



Around the Word  
**BIBLE STUDY**  
 Eastertide, 2015

The Resurrection  
**1 Corinthians 15:50-58**

**OVERVIEW**

**Author:** The Apostle Paul

**Outline:**

From perishable to imperishable (v. 50–53)

In your face, death! (v. 54–55)

Victory is ours! (v. 56–57)

Laboring in the Lord's work (v. 58–59)

**St. Augustine on 1 Corinthians 15:53:**

"People are amazed that God, who made all things from nothing, makes a heavenly body from human flesh. When he was in the flesh, did not the Lord make wine from water? Is it anything so much more wonderful if he makes a heavenly body from human flesh?" (*Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, 38:406).

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**OPENING: Psalm 116**

<sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, because | he has heard\*  
 my voice and my pleas for | mercy.

<sup>2</sup>**Because he inclined his | ear to me,\***  
**therefore I will call on him as long | as I live.**

<sup>3</sup>The snares of death encompassed me;  
 the pangs of Sheol laid | hold on me;\*  
 I suffered distress and | anguish.

<sup>4</sup>**Then I called on the name | of the LORD:\***  
**"O LORD, I pray, deliv- | er my soul!"**

<sup>5</sup>Gracious is the LORD, and | righteous;\*  
 our God is | merciful.

<sup>6</sup>**The LORD preserves the | simple;\***  
**when I was brought low, he | saved me.**

<sup>7</sup>Return, O my soul, | to your rest;\*  
 for the LORD has dealt bountifully | with you.

<sup>8</sup>**For you have delivered my | soul from death,\***  
**my eyes from tears,**

**my feet from | stumbling;**  
<sup>9</sup>I will walk be- | fore the LORD\*  
 in the land of the | living.

<sup>10</sup>**I believed, even | when I spoke,\***  
**"I am greatly af- | flicted";**

<sup>11</sup>I said in | my alarm,\*  
 "All mankind are | liars."

<sup>12</sup>**What shall I render | to the LORD\***  
**for all his bene- | fits to me?**

<sup>13</sup>I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
 and call on the name | of the LORD,

<sup>14</sup>**I will pay my vows | to the LORD\***  
**in the presence of all his | people.**

<sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
 is the death | of his saints.

<sup>16</sup>**O LORD, I am your | servant;\***  
**I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.**

**You have | loosed my bonds.**

<sup>17</sup>I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanks- | giving\*  
 and call on the name | of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>**I will pay my vows | to the LORD\***  
**in the presence of all his | people,**

<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
 in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise the LORD!

**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 15:50–58**

**v. 50: "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."**

Paul, of course, admits that "flesh and blood" cannot inherit God's kingdom. What is "flesh and blood," and why can it *not* "inherit," that is, earn, God's kingdom? See Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 2:14; Genesis 3:1–19. How does Jesus teach the same truth in John 3:6?

How can human beings—"flesh and blood"—truly inherit God's kingdom? See John 3:3, 5; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Romans 6:3–4.

How do Matthew 25:34 and 1 Peter 1:3–5 show that our "inheritance" of God's kingdom is pure *gift* (grace)? See also Romans 4:4–5; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9.

We can also connect our eternal inheritance with the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:25. When we read "new covenant," we can also think, "new *testament*" (as in "last will and testament").

Gregory Lockwood: "The faithful reception of the body and blood of the crucified and risen Christ promises the communicant a share in the resurrection and in the heavenly inheritance guaranteed by Christ's death and resurrection" (*1 Corinthians*, 600).

**v. 51–52: "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet."**

"A mystery" is something of great importance that can be known only when God reveals it. See 1 Corinthians 2:7; 13:2; 14:2; Ephesians 1:7–10; 3:1–12; 6:19; Colossians 1:24–26; 2:2–3.

"In a moment" literally means "in an indivisible instant of time." "In the twinkling of an eye" is better rendered "in the blink of an eye" (a movement so rapid it is almost undetectable).

What does the sound of the trumpet mean in Exodus 19:13, 16, 19; 20:18? What does it signal in Numbers 10:1–10? What does the trumpet blast signal in Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16? See also Revelation 11:15–19.

**v. 52–53: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."**

When we Christians are raised on the Last Day, we will

“be changed.” Our bodies will be “made other”—that is, a different kind of body—than what we have now. What is that “other” into which we will be changed? See Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Paul here uses the language of changing clothes to illustrate how our “mortal body” will “put on immortality” (like changing from tattered, filthy work clothes to nice, clean dress clothes). How does Paul say the same thing in 2 Corinthians 5:1–4?

What is this “new clothing”? See Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10, 12.

Where and when do we receive this new clothing, now by faith? See Galatians 3:27.

Once this change of “clothing” takes place, the prophecy of Isaiah 25:6–9 will come true. What comfort do Isaiah’s words give? Also see 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 21:4.

Martin Luther: “[Paul] wants to say that we will not only be enraptured and be carried heavenward and leave all that pertains to the necessities of this life behind, house and home, clothing, shoes, etc., and see all that is on earth perish and burn to ashes, but we shall also put off all that is inborn of the perishable essence, eating, drinking, sleeping, so that we need no longer toil or labor. All of that must be cast off in a moment and be renewed to eternal glory and splendor. We will be changed, not only with regard to place but also with regard to our body, which will then remain unchangeable and imperishable” (*Luther’s Works*, 28:201).

**v. 54–55: “When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’”**

Paul now sings a taunt song to mock death and gives it a certain untoward gesture! Look up Hosea 13:14 to see where Paul got his inspiration for taunting this defeated enemy.

What other Bible passages will “come to pass” when death is finally swallowed up in victory? See Genesis 3:15; Psalm 118:17; Ezekiel 37:12; John 5:21, 24, 25; 6:54; 11:25–26; Revelation 21:1–7; 22:1–5.

**v. 56: “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”**

How do sin and death “sting” us? See Romans 4:15; 5:13; 6:23; 7:5, 8, 13.

In Romans 7:7–23, what does Paul say about the goodness of the Law, even though it stings and hurts? Also see 1 Timothy 1:8–11. Where does Paul look for his consolation? See Romans 7:24–25; 1 Timothy 1:12–17.

Gregory Lockwood: “Sin stings the conscience of the dying person and is responsible for the painful breakdown of his body. The very separation of body and soul is an assault on our humanity, for human beings are not essentially only a body or a soul, but both, joined together” (*1 Corinthians*, 603).

**v. 57: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

## BIBLE STUDY

## The Resurrection 1 Corinthians 15:50–58

Paul breaks out into sheer, joyous praise and thanksgiving to God for His saving, life-giving work in Jesus Christ.

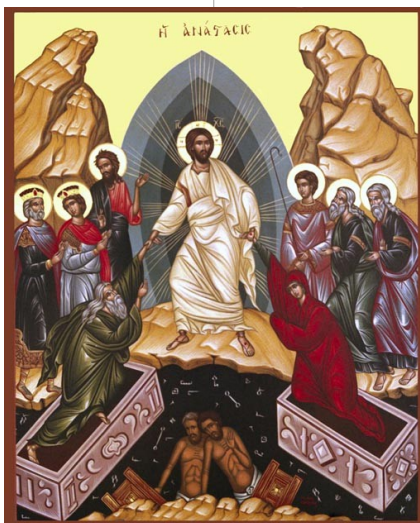
How does Hebrews 12:1–2 depict the grueling contest in which Jesus won the victory over sin and death? How does Philippians 3:12–14 describe the grueling contest that we Christians face?

How does Revelation 12:7–12 portray Jesus’ victory over sin and death? What weapon did Jesus use to win the victory, according to v. 11?

According to Revelation 19:11–16, what will Jesus’ victory look like on the Last Day?

How does Jesus make His victory our victory as well? See 1 John 4:4; 5:4–5.

What consolation do we have until that Day when we will fully experience Jesus’ victory over death, no longer by faith but by sight? See John 16:20–33.



**v. 58: “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”**

Finally, based on God’s teaching of the resurrection of the body and Jesus’ victory over death, Paul urges us Christians to “be steadfast” and “immovable.” In Ephesians 6:13–14, what is the purpose of putting on “the whole armor of God”? (Hint: look for the verbs that are repeated for emphasis.)

What is “the work of the Lord” in John 6:28–29 and 1 John 3:23?

What other works are Christians called to do as they remain steadfast and immovable in Christ’s victory? See Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 6:1–10; 1 Corinthians 16:10–14; Philippians 2:12–13; Colossians 3:5–17; 1 Peter 1:13–21.

Based on 2 Peter 3:11–18, what sort of people are Christians to be until Christ returns?

### Closing Hymn: Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won

Jesus lives! And now is death  
But the gate of life immortal;  
This shall calm my trembling breath  
When I pass its gloomy portal.  
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:  
Jesus is my confidence!

(Christian Fürchtegott Gellert; tr. Frances E. Cox; *LSB* 490:5)

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