

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

I Corinthians 15: Did Christ Rise From the Dead?

The Resurrection! Oh, what a great topic to start off the new year. Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, yet He wasn't held by the grip of death. He arose victorious! This is foundational to the Christian faith and our great hope. Chapter 15 begins with the historical events of the Lord's death and resurrection: *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."* (Vs. 3-4)

I Corinthians 15 addresses this topic since there were some in Corinth that questioned the resurrection: *"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"* (Verse 12). In fact, there was even a sect in Israel's leadership, the Sadducees, that did not believe in resurrection: *"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection..."* (Matthew 22:23) This false doctrine can also be seen today within the Church. This tendency ought to keep us alert.

The Corinthians themselves were proof that Christ arose. They believed the resurrection Truth and therefore had a justified standing (position) in the gospel of God's grace and would also experience this new resurrection life: *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand."* (Verse 1)

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is further validated as Paul documents the concrete proofs of those who saw him alive after the cross: **1)** *"And that he was seen of Cephas* **2)** *then of the twelve: 3) 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. 4) After that, he was seen of James; 5) then of all the apostles. 6) And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."* (Vs. 5-8)

How can we be sure the resurrection is true? God's Law provides insight into how to establish the validity of an event or behavior: *"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: **at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.**"* (Deut. 19:15; Also read I Tim. 5:19.) It is clear, the proofs are enormous; the Lord Jesus did resurrect!



For those who do not believe that the resurrection is significant or true, let us think out the results of this view. If the Lord never arose from the dead, Jesus Christ would be a liar, as would God the Father, and the Spirit that bears witness to Christ. It means Scripture is inaccurate, teaching blatant falsehoods. Additionally, all the witnesses who saw Jesus alive would have lied, consenting together.

Let us also consider the sad results if the resurrection was false:

Vs. 13: Christ never rose and He is still dead in the grave.

Vs. 14: The preaching of the resurrection is vain, as is our faith in it.

Vs. 15: We are false witnesses, when we preach the resurrection.

Vs. 16: If there is no resurrection, Christ is not raised up from the dead.

Vs. 17: Our faith is vain, since we are still in our sins.

Vs. 18: Those fallen asleep as believers are perished and without hope.

Vs. 19: We have false hope in Christ; being a hope that only lasts in this life. Above all, we are most miserable!

It most definitely matters that we confidently know the resurrection is true. The very basis for our new life and walk is that Christ arose: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:3-4)
His new life can live in us now!



Search it out!

I Corinthians 15: Proofs of the Resurrection

Examine verses!



This month we will begin a new approach in this section. One study tool will be used to display a new way to understand a chapter being examined. This first tool will be taken from, "Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools," which is a new booklet soon to be available through this ministry and Amazon. Read the tool below to examine the passage in more detail:

Application of Scripture: Read and think about verses through the day. Look for ways to apply them in life. Ask yourself questions to determine if you understand what verses are saying and how to apply them in daily living. Let's examine I Corinthians 15:1-2:

"1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." (Verses 1-2)

1. Read Verses 1-2: Think about your general understanding of the passage as you read it. Are there words or phrases that seem a bit elusive? Think about their meaning within the context. If desired, use a dictionary and/or concordance to search it out.

2. Reread verses: Think about the new light that has

been shed on the passage as you clarified terms and phrases. How do you have further understanding?

3. Now, ask yourself application questions:

Verse 1: Is this verse just written to the Corinthians or does it also relate to me? Have I received Paul's gospel message and do I believe I have a perfect standing with Christ? How can I know/become confident in it?

Verse 2: What does it mean, 'if I keep in memory' what Paul preached? Is this teaching that salvation is conditional? (ABSOLUTELY NOT! Look back: Paul already called them 'brethren' and said they 'received' the Truth in Verse 1. Also, it would be inconsistent with all of God's teaching through Paul.) So what kind of 'saved' is this referring, if it is not 'justification'?

As a student looks at the term 'saved' through the Bible, he'll notice it is not always referring to being justified by faith in Christ's blood (i.e. Rom. 8:24). Note the context of the chapter. Saints at Corinth are questioning the resurrection. Consider this: If they keep in memory the gospel, they would be 'saved' from being pulled aside/derailed from the Truth of the resurrection. So, how could I use these two verses to help others in ministry or for myself, when my faith waivers?

Knowing the Specifics About Our Resurrection

I Corinthians 15 provides details about the resurrection, what to expect and not to expect. Saints who will be resurrected into the earthly Kingdom (Israel) will have an eternal body to function on earth. The destiny of the Body of Christ is in heaven, with a body perfectly suited for the heavenlies. God "...giveth it a body as it pleased him..." (vs. 38), and also provides general insight into a few things:

"a) All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another fishes, and another birds. b) There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. c) 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." (I Corinthians 15:39-41)

Additionally, the student can see five categories of resurrection changes:

1) "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 2) It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: 3) it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 4) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body...5) The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven...And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (I Cor. 15:42-44, 47,49)

The 'Catching away' of the Church (Body of Christ), also described in I Thessalonians 4, is known today as the Rapture. It is a mystery, and will occur at an unknown time in the future, marking the end of this dispensation of Gentile Grace. I Corinthians 15:51-53 provides details of the event and includes those who sleep in Jesus, and those who are still living on this earth: *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."* The Rapture will happen quickly, even in the twinkling of light within the eye, at the last trump. We all will be changed, as corruption cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. *"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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."* **What a glorious hope we have in Christ!**



The Resurrection Transforms Our Thinking

The transforming power of the close identity we have with our Lord Jesus Christ enables us to live resurrection life, while on earth. What does it look like? One idea: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal. 2:20) Another example of Christ's transforming life is Paul, who was a blasphemer, even killing saints, yet Christ changed him to be the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Romans 6-8 contains the transformation process:

1. Read/meditate on Romans 6-8: This explains the transformation process. Christ's resurrection life is also our new life, which works in us as the Word is deposited in our inner man. Simply believe/yield. (Rom. 6:8-13)
2. Christ does it all: It may seem hard, but the struggle, helps us depend upon God and His power, alone. *"..So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."* (Rom. 7:25) We believe & Christ in us enables us to yield to set aside the flesh.
3. Allow the Word to dwell in your thoughts: As the Spirit teaches us, it will feel at home in our thinking and life as we believe. This is how the Spirit quickens our mortal bodies: *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* (Rom. 8:11)
4. Led by the Spirit and quickened: As we live in the sound doctrine formed and abiding within, our thinking is affected. This impacts behavior. The body is quickened and made alive: *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Rom. 8:13) Simply, we are to be led by the Spirit to walk by faith, even when our fleshly desires pull us in another direction. The mind is renewed, affecting life on earth and how others view us. Read and trust, walking by faith.

Change happens over time, so patient endurance is important. The process is similar to the dramatic change of a caterpillar into a butterfly; it must be patient and struggle a bit. In His time, God brings forth an amazing transformation.



Personal Note

A Balance in Our Focus

At times, I find myself pondering the time when the Church will be caught up together with Christ in the clouds. *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."* (II Cor. 5:8) It is such a joy to think on this!

However, in this challenging world, it's easy to hyper-focus on this future time, longing for our heavenly home and to be taken out of our difficulties. Yet, it's important to have a balance in our focus. If it is all on the future, we won't be fully present in the now, and will miss the fullness of what God desires for us here, even opportunities to learn from problems. If our focus is the past, what we did right or wrong, or should have done, we stir anxiety & fear, inhibiting our present life.

Can we contemplate the future at times? Of course, it's our glorious hope! Since what we do here, in the present, affects us in eternity, it is important to keep our resurrection life in view. (I Cor. 3:13-15) Should we ever think on the past? Yes, strategically, as it can help us learn in grace from our prior experiences.

God purposefully left us on earth, desiring that we grow, even through sufferings, to allow the treasure of sound doctrine to shine to others, *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."* (II Cor. 4:7)

The feelings of wanting to be with the Lord are real and strong. Paul also had these yearnings: *"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."* He stayed on earth for the good of others, for their *"..furtherance and joy of faith..."* (Phil. 1:23-25) It is a picture of selfless love toward others, even, a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1) Keep in mind the past and the future, while allowing Christ's life to live within us in the here and now, for the eternal good of others.

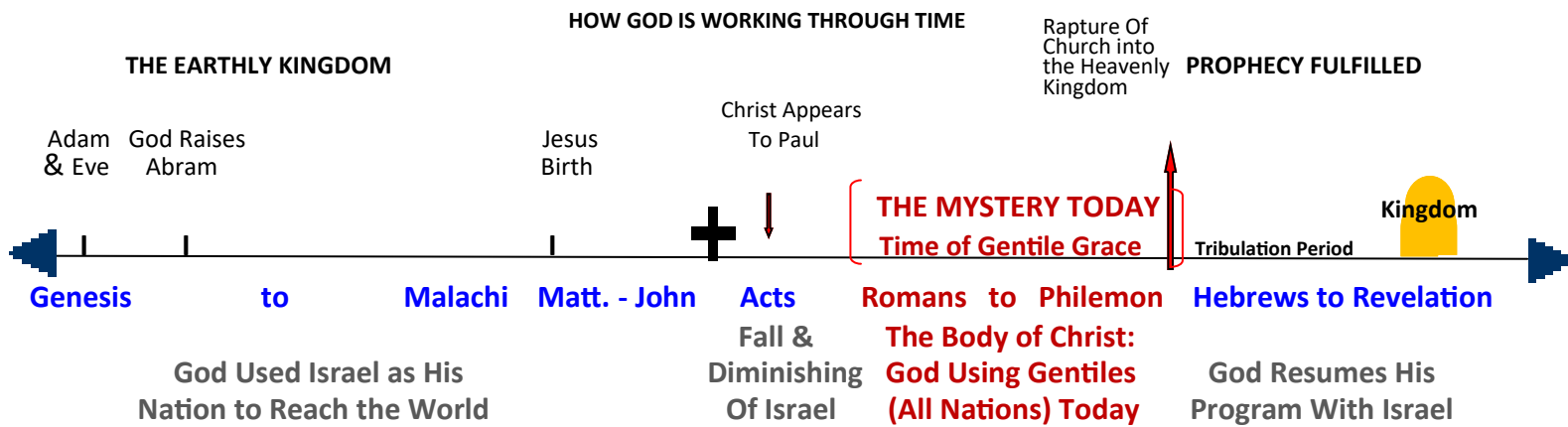
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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...”. (Romans 3:24)

The Simple Design of the Bible



Ask Yourself: Do I Pull Verses Out of Context?

The Bible can be interpreted to say almost anything, when context is not considered. We need to rightly divide the Word. (*II Tim. 2:15*) God dealt with man differently over time, therefore, instructions and doctrine differ within these dispensations of time. For example, under Israel’s program (in blue), God placed them under the Law system i.e. they were to keep holy days (Ex. 35:2), do sacrifices (Deut. 12:5-6), even to stone adulterers (Deut. 17:5). ‘If’ Israel obeyed, they had abundant blessings, if not, curses (Deut. 28:1-68). We also see in Acts that believing Israel was told to sell all they had and have all things in common (Acts 4:32-35). Are these instructions to you?

Under Paul’s ministry (in red), the Body of Christ is taught we are under grace and don’t need to respect holy days (Rom. 14:5-6), eat special foods (Rom. 14:14), nor sell all we have. Rather, we are to deal with others in love: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13:10). Further, we are given grace and God has fully provided all blessings for us; some we have now, others in eternity. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with **all spiritual blessings** in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. 1:3)

To Do: Think on this: What would happen if you did not discern dispensational doctrines and decided to apply Israel’s instructions? It might pose some problems to stone your neighbor for infidelity or even sell all you had, waiting for God to provide (Israel’s instructions). So, how do we discern these things as we study? We need to rightly divide the Word. (*Continued in Feb.*)

Read the Bible Through This Year!

Think about joining us to read God’s Word, a little each day, this year. Do it at your own pace, or we would be glad to furnish a daily reading schedule. Really think about this opportunity! Contact us if you have questions or would like help: (804) 519-1210

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