



***19: Hope Beyond the Grave*** (1 Cor 15:29-58)  
 What should Christians believe about hope beyond the grave? There are many different perspectives in our culture, but what do the Scriptures have to say? Let's find out.

## beourguest

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## teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES

### Different Perspectives of Life Beyond the Grave

- **Some think people become angels** who watch over loved ones. The Bible does not teach this. In fact, the Bible commands us NOT to try to contact the dead, calling it a detestable practice (Deut 18:10-12).
- **Some think people reincarnate** and come back as another person or animal. This is found nowhere in the pages of the Scriptures nor in the minds of the Jewish people (including Jesus).
- **Some think people are disembodied souls** who float and fly around; some even say **we are just absorbed into 'the universe'** where we all become part of the same consciousness. This is NOT Christian teaching.

**What IS our Hope Beyond the Grave?** What will happen at the end of all things? Let's find out!

### CATCH THE CONTEXT

Last week we saw the significance of our Resurrected King. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then Jesus or his disciples were LIARS.

### The Resurrection - A Big Fat Lie?

**1 Corinthians 15:14-19** (CSB) and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom He did not raise up...And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

But...***if He rose from the dead, then we can trust what He said.***

### Many Saw the Risen Jesus

**1 Corinthians 15:5-8** (CSB) and that **He appeared to Cephas**, then to the Twelve. Then **He appeared to over five hundred** brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then **He appeared to James**, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, **He also appeared to me.**

### Because He Lives...

**1 Corinthians 15:20-23** (CSB) But as it is, **Christ has been raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the **resurrection of the dead also comes through a man**. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, **at His coming**, those who belong to Christ.

## Baptized for the Dead?

**1 Corinthians 15:29** (CSB) Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?

**What in the world is THAT about?** This is taught NOWHERE in all of Scripture. So why does Paul write about it?

Paul is not commanding baptism of the dead - whatever that meant to the Corinthians - nor is he condemning this Corinthian practice here in this text (he might have addressed this at another time). Instead, Paul uses this Corinthian tradition to point to this Christian truth - that **those who have died have hope beyond the grave.**

🔍 **Think about it.** What's baptism a picture of? Death, burial, and....RESURRECTION!

## Why Face Death if That's All There Is?

**1 Corinthians 15:30-32** (CSB) Why are we in danger every hour? I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*

If this life is all there is, why would Paul and other Christians do things that put them in danger to **face death every day**? Paul writes about this in other places and focuses on our hope beyond the grave.

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**Romans 8:18** (CSB) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

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**2 Corinthians 4:17** (CSB) For our momentary light affliction is producing for us **an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.**

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If this life is all there is, and the dead are not raised, then we should follow the ancient slogan (and current worldview for many) - **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.** (Is 22:13; Ecc 2:24)

## Beliefs Impact Our Behavior

**1 Corinthians 15:33-34** (CSB) Do not be deceived: "*Bad company corrupts good morals.*" **Come to your senses and stop sinning;** for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame.

Paul is likely quoting this line from a play which is now lost to time (*Thais* by Menander).<sup>1</sup> This quote is exactly what has been happening to some followers of Jesus who have been **deceived** by those who don't believe in the resurrection of the dead - those who live by "Let us eat, drink, for tomorrow we die". Their **bad company** has corrupted the **good morals** of Christians. \* Spending much time with those who BELIEVE and BEHAVE wrongly will impact our morals and limit our influence to others.

Christians must wake up from the deception and **come to** their **senses**. Christians who live with HOPE beyond the grave also know there is JUDGEMENT beyond the grave. Christians are to live like Jesus has risen and is returning, and then to influence the **people who are ignorant about God**, rather than becoming like them.

Paul now borrows from Genesis 1-2 to show how God created the heavens and the earth, all the plants, animals, and humans. Paul is using an illustration that farmers understand.

## In the Beginning God Created Plants

**1 Corinthians 15:35-37** (NCV) But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? **What kind of body will they have?**" Foolish person! When you sow a seed, it must die in the ground before it can live and grow. And when you sow it, it does not have the same "body" it will have later. What you sow is only a bare seed, maybe wheat or something else.

When you plant/**sow a seed**, you plant something **in the ground**, that will eventually **live and grow** again. The dormant seed **does not have the same body** as the plant that rises out of the ground.

## In the Beginning God Created People, Land Animals, Birds, & Fish

**1 Corinthians 15:38-39** (NCV) But **God gives it a body that he has planned for it**, and God gives each kind of seed its own body. All things made of flesh are not the same: **People** have one kind of flesh, **animals** have another, **birds** have another, and fish have another.

Paul moves from **earthly bodies** of people & animals to **heavenly bodies** - what people see in the 'heavens' - (what we would call "space").

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 306.

## In the Beginning God Created The Heavens and the Earth

**1 Corinthians 15:40-44** (NCV) Also there are heavenly bodies [space] and earthly bodies [people & animals]. But the beauty of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the beauty of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another beauty, and the stars have another. And each star is different in its beauty. It is the same with the dead who are raised to life. The body that is "planted" will ruin and decay, but it is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed. When the body is "planted," it is **without honor**, but it is **raised in glory**. When the body is "planted," it is **weak**, but when it is **raised, it is powerful**. The body that is "planted" is a **physical body**. When it is **raised**, it is a **spiritual body**. There is a **physical body**, and there is also a **spiritual body**.

The **body** that is **raised** is going to be **different** - real & touchable - yet no longer **dying, without honor, & weak** - like sinful Adam; but **raised, glorified, & powerful** - like sinless Jesus.

## Last Adam>1st Adam

**1 Corinthians 15:45-49** (NCV) It is written in the Scriptures: "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam became a spirit that gives life. The spiritual did not come first, but the physical and then the spiritual. The first man came from the dust of the earth. **The second man came from heaven**. People who belong to the earth are like the first man of earth. But those people who belong to heaven are like the man of heaven. **Just as we were made like the man of earth, so we will also be made like the man of heaven.**

When Jesus physically raised from the dead, the apostles feared they were seeing a ghost. Jesus told them,

**Luke 24:39-43** (CSB) Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Jesus had a physical body that could be recognized & touched. He could eat...yet...He could no longer die. *Similar, but different.* In this way, we will be transformed into **the image of Jesus, the Man of heaven** - able to touch and be touched, able to eat, but...no longer able to die. (And there's more.)

## Forever Changed

**1 Corinthians 15:50-52** (NCV) I tell you this, brothers and sisters: **Flesh and blood cannot have a part in the kingdom of God**. Something that will ruin cannot have a part in something that never ruins. But look! I tell you this secret: We will not all sleep in death, but **we will all be changed**. It will take only a second—as quickly as an eye blinks—when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet will sound, and **those who have died will be raised to live forever, and we will all be changed**.

Followers of Jesus **who have died will be raised to live forever**; those who are still alive when Jesus returns **will be changed** to be like the risen Jesus! John, the apostle of Jesus (who SAW Jesus ascend into heaven, and who heard the angels declare that Jesus would return the same way - Acts 1:11), writes about what will happen in that moment.

**1 John 3:2-3** (NCV) Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that **when Christ comes again, we will be like Him**, because **we will see Him as He really is**. Christ is pure, and all who have this hope in Christ keep themselves pure like Christ.

Paul wrote that we will know Him fully when we are "face to face." (1 Cor 13:12) As we look forward to that moment, we must **BE LIVING** like Jesus is **RETURNING**, living **pure**. What a moment that will be - when the followers of Jesus will be reunited with one another and with our King (also see 1 Thes 4:13-18)!

**1 Corinthians 15:53-54a** (NCV) This body that can be destroyed must clothe itself with something that can never be destroyed. And this body that dies must clothe itself with something that can never die. So **this body that can be destroyed will clothe itself with that which can never be destroyed**, and **this body that dies will clothe itself with that which can never die**.

**1 Corinthians 15:54b-57** (CSB)

then the saying that is written will take place: **Death has been swallowed up in victory**. [Is 25:8] *Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?* [Hos 13:14] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But **thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!**

When the stinger is removed, there will be **NO MORE FEAR!** And this is exactly what will happen on that day. The stinger of **death** that comes from **sin** will be removed! **No more sin = no more death!**

## Our Future Hope Impacts Our Present Practices

### 1 Corinthians 15:58 (CSB)

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, **be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work**, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

✓ Your *faithfulness to Jesus & your work for Jesus* is not empty; it is not wasted. **Live for an audience of ONE.**

## Hope & Judgement Beyond the Grave

### Revelation 20:11–21:8 (CSB)

Then I saw a great white throne and **One seated on it**. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is **the book of life**, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. **Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire**. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. Then I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, **the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God**, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, **God's dwelling is with humanity**, and **He will live with them**. They will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and will be their God. **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes**. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. **The one who conquers will inherit these things**, and I will be His God, and he will be My son.

But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

**Why end with this warning?** Sometimes it's not until we stare death in the face that we consider the Christian claims about eternity.

🔗 **Are you safe in the arms of Jesus?** Is He King over your life? If not, or if you have questions CONTACT US.

## heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

\* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

\* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

## discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? You might need to look back in your notes to help explain your answer.
2. **Read 1 Cor 15:45-54.** How are future transformed bodies of believers likely to be similar & different from earthly bodies? Spend some time talking about what life without sin & sin nature will be like.
3. **Read Revelation 20:11-21:8.** How does this picture of future hope and future judgement comfort you and concern you for yourself/others?
4. How can a Christian grieve for someone's death while still holding on to the hope of resurrection?
5. **Read 1 Cor 15:58.** Discuss how believing in the future resurrection & the return of Jesus should impact how we live on earth. In what areas are you struggling to stand firm (steadfast & immovable)? Why should Christians be encouraged to know that what we do for Jesus is not done in vain (not a waste)?
6. What specific areas do YOU need to commit to do the work of the Lord?
7. What other questions has this teaching or discussion prompted for us to talk about?
8. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.**