

1 Corinthians 15 - Resurrection of Christ; Resurrection of the Dead; After the Millennium; Our Resurrection Body; The Rapture

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1 Corinthians 15

- (6) Resurrection (1 Cor 15:1-58)
 - (A) Christ's resurrection (15:1-11)
 - (a) Predicted in the OT (15:1-4)

1 Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, **the gospel** which I preached to you, which you also **received**, in which you also stand,

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

1 Now I'm making known to you, brothers, the gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you accepted, on which you have taken your stand,

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

- "Now I make known to you" - replaces the "Now concerning..." (*peride*) introduction to a change in subject that Paul used earlier in the epistle when beginning to respond to another issue brought up by the Corinthians

— It was likely reported to Paul that some believers in Corinth did not believe in the resurrection of the dead

— Presumably some believed that Christ was raised from the dead (clearly some did not believe that), but not necessarily that all believers would be raised from the dead (v12)

— Paul corrects their unbelief in a resurrection in the following ways:

- Logically (v12-19)
- Theologically (v20-28)
- Axiologically (v29-34)
- Naturally (v35-42a)

— He then describes the nature of the resurrection body (v42b-49) and the translation of believers into resurrection bodies (v50-57)

— "...the gospel" - Paul gives it to us in a nutshell. It's the same gospel Paul preached when he originally visited Corinth (Acts 18:1-18a).

— After his Damascus conversion, Peter and James spent time with Paul in Jerusalem to fill in the details (Gal 1:18-19). After 14 years passed, he returned to Jerusalem to confirm with the apostles that his preaching was in harmony with the gospel they proclaimed (Gal 2:1).

— "...received" - *paralambanō*, aorist tense meaning their reception of the gospel was a decisive act in the past

2 by which **you also are saved**, if you **hold firmly** to the word which I preached to you, unless **you believed in vain**.

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

2 and by which you are also being saved if you hold firmly to the message I proclaimed to you—unless, of course, your faith was worthless.

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

- This is one of the most misinterpreted verses in the NT... if you don't understand the three tenses of salvation (justification, sanctification, and glorification), and if you don't understand the various conditional "if" clauses in Greek, you will not be able to interpret this verse properly.
- Paul consistently, in both Corinthian epistles, reiterates that his audience, the Corinthian church, were saved individuals (Cf. 1:2, see notes there). To interpret this verse as referring to unbelievers is to misread the context and audience of both Corinthian epistles.
- "...you also are [being] saved" - *sōzō*, present tense, referring to the middle tense of salvation (sanctification)
 - Justification saves us from the **penalty** of sin
 - Sanctification (here) saves us from the **power** of sin
 - Glorification saves us from the **presence** of sin
- Paul is not placing a condition on the Corinthians to maintain their salvation/justification, or presenting to them a doctrine whereby they must prove they are "truly saved" through their works. What he is saying is that the Corinthians were saved/justified, but in order for them to progress in the second tense of their salvation (progressive sanctification), they must "hold firmly" to what Paul had previously preached to them.
- Just as the gospel is the means by which the Corinthians (and us) were saved from the penalty of sin (justification), the gospel is also the means by which they (we) are being saved (present tense) from the power of sin
- The Corinthians (and us) would only make progress in the second tense of their salvation (sanctification) if they chose/decided to "hold firmly" to Paul's teaching. James 2:14-25, another highly misinterpreted passage of Scripture, essentially says the same thing as Paul is saying here...that the same faith we had in Christ that secured our justification is the same faith we need to make progress and be victorious in our sanctification.
- Paul is not entertaining the possibility that Christians could lose their salvation by abandoning the gospel he preached to them. His point is, if the Corinthians "hold firmly" to the gospel they received, they would continue to experience God's deliverance from sin as they lived day to day.
- "...if" - third class condition (*ei* + subjunctive), the condition of possibility
- The third class conditional sentence states what will happen [deliverance from the power of sin] if at any time in the future the condition [holding fast to the gospel] is met. Paul knows that at the present time the condition has not been met, but it is possible and even probable that the condition will be met at some time in the future. There is hope that the condition will be fulfilled, but on the other hand, there is some uncertainty or doubt in Paul's mind as to whether the condition will be met. It may be fulfilled, or it may not be fulfilled.

- Many readers who do not understand conditional "if" statements in Greek (as explained above), and also do not understand the past/present/future tenses of salvation, interpret "if" here as a condition to be met in order for the Corinthians to be saved/justified, or to keep/maintain their salvation/justification. The condition which they must meet is to "hold firmly to the word which I preached to you." But that's not what this verse is saying.
- What Paul is actually saying here is that "if" (possibly) the Corinthians at some point in the future begin to "hold firmly" to what he preached to them, then they would begin to have the power over sin in their lives
- "...hold firmly" - *katechō*, possess, keep; in this context, means to "adhere firmly to"
- It means to rely upon, depend upon; as noted above, and confirmed in James 2:14-25, we need to exercise the same faith that secured our justification every day, moment-by-moment, as we live out the Christian life. Faith does not become useless the moment after we place it in Christ for our justification...we need to walk by faith every single day (Cf. Heb 11:6).
- "...you believed in vain" - their belief in the gospel by faith (which secured their salvation/justification) would have no effect on their lives; their salvation/justification was still intact, but it would not lead to any meaningful evidence or fruit in their lives because they would not be progressing in their power over sin. They would not enjoy God's deliverance from the *power* (not the *penalty*) of sin in their lives.
- To have once believed in the gospel by faith and be saved from the *penalty* of sin, then subsequently reject it, would be to "believe in vain"—meaning belief in the gospel would have "no effect" in them being saved from the *power* of sin.
- Charles Ryrie says "believing in vain" would be the case if the resurrection of Christ were not true. Bottom line...believing in an non-resurrected Christ cannot save anyone from the *power* of sin.

The Corinthians' doctrinal error led Paul to make the gospel known to them again because continuing to believe it is essential to being saved from the power of sin, which is essential to growth.

- 3 For I handed down to you as **of first importance** what I also **received**, that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**,**
- 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**
- 3 For I passed on to you the most important points that I received: The Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**
- 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;**

- "...of first importance" - when Paul founded the church at Corinth and spent 18 months there, his top priority was to deliver them the gospel
- "...received" - the gospel that he communicated to the Corinthians was the same gospel that he received on the Damascus Road from Christ Himself (Cf. Gal 1:11)
- "...Christ died" - an essential component of the gospel; it was Christ's death that accomplished the saving work (Cf. Rom 3:25)
- "...for" - in these passages the Greek preposition *hyper* (for) expresses the idea of Jesus being both our representative and our substitute (Rom 5:8; 8:32; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2; Titus 2:14)
- "...our sins" - the substitutionary nature of His death, which was prophesied in the OT (Is 53:5)
 - Christ's death is a historical fact; that He died for our sins is a theological fact. Without both, you don't have Christianity.
 - The phrase "Christ died for our sins" is the doctrinal summary of the atonement:
 1. As our Substitute, Christ died to appease God and meet the demands of the law (Rom 3:25-26; 5:9-19)
 2. As our Advocate, He effected reconciliation and made us righteous before God. The death of Christ was a propitiation (substitutionary atonement) for the sins of the world (2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 2:1-2)
 3. As our Mediator, He established a new covenant and accepted us as partners (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25)
 4. As our Savior, He grants us eternal life through faith in Him (John 3:16)
- "...according to the Scriptures" - His death was prophesied in the OT (Cf. Ps 16; 22; Is 52:13–53:12; Jonah (in Matt 12:38-41))
 - Ps 22:1-21 reads as a first person account of a crucifixion, even though stoning was the official Jewish mode of execution at the time. This passage emphasizes the "how" of His death: by crucifixion.
 - Dan 9:26 says "the Messiah will be cut off [to eliminate, to cut off, to kill] and have nothing"
 - Is 52:13–53:12 gives many details of Jesus' death. The emphasis is on the substitutionary nature of His death: that He died in our place.
 - In the NT, Jesus said on numerous occasions that He would suffer, die, and be raised from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Luke 9:22,44; 18:31-34)

4 and that **He was buried**, and that **He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

4 he was buried, he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures—and is still alive!—

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
- "...He was buried" - burial was the evidence of His death and emphasizes the finality of it (Cf. Acts 2:29). His burial also serves as evidence for the reality of His resurrection (Cf. Acts 13:29-30).

— His burial and His appearances are not essential parts of the gospel, but are historical evidences that He did in fact die and rise again

— Paul identifies the believer's baptism with Christ's burial (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12)

— "...He was raised" - an essential component of the gospel; the resurrection was vindication that the saving work had been accepted by God (Cf. Rom 4:25)

— The perfect tense and passive voice of the Greek verb implies that since God raised Him, He is still alive

— The Greek uses the past tense to describe a single action in the past for Jesus' death and burial. But for the verb "to be raised" in Greek is in the perfect tense to indicate an action that occurred one time, in the past, with lasting relevance for the present (v12-14,16-17,20; Cf. 2 Tim 2:8).

— Jesus was raised from the dead and continues His life in the resurrected state (Rev 5:6). The passive voice denotes the implied agent, God (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,37). If the Roman or Jewish authorities could have produced the body of Jesus, all the rumors would have quickly stopped, and it all would have ended...but they could not.

— The empty tomb emphasizes that Jesus' resurrection was physical. All four Gospels emphasize that the body was missing: Matt 28:5-6; Mark 16:5-6; Luke 24:3-4; John 20:6-8.

— After His resurrection, Jesus' physical body could be touched (John 20:27); recognized...with difficulty (John 20:14-15; 21:4,7); could come and go through locked doors (John 20:19,26); could eat and drink with them (Luke 24:42-43; Acts 1:4; 10:41). Jesus' resurrection body was transformed to transcend time and space (1 John 3:2).

— "...third day" - Jesus taught that He would be killed and be raised on the third day (Cf. Matt 16:21; John 1:17, linked with Matt 12:40. Also, Ps 16:8-11 with Ps 110:1; Cf. Acts 2:25-36. Some also point to Hosea 6:2.

— Gen 22 is perhaps the most dramatic example: Abraham's offering of Isaac. Isaac was "dead" to Abraham for three days.

— "...according to the Scriptures" - where in the OT does it refer to Jesus' resurrection? Ps 16:10; 22:21-22; Is 53:10-11; Jonah 1:17.

— According to the Scriptures, all three Persons of the Godhead had a part in Jesus' resurrection:

- the Father (Rom 6:4; Cf. Heb 13:20)
- the Son (John 2:19,21)
- the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11)

Other “Three Days” Examples

1. Third day of Creation: Double Blessing (Gen 1:9-13)
2. *Akeidah*: Abraham’s Offering of Issac (Gen 22)
3. Joseph Interprets Two Dreams (Gen 40:8-22)
4. Baker (bread) Dies on the Third Day
5. Cupbearer (wine) Freed on the Third Day
6. Crossing of the Red Sea: The Third Day after Passover
7. Departed from Mt Sinai (Num 10:33)
8. Spies En Route From Jericho (Joshua 2:16)
9. Jonah in the Great Fish (Jonah 1:17)
10. Esther Fasts Three Days (Esther 4:16)
11. Wedding in Cana on the Third Day (John 3:1)
12. Christ Was Three Days in the Tomb (Luke 24:21)
13. Saul’s Blindness in Damascus (Acts 9:9)
14. Hosea: Israel’s Petition for Lord’s Return (Hosea 5:15—6:3)

The death and resurrection are both essential components of the gospel (1 Thess 4:14). However, only His death accomplished the saving work (Rom 3:25). The resurrection was the vindication that the saving work had been accepted (Rom 4:25). This is why we are to remember His death until He comes (1 Cor 11:23-26). The cross is where He made substitutionary blood atonement that satisfied the Father. The resurrection proved that the payment He made for our sins had been accepted by the Father.

(b) Attested to by eyewitnesses (15:5-11)

(9) Fourth Appearance: Peter (Cf. Luke 24:33-35)

(11) Sixth Appearance: The Eleven (Cf. John 20:26-31)

5 and that **He appeared to Cephas**, then to **the twelve**.

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

5 and he was seen by Cephas, and then by the Twelve.

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

— "...He appeared to" - physical appearances of the resurrected Christ. On that Sunday, Jesus appeared to the women, Mary Magdalene, two men on the road to Emmaus, Peter, and the 10 disciples in the upper room (Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:13-43).

— Peter was the first disciple to see the resurrected Jesus (Luke 24:34)

- Paul does not list the appearances to women, showing his Jewish background. Women were not eligible to be witnesses under Jewish law.
- "...Cephas" - Paul first mentions Peter, whom he usually calls Cephas (Cf. 1:12), Peter's name in Aramaic (John 1:42). It is the equivalent of the Greek "Petros" which means "small stone or pebble" (Cf. Matt 16:18).
- Sunday evening, the disciples in the upper room told the men from Emmaus that He appeared to Simon (Luke 24:34). That morning the angel instructed the women to tell the disciples "and Peter" to go to Galilee where Jesus would meet them (Mark 16:7). There Jesus forgave Peter and reinstated him (John 21:15-19).
- "...the twelve" - Paul lists the "twelve," the common term used to describe the disciples. This term was used of them even after Judas had died (John 20:24) and before Matthias took his place (Acts 1:20-26).
- For a detailed chronology of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, see [Chronology of the Resurrection](#).

(13) Eighth Appearance: The Five Hundred (Cf. Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18)

- 6 After that He appeared to **more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom remain until now**, but some have fallen asleep;
- 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;
- 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.
- 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.
- "...more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time" - nothing in the Gospels or Acts clearly corroborates the figure of 500 brothers. Paul includes this here as solid evidence of Jesus' bodily resurrection, and to argue against some Corinthians who believed that His resurrection body was a spirit.
- Some associate this appearance before more than 5,000 with the closing words of Matthew's Gospel and the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18). A crowd would not be surprising since He announced this appearance through the women earlier.
- "...most of whom remain until now" - most of the 500 were still living at the time Paul wrote this epistle (23 years after the crucifixion). Any Corinthians skeptical of Christ's bodily resurrection could check with them.
- Such an appearance, before so many people, would later provide evidence that those who testified of seeing Him were not hallucinating, since hallucinations are individual, not shared

(14) Ninth Appearance: James

7 **then** He appeared to **James**, **then** to all the **apostles**;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

7 Next he was seen by James, then by all the apostles,

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

- "then...then" - *epeita, eita* - there was a time gap (days) between the time Jesus appeared to James, and the time He appeared to all the apostles
- The *epeita / eita* construction in Greek also indicates a time gap in v23-24
- Same Greek construction in v5-6: "...He appeared to Cephas, then [eita] to the twelve; After that [epeita] He appeared to..."
- "...James" - Jesus' half-brother
- Half a year before Jesus' death, his brothers, including James, still did not believe on him (John 7:5). But immediately after Jesus' ascension, his brothers believed and were with the apostles in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14; Cf. also 1 Cor 9:5).
- He became the leader of the Jerusalem church (Cf. Acts 15:13-21) and wrote the book of James
- James listened to Paul when the former persecutor returned to Jerusalem as a believer (Gal 1:19). He filled Peter's role when the apostle fled Jerusalem after his release from prison (Acts 12:17).
- After his third missionary tour, Paul reported to James and the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18-19)
- "...apostles" - in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the word signifies the Twelve (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13)
- By contrast, in Acts, Luke uses the term to include Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14). Andronicus and Junias, according to Paul, were outstanding among the apostles (Rom 16:7).
- In this context, we assume it refers to the Twelve

8 and **last of all**, as to **one untimely born**, **He appeared** to me also.

8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

8 and finally he was seen by me, as though I were born abnormally late.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

- "...last of all" - Paul regarded the Lord's appearance to him on the Damascus Road as the equivalent of a post-resurrection appearance
- Paul was the last in a series of believers who saw the resurrected Savior (Acts 9). This was the last time the Lord appeared to anyone.
- "...one untimely born" - refers to a baby who is born before full gestation, which usually resulted in some sort of deformity. It's possible the Corinthians used this term to refer to

Paul (as a pejorative), or possibly Paul viewed himself as "deformed" relative to the other apostles.

- "...He appeared" - *hōraō*, to see with the eyes; same word used by Paul to describe Jesus' appearance to the disciples and others after the resurrection. Luke used the same word to describe the appearance of Jesus (Luke 24:34).
- Paul met Jesus in both a visual and audible form

10 Appearances to Paul [Ten Appearances to Paul](#)

1. 36 AD - Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-9; 22:5-11; 26:12-20)
2. 36 AD - Vision of Ananias (Acts 9:10-19; 22:12-16)
3. 37-39 AD - Arabia Revelation (Gal 1)
4. 39 AD - First Vision: Fleeing Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29; 22:15-21; Gal 1:17-20)
5. 39-43 AD - Third Heaven (2 Cor 12:1-4)
6. 50 AD - To Jerusalem by Revelation (Acts 15:1-3; Gal 2:1-2)
7. 51-54 AD - Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-11)
8. 51-54 AD - Corinthian Vision (Acts 18:9-10)
9. 58 AD - To Witness in Rome (Acts 23:11)
10. 60 AD - Salvation from the Storm (Acts 27:22-26)

Paul stressed the appearances of the risen Christ (v5-9) because they prove that His resurrection was not a form of "spiritual" (i.e., not physical or material) existence. Just as His body died and was buried, so also *His body* was raised—and many witnesses saw it, often many witnesses at one time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and not even fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted God's church.

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.

- "...the least of the apostles" - Paul considered himself "the least" worthy to be an apostle because he was made an apostle by divine appointment and did not fulfill all three requirements for an apostle given in Acts 1:22-25 (Cf. 1 Cor 9:1)

— However, he did not regard his apostleship as inferior to that of the other apostles (Cf. 2 Cor 10:1-13:10; Gal 1:11-2:21)

- The apostles recognized Paul's special ministry and later placed him on an equal footing with them (Gal 2:9)
- "...I persecuted the church of God" - Paul always presents himself as the least among the apostles (Cf. Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15). He continually reminded his readers that he persecuted the church of God (Acts 8:1,3; 9:4; 22:7; 26:9,14; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6).

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

10 But by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace shown to me was not wasted. Instead, I worked harder than all the others—not I, of course, but God's grace that was with me.

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.

- Despite Paul's persecution of the church, God's grace made him what he was: an apostle (Cf. 9:1)

— God's grace is given "in vain" means "of no benefit"; God's grace is given in vain when it does not result in our appropriate response. Paul responded to God's unusually great grace by offering back unusually great service to God.

— Yet, he did not view his service as self-generated, but as the result of God's continual supply of grace

11 Whether then *it was I or they*, so we preach and so you believed.

11 Whether then *it was I or they*, so we preach and so you believed.

11 So, whether it was I or the others, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

- "...they" - the other apostles

— Whether it was Paul who preached, or the other apostles, it didn't matter because they all preached the same gospel (Cf. Gal 2:1-10)

— This "common message" preached by both Paul and the apostles is what the Corinthians believed when they were saved/justified. By some of them now denying the Resurrection, they were not following Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ.

— The situation in Corinth was as bad as the situation was in Galatia (Cf. Gal 1:6-9) because rejecting the resurrection is denying the resurrection power needed to live the Christian life (Cf. Eph 1:19-20; Phil 3:10).

The point of this section of verses was to present the gospel message, including the account of Jesus Christ's *resurrection*, as what many reliable eyewitnesses saw—and all the apostles preached. Paul did this to stress that Jesus Christ's resurrection, which most of the Corinthian Christians accepted, was an "objective reality," not to "prove" that He arose from the dead. Even though Paul had a different background from the other apostles, he heralded the same message they did.

In the following verses (v12-19), Paul uses a series of 1st class conditions to prove logically that Christ has been resurrected. The 1st class condition assumes the truth of the proposition for the sake of argument. His mode of argument is *modus tollens* which is formed by saying if *x* is true, then *y* is true, but if not *y*, then not *x*. This logic is easy to follow even if the mode of argument is not technically understood.

(B) Negative consequences if there is no resurrection (15:12-19)

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do **some** among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

12 Now if we preach that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, how can some of you keep claiming there is no resurrection of the dead?

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

- After establishing that the gospel the Corinthians had believed from the beginning included the fact that God raised Jesus Christ bodily, he now shows the consequences of rejecting belief in the resurrection of the body

— The resurrection of the body seems to have been difficult for Greeks to accept other places as well, not just in Corinth (Cf. Acts 17:32; 2 Tim 2:17-18). To most Greeks, the idea of the resurrection of the body was abhorrent because they viewed the body as a hindrance to attaining the highest aspects of life.

— Philetus and Hymenaeus denied the doctrine of a bodily resurrection and destroyed the faith of some (2 Tim 2:17-18). Paul handed them over to Satan (1 Tim 1:19-20).

— "...some" - Gentile believers who had fallen back under the influence of Greek philosophy. The Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul, but sneered at resurrection because they viewed the body as a cage for the soul.

— Their conception of resurrection was the return of the corpse (Acts 17:32; 2 Tim 2:17-18). So, they longed to be rid of the body. Paul will correct their notion of the resurrection body in v35ff.

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised;
13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;
13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then the Messiah has not been raised,
13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
- Belief in a bodily resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith. A Gospel without the resurrection of Christ has no message of redemption and no hope for the future
— Paul highlights six history-changing facts that would have followed if Jesus had not risen from the dead

14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is in vain.
14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.
14 and if the Messiah has not been raised, then our message means nothing and your faith means nothing.
14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
- If the resurrection of the body is impossible, then the resurrection of Jesus Christ is fiction. And if He did not rise, the apostles' preaching rested on a lie.
— To deny the resurrection is to go against all the pertinent evidence that was available in the early church as well as just plain common sense

15 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.
15 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.
15 In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God because we testified on God's behalf that he raised the Messiah—whom he did not raise if in fact it is true that the dead are not raised.
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.
- If there is no resurrection of the body, the apostles would be in error and would also be false witnesses against God. They would have been preaching something untrue about God: that He raised Jesus Christ, when He really had not.
— Can you imagine Paul testifying falsely of God? Paul was a Pharisee: the penalty in OT for being a false prophet was death (Deut 18:20 22); in the NT (1 John 5:10; 2 John 10; Cf. Job 19:25). This would be a serious charge against the man who founded their church.

16 For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised;
16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;
16 For if the dead are not raised, then the Messiah has not been raised,

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

- Expanding on the logical conclusions in v12-14, if Christ was not physically raised from the dead then our faith is "worthless" (v17)

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is **worthless; you are still in your sins.**

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

17 and if the Messiah has not been raised, your faith is worthless and you are still imprisoned by your sins.

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

- "...worthless" - *mataios*, of no benefit; useless

- "...you are still in your sins" - because there has been no vindication (confirmation) that Christ's payment for our sins was accepted by the Father (Rom 4:25)

— Christ's resurrection didn't cover or atone for our sins. His death did that. However, His resurrection is a critical piece in that it demonstrates that His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient payment for the sins of mankind.

18 Then also those who have fallen **asleep** in Christ **have perished.**

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

18 Yes, even those who have died believing in the Messiah are lost.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

- "...asleep" - a NT euphemism for those who have physically died

- "...have perished" - if there is no resurrection, those who had already died would be lost forever, eternally separated from God. A denial of the resurrection mean that all have perished, including Jesus. It makes the believer a martyr to an illusion.

— There is no personal hope apart from Christ's personal bodily resurrection

— Death is unable to break the bond that exists between Christ and believers in this earthly life. That bond continues into the life hereafter and lasts eternally (Cf. Rom 6:11).

- After writing seven conditional statements to demonstrate the effect of denying the resurrection, Paul returns to the consistent doctrine of the Christian church: Christ's resurrection.

— The denial of their future, that they are destined for resurrection on the basis of Christ's resurrection, has the net effect of a denial of their past, that they have received forgiveness of sins on the basis of Christ's death.

19 If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied.

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

19 If we have set our hopes on the Messiah in this life only, we deserve more pity than any other people.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

- Paul now gives the sorry conclusion to the Corinthians' unbelief in a bodily resurrection: if a believer only has hope in Christ in this life, and no hope for any life beyond the grave, they are to be more pitied than anyone.

— If a Christian's hope in Christ is just for what they can expect this side of the grave, then that person deserves pity

It is important to remember that the Corinthians were not denying the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; what they were denying is the resurrection of the body; and what Paul is insistent upon is that if a man denies the possibility of the resurrection of the body he has thereby denied the possibility of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and has therefore emptied the Christian message of its truth and the Christian life of its reality.

(C) Positive consequences of the resurrection (15:20-28)

(a) Christ's resurrection guarantees the believer's resurrection (15:20-23)

20 But the fact is, Christ **has been raised** from **the dead**, the **first fruits** of those **who are asleep**.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

20 But at this moment the Messiah stands risen from the dead, the first one offered in the harvest of those who have died.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

- "...has been raised" - *egeirō*, perfect tense, meaning a past completed action with on-going results

— Paul now shows that the resurrection of Christ makes the resurrection of believers necessary and inevitable. His resurrection requires our resurrection because otherwise death would remain undefeated.

- "...the dead" - *nekros*, plural, literally He was "raised from the deaths"

- "...first fruits" - indicates that the first sheaf of the forthcoming grain harvest will be followed by the rest of the sheaves; it implies that much more production from the field would follow

— Christ is the guarantee for all those who belong to him that they also will share in the resurrection (Cf. v23; 2 Cor 1:22)

— The sons of the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite, the daughter of Jairus, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus: they were all raised from the dead, but not resurrected into a resurrection body, and they all died later.

- "...who are asleep" - *koimaō*, a euphemism for physical death; it carries the implication that the dead will one day "wake up" (be resurrected, Cf. Acts 7:0; 1 Thess 4:13-14)

The significance of first fruits comes from Israel's Feast of First fruits. Passover was on the 14th of Nisan. Unleavened bread began on the 15th of Nisan. The Feast of First fruits began the day after the next Sabbath (Lev 23:11). On that day the Israelites were instructed to take some of the first fruits of their harvest and bring them in a basket to the priest and make a declaration to the Lord God that they had entered the promised land. The priest would take the basket and set it before the Lord and make a further declaration regarding God's faithfulness to His land promise (Deut 26:1ff). The waving of the first fruits signified more to come. In the same way, when Christ was raised, He fulfilled the Feast of First fruits and there are more resurrections to come.

21 For since **by a man death came**, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also came through a man.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

- "For" - signals an explanation for the relationship between Christ's bodily resurrection and the believer's future bodily resurrection

- "...by" - *dia*, shows that man is the agent responsible for death; we have a genetic defect, the penalty of death (Gal 2:17; 3:19)

- "...a man" - 1st use: Adam

- "...death came" - all human beings were in Adam when he died, so all died (Cf. Rom 5:12)

- "...a man" - 2nd use: Jesus

22 For as in **Adam** all die, so also in **Christ** all will be made alive.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in the Messiah will all be made alive.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

- "...Adam" - the first man in the old creation and, like him, all of his descendants die physically

- "...Christ" - the first Man in the new creation and, like Him, all of His descendants will live physically (Cf. Rom 5:12-19)

— Since both Adam and Jesus were men, our resurrection will be a human resurrection, not some "spiritual" type of resurrection

— Physical resurrection is as inevitable for the sons of Christ (believers) as physical death is for the sons of Adam (humans)

Before the fall, Adam was able to sin or not to sin; after the fall, he was not able not to sin.

[Augustine]

23 But each in his own **order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,**

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

23 However, this will happen to each person in the proper order: first the Messiah, then those who belong to the Messiah when he comes.

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

- Paul goes on to provide further details on the future resurrection of believers. He uses two analogies to describe the future resurrection: the "order" (*tagma*) of a Roman victory parade, and the Jewish harvest cycle. Both analogies demonstrate that the future resurrection will occur in "phases."

- "...order" - *tagma*, Paul analogizes God's future resurrection program to a Roman parade; *tagma* is a word used for the sequence of troops marching in a procession

— Just as a Roman parade had phases to it, so does God's resurrection program. The phases of this Roman victory parade are made up of:

1. General: Christ's resurrection (v23)
2. Lead Officer: Rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18)
3. Soldiers: OT Saints and Tribulation Martyrs (Rev 20:4)
4. Captives: Unsaved of all ages (Rev 20:5)

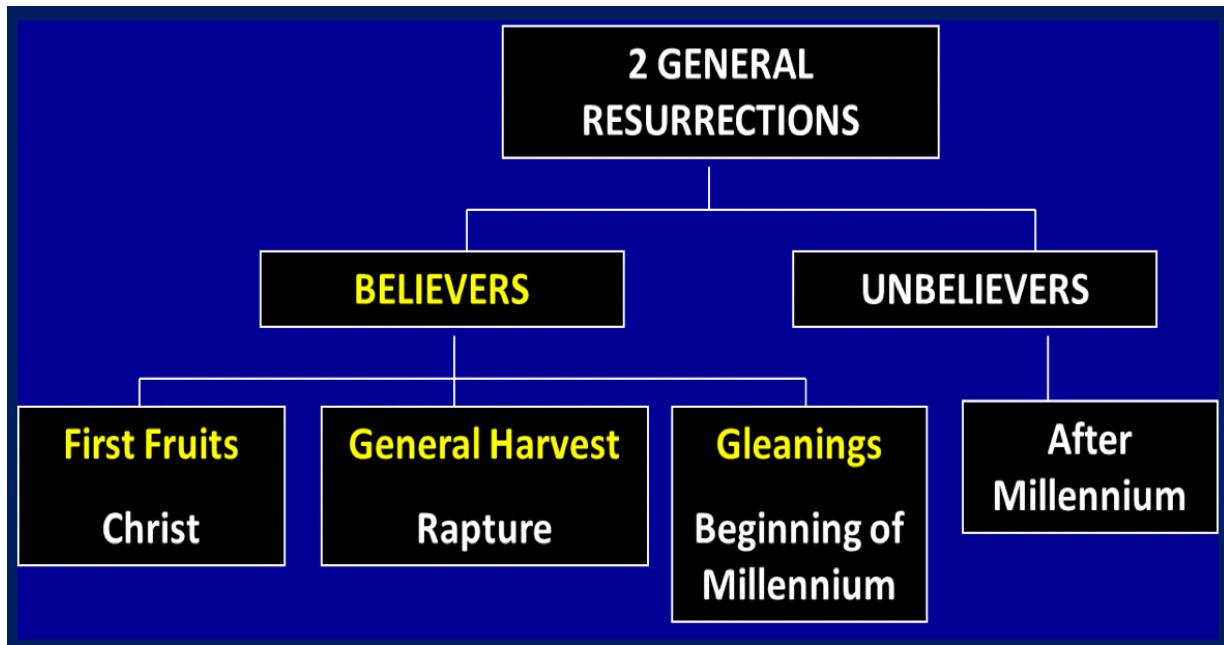
— After the Romans conquered a people-group, when they returned home they held a parade. The conquering general was out front, followed by the lead officer, followed by the soldiers who were victorious in battle, then came along the captives they captured in the battle, bound in chains.

- "...first fruits" - the Jews harvested their crops in three cycles. Here Paul analogizes these three harvests to the three distinct resurrections of believers (called the "first resurrection" in Rev 20:4-6):

1. First Fruits (Christ) - a joyous time when the first fruits came in; the first fruits guaranteed that the remainder of the harvest would come in, which built their confidence (Ex 23:16)
2. General Harvest (the Rapture) (Lev 23:10-12) - the primary harvest; the bulk of the harvest
3. Gleanings (beginning of the millennium) - the Law provided provision for the poor but they had to work for it; farmers were told to leave part of the General Harvest in the field so the poor would be provided for (Lev 19:9-10).

— Scripture teaches distinct times of resurrection for different groups (John 5:25-29; Rev 20). There is no such thing as a "general resurrection" taught in Scripture.

- "...after that" - *epeita*, linked with *eita* in v24; Cf. v7, which has the exact same Greek structure (*epeita / eita*)
- "...those who are Christ's" - those who "belong to" Christ (believers); they are also described as "in Christ" in v22. This is the resurrection of the church.
- "...His coming" - the Rapture of the Church; the church is the next resurrection following Christ's resurrection



(b) Christ's resurrection guarantees the Father's ultimate victory (15:24-28)

24 **then comes the end**, when **He hands over the kingdom** to our God and Father, when He has **abolished all** rule and all authority and power.

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.

24 Then the end will come, when after he has done away with every ruler and every authority and power, the Messiah hands over the kingdom to God the Father.

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.

- "...then" - *eita*, coupled with *epeita* in v23; this Greek structure (*epeita / eita*), two other times in the same chapter (v4-5; v7), allows for a time gap between the two
- There is no doubt that in v4-8, Paul is laying out a chronological progression of resurrection appearances, and he uses *epeita / eita* to describe it. He also uses the same *epeita / eita* construction to describe a chronological progression of resurrections, with a time gap between them.

- "...the end" - the end of the millennial kingdom
- The rapid movement from the Rapture (v23) to "the end" indicates that Paul is telescoping end times events rather than describing every detail. There will be other resurrections not mentioned here:
 - The Two Witnesses at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev 11:11-12)
 - OT saints at the Second Coming (Dan 12:1-3,13)
 - Tribulation saints at the Second Coming (Rev 20:4)
- Paul connects the kingdom with the final, future resurrection; refers to the end of the present heavens and earth, after the 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom
- At that time (Rev 20), Christ, who will have been reigning over His earthly kingdom, will turn over ("hand over" [ISV]) that reign ("kingdom") to the Father
- "...He" - Jesus
- "...hands over the kingdom" - at the end of the millennial kingdom, the kingdom of God the Son will merge with the kingdom of God the Father
- "...abolished all" - *kartargeo*, making all ruling powers ineffective, terminating and setting them aside
- Christ's abolition of all other "rule...authority...power" will take place when He subdues the rebels that rise up against Him at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:7-10)

25 For **He must reign** until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

25 For he must rule until God puts all the Messiah's enemies under his feet.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

- Before the Son takes the kingdom and merges it / relinquishes it to the Father, He (Jesus) must reign and put all His enemies under His feet. He just fulfill what Adam failed to do, which is to rule the earth for the glory of God (Gen 1:26-28; 3:6ff; Ps 8:3-9; Rom 5:12) and to fulfill the Davidic Covenant (1 Chr 17:10b-14; Ps 89).
- To say that this is happening now not only violates logic and common sense, but it also violates the chronology of the passage
- Before the events of v24 can happen...before He abolishes all rule and all authority and power, before He abolishes death, before He hands over the kingdom to the Father, there must be a successful reign of Christ on the earth for 1,000 years.
- The successful reign of Christ on the earth is described in v25,27 by alluding to two OT passages to describe His reign:
- "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet" (Ps 110:1-2) - the reign of Christ on earth must take place before "the end," before He can hand over His kingdom to the Father. If Jesus doesn't reign over a kingdom, how could He turn over His kingdom to the Father?

- "...He must reign" - an imperative; Jesus must reign from the earth because Ps 110:1-2 says that this must take place
- The context of Ps 110 is David's Lord, the Messiah, sitting at the right hand of God for a session in heaven (Heb 10:12-13) "until" He begins His earthly reign over His enemies from "Zion" (Jerusalem).
- When does this reign take place? If you follow the passage chronologically (v23), it occurs "at His coming" which refers to the Second Coming. You have Christ at His Second Coming, *then* the reigning starts. Kingdom Now puts the reigning *before* the Second Coming of Christ, but this interpretation ignores the chronology of the passage.
- Every other reference to the kingdom in 1 Cor also relates it as future (4:5,8; 6:2-3,9-10; 15:50)
- So Christ returns at the Second Coming, there's a resurrection of OT saints and Tribulation Martyrs, then Christ reigns for 1000 years. Verse 25 is a description of this reign through the use of Ps 110:1-2.
- Jesus, the Last Adam, must fully restore what was lost by the first Adam, and He must reign in the same realm where the first Adam failed (Cf. Ps 8)
- You cannot go into glory except under the sovereignty of the One who has won the right for you to enter
- See [The Coming Kingdom 66 Kingdom Now Passages: 1 Cor 15:23-28 - Part 1](#) and [The Coming Kingdom 67 Kingdom Now Passages: 1 Cor 15:23-28 - Part 2](#).

Ps 110:1-2:

- 1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
- 2 The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from **Zion**, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."
- "...Zion" - Jerusalem

Paul alludes to this Psalm in v25, referring to the reign of Christ from Jerusalem ("Zion") after His Second Coming. In the meantime, where is Jesus now? — Ps 110:1..."Sit at My right hand": He's sitting at the Father's right hand in heaven.

- 26 The last enemy **that will be abolished** is **death**.
- 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
- 26 The last enemy to be done away with is death,
- 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
- "...that will be abolished" - *katargeō*, rendered inoperative

- "...death" - death will be defeated at the end of the kingdom, at the beginning of the Eternal State, when God wins the final battle against Satan and rebellious mankind (Rev 20:7-10)
- In addition to "putting down" "all rule...authority...power" (v25), He will also defeat death, and from then on, no one will die
- Christ holds the keys of death and the grave (Rev 1:18). Both death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Rev 20:14).
- If there is a resurrection of all believers, the power of death ends once and for all
- Even though Jesus triumphed over death in His resurrection, believers still die. Therefore we *must* experience resurrection at some point, because we are "in Christ" and because only then (after all believers have been raised) will the final enemy, Death, be subdued. Only then will God become all in all.

27 For **HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says**, "All things are put in subjection," it is clear that this excludes the *Father* who put all things in subjection to Him.

27 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 is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

27 for "God has put everything under his feet." Now when he says, "Everything has been put under him," this clearly excludes the one who put everything under him.

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.

- The second OT quote Paul uses to describe the successful reign of Christ on the earth is Ps 8:6. That passage describes Jesus ruling the present world, where the first Adam failed. In every area where the first Adam failed, the Last Adam will succeed. It describes how God will restore everything that was lost in Eden.

— The original pattern in Eden was that God created Adam and Eve, and they were to govern creation for God (Gen 1:26-28): God rules over our forebears (Adam and Eve), and they rule over creation for God.

— In Ps 8, God will not rule over the first Adam, He's going to rule over the Last Adam. God the Father will rule over God the Son; God the Son will rule over this earth for God.

— Paul saw Jesus as the Person who fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Ps 8:7. In the Psalm, the ruler in view is man, but Christ will be the Man who will have regained for humanity all that Adam lost.

- "...HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET" - it is during the Son's reign that Jesus, the ultimate Man and King, fulfills all the prophecies, covenants, and promises concerning God's messianic kingdom program

- The use of Ps 8 points to a future earthly reign of Jesus. Ps 8 explains and expands on Gen 1:26-28, that God created man to rule successfully over the earth. The Last Adam must succeed from and over the same realm where the first Adam failed—earth. The Last Adam's destiny is not to rule from heaven in a spiritual kingdom...it is to rule *from* and over the earth just like the first Adam was supposed to do...but unlike Adam, Jesus will succeed.
- Once this occurs, then the eternal kingdom of the Father commences
- This once again highlights the need for an age that is distinct from both this present age and the Eternal State. Assuming that unfulfilled promises will be fulfilled during the Eternal State puts fulfillment outside the reign of Jesus, to whom the task of fulfillment belongs.
- "...But when He says" - means that all things will be subjected to the Son during this 1,000 year time period, except the Father, who originally gave the Son authority to rule and reign

Ps 8:4-6:

- 4 What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?
 - Good question: Why on earth does God care for humanity?
- 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty!
- 6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,
 - Verse 6 answers the question from v4: Because of God's original perfect purpose for mankind
 - God's original purpose for mankind was to rule the entire earth under His delegated authority (on His behalf)

Paul uses two OT Psalms (Ps 110:1; 8:6) to describe the interim reign of Christ on the earth before He takes His kingdom and turns it over to the God the Father.

- 28 When all things are **subjected** to **Him**, then the Son Himself will also be **subjected** to the One who **subjected** all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.
- 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.
- 28 But when everything has been put under him, then the Son himself will also become subject to the one who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.
- 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.

- "...subjected" [3x] - *hypotassō*, to arrange under; to submit to one's control. The verb occurs 3x in this verse in three different Greek forms; 6x in v27-28
- The Son proceeds eternally from the Father (Ps 2:7), and confesses that He can do nothing of Himself, only those things which he sees the Father doing (John 5:19)
- "...Him" - God the Father
- When the earthly messianic kingdom ends, everything will merge into the eternal kingdom of God. At that time, the Lamb will sit on the same throne as the Father and co-reign with Him for all eternity, although the Lamb's rule will be functional subordinate to the Father.
- This is the central passage that affirms the eternal functional (not ontological) subordination of the Son to the Father (Cf. 3:22-23; 8:6; 11:3; Mark 13:32; 14:62; John 1:1; 14:28; 17:24; Eph 3:21; Phil 2:9-11; 4:19-20)

After the Millennium

We learn from v24-28 that the Father put the kingdom under the Son's authority for the purpose of cleansing it of all enemies. The last enemy is death which will be conquered at the end of the millennium when it will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14).

At that point we will enter eternity and the Son will hand the purified Kingdom back to the Father. The Creation will have been restored to the condition it was in when God originally created it, the rebellion in heaven will have been put down and the rebels judged, humanity will once again be sin-free and immortal, and there will be only one will in the universe—God's will. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will be just as they were before Satan's rebellion upset everything.

Paul uses all of this prophetic detail, most of it found nowhere else in Scripture, to logically argue to the Corinthians that the believer's future resurrection is the logical theological conclusion from the way God started things with the one man Adam.

(D) More negative consequences if there is no resurrection (15:29-34)

Paul now asks the Corinthians a number of questions from axiology, which is the philosophical discussion of the value of living a particular way given certain beliefs.

(a) The futility of baptism for the dead (15:29)

29 For 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?

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?

29 Otherwise, what will those people do who are being baptized because of those who have died? If the dead are not raised at all, why are they being baptized because of them?
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 verse may have more interpretations than any other verse in 1 Corinthians...
- "...what will those do" - Paul doesn't accuse the Corinthians of being baptized for the dead, but asks them that if there is no future resurrection, "what will those do" who are baptized for the dead
 - Paul did not say that the Corinthians were doing this, only that some people did this. He said: "Why then are *they* baptized for them?" not: Why then are *you* baptized for them?
 - Paul certainly is not endorsing the practice, but is simply using it as an argument in favor of a future resurrection. The Mormons practice baptism for the dead based on their erroneous interpretation of what Paul says here.
 - "...baptized for the dead" - this likely refers to proxy baptism, which was undergoing baptism for someone who died before they could be baptized
 - Whether the Corinthians were engaged in this or not, they were evidently influenced by this custom
 - Paul's point is to argue in favor of a future resurrection, and his logic is that if there is no future resurrection, as some Corinthians believed, it is foolish to undergo baptism for someone who had died because (if there's no resurrection) they are dead and gone forever. Even some pagans, who baptized for the dead, had a sense of a future resurrection (otherwise what would be the point of baptizing the dead?).
 - On the other hand, since there is a resurrection, when God raises those who were proxy baptized, they would not suffer shame for failure to undergo baptism while they were alive

(b) The futility of self-sacrifice (15:30-32)

- 30 Why are we also in danger every hour?
- 30 Why are we also in danger every hour?
- 30 And why in fact are we being endangered every hour?
- 30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?
- If there is no resurrection, why did Paul endure so many hardships and dangers in his ministry? Paul's sacrifices do not prove a future resurrection, but they do show that he believed there was one (otherwise what would be the point of him enduring what he did?).
 - He literally faced death on a daily basis, and did so because he believed God would raise him. Paul's next letter to the Corinthians catalogs the perils and adversities he went through (2 Cor 4:8-11; 11:23-29).

31 I affirm, brothers and sisters, by **the boasting in you** which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, that **I die daily**.

31 I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

31 I face death every day! That is as certain, brothers, as it is that I am proud of you in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord.

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

- "...the boasting in you" - Paul probably meant that he was proud that they were Christians, rather than boasting to other churches about their behavior

- "...I die daily" - Paul literally faced death on a daily basis

— Paul put himself in harm's way and at least once thought he was going to die (Cf. 2 Cor 1:8-9). Yet to do so (put himself in harm's way) would be foolish if there was no resurrection from the dead.

32 If from human motives I fought with **wildbeasts** at Ephesus, what good is it to me? If the dead are not raised, **LET'S EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE**.

32 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.

32 If I have fought with wild animals in Ephesus from merely human motives, what do I get out of it? If the dead are not raised, "Let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

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.

- One example of Paul facing death occurred in Ephesus, where Paul wrote this epistle. He spent three years in Ephesus during his third journey, but the only account of this interval is in Acts 19:1—20:1. Paul relates that God raised him from the dead as it were (2 Cor 1:8-10).

- "...wild beasts" - refers to his conflicts with Demetrius the silversmith and other guild members whose profits took a serious hit when Paul began to preach that gods made with human hands are not gods (Cf. Acts 19:24-30)

— If Paul battled these "wild beasts" from human motives, what would it profit him if the dead are not raised and there is no afterlife?

- "...LET'S EAT AND DRINK FOR TOMORROW WE DIE" - quoted from Is 22:13; Jesus echoes this proverb (Luke 12:19-20)

— If the dead are not raised and there is no afterlife, then the Judeans who espoused this philosophy were correct

— Our beliefs affect our behavior. If there is no future resurrection, why waste time living a moral life? You should just do whatever you want to maximize your pleasure now.

(c) Paul's exhortation (15:33-34)

(i) Separate from bad company (15:33)

33 **Do not be deceived:** "Bad company corrupts good morals."

33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

33 Stop being deceived: "Wicked friends lead to evil ends."

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

- Paul quotes a proverb from a comedy by the Greek poet Menander titled *Thais*. This saying was a proverb in Paul's day.

- "Do not be deceived" - this is the second time Paul warns the Corinthians not be deceived by their own society (6:9; Cf. Gal 6:7; James 1:16; 1 Cor 3:18)

- "...Bad company" - in context, refers to those in Corinth who did not believe in a future resurrection

— Paul urges those who believed in a future resurrection to not associate with those who did not as it would result in endless discussion that would eventually lead them to reject their belief in a future resurrection and stray morally

— Paul realized the ease with which people accept perverted beliefs, and how those perverted beliefs always led to a corruption in their moral/ethical behavior

(ii) Gain knowledge (15:34)

34 **Sober up** morally and **stop sinning**, for **some have no knowledge of God**. I say *this to your shame*.

34 Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this to your shame*.

34 Come back to your senses as you should, and stop sinning! For some of you—I say this to your shame—don't fully know God.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

- "Sober up" - *eknēphō*, "come back to your senses"; be alert to the spiritual dangers which surrounds you

— The Corinthians needed to begin thinking correctly: rather than living for the present, they needed to stop sinning and fulfill their present purpose, to spread the gospel

— It was a shame that their neighbors still had no knowledge of God, even though they had much knowledge of God (Cf. 1:5; 8:1). The Corinthians' persistence in sin kept others from the knowledge of God.

- "...stop sinning" - *mē hamartanō*, present tense, imperative mood meaning it is a command

— Paul's command for the Corinthians to stop sinning (their unbelief in a future resurrection = sinning) because it was already having a moral effect on their lives

- "...some have no knowledge of God" - their sinning (disbelief in resurrection) led to moral compromise and decay in their lives, which resulted in some in the surrounding city of Corinth had no knowledge of God
- Paul ties the Corinthians' moral decay to their wrong beliefs (particularly regarding the resurrection), which affected their witness in the surrounding community
- The implication is that the surrounding unbelievers could gain a knowledge of God through the moral lives of the Corinthians if the Corinthians corrected their beliefs
- "...*this* to your shame" - notice that Paul doesn't question their salvation/justification here; rather he says they could be *ashamed* of how the world had infiltrated their belief system, which in turn affected their moral integrity and ruined their witness

(E) The resurrection body (15:35-49)

(a) Objection stated (15:35)

35 But **someone will say**, "How are the dead raised? And **with what kind of body do they come?**"

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come back?"

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

- "...*someone will say*" - Paul now introduces a hypothetical objector to a future resurrection in order to clearly show the evidence for resurrection all around us (Cf. Rom 9:19; 11:19; James 2:18)

- Here, Paul addresses the objection that resurrection is impossible because when a person dies, their body decomposes and no one can reassemble it

— Some Greeks thought of the resurrection as the particles of a rotting corpse coming back together, which was considered both impossible and repulsive.

— Paul addresses this objection by teaching that the resurrection of believers was not simply a resuscitation of dead bodies from the same physical elements that it previously possessed, but instead a powerful re-creation of new, glorified (Christ-resembling) bodies

— There was a much more glorious future for believers than the present "spiritual" existence that the Corinthians followed

- "...*with what kind of body do they come?*" - Greek philosophers taught the immortality of the soul but denied the immortality of the body

— At the end of his address on the Areopagus (Mars Hill), the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens questioned Paul over this point (Acts 17:31-32)

The Physics of Immortality

Frank J. Tipler, Professor of Mathematical Physics at Tulane University, is a major theoretician in the field of global general relativity, that rarified branch of physics created by Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose. In devising a mathematical model of the end of the universe, Tipler (a professed atheist) came to a stunning conclusion. Using the most advanced and sophisticated methods of modern physics, relying solely on the rigorous procedures of logic that science demands, he has created a proof of the existence of God. He believes that every human being who ever lived will be resurrected from the dead. He claims that he arrived at his proofs of God and immortality "in exactly the same way physicists calculate the properties of an electron." His book, *The Physics of Christianity* (2007), explains why he now believes that the central claims of Judeo-Christian theology are in fact true, and that these claims are straight-forward deductions of the laws of physics as we now understand them.

(b) Example of seeds (15:36-38)

36 **You fool!** That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;
36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;
36 You fool! The seed you plant does not come to life unless it dies,
36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:
- "You fool!"- one who lacks good judgment (and excludes God from consideration) on a matter. The objection of v35 sounds reasonable on the surface, but it is very foolish, and drew a sharp rebuke from Paul.
— The person Paul is referring to here as a "fool" is a representative for the Corinthians who were mocking belief in a future resurrection
- To explain the resurrection, Paul uses a metaphor from agriculture...a seed must first be sown into the ground in order to come to life as a plant. You don't sow the plant, you sow the bare grain and it grows up to be the plant.
— So it is with the resurrection body...the dead body is buried (sown) in the ground and out from it, by God's power, comes the resurrection body
— The body that God resurrects will not be the same type of body that died, even though it is identified as the "body" of the same person

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.
37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.
37 and what you plant is not the form that it will be, but a bare kernel, whether it is wheat or something else.

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:

- The body that houses the life is different before and after death, as with a seed/grain
- In the same way, human life exists in one type of body before death, but after death it exists in a different type of body. God does this with grain, so he can do it with humans too.
- Jesus' physical body was placed in the tomb. On the third day a new glorified body came forth, no longer subject to time and space (John 20:19,26; Luke 24:31)
- What emerges from a seed that "dies" is incomparably more glorious than what was planted

38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

38 But God gives the plant the form he wants it to have, and to each kind of seed its own form.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

- Crops/plants (as well as people) do not rise of their own volition, nor by chance; only by the decisive action of God

— Paul reasoned that it is no more difficult to believe in the resurrection than it is to believe in the harvest

(c) Example of human and animal bodies (15:39-40)

39 **All flesh is not the same flesh**, but there is one *flesh* of mankind, another flesh of animals, another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

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.

39 Not all flesh is the same. Humans have one kind of flesh, animals in general have another, birds have another, and fish have still another.

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.

- "All flesh is not the same flesh" - the principle behind the distinguishing between our present flesh and our resurrection flesh. Our resurrection flesh is not the same rotting/disintegrating flesh that is in the grave.

— The various forms of flesh Paul gives—of mankind, of animals, of birds, and of fish—demonstrate that a body can subsist in different forms for different environments

— The fact that God created different kinds of flesh among various animals, based on their environment, should assist with us in understanding and believing that there can be different kinds of human bodies

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.

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.

40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of those in heaven is of one kind, and that of those on earth is of another.

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.

- There is also a difference in the "glory" of heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, thus the present body and resurrection body are not the same

— The fact that celestial bodies (stars) differ in "glory" should help us realize that human bodies can also differ in "glory"

— The glory of a perishable, mortal human body is much less than that of an imperishable, immortal human body

(d) Example of celestial bodies (15:41)

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

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.

41 One kind of splendor belongs to the sun, another to the moon, and still another to the stars. In fact, one star differs from another star in splendor.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

- All these differences we can see in nature are evidence that there will be differences of glory between our present body and our resurrected body

— They also show that one believer's resurrection body may differ in glory from another believer's resurrection body

(e) The perishable body versus the imperishable body (15:42-44)

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*;

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*;

42 This is how it will be at the resurrection of the dead. What is planted is decaying, what is raised cannot decay.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

- Paul's conclusion: all of these differences we see in nature are evidence for a future bodily resurrection
- Paul then continues with the agrarian metaphor: after death, the human body goes into the ground (is "sown") perishable (subject to death), but God raises it imperishable (not subject to death)

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
 43 The body is planted in a state of dishonor but is raised in a state of splendor. It is planted in weakness but is raised in power.

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:
 - The body goes into the ground in "dishonor" (not highly esteemed), but it is raised in "glory" (highly esteemed); it is weak (subject to frailties) when it dies, but it is powerful (with great capabilities) when it is resurrected.

44 it is sown a **naturalbody**, it is raised a **spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

44 It is planted a physical body but is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

- This passage (v42-44) is an example of the futuristic present tense (Cf. Joshua 6:2; Rom 8:29-30; 2 Peter 3:8; 1 John 2:17; Jude 14)
- "...natural body" - *psychikon*, soulish, belonging to the present age; created for our current environment
- "...spiritual body" - *pneumatikos*, supernatural, belonging to the future age

Burials are vivid and constant reminders of the curse of death pronounced in Genesis. The dissolution of the human body in the grave is the ultimate humiliation to we who were originally crowned with glory and honor to rule God's creation (Ps 8:5b; Heb 2:7b,9). Burial is a figurative sowing in anticipation of the future harvest at the time of the resurrection. A believer has received eternal life already (John 5:24; 17:3; 1 John 5:11-13).

Paul uses numerous examples from nature, and sprinkles in some teaching, so the Corinthians would understand the reality of a future resurrection. From this, the Corinthians who doubted resurrection should now know that our resurrection body is not a dead,

rotting corpse that comes back to life, but another body completely, with distinct eternal qualities.

Jesus' Resurrection Body

- Could appear and disappear at will (Luke 24:31; John 20:19)
- Could move through solid walls (John 20:19,26)
- Could be seen and felt; palpable (Matt 28:9; Luke 24:36-42)
- He could eat food, although it wasn't apparently necessary (Luke 24:41-43)
- Though glorified, He could be recognized (Luke 24:30-31)
- No more experience of death, aging, crying, mourning, sorrow, or pain (Rev 21:4)

All believers will be given new bodies like the glorious body of the Lord (Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2). Otherwise, we'd be better off if we died at 25!

(f) Those in Adam versus those in Christ (15:45-49)

45 So also it is written: "The **first** MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING PERSON." The last Adam was a life-giving spirit.

45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

45 This, indeed, is what is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

- Quoted from Gen 2:7...

- "...first" - the mention of a "first" implies that there would be a "last," which is Christ
— Paul already introduced a contrast between Adam and Christ in v20-24, and he elaborates on that contrast here. The contrast is between the different character of life between the soul (present life in Adam) and the spirit (future life in Christ).

- The resurrection body is spiritual, the product of Jesus Christ, the "last Adam," who gives new life. That life will inhabit a body that will never die.

— Paul called it "spiritual" because it is prepared for the *spiritual* rather than the physical realm. Moreover, it comes to us from a spirit-Being ("a life-giving spirit")—Jesus Christ—rather than a physical being—Adam.

— One can only assume full "spiritual" existence, including a spiritual body, just as Christ did: by resurrection

46 **However**, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

46 The spiritual does not come first, but the physical does, and then comes the spiritual.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

- "However" - indicates a disjunction in time between these two lives
- Even though God breathed life into Adam at Creation, his "physical" body was fitted only for the present order. Believers' new body at their resurrection will make them "spiritual" persons fitted for the eternal order.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man **is from heaven**.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

47 The first man came from the dust of the earth; the second man came from heaven.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

- God formed Adam from dust, to live on this planet (Gen 2:7); Jesus Christ had a heavenly origin (John 1:1)

— Christ's heavenly body also included flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), so we should not think of it has pure "spirit" in the sense of being immaterial.

— He ate and drank in His spiritual body and He was touched. Therefore, the spiritual body means that it was created for the next world which is spiritual in nature.

— "...is from heaven" - Jesus "is from heaven" since His resurrection was brought about from God in heaven who raised Him from the dead (Cf. Acts 2:24,32)

48 As is the earthy one, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly one, so also are those who are heavenly.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

48 Those who are made of the dust are like the man from the dust; those who are heavenly are like the man who is 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.

- Paul's point (v47-48) is that Adam was fitted for life in this age, with natural life, whereas Jesus was fitted for life in the age to come, with spiritual life. God equipped both to live in the realm they would occupy.

— The bodies we inherit from Adam are for our earthly existence; the bodies we receive from Christ at our resurrection will be for living in the spiritual (heavenly) realm

— Adam was the pattern, we are his copies. In Christ, He is the pattern (we are His copies)

— Just as a caterpillar enjoys a new dimensionality when it transforms into a butterfly, believers will also enjoy a new dimensionality in our resurrection bodies. We're headed for an "upgrade!"

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the likeness of the man who was made from dust, we will also bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

- Children born of their parents bear not only the external image, but also the talents, traits, and characteristics

— Those born *only* of Adam exist only in the natural world; those born *also* of the last Adam, who God equipped to live in the supernatural world by resurrection, will also exist in that world

— At the resurrection, God's intent to make man in His own image (Gen 1:26) will finally reach fulfillment, when believers finally receive their heavenly bodies that enable them to live in the spiritual sphere in fellowship with Him forever

After teaching about the necessity of resurrection for the body to be prepared for its future home, Paul now defines this future as the kingdom of God and reveals a mystery about the change that will take place for those who are still alive when the time to go to Heaven comes.

(F) The Rapture (15:50-58)

50 Now I say this, brothers *and* sisters, that **flesh and blood** cannot **inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

50 Brothers, this is what I mean: Mortal bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

- "...flesh and blood" - an idiom for our present mortal bodies; our current "flesh and blood" is not fit for the kingdom, we first need an "upgrade"

— It is impossible for us, in our present physical form, to enter into the heavenly glories of the kingdom of God. Thus, our bodies have to be resurrected/changed in order for us to enter the kingdom.

— Our bodies now are of the physical order, and need to be "converted" to the spiritual order to enter the kingdom. We need an upgrade (resurrection) before we change our

address.

- "...inherit" - inheriting the kingdom is synonymous with "entering" the kingdom throughout the NT (Cf. 6:9-10)
 - Another view is that "inheriting the kingdom" is different than "entering the kingdom." Entering is the birthright of all believers (John 3:5) while inheriting is a reward of reigning given to faithful believers (Col 3:23-25). Some passages do relate rewards with inheritance, but others to a birthright of all believers (Rom 8:17b). It is better to see all believers as entering and inheriting, and the degree of inheritance as related to varying degrees of the reward of rule in the kingdom. We were created by God to rule (Gen. 1:26-28), and therefore it seems that all believers will rule with Christ in the future kingdom.
 - "...the kingdom of God" - typically a reference to the future messianic kingdom on the earth, however we know from other passages (Dan 12:12; Zech 13:8-9; 14:11,16-19; Matt 24:13,22,31,40-41; 25:31-46; Rev 20:3,8) that mortal humans will enter the future earthly messianic kingdom [does "kingdom" refer to the messianic kingdom or heaven?]

51 **Behold**, I am telling you a **mystery**; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

51 Let me tell you a secret. Not all of us will die, but all of us will be changed—

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed

- "Behold" - grabs the readers attention and denotes that something important is about to be disclosed

- "...mystery" - *mystērion*, the Greek definition of "mystery" is something that is now out in the open, disclosed, revealed, that used to be hidden or veiled. It was hidden or unknowable by prior generations, but today is out in the open for everyone.

— It is similar to the Greek word *apocalypsis*, from which we get the English word "Revelation" which implies that God has "rolled back the curtain" on something so it is unveiled or revealed to everyone.

— The English definition of "mystery" is a truth that must be sought out with great diligence before you can understand its meaning. This definition doesn't fit here.

— According to Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: In the NT, it denotes not the mysterious (as with the English word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit.

— The mystery that Paul is not revealing is that not every believer will die before going to heaven, but all believers will be changed. "Changed" (*allasso*) refers to our present bodies being altered into our resurrection bodies at the Rapture.

- This is proof that the Rapture and Second Coming are separate events: the Rapture was an unknown event ("mystery") until Paul revealed it here; the Second Coming, however, is spoken of numerous times throughout the OT and the Gospels.
- "...we will not all sleep" - Paul informs the Corinthians about an entire generation of believers on earth who will not experience physical death
- "we" [2x] - Paul again uses the first person plural, to include himself as well as his readers (Cf. 1 Thess 4:15); this is evidence that the Rapture will include all believers, even those who are carnal. It also shows that Paul considered himself eligible to be included in the Rapture, arguing in favor of the doctrine of imminence.
- "all" [2x] - negates the doctrine of a "partial Rapture" (the view that only walking and watchful Christians will participate)
- "sleep" - a euphemism for physical death; Paul used this same word in describing the Rapture in his letter to the Thessalonians (Cf. 1 Thess 4:13)
- Paul had previously written to the Thessalonians about the Rapture, where dead Christians will rise first before God "catches up" living believers, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:15-17)
- The point of this passage is not to disclose the Rapture to the Corinthian church, since they would have been aware of it based on Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians (written in 51 AD, from Corinth), but to
- Two OT passages describe a future resurrection at the end of the age (Dan 12:1-2; Job 19:25-27); since the resurrection described here by Paul was previously unknown and undeclared in Scripture ("a mystery"), it must refer to a different resurrection, including the living, than the resurrection at the end of the age.
- "...we will all be changed" - in v35-39, Paul revealed that our resurrection bodies will be different than our present bodies. Now he reveals further that living believers "translated" at the Rapture would not only be taken up, but also simultaneously receive spiritual bodies.
- Not every Christian will die before they receive a new body, but every one must experience this change prior to entering heaven
- Whether a believer is alive or dead at the Rapture, we will all receive spiritual bodies at that moment

Exemption from Death

1. Enoch (Gen 5)
2. Elijah (2 Kings 2)
3. Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev 12:5)
4. Philip (Acts 8:39)
5. Paul (2 Cor 12:2,4)
6. John (Rev 4:1-2)

7. Two Witnesses (Rev 11)

The Greek verb *harpazō* is used in Rev 12:5; Acts 8:39; 2 Cor 12:2,4. This is the same verb used to describe the Rapture in 1 Thess 4:17.

Partial Rapture Theory

The entire book of 1 Corinthians is a death blow to the Partial Rapture theory. This theory suggests that only "spiritual, growing" Christians will be taken in the Rapture, but backslidden, carnal Christians will be left behind so the Tribulation can "straighten them out." This theory produces a lot of unnecessary fear in people. What happens if I'm having a sinful thought at the moment of the Rapture...does that mean I'll be left behind? It is interesting that everyone who teaches this theory believes they are good enough to be taken; none of them think that they will be left behind. It also ignores the typology of Lot, as well as Paul's point throughout the entire book of 1 Corinthians.

Here's what Paul addressed to these carnal Christians in Corinth:

- 1 Cor 1-4 - the church was divided on the speaking styles of various preachers
- 1 Cor 5 - incest among the believers
 - Paul reprimands them that not even the pagans were involved in incest
 - Carnal believers often don't look or act anything like a believer; sometimes their sin even surpasses that of an unbeliever
- 1 Cor 6 - believers are suing each other, with trials before unbelieving judges; sexual immorality with temple prostitutes
 - Not obeying John 13:35
- 1 Cor 7 - rampant divorce and remarriage
- 1 Cor 8-10 - food sacrificed to idols
 - Converts from Judaism, with sensitive food-related consciences, who were upset about food sacrificed to idols. Other (Gentile?) believers didn't care or have the same conscience, but were using their liberty to stumble their Jewish brothers.
- 1 Cor 11 - drunkenness and disorderly conduct at communion
 - There was also a "pay-to-play" scheme that favored the rich and excluded the poor; they had turned communion into a common meal; lost its sacredness
- 1 Cor 12-14 - imbalance on spiritual gifts, placing those who speak in tongues on pedestal, with no interpreters
 - The practice was disorderly and non-conducive to non-believers
 - The church was using their gifts, but not with love (1 Cor 13)
- 1 Cor 15 - gnostic takeover in Corinth, denying the resurrection
 - Paul explains that if you don't have resurrection, you don't have Christianity because it's based on the resurrection of Jesus

The Corinthian church was a complete and total mess. But when Paul gets to the end of 1 Cor 15, after dealing with all of the carnal actions and beliefs of this church for 15 chapters, he includes these carnal, backslidden, highly confused believers in the Rapture!! When the Rapture happens, it happens for everyone, no matter how much progress one has made in the middle tense of their salvation (sanctification). It's part of the "Grace Package" that God gives to us...participation in the Rapture. Rewards at the Bema Seat are a different story, but the inclusion in the Rapture is not.

52 in a **moment**, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **lasttrumpet**; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we** will be changed.

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

52 in a moment, faster than an eye can blink, at the sound of the last trumpet. Indeed, that trumpet will sound, and then the dead will be raised never to decay, and we will 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.

- "...moment" - *atomos*, means "not to cut" meaning an indivisible fragment of time (in quantum physics, an indivisible quanta of time is 10^{-33} seconds); it's an amount (of time) so small that it can no longer be divided

— This describes the rate of transformation from our current physical body to our resurrection/spiritual body at the Rapture. It will not be a gradual process, but instantaneous.

- "...in the twinkling of an eye" - "in the blink of an eye"; the Rapture will happen so quickly that you blink your eye during that time, you would not see it happen

- "...last trumpet" - interpretations abound about this "last trumpet" and it is said to be a problem for those who hold to a pre-Tribulational Rapture since there are trumpets once the Tribulation begins (the 7th Trumpet that sounds in the middle of the Tribulation, Rev 11:15; the trumpet that sounds at the Second Coming, Matt 24:31).

— However, "last" (*eschatos*) here refers to the "last one in a series" rather than the last one ever. There will be trumpets blown during the millennial kingdom, so the trumpet Paul speaks of here cannot be the last trumpet ever.

— This trumpet blast (sound) will summon Christians home to heaven (Cf. 1 Thess 4:16); it will be the last trumpet we hear before we're changed; the last trumpet blast of the Church Age.

— It's possible this is not a literal trumpet blast, since the Rapture will take place "in the twinkling of an eye," but is rather a metaphor for Christ's summoning of His Church.

However, throughout Israel's history, God has announced His working for the nation, and He summoned His people to Himself, with the blowing of literal trumpets (Ex 19:16,19; 20:18; Lev 25:9; Num 10:2,8-10).

— It is called the "Trumpet of God" (1 Thess 4:16), used only there and in Ex 19:16 at Mt. Sinai. Since both the Corinthian passage and the one from 1 Thess 4:16-17 describe the same event, we can assume this trumpet is the same one mentioned there.

- "...we" - the fact that Paul includes himself in the group living at the time of the Rapture shows that he expected this event to take place imminently (at any moment). If Paul believed that the Rapture would not occur until after the Tribulation period, it would've made sense to mention it here.

The Last Trump

Mid-Tribulationists equate this trumpet with the seventh or last trumpet of Rev 11:15-18, but this is not valid. Other trumpets will sound announcing various other events in the future (Cf. Matt 24:31; Rev 8:2,6,13; 9:14). However, believers living in the Church Age will not be on the earth then, and those trumpets will not affect us. This "last trumpet" is not the very last one that the Bible speaks of. The fact that Paul included himself, in the group living at the time of the Rapture, shows that he expected that event to take place imminently (i.e., "at any moment"; Cf. 1 Thess 4:15,17). If he believed the Tribulation precedes the Rapture, it would have been natural for him to mention that here.

In 1 Thess 4:16 Paul called this the trumpet call of God. The trumpets blown during the Feast of Trumpets are all blown by men on Earth and concern Israel, not the Church. The ones blown during the trumpet judgments of Rev 8:6—9:20; 11:16 are blown by angels in heaven, not on earth. And the trumpet blown in Matt 24:31 summons the angels in heaven, not believers on earth. In my opinion the trumpet call of God is different from all these because it is blown at God's command specifically to and for the Church on Earth.

Correlations between trumpet calls in Ex 19:16 and 1 Cor 15:52 include:

1. Israelites redeemed from slavery; the Church redeemed from sin
2. Israel was consecrated; the Church will be perfected
3. Israel washed their clothes; the Church will be given clean clothes
4. God came to the mountain top; Jesus will come in the air
5. Moses and Aaron went up; the Church will go up
6. Israel was wed to God; the Church will be wed to Christ
7. God dwelt with Israel; the Church will dwell with Christ
8. God promised to abide with Israel if they obeyed; the Church will abide with Christ because He obeyed
9. Israel changed themselves temporarily; the Church will be changed permanently

10. Israel was in great fear; the Church will be in great joy
11. Mt. Sinai was the presentation of God's Law; the Rapture is the manifestation of His grace

53 For this perishable **must** put on the imperishable, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

53 For what is decaying must be clothed with what cannot decay, and what is dying must be clothed with what cannot die.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

- "...must" - *dei*, a divine imperative; in order to comply with what Paul said earlier (v50), both the dead in Christ and those who are alive and remain must receive resurrection bodies because our current bodies are not fit to dwell in heaven

54 But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: "**DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP** in victory.

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.

54 Now, when what is decaying is clothed with what cannot decay, and what is dying is clothed with what cannot die, then the written word will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up by victory!"

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

- "When" this event (perishable putting on the imperishable), both Is 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 will be fulfilled

- "...DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP" - quoted from Is 25:8

— This verse refers to the new heaven and new earth (Cf. Rev 21:4) when the last human has died and all tears are wiped away. But here, Paul is making application of it to when Church Age believers receive our resurrection bodies at the Rapture.

55 WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, **O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?**"

55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

- "...WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?" - quoted from Hosea 13:14. Paul modified the actual quote for his own purpose in this passage.
- This verse is a question regarding Israel's redemption from death through resurrection from the grave (Sheol). At that time, God would not redeem them, but with the coming of Christ He did provide for their redemption.

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law;

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

56 Now death's stinger is sin, and sin's power is the Law.

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

- Here in a single verse, Paul expresses the doctrine of sin, the law, and death:

- "...The sting of death is sin" - in is the "sting of death" because death is caused by sin. What makes sin sinful is the law of God. Since Jesus overcame sin and fulfilled the law, death cannot hold its prey (Rom 5:12-21).

— Two years later, Paul expanded the complete doctrine in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom 6:23; 7:9-11,13)

- "...the power of sin is the Law" - the sin nature rebels against the Law (Cf. Rom 7:5,8-13)

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus the Messiah!

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- But God gives us victory over the sin nature and death through "our Lord Jesus Christ" who defeated sin and fulfilled the Law so that when we believe in Him we also defeat sin and fulfill the Law (Cf. Rom 8:3-4)

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not *in* vain in the Lord.

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.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, unmovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that the work that you do for the Lord isn't wasted.

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.

- "Therefore" - after 57 verses of doctrinal truth, with no application or commands/imperatives presented at all, Paul now summarizes the application of a future resurrection. Paul knew that what we believe about the future affects how we live in the present.

- "...my beloved brothers *and sisters*" - Paul loved the Corinthian believers, and referred to them lovingly in anticipation of a positive response from them to his exhortation
- "...firm" - *hedraios*, steadfast; settled; stand firm in the gospel
- "...immovable" - *ametakinētos*, not wavering (even a little bit) in your belief in the resurrection
- "...excelling" - *perisseuō*, abounding; increasing
- So based on what Paul said over the past 57 verses, how then shall we live? We should stand firm in the gospel, not waver in our belief in our future resurrection, and always increasing in the work of the Lord.
- The Bible is not a textbook or a book of theory. It is the compass, the chart, the guide for your whole life. Not applying it is the ultimate sin.
- We are to prepare for the victory that is ours, and not let anyone or anything rob us of that confidence. Don't allow yourself to be moved away from the hope of the gospel. Never be satisfied with anything less than giving yourself wholly to it.