



## OVERVIEW

**Author:** The Apostle Paul

**Outline:**  
Christ has been raised as the firstfruits (v. 20–23)

Christ puts death under His feet (v. 24–28)

What’s the point of your so-called baptism for the dead? (v. 29)

Why would we endanger ourselves? (v. 30–34)

**St. Augustine on 1 Corinthians 15:22:** “Man indeed brought death to himself and to the Son of Man. But the Son of Man, by dying and rising again, brought life to man” (*Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, 20:77).

This Bible Study is brought to you by Issues, Etc. Listen on demand at [www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org).

**Issues, Etc.**



Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio  
[www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org)

# Around the Word BIBLE STUDY Eastertide, 2015

# The Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15:20-34

## OPENING: Psalm 110

<sup>1</sup>The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at my | right hand,\*  
until I make your enemies your | footstool.”

<sup>2</sup>The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty | scepter.\*

**Rule in the midst of your | enemies!**

<sup>3</sup>Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy | garments;\*  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth | will be yours.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD has sworn  
and will not | change his mind,\*

**“You are a priest forever  
after the order of Mel- | chizedek.”**

<sup>5</sup>The Lord is at your | right hand;\*  
he will shatter kings on the day | of his  
wrath.

<sup>6</sup>He will execute judgment among the na-  
tions, filling them with | corpses;\*  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the | wide earth.

<sup>7</sup>He will drink from the brook | by the way;\*  
therefore he will lift | up his head.

**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 15:20–34

**v. 20: “But in fact Christ has been raised  
from the dead, the firstfruits of those who  
have fallen asleep.”**

Paul leaves behind the depressing false teachings of the previous verses (vv. 12–19). Now he boldly and joyously pronounces Christ’s resurrection.

What was the Old Testament significance of “the firstfruits”? See Exodus 23:19; 34:22; Leviticus 23:20; Proverbs 3:9.

Since Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead first, when will the “harvest” of believers rising bodily from the dead happen? See John 6:39–40, 44, 54.

How are Christians “the firstfruits” of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ even now? See Romans 8:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; James 1:18.

**v. 22–23: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.**

Paul now compares and contrasts the first Adam (“son of God”; see Luke 3:38) with Jesus Christ, the Son of God and “second Adam.”

How did Adam bring death into the world? See Genesis 3:1–19. How does Adam’s original sin infect and spread to all human beings? See Romans 5:12.

Read Romans 5:12–21 for Paul’s longer, more detailed comparison of the first Adam and Jesus Christ, the “second Adam.”

What comfort and hope do Christians have before “the harvest” on the Last Day? See Romans 8:28–30.

Luther: “We who cling to Him must also follow after Him as His body and His members. For where the head goes and abides, there the body with all the members must necessarily follow and abide. As in the birth of man and of all animals, the head naturally appears first, and after this is born, the whole body follows easily” (*Luther’s Works*, 28:110).

**v. 24: “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”**

How does Jesus teach about His going away and coming again on the Last Day? See Luke 19:12.

What kind of authority does God the Father give to Jesus, His eternal Son? See Mark 3:22–27; Matthew 11:27; 28:18.

**v. 25: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”**

In verses 25–27, Paul echoes Psalm 110:1. See Acts 2:32–35 for how Peter also uses this same Psalm to proclaim Jesus’ resurrection and reign.

What enemies does Paul have in mind here? See Ephesians 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12. How will God ultimately put His earthly human enemies “under his feet”? See Psalm 2.

**v. 26: “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”**

How does the Apostle John graphically portray the defeat and destruction of “the last enemy”? See Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14.

Lockwood: “Humankind fears death as a hostile and destructive force (Hebrews 2:15) and the punishment for sin (Romans 6:23). As long as people continue to die as the wages of their sin, inherited from Adam, who rebelled against the Creator, God’s good and gracious will for his creation is not yet brought to completion. But after all Christ’s people have been raised to life at his second coming, there will be no more death (Rev 21:4)” (*1 Corinthians*, 571).

**v. 27: “For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’”**

Read Psalm 8. How does this psalm, especially verse 6, apply to Jesus, the Son of Man? How does Hebrews 2:5–9 apply Psalm 8 to Jesus and His resurrection?

How do we Christians benefit? See also Philippians 3:21.

**v. 29: “Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead?”**

Paul now shifts his focus from Christ to the Christian. Evidently, the Corinthians practiced some kind of vicarious baptism or baptism over the graves of dead people.

Lockwood: “Although Paul—for some inexplicable reason—does not explicitly censure the group that is practicing this kind of baptism, neither does he approve of this eccentric practice. He merely asks, in effect, ‘What would be the point of these baptisms if the dead are not raised?’” (*1 Corinthians*, 577).

**v. 30: “Why are we in danger every hour?”**

If the resurrection of the body were not true, then why would

## BIBLE STUDY

## The Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15:20–34

Paul, the other apostles, and other Christian preachers risk life and limb to proclaim forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ?

How did Paul proclaim Jesus and His resurrection despite the dangers to his own person, life, and health? See 2 Corinthians 4:7–18; 6:3–10; 11:23–33.

**v. 32: “What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?”**

To whom is Paul referring when he uses the term “beasts”? See Acts 21:27–36; 24:18–21.

**v. 34: “Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning.”**

In what ways did the Corinthian Christians fall into immoral living due to their skepticism about the resurrection of the body? See 1 Corinthians 1:11–17; 5:1–2; 6:1–8; 11:17–22.

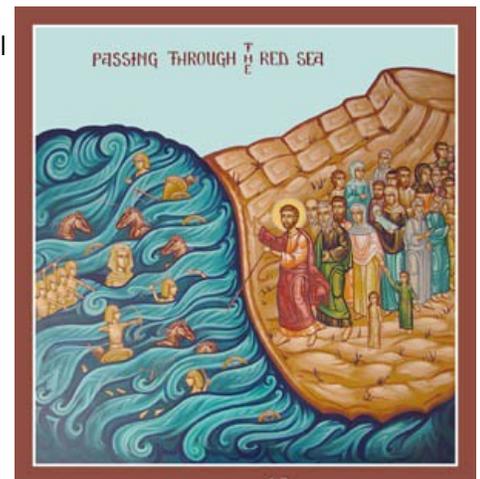
How does our Baptism into Christ change us to live upright and godly lives? See Romans 6:1–14; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6; Colossians 3:1–17.

Hays: “To proclaim the resurrection of Christ is to enter a world made new by God and therefore to lead a transformed life as well, even in the present age” (*First Corinthians*, 269).

**Closing Hymn: All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall**

But Christ, the second Adam, came  
To bear our sin and woe and shame,  
To be our life, our light, our way,  
Our only hope, our only stay.

(Lazarus Spengler, tr. Matthais Loy; *LSB* 562:4)



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Rev. Randy Asbury is pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO ([www.hopelutheranstl.org](http://www.hopelutheranstl.org)) and co-host of Steadfast Throwdown ([www.steadfastthrowdown.org](http://www.steadfastthrowdown.org)).