behold, a door [was] opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard [was] as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

This door into heaven has been opened to the believers, ever since the curtain in the temple was torn. The invitation to come has been to all who believe, as well. Remember when Stephen was stoned to death. He looked into that open door and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. Jesus was the first to enter in, and He paved the way for us to enter in. Jesus was the first of the firstfruits.

Christ was the first, as the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest. Because of His resurrection, “those who are Christ’s” will be raised and enter the eternal heavenly state in several stages:

- (1) Those who have come to saving faith from Pentecost to the Rapture will be joined by living saints at the Rapture to meet the Lord in the air and ascend to heaven;
- (2) Those who come to faith after the rapture (subject to a pre-tribulation belief), and during the Tribulation, with the Old Testament saints as well, will be raised up to reign with Him during the Millennium; and

The only people left to be raised will be the ungodly and that will occur at the end of the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment of God, which will be followed by eternal hell.

1 Corinthians 15:24 "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."

There is a time when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Savior.

Revelation 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying: "The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

In an earlier lesson, we saw that Christians are the Lord's kingdom on this earth now. We are a kingdom in exile, until our Lord who is in exile too, comes and sets His kingdom up on this earth. Jesus will be King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Then cometh the end": This involves the restoration of the earth to the rule of Christ, the rightful King. "End" can refer not only to what is over, but to what is complete and fulfilled.

He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God": In the culmination of the world's history, after Christ has taken over the restored world for His Father and reigned for 1,000 years, all things will be returned to the way they were designed by God to be in the sinless glory of the new heavens and new earth.

"Put down all rule": Christ will permanently conquer every enemy of God and take back the earth that He created and that is rightfully His. During the Millennium, under Christ's rule, rebelliousness will still exist and Christ will have to "rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15).

At the end of that 1000 years, Satan will be unleashed briefly to lead a final insurrection against God. But with all who follow his hatred of God and Christ, he will be banished to hell with his fallen angels to suffer forever in the lake of fire.

1 Corinthians 15:25 "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

This figure comes from the common practice of kings always sitting enthroned above their subjects, so that when the subjects bowed or kneeled, they were lower than the sovereign's feet. With enemies, the monarch might put his foot on the neck of a conquered ruler, symbolizing that enemy's total subjugation. In the millennial kingdom, Christ's foes will be in subjection to Him.

1 Corinthians 15:26 "The last enemy [that] shall be destroyed [is] death."

Christ has broken the power of Satan, who held the power of death (Heb. 2:14), at the cross. But Satan will not be permanently divested of his weapon of death until the end of the Millennium. At that point, having fulfilled completely the prophecy of (Psalm 8:6), Christ then will deliver the kingdom to His Father, and the eternal glory of (Revelation chapters 21 and 22), will begin.

1 Corinthians 15:27 "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."

Lest anyone misunderstand what should be 'evident,' Paul does not mean by "all things being put under Christ," that God the Father is so included. It is actually the Father who gave Christ His authority (Matt. 28:18 and John 5:26-27), and whom the Son perfectly serves.

Ephesians 1:20-22: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places]," "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:" "And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church,"

Matt. 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

John 5:26-27 "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

The Word of God (Jesus as we know Him), created all things. It is only correct that He would rule over His creation. Read the first (chapter of John 1:1-3), to find that the Word is Creator God.

1 Corinthians 15:28 "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."

When Jesus is spoken of as the Son, that has to do with His being in the flesh of man on this earth. When Jesus was in the flesh of man, He was subject to the Father. In fact, Jesus was the Son, while He was here on the earth as our Savior. In heaven, before He came to the earth, He was the Word of God. The one we know as Jesus is eternal Spirit, the same as the Father, and the Holy Spirit in heaven.

Therefore, Christ will continue to rule because His reign is eternal, but He will reign in His former, full, and glorious place within the Trinity, subject to God in the way eternally designed for Him in full Trinitarian glory.

1 Corinthians 15:29 " 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?"

This difficult verse has numerous possible interpretations. Other Scripture passages, clarify certain things which he does not mean. For example, it does not teach that a dead person can be saved by another person who was baptized on his behalf, because baptism never has a part in a person's salvation.

A reasonable view seems to be that "they ... which are baptized" refers to living believers who give outward testimony to their faith in baptism by water because they were first drawn to Christ by the exemplary lives, faithful influence and witness of believers who had subsequently died. Paul's point is that if there is no resurrection and no life after death, then why are people coming to Christ to follow the hope of those who have died?

1 Corinthians 15:30 "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?"

He is saying here, why would we go through the persecutions on this earth in the name of Jesus, if there were no eternal life?

Paul continually risked his life in self sacrificing ministry. Why would he risk death daily, even hourly, if there were no life after death, no reward and no eternal joy for all his pain?

1 Corinthians 15:31 "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."

Paul endured great persecution for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:36 "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Paul endured whatever hardship was necessary to bring the gospel to all who would hear. I am sure, to him it seemed as if the persecution was constant. We are told also, if we are Christians, to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus. If you are sold out to the Lord Jesus, you will suffer persecution from the world. We do not have to die on the cross for Christianity, but we do have a cross to bear.

Luke 9:23 " And he said to [them] all, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

1 Corinthians 15:32 "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 tomorrow we die."

This reminds me very much of the way many of our young people feel about their lives today. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. You see this would be a statement from a person who did not believe in life after death. I believe that much of the suicide today is a way of escape from reality. Young people have so many problems to face that people growing up 50 years ago did not have. The problem is a spiritual problem. Children, who have not been schooled in the teachings of the Bible, do not realize that there is help for the problems they are facing. The world cannot help them face tomorrow.

The world has no solutions to the problems. The only solution to their problems is found in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Word (Bible).

The scripture sounds as if it is talking about wild animals, but the beasts here are not animals, but men with beastly natures. He is saying, why did I fight so hard to win them to the Lord, if there is no resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

The statements of those, who are not saved, and those who do not believe in life after death of the body, are just confusing and deceiving. By word or example, evil friends are a corrupting influence. Hope in the resurrection is sanctifying; it leads to godly living, not corruption. Some

in the church did not know God and were a corrupting influence, but not for those who hoped for life in God's presence.

Why listen to the statements of those who are lost? If you wanted to find your way, you would first find someone who knew the way and then follow them. Paul is saying; do not even listen to their doubting.

1 Corinthians 15:34 "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak [this] to your shame."

Stay in the path that the Light of Jesus has illuminated for you. Do not walk in the dark. This "awake" means wake up from a stupor. We Christians are warned over and over to walk in the Light. We are to have no fellowship with darkness, if we are Christians. Righteousness means in right standing with God. If we are to stay in right standing with God, we must not sin. Sin separates us from God.

Even some, who proclaim Christianity, are still walking in darkness. If they are walking in darkness, they will stumble and fall, because they do not have the Light of God directing them. Paul is saying that even some of the Corinthians have not the knowledge of God. Definitely the ones, who do not believe in life after death of the body, do not have the knowledge of God.

We will see in the next lesson some of the arguments these people who do not have the knowledge of God, bring up.

1 Corinthians Chapter 15 Continued Questions

1. What is verse 19 speaking of?
2. Who did Paul say would lead the list of the miserable, if there is no life after death?
3. What is Christ called in verse 20?
4. What do all agree on about Christ?
5. How had Paul established the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus?
6. What does the word "firstfruits" indicate?
7. Who did death come by?
8. The punishment for sin is _____.
9. In the second Adam (Jesus Christ), we have been made free from _____.
10. When did Jesus defeat death?

11. In Adam, all die in _____ shall all be made alive.
12. Who is the Tree of Life?
13. Jesus is the ____,the _____, and the _____.
14. When was the door in heaven opened to the believer?
15. Who was the invitation to come given to?
16. When Stephen saw into heaven, what did he see?
17. The kingdoms of this earth have become the kingdoms of whom?
18. What is the last enemy destroyed?
19. What lesson do we learn from Ephesians chapter 1 verses 20, 21, and 22?
20. Who is the Word of God?
21. Who is Creator God?
22. Why is Jesus spoken of as the Son in verse 28?
23. Who is the Eternal Spirit?
24. Is Paul promoting baptizing for the dead in verse 29?
25. How often did Paul say we are in jeopardy?
26. We do not have to die on the cross for Christianity, but we do have to do what?
27. What is similar to our day in verse 32?
28. What is the only solution to problems we face?
29. Who are the beasts in verse 32?
30. Evil _____ corrupt good manners.
31. What lesson can we get from verse 34?