

What Do You Do With Jesus?

1 Corinthians 15

About thirty years earlier, Jesus had died and risen again. So many of the witnesses were still alive when Paul wrote this letter.

Some people in the church denied the Resurrection.

What Does The Bible Say?

Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. ² It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 NLT)

The message of the gospel is both easy to explain and complicated. The gospel can be expressed in five words—“Jesus died and rose again”—or expounded in sixteen chapters (Romans 1–16).

Chapter 15 deals with the resurrection of believers, not of unbelievers. Of course, the Scriptures teach that there will be a resurrection of unbelievers (John 5:28–29), but the Scriptures give only slight attention to that event.

Facts About The Resurrection:

Christ’s resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures (Ps. 16:10).

4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. (1 Corinthians 15:4 NLT)

The risen Christ appeared to more than five hundred witnesses, including Paul.

5 He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. (1 Corinthians 15:5–8 NLT)

The Resurrection is central to the gospel.

14 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15 And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:14–15 NLT)

Without the Resurrection, there would be no forgiveness of sin.

17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18 In that case, all who have

died believing in Christ are lost! 19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. (1 Corinthians 15:17–19 NLT)

Because Christ rose again, we know we can also have a resurrected body.

20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23 But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

24 After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and

authority and power. 25 For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. 26 And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:20–26 NLT)

Our dead, physical body will one day be resurrected.

42 It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. (1 Corinthians 15:42 NLT)

During the Resurrection, our soul will be reunited with our resurrected body.

43 Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44 They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:43–44 NLT)

Jesus is the power behind the Resurrection. (John 11:25)

45 The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45 NLT)

After the Resurrection, we will be recognizable and capable of supernatural activities. (see Luke 24:31, 36, 51).

51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a

moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown.

For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.

53 For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory. (1 Corinthians 15:51–54 NLT)

Our resurrection will take place when Jesus returns (see 1 Thess. 4:13–18).

51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. (1 Corinthians 15:51–52 NLT)

How Can You Obey?

14 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15 And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can’t be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. 16 And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then

Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.

18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost!

19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. (1 Corinthians 15:14–19 NLT)

What Do You Do With Jesus?

Why do you believe Jesus conquered death?

I believe in the resurrection of Jesus because of people's changed lives who saw Him after His resurrection.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Notes:

Today's Bible & Science comes from Ken Ham, The New Answers Book 1 (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), 149–163-165.

Explore:

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul put the gospel message in a concise, summarized form. The literal bodily resurrection of Jesus was foundational to this message. It was so important that he spent the next several verses (5-12) establishing the grounds for belief in this crucial event. From there, he taught the Corinthian believers how this event would impact their lives for all eternity.

Explore:

Some were teaching that there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12). If true, that would mean that Christ did not rise from the dead. And if Christ was not raised then faith is

useless. If Christianity is for this life only, then believers are to be pitied because there is no hope after death. The sacrifices Paul made to spread the gospel would be in vain. If there is no resurrection we should party hard, for tomorrow we die.

But Christ did rise from the dead (verse 20). It started with Him and He paved the way for all who know Him to be raised when He returns. The term first-fruits was an allusion to the Jews bringing the best of the first of their harvest as an offering to God (Exodus 34:26). It was intended to represent the full harvest that was yet to come. Here, the term was used in reference to a preliminary installment, including not only an example, but also a guarantee of more to come. Being asleep was used metaphorically for those who had died.

In verse 21, Paul reminded the Corinthians that death came as a result of a man, namely Adam. Since all humans inherit a sin nature from Adam, all sin and die. Conversely, it was through a

man (Jesus— the God-man), that God could offer us life (resurrection). In the same way that Adam brought death through his disobedience, Christ brings life through His obedience. All who are in Christ and follow Him will live. The death and life spoken of in verses 21- 22 involve both physical and spiritual. Thus, Christ will one day destroy death, the final enemy. (See also Romans 5:12-21.)

The process for this resurrection is an orderly one. Christ was raised first and then His followers will be raised at His appearing. Then will come the end, when Jesus will deliver the kingdom into the hands of the Father, having subdued all, including His enemies (verses 24-25). In verse 26, death is personified and referred to as one of God's enemies. After all, God desires to give life, while man, through Adam, chose death (Genesis 2:17).

Through the Resurrection, Christ demonstrated His rule and power over all. All things are subject to Him and under His feet (verse 27). When all this is completed, Christ will join the church and all of creation in subjection to the Father. This subjection is so that God may be “all in all,” an expression relating to the supremacy of God and His will in all things (verse 28).

Verse 29 is puzzling at best and much debated by scholars. While baffling to scholars today, it seems as if the Corinthians knew what Paul was speaking of. There is no information given concerning how this “baptism for the dead” was done or what it was intended to accomplish. What we do know, however, is that Paul distinguished his own practice and belief from those who were participating in such an act. The notion that a person could be baptized on behalf of one already dead contradicts the clear teaching of both salvation and baptism given throughout the New Testament. It was likely a practice rooted in pa- gan

culture and not one the apostle could approve. Paul's point, however, was: Why would someone be baptized on behalf of someone else if they denied a resurrection of the body?

In verses 30-34, Paul turned to a personal argument. Why would he risk his life daily for the sake of the gospel if there were no resurrection? The "beasts" spoken of in verse 32 was likely a figurative term referencing the challenges and struggles that he faced for the gospel's sake in Ephesus and elsewhere (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-33). If there is no resurrection of the dead, humans should live life in the most self-serving manner, knowing that death is inevitable and that is the end. Instead, because there is a resurrection of the dead, the Corinthians should stop living an indulgent lifestyle. The Resurrection illustrates and proves that this life is not all there is to experience.

Explore:

How can we comprehend the concept of the kingdom of God when it is sometimes depicted as right now and at other times as not yet? This theme of the kingdom of God runs throughout the New Testament (Matthew 3:2, Mark 1:14-15, Acts 1:3, Acts 28:31). Both the Old Testament (Psalm 145:13, Isaiah 2, Isaiah 52:7) and the teachings of Jesus in verses like Luke 19:11-27 seem to indicate that the kingdom is a future reality. At the same time, the Bible also seems to teach that the kingdom of God is a present reality (Matthew 4:17). The truth is, God's kingdom has a dual dimension. The kingdom had not been fully manifested in Jesus' day, nor has it been fully manifested today. In this way, it is a future event and has not been experienced completely. Yet at the same time, where God's will is being carried out, the kingdom has a present component. As believers today, we feel the tension of knowing the kingdom of God in our hearts, yet still witnessing unbelief, sin, brokenness, and despair all around us. Through Jesus, however, we can experience God's kingdom

in the midst of this brokenness and be prompted to commit every area of our lives to His rule.

Explore:

In verse 35, Paul addressed those who had trouble believing that resurrection from the dead was possible. How could it happen?

What kind of body will they have? The questions imply that some of the Corinthians thought the idea of the resurrection was irrational. Paul considered those people to be foolish (verse 36).

In the Old Testament, a “fool” was one who rejected the idea of God (Psalm 14:1).

For the apostle the resurrection was like a seed and harvest. A small brown, dried seed is buried; a green leafy plant comes out of the ground. The only way this transformation happens is if the seed dies in the ground. Likewise, the resurrected body is different from the physical body, which must die. It is God,

however, that determines the future of both the seed and the body (verses 38-39). In verses 40-41, Paul pointed out that our universe already has many different kinds of bodies. So, it is foolish to think the resurrected body could not be something much different from the frail body we have now.

In verse 42, Paul applied the previous illustrations to teach that the resurrection body will be quite different from the earthly body that is planted in burial. The earthly body is perishable, dishonorable, weak, and natural. But the resurrected body will be imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual, like Christ's (verses 43-44)!

In the verses that follow, the apostle resumed his contrast between Adam and Christ. Adam's descendants share his nature while those who are "of heaven" or "heavenly" share in Christ's nature. Adam was the procreator of all natural men and women that were physically born from him. Christ, on the other hand, is

the source of all who are spiritually born again. All those born from Him will have a resurrected spiritual body that is like His resurrected spiritual body. In summary, Adam stands at the head of all creation while Jesus assumes the role of headship of the new creation. Those that belong to Jesus will bear His image in His glorified spiritual state just as previously they had borne the image of Adam (verse 49).

Explore:

Our perishable earthly bodies cannot enter the immortal kingdom of God (verse 50). Both the living and the dead must be changed (verse 51). The dead believers first, then the living believers bodies will be transformed into their imperishable, immortal bodies. Then death will no longer have victory and sting. For now, sin has caused death to sting and the law has given that sting power. But through Christ we have victory over

both sin and death and will one day be exempt from the hurt and sorrow they bring (verses 52-55).

According to verse 52, the coming of Christ will occur in an instant and will be preceded by the sound of a trumpet.

Trumpets were used in worship in the Old Testament and will signal the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16). At Christ's return, believers' bodies will be changed and they will be able to enjoy the immortality with which they were originally created. Believers will receive a body that is no longer subject to death, disease, and decay.

All of this comes in fulfillment of that spoken of by the Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Hosea (verses 54b-55). Sting may allude to the sting of bees or serpents and is compared to the effects of death on mankind. Metaphorically speaking, as a result of mankind's sin, death has always had a sting to it.

Through the resurrection, however, death will lose its power and

the sting will no longer cause the same trepidation as before. It is for this reason Paul could thank God for giving us victory through Christ (verse 57).

The coming return of Christ and the hope of our future resurrected bodies should motivate us to stand firm in our faith and give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. We know our efforts will not be in vain (verse 58). Being steadfast and unmovable speaks to the Corinthians' firm establishment in the faith and in response to the opposition of the skeptics. This they could do, knowing that, because of the resurrection, their labor for the Lord was not in vain.

Explore:

Look for a tool, utensil, nail, or toy that has begun to rust. Rust is an iron oxide—the result of exposing iron (a component of steel) with water and oxygen. In time, all iron will corrode into

rust, and eventually only flakes of rust will remain. Enlist your children to stop the rusting process! Pour some cola over the rusted object and leave it for 24 hours. You should be able to brush or wipe much of the rust away afterward. But the metal will immediately begin the rusting process again. Our bodies are also in the process of deterioration. We're not rusting, but we are growing older and one day, when we die, our bodies will return to dust. But because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have the promise that we will have new bodies that will not deteriorate, die, or decay. We will be raised with Christ and our new bodies will be made for Heaven!

Explore:

Paul imagines someone asking, 'How are the dead raised? What is a resurrection body like?' (15:35–49). These are silly questions, because they doubt God's power to do something

new. To answer them, Paul shows the pattern of death and resurrection in the world of nature.

When we sow a seed or plant a bulb, it looks nothing like the grain or flower that will grow. The seed must go into the ground and die before it can spring up as a beautiful new plant. But although the new growth is completely different, it is the same species that was planted—now gloriously transformed!

God has created physical bodies in amazing variety. Humans and animals, birds and fish, all have bodies to suit their life on earth. In space, too, the sun, moon and stars all have different bodies and degrees of splendour.

From these examples, Paul encourages us to see the power of God. God is able to raise us to new life. He will give us a resurrection body—a body which will be completely different and glorious—and yet it will be our body.

Our new body is not an earthly body—it is heavenly. It is not a mortal body—it is immortal. It is a body which will enable us to live in the presence and glory of God. And yet it will be our body—just as a plant is related to the seed from which it grows.

Human beings are, like Adam, made from ‘dust’—the physical stuff of this earth. The risen Christ, however, has the spiritual body of heaven. In our earthly life we have a natural, physical body like Adam’s. In our heavenly life we will have a glorious spiritual body like Christ’s.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 591.

Explore:

So far in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul has primarily addressed the church’s errors of orthopraxy. They had failed to live up to the Christian virtues of love, unity, peace, morality,

and humility that should have characterized growing, Spirit-filled believers. At times, the heinousness of moral failure may have led Paul to question the genuineness of a few of the believers' conversions (5:11–13; 6:9–10); yet as a whole, Paul regarded the people in the church at Corinth to be genuine Christians struggling with immaturity and carnality (1:4–9; 6:11).

In light of the challenges to orthopraxy in Corinth, 1 Corinthians 13 can be regarded as the “practical pinnacle” of the treatise. In 1 Corinthians 15, however, Paul makes a sudden transition from serious issues of orthopraxy to a severe issue of orthodoxy, making this chapter the theological summit of Paul's grand letter. He begins with a reiteration of that which is “of first importance”—the message of the gospel of the person and work of Jesus Christ (15:1–11). From this center and source of the Christian faith—the atoning death and life-giving resurrection of

Jesus Christ—Paul details the doctrine of our own future resurrection at the return of Christ (15:12–58).

Charles R. Swindoll, 1 & 2 Corinthians, vol. 7 of Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017), 217–218.

Explore:

First Corinthians 15 may contain the earliest written account of the Resurrection of Christ, and is the fullest and most important treatment in the Bible of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

Resurrection may be defined as a creative act of God whereby the bodies of dead people are raised to life. It is a distinctly biblical concept, since no form of paganism has any such teaching. Even the Old Testament has few references to resurrection, and these tend to be rather late. This is not

surprising, since God's redemptive work in and through the Messiah was progressively revealed. Resurrection hope could come to full flower only after Christ had conquered death and the grave.

Previous sections of the book have treated matters pertaining to church fellowship, morality, idolatry, and worship. Some of these issues had been brought to Paul's attention by members of the household of Chloe; some were perhaps matters of common knowledge among Christians (even those in places far removed from Corinth); others were put to Paul in the form of a letter from the Corinthians. It is not known how the problem concerning the doctrine of the Resurrection was brought to Paul's attention.

Several matters should be kept in mind as one studies this profoundly important passage. One is that the passage speaks of the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul. The

two concepts, being quite distinct, should not be thought of as interchangeable. The Greeks found the resurrection of dead bodies inconceivable, and it is not surprising that they ridiculed Paul's proclamation of it in Athens (Acts 17:32). Greek philosophy taught the immortality of the soul; but the body, being matter, was considered evil. Edwards remarks that "no doctrine of Christianity appears to have evoked more stubborn opposition and more contemptuous scorn." Present-day theologians who reject biblical truth as the standard for Christian doctrine tend to reduce resurrection hope to a modern version of the immortality of the soul. That is to say, they reject the doctrine of a bodily resurrection and teach that man's true "self" will continue to exist in an immaterial, ghost-like body made of spirit. The passage before us lends no support to this view. When it speaks of resurrection, it refers to the raising of dead bodies by the power of God.

Again, one should remember that this passage has to do with the resurrection of believers, not of unbelievers. The Scriptures teach that there will be a resurrection of unbelievers (e.g., John 5:28–29), but they give only small attention to that event. First Corinthians 15 is completely silent about it. Paul’s concern here is only with the resurrection of those who are in Christ, an event that will take place at His coming.

Finally, it is well to keep in mind that Paul, in writing this chapter, was not fighting a straw man; “some” at Corinth were actually denying the resurrection of the dead (v. 12). But we do not know who these people were, and all the speculative suggestions are unconvincing. Edwards thinks that the word “some” (v. 12) implies that those who denied the Resurrection were relatively few, but of that we cannot be sure.

The chapter falls into two large divisions: verses 1–28, which relate to the Resurrection of Christ; verses 29–58, which speak

directly to questions pertaining to the resurrection of believers, those who are “in Christ.”

Curtis Vaughan and Thomas D. Lea, 1 Corinthians, Founders Study Guide Commentary (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2002), 150–151.

Question 1 of 5

Why do fossils need something like a global flood to exist?

Question 2 of 5

Why would we be hopeless if Christ had not risen from the dead?

Question 3 of 5

How does knowing we will be resurrected motivate us to live for Christ?

Question 4 of 5

What will our resurrected bodies be like? How will they be different from our earthly bodies?

Question 5 of 5

How does Christ's resurrection assure us that we will be resurrected to eternal life?