



OVERVIEW

Author: The Apostle Paul

Outline:

If there is no resurrection of the dead...

- ...then Christ has not been raised (v. 12-13)
- ...then preaching and faith are in vain (v. 14)
- ...then we are lying about God (v. 15)
- ...then we are still in our sins (v. 16-17)
- ...then we perish and are most pitiable (v. 18-19)

St. John Chrysostom on 1 Corinthians 15:19:

"If the body does not rise again, the soul remains uncrowned with the blessings stored up for it in heaven. In that case, we have nothing to hope for, and our rewards are limited to this life. What could be more wretched than that?" (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1, 12:236).

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Around the Word BIBLE STUDY Eastertide, 2015

The Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

OPENING: Psalm 33

¹Shout for joy in the LORD, O you | righteous!*
Praise befits the | upright.

²**Give thanks to the LORD | with the lyre;*
make melody to him with the harp of | ten
strings!**

³Sing to him a | new song;*
play skillfully on the strings, with | loud
shouts.

⁴**For the word of the LORD is | upright,*
and all his work is done in | faithfulness.**

⁵He loves righteousness and | justice;*
the earth is full of the steadfast love | of the
LORD.

⁶**By the word of the LORD the heav- | ens
were made,*
and by the breath of his mouth | all their
host.**

⁷He gathers the waters of the sea | as a heap;*
he puts the deeps in | storehouses.

⁸**Let all the earth | fear the LORD;*
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in
| awe of him!**

⁹For he spoke, and it | came to be;*
he commanded, and it | stood firm.

¹⁰**The LORD brings the counsel of the nations
to | nothing;*
he frustrates the plans of the | peoples.**

¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands for- | ever,*
the plans of his heart to all gener- | ations.

¹²**Blessed is the nation whose God | is the
LORD,*
the people whom he has chosen as his |
heritage!**

¹³The LORD looks down from | heaven;*
he sees all the chil- | dren of man;

¹⁴**from where he sits enthroned he | looks
out*
on all the inhabitants | of the earth,**

¹⁵he who fashions the hearts | of them all*
and observes | all their deeds.

¹⁶**The king is not saved by his great | army;*
a warrior is not delivered by his | great
strength.**

¹⁷The war horse is a false hope for sal- | vation,*
and by its great might it cannot | rescue.

¹⁸**Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those
who | fear him,*
on those who hope in his | steadfast love,
¹⁹that he may deliver their | soul from death*
and keep them alive in | famine.
²⁰**Our soul waits | for the LORD;*
he is our help | and our shield.**
²¹For our heart is | glad in him,*
because we trust in his | holy name.
²²**Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be up- | on
us,*
even as we | hope in you.
Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit.
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.****

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

v. 12: "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

Greek culture strongly denied and opposed the notion that the body would rise again. Many of the Corinthian Christians apparently went along with such denials. Paul now employs a series of logical "if-then" statements and classic rhetoric (art of persuasion) to show the foolishness of denying, or even just doubting, the resurrection of the body.

Read Acts 17:22-34, especially verses 30-31, to see how Paul had previously confronted the Greek denial of the resurrection of the body.

What evidence of the Greek denial of the resurrection of the body can we see in our culture today?

Who else denied the resurrection? See Matthew 22:23.

What happened in Acts 23:6-10 when Paul confessed the truth of the resurrection in his court proceeding?

The second half of this verse would better be translated, "...how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of *dead people* (or even of *corpses!*)" Paul is speaking about the resurrection of *all* people, not just certain people. How does Revelation 20:11-15 teach the resurrection of *all* people?

On the Last Day, *all* people will be raised. What will happen to those who believe in Jesus for forgiveness, life, and salvation? What will happen to those who deny Jesus? See Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:24, 41, 46; John 5:28-29; Philippians 3:21.

Luther: "On the Last Day, [the Holy Spirit] will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true" (*Small Catechism*, Third Article).

v. 13: "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised."

How did the Jewish leaders try to deny that Jesus had risen from the dead? See Matthew 28:11-15.

How did the resurrection of Jesus embolden the apostles to continue preaching the Gospel in spite of persecution and suffering? See Acts 5:27-42.

What evidence did Paul previously offer for the fact that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead? See 1 Corinthians 15:5-8.

v. 14-15: "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God..."

How did God proclaim the truth of the resurrection of the body even before Jesus died and rose again? See Exodus 3:13-15; Matthew 22:23-33; Job 19:25-26; 1 Kings 17:17-24.

If there's no such thing as resurrection of the body, then even Jesus is a liar! What does Jesus say about the resurrection in John 5:21, 25 and 11:25-26?

What is the severe consequence for misrepresenting—that is, "blaspheming" or lying about—God and His promises? See Leviticus 24:15-16; Matthew 12:31.

Morris: "Christianity is not a system of good advice, and the preachers had not simply told people of a good way to live. They had said that something happened; God raised up Christ. Christianity is basically a gospel, the good news of what God has done. The function of preachers is to bear witness to God's saving



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acts" (*1 Corinthians*, 207).

v. 17: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."

What does it mean to be "still in your sins"? See John 8:21, 24; Ephesians 2:1, 5; and Colossians 2:13.

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

What comfort do Christians receive from the truth that Christ has indeed risen from the dead, and that they will be reunited with those they love who have departed in the faith? See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

v. 19: "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."

Why is it foolish and pitiable to find meaning only in this life? See Luke 12:13-21.

Lockwood: "Contemporary Christians, including preachers, sometimes seem to forget that the final Christian hope is not just for the soul to enter Christ's presence after the death of the body. It is surely true that the Christian's soul goes 'to be with Christ' immediately upon death (Phil 1:23; see also Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Rev 6:9). At times, however, it seems as though this has become the only goal in the minds and hearts of believers, and that the return of Christ Jesus and the resurrection of the body do not play as vital a place in everyday living, believing, and hoping" (*1 Corinthians*, 565).

What comfort and joy does the Biblical teaching of the resurrection of the body give to Christians? See Isaiah 11:6-9; 25:6-9; Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-5.

Closing Hymn: Christ Jesus Lay In Death's Strong Bands

Christ Jesus, God's own Son, came down,
His people to deliver;
Destroying sin, He took the crown
From death's pale brow forever:
Stripped of pow'r, no more it reigns;
An empty form alone remains;
Its sting is lost forever.
Alleluia!

(Martin Luther, tr. Richard Massie; *LSB* 458:3)

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