

Resurrection Day

1 Corinthians 15

By Scott Huckaby

4/20/2025

BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP

Today is Easter, the day Christians give special recognition to the resurrection of Jesus. So, this morning we're going to consider what the resurrection of Jesus teaches us along with what it reveals about our own future resurrection. We'll be looking at 1 Corinthians 15, especially the first 8 verses.

- The term "resurrection" simply means rising from the dead. It refers to life after our current mortal life is over. It is a continuation of life into eternity in a significantly better state.

The resurrection of Jesus was the most important development in all of history. And it was pretty significant for God as well...

King David spoke of God's creation in Psalm 8:3-4 –
When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?

Astronomers estimate there are something on the order of 200 billion-trillion stars in the universe spread out over at least 26 billion light-years. And yet Scripture refers to that work of creation as the work of God's fingers. While the provision God made for His people being able to spend eternity with Him was a much bigger deal...

Isaiah 52:10 – *The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

God rolled up His sleeves and did an even greater work than creation to make possible our salvation. And Jesus demonstrated that God's provision for eternal life salvation was real in His resurrection.

So, our faith is based on the resurrection of Christ. Of all the miracles revealing that Jesus was the Messiah, His being raised to life after he was crucified was the most important. When the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to prove that He was the Messiah, He responded in Matthew 12:39-40:

"A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

It is interesting to note that Jesus refers to the story of Jonah as if it really happened, it is not some fantastic myth. Also, details matter and the 3 days Jonah was in the belly of the fish points to the 3 days Jesus would be in the grave. Alright, let's look at...

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (NIV)

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also.

In this passage, Paul wraps up his letter to the church in Corinth with a reminder of the gospel... the good news about Jesus Christ. Paul preached this good news to them when he visited them, they came to believe it and, in general, the Corinthian Church was standing firm on it.

Speaking of standing firm on the gospel, I was really blessed by Tate and Bo's report of the Lord working in Nepal last Sunday. It was encouraging to hear how receptive the Nepali people were to the good news of Jesus and how God was raising up passionate leaders among them to extend His kingdom.

- I got a sense that God was working with urgency there which reinforces my perception that we are close to the end of the Church Age.

The good news about Jesus is very simple: God the Father demonstrated His love for humanity by sending God the Son into our world to live among us as one of us and then He paid the sin-penalty for all who trust in Him.

- As Romans 5:8 says, *"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Sin is what we call that which separates us from God. The term sin is essentially synonymous with selfishness.

- All of us have a natural tendency to put ourselves ahead of others, especially our Creator-God.
- As Romans 3:23 says, "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

There are consequences for living our lives just for ourselves never accepting the provision God made for us. All who persist in putting themselves ahead of God will be separated from Him when this mortal life is over.

- As Romans 6:23 says, "*the wages of sin is death.*"

The consequences for holding on to our natural human selfishness is permanent separation from God which is spiritual death. Part of the human condition is to suffer physical death, but that is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. The worst thing is this spiritual death which is called the *second death* in Revelation 20:14.

- We don't much like talking about the prospect of eternal, spiritual death but Jesus warned us more about this than what He told us about Heaven.

The reality of the *second death* is what makes the good news of God's provision for us so good. Jesus was the only one who could pay the penalty of sin for us.

- Since Jesus was God who took on the flesh of a man, He lived a sinless life and thus did not have to die. But He chose to go to the cross for us, paying the sin-penalty of all who trust in Him.

Back to 1 Cor 15... Notice that verse 2 says you will be saved, "*if you hold firmly to the word*" of the gospel. This is rhetorical, if you truly trust in the work of Christ on the cross for your salvation, you will never stop believing it. That is because our capacity to believe this truth is not just some decision we make; it is the direct result of God breathing life into our human spirits.

- Jesus called this being "*born again*" in John 3.

1 John 5:1 says, "*whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*" People don't get un-born and God doesn't un-do what He has done. If you truly trust in Jesus for salvation, you will never stop believing. All who appear to have believed and then later fall away from the faith did not really believe. Just saying you believe doesn't make it so; Paul called this *believing in vain* in verse 2.

While truly believing in your heart of hearts is something God must do for us, He will breathe life into the spirits of all who **sincerely** seek Him. Romans 10:12-13 says, "*[the Lord] richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*"

In this context, Romans 10:9 says, "*If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

And that is what our 1 Corinthians 15 text tells us in verses 3 & 4. Believing Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead is of *first importance*.

- His dying to pay the penalty for our sins and rising from the dead is the good news about Jesus.

Paul next reminds us that Jesus rising from the dead confirmed that He was the Messiah... Notice it says here in verse 4 that the death and resurrection of the Messiah happened "*according to the scriptures.*" The death and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah.

- Psalm 22 describes in detail the crucifixion of the Messiah and it was written by King David 500 years before this method of execution was even invented.
- Psalm 16:10 refers to the resurrection of the Messiah saying, "*You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*"
- Isaiah 53 also describes the Messiah's death on the cross and verse 11 says, "*after he has suffered, He will see the light of life and be satisfied.*"

In 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, Paul describes all the witnesses to the resurrected Jesus. Our Lord made sure His followers knew He had risen from the dead spending 40 days appearing to them on numerous occasions (Acts 1:3). He was seen by all of His disciples and even 500 people at one time. He was seen by His half-brother James and all the apostles He called to start churches including Paul, who He specifically commissioned to go to the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 15:20 calls the resurrection of Christ the first-fruits of all who have died. This term brings to mind the feast of first-fruits introduced back in Leviticus 23:9-14. No grain was to be harvested until the first-fruits offering was made because this offering consecrated the whole harvest. The first-fruits offering was to be observed the third day after Passover.

- Not only did Jesus die on the cross the very day the Jews slaughtered their Passover Lambs, He rose from the dead on the same day they made the first-fruits offering. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread & First-Fruits.

Since Jesus' rising from the dead was the first-fruits of the resurrection, the testimony of those who saw Him reveals what we can look forward to when we are resurrected.

One such insight comes from Peter at the Lord's empty tomb:

John 20:6-7 - *He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.*

The picture here is of the grave clothes lying undisturbed as if the body of Jesus just dematerialized from inside them. Contrast that with the time Jesus raised Lazarus per John 11. Lazarus had to be helped out of his grave clothes while Jesus did not.

Since the resurrection of Jesus was the first-fruits of the resurrection, the resurrection of Lazarus had to be different. I take it that Lazarus was made alive in his mortal body. Jesus was resurrected into a permanent, glorified body; one like we can expect to have when we are resurrected. As 1 John 3:2 says, *"we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."*

Revelation 21:4 promises us we will not suffer *"death or mourning or crying or pain"* in our eternal, glorified bodies. And the resurrected Jesus made it clear that our resurrected bodies will have some capabilities that our mortal bodies do not, such as the capacity to pass through physical barriers.

Among my favorite descriptions of the resurrected Jesus appearing to His disciples is in Luke 24 when He just materialized to His disciples who were assembled in a locked room. He could have knocked on the door, but instead He beamed Himself into the midst of them for a reason. This demonstrated that we will have the capability in our glorified bodies to teleport ourselves around at will.

- We know that because Jesus promised us in John 14:12 - *"He who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do."*

1 Cor 15:44 says our resurrected bodies will be spiritual... We will have the capacity to be in the third heaven, the domain of the angels. We will no longer be confined to the material universe.

- Based on particle and wave phenomena, physicists have theorized that there has to other dimensions beyond the four dimensions of our physical universe: length, width, depth, and time. This means that the spiritual domain is essentially a Fifth Dimension.

When I grew up in the late 60s, there was a rock-n-roll group called The Fifth Dimension who sang a song titled, *"Let the Sunshine In"* that looked forward to a future Age of peace and harmony called *the Age of Aquarius*. That Age didn't come with the hippy culture but it certainly will during the Millennial Kingdom after Jesus returns.

- By the way, Aquarius means Water-Bearer; Jesus is the ultimate Water-Bearer with the Water of Life.

I expect that after our resurrection, we will make use of the spiritual realm to get around the physical universe. Certainly, Jesus promised us in John 14:3 - *"I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."* And since Jesus is omnipresent God in human form, He may be anywhere.

Another thing the resurrected Jesus did when He appeared to His disciples was show them He wasn't just a non-corporeal spirit-being but had a physical body with flesh and bones even eating food with them.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 says that all people are a tri-unity of body, soul, and spirit; we will always be body, soul, and spirit, even in eternity after our resurrection. Eternal life will not be some alien ethereal existence, it will be physical one like we are already familiar with; only much, much better. People often use the terms soul and spirit interchangeably but it is clear from Hebrews 4:12 that there is a distinction... our souls are that inner part of us that is our intellect, personality, and the seat of our emotions. Our spirits are that part of us that has the capacity to commune with God when we are born-again:

Romans 8:16 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

Our human spirits have already resurrected as a guarantee of our ultimate body and soul resurrection when we were born again. We look forward to the resurrection of our bodies, especially as we get older. But our souls will also be resurrected at the same time, losing our sin nature.

1 Corinthians 15:42-43 – *The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.*

Our resurrected bodies will be sinless... our capacity to sin will be removed with the resurrection of our souls that will happen when our bodies are resurrected.

Our current mortal sin nature means we are corrupted. But after we're resurrected, we'll be incorruptible.

- This boggles the mind... it is hard to imagine our being in a state that will not have a selfish thought.

Can you imagine living in a world where no one acts selfishly?

- I've speculated that there will not be any doors in the New Jerusalem; not so much because we'll be able to pass through walls, but can you imagine the confusion there'd be with everyone scrambling to open the door for everyone else?

Some other things Scripture teaches us about our eternal existence is that we will maintain our identity in our resurrected bodies. While Jesus' disciples didn't always immediately recognize Him after His resurrection, they did recognize Him and they knew He was a man. John 20:10-18 tells about Mary Magdalene's encounter with the resurrected Jesus... she initially mistook Him for the cemetery gardener calling Him "Sir" but recognized Him when He spoke her name.

- So, men will still be men and women will still be women in eternity. What a blessing that will be.

However, according to Jesus in Matthew 22:30, there will be no marriage in heaven. It will not be necessary because we will not be procreating and all our relationships will be enhanced. There will be no need for the exclusive institution of marriage to address the loneliness and despair of this fallen world.

I've heard people say they think an eternity without sin would be boring. This is as if there can be no fun without sin. That is a lie from the devil. So, what will we be doing? Revelation 5:10 says we will *"reign on the earth."* We will have opportunities to express our unique creativity in eternity. It has always been God's plan for us to work with Him in managing His creation. God gave Adam work to do in the garden even before the fall. Work will be significantly more rewarding with the curse removed. We will be engaged in activities that will help us get to know God better, glorify Him, and bless our fellow immortal souls. I expect one of the things that will keep us busy in eternity is learning more about our Creator by exploring this vast universe He created for us. God has some amazing things to show us after this life is over and no one should want to miss out on that.

1 Cor 15:42 says our mortal bodies are *sown in weakness*, but *raised in power*. Our mortal bodies are weak in comparison to what we'll be like in our resurrected bodies. Does that mean we will have super powers? I don't know but wouldn't be surprised based on the other amazing things God has revealed to us.

- Certainly, our resurrected bodies will not have the limitations we now have; especially as we get older.

This chapter also includes one of the classic references to the Rapture of the church...

1 Cor 15:51-52 – *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

The Bible tells us the Church Age will end spectacularly in an instant with no prior notice when Jesus comes for His bride resurrecting all His Church-Age followers both living and dead at one time.

- Our resurrection is the Rapture of the church.
- We don't know when this mass resurrection of the Rapture will happen, it is intended to be a surprise event that could happen at any time.
- The point is just to live ready because we could find ourselves snatched up to be before the Lord Jesus at any moment with no notice.

This chapter also reinforces the teaching that the Rapture of the Church will occur before the time of God's wrath called the Tribulation...

1 Cor 15:22-24 – *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.* ²³ *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.* ²⁴ *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.*

Verse 23 tells us there is an order to the resurrection of the church; Christ of course was the first-fruits of the resurrection which foreshadows our own resurrection. And after the resurrection of the church, *comes the end*. I take it *the end* is the Tribulation given the context of putting an end *to all rule and all authority and power...*

- The Tribulation will be *the end of the times of the Gentiles* that has oppressed Israel since Babylon.

The Tribulation is described in many places in God's prophetic Word, especially in Revelation 6-19. It will be a terrible 7-year period of time on earth when the Antichrist reigns and God pours out His wrath. God uses this time to prepare the nations for when Jesus will rule on earth during His Millennial Kingdom.

- Oh, and the Church Age resurrected saints will have some role in ruling with Jesus during His Millennial Kingdom according to Revelation 5:9.

There are many signs we are getting close to the Day of our resurrection. We know that to be the case because God is preparing to work through Israel again:

- The Jews have maintained their distinct culture despite their dispersion among the nations for almost 2,000 years.
- Israel is a nation again after almost 2,000 years, with a powerful military and is also hated by most of the nations of the world.
- The Hebrew language has been resurrected so that the average Jew in Israel today can read the original text of the Old Testament. Hebrew as a language was dead even when Jesus walked the earth having to speak in Aramaic and Greek.

All these developments fulfill prophecy and are unprecedented among the nations. Besides Israel, there are many other signs that reinforce the idea we are close to the end of the Age...

- It seems like the nations of the world are doing just about everything they can to provoke a world war.
- The spirit of the Age is driving change to a new world order based on a collective, globalist vision.
- Technology is in place for unprecedented monitoring and control of the population.
- And we're seeing the Apostasy of the church; people professing to be Christians but harboring heretical beliefs.

There are many other things I could point out but hopefully this is enough to give you a sense that we are not living in "ordinary" times.

- We are privileged to live in a time when God is preparing to spectacularly intervene in the affairs of men. This should give us a sense of urgency to get on with what God is calling each of us to do.

And we all know it will be much better to become a follower of Christ now during the Church Age than to think that can be put off until after the Rapture. The Tribulation that follows the Rapture will not be a pleasant time to be on earth.

So, in summary, the resurrection of Jesus reveals that He really was the Messiah and shows us that death is not the end; we can indeed look forward to life after death.

- And we can also eagerly anticipate eternity in a glorified, physical body with some amazing enhancements... all immortal people will be like super-heroes being able to move about this vast universe at will.
- You certainly don't want to miss out on that... if you have any doubts about your salvation, I'd urge you to pray that God would help with your unbelief.

I hope this message has given you something that brings you closer to Jesus...

- God wants us to know that we are secure in our relationship with Him
- Also, the more we get to know the Lord Jesus and apply His Word in our lives, the more abundant our lives will be

Let's pray...

As you go, go in the peace, joy and love of our Lord Jesus Christ! And remember... He is Risen!