

# PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A GODLESS WORLD

## 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 15:12-21

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER SMX774 JUNE 10, 2012

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

### **WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ? – PART 1**

*DISCOVERING THE NATURE OF GOD IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE*

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

**Death, Eternity, Resurrection, Hell, Heaven, God**

**The Majority of us here this morning are Christians.**

**Meaning - we are followers, believers, doers of what Jesus commanded us to do. And this relationship with Him begins with what is called "conversion" Conversion means change. It means that we have experienced a personal, internal revolution.**

**John 1:12-13**

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: **:13** who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This Conversion Experience - this supernatural ability to be changed by the power of God is a work that He initiates from within.

**The Crowning Event of Our Absolute Conversion will be the moment of our physical, personal, bodily resurrection or when the LORD suddenly appears.**

**Our Passage for Today**

**1 Corinthians 15:12-21**

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **:13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. **:14** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. **:15** Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. **:16** For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. **:17** And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! **:18** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **:19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. **:20** But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **:21** For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

## At The Time of Death:

### 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. :7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. :8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

## At The Moment of The Rapture:

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. :14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. :15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. :16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. :17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. :18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

## At The Moment of The Rapture:

### 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. :51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - :52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

**We Cannot Avoid The Argument Presented.  
We must either Deny it. Disprove it. Or Reject it.**

*Just because someone says*

*"I don't believe in the Bible, so to me – I mean Jesus Christ wasn't or isn't an actual person" is by no means off the intellectual, factual or historical hook.*

**Reasons Must Be Given and Facts Must be Submitted  
for You to Make a Reasonable Conclusion.**

**WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT  
WHEN YOU SAY THAT**

**1.) Christianity's relevance is anchored to Jesus' resurrection ?**

**What are we talking about when we say  
*It's all about Jesus Christ being raised from the Dead?***

**The resurrection doctrine  
was the foremost teaching and preaching of the church from its birth.**

**1a.) Opposition can only strengthen the argument**

**v.12**

Now if **Christ is preached** that He has been raised from the dead, how do **some among you** say that *there is no resurrection of the dead?*

The issue is – It's preached that Jesus is risen BUT there are some people who say, not possible. Not going to believe that.

**“I Don't Believe in the Bible”**

**I Understand That – But You're Not Stupid**

**Christianity Claims Something That No Other Religion Does.**

THAT ITS FOUNDER TRAVELED FROM ONE DIMENSION (heaven) TO ANOTHER (earth) TO YET ANOTHER (death) AND BACK

The **“Preaching”** of the Gospel should be based upon the Facts.  
God will not be part of any lie or deception.

**“And why would they Preach such a radical thing?”**

**Denying It will not remove it from reality.**

**Let me say to all of you here;**

You need to always be ready to answer the **“some among you”**.  
They will always be with us and they will always have their “wisdom” to spread as to how *faith is silly.*  
*Jesus was a great guy or there is no life after death.*

**1 Peter 3:15 NIV**

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

**1b.) Opposition can only steel the investigation**

**v.13**

But ***if there is no*** resurrection of the dead, ***then*** Christ is not risen.

**Paul Introduces Here a Form of Argument That  
In the Greek philosophy is an “assured negative”.**

**Modern Objections To The Resurrection of Jesus:**

- 1. People then were primitive, foolish, & superstitious. They easily believed in a God or gods and teachings like resurrections.**
- 2. There were dozens of messianic pretenders. Jesus was just one in a long line.**
- 3. The Gospel accounts contradict themselves.**
- 4. Post-resurrection sightings of Jesus were most likely mass hallucinations.**
- 5. Disciple conspiracy theory so as to deceive people for popularity.**
- 6. Swoon theory is that Jesus fainted and later revived.**

## CHRISTIANITY'S RELEVANCE IS ANCHORED TO JESUS' RESURRECTION

### 1c.) Opposition can only sharpen the faith

v.14

And *if Christ is not risen*, then (1) our *preaching is empty* and (2) *your faith is also empty*.

God wants us to use our minds and our reason and our logic.  
(examine what it is you believe to the full end of it)

I watched over the years that a clear, educated presentation of the gospel or a healthy defense of the faith has always won in the court of reason – always !!!

#### Hebrews 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of **use** (*faith in action*) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

#### Romans 10:17

So then faith *comes* **by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.

### Faith is becoming more scarce and rare in our day because

Very few people are listening to the WORD OF GOD through absorption.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE WORD MEDITATION?

CAN YOU DEFINE WHAT MEDITATION IS? DO YOU MEDITATE?

## WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU SAY THAT

### 2.) It's all about Jesus being raised from the dead

What are we talking about when we say  
*It's all about Jesus being raised from the dead?*

### 2a.) The evidence existed in advance

v.15-16

Yes, and we are found **false witnesses** of God, because we have **testified** of God - that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - *if in fact the dead do not rise*. :16 For if the dead do not rise, *then Christ is not risen*.

**Testified** - marture÷w martureo, mar-too-reh'-o

“Atheists argue that they cannot even begin to entertain Christianity because **they do not believe** in the resurrection - because **they do not believe** in the Bible – because **they do not believe** in the existence of God.”

## What are we to do?

**We're to use the Bible just like any other book, we ask:**

- (#1) What does the book say =
- (#2) What is the historical evidence =
- (#3) What does the examination of the claims produce =
- (#4) We Interview the eyewitnesses.
- (#5) We form an educated conclusion / opinion / argument from the data.

**Flavius Josephus, not a believer. Not a Christian.**

Pontius Pilate, Herod, King Agrippa, Numerous Caesars

The transformed lives of millions if not billions since all are saying and living and being ambassadors of this faith.

The eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus Christ so held to their experience that they went on to be exiled, banished, martyred or imprisoned for what they claimed to have seen and thus believed.

The apostles all died violent deaths, except 1, for what they believed they saw. This is continued on to this very day because of the perpetuation of truth and observation – the evidence !

**I am a Christian and will die for what I believe because it cannot be refuted. - - I can waver, doubt, or fear – but those things do not change the facts.**

**Almost everyone is willing to die for what they believe in.**

Communists / Buddhists / Hindus / Muslims will even commit suicide for what they believe – that doesn't make them right.

**But it doesn't make the Christian wrong either.**

Your Belief Matters BECAUSE of What or Whom it is you believe in.  
You Are Dying for Something That You Believe In as I Speak.  
What are you willing to die for?

**WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT**

*WHEN YOU SAY THAT*

**IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD?**

**2b.) The evidence existed in the time of Christ**

**v.17**

And *if Christ is not risen*,  
(1) your faith is **futile**; (2) you are **still in** your sins!

This speaks of the internal witness  
that is experienced by every true believer. It is a deep, personal and firm confidence.

Your faith (meaning – the life changing, on-going, transforming experience that you’ve been going through – isn’t real)

(1) Your faith is **futile**;

**True Christianity is So Dynamic, So not Boring.  
So Battle Tested. So not of this world.**

(2) You are **still in your sins!**

**Nothing has changed. You’re no different. You are the same person that you were after you heard the gospel – sin is still your pleasure.**

**2c.) The evidence exists in our day**

**v.18**

Then also (3) those who have fallen asleep in Christ **have perished**

## **WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT**

*WHEN YOU SAY THAT*

**3.) For God so loved the world ?**

**3a.) That God has placed within us the pursuit**

**v.19**

For *if* in this life only we have **hope** in Christ, we are of all men the most **pitiable**.

**Pitiable** *ejleeino/β eleeinos, el-eh-i-nos*; the pitiable. The miserable.

Victor Hugo called such a Life – Les Misérables.

The concept and reality of the origin of things  
is always a good exercise for our hearts and minds.

**Everything has its origin.**

Nothing is simple in our universe whether it be within our physical bodies or heavenly bodies light  
years away – the laws of science apply.

**If the Hope that God designed for us is only for now  
– what a joke, Les Misérables**

**Hope by nature looks ahead.** Hope looks over the hill of difficulty and can see the  
meadows of peace. Hope looks from a higher vantage point and says – “it’s better up ahead”.  
**Do we have prescient or eschatological information? That is, advance information to go by –  
(like the advanced information-knowledge that a map provides ?)**

## Do we have any physical evidence (photographs)

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - :2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - :3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. :4 And these things we write to you

## We Have an Internal Photograph – an Image

In the Christian's life of hope; There is a strange and delightful circle of seeking God and finding God and the seeking of God again... until...

Psalm 42:1-2

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. :2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

This is the soul's longing hard after God. All the while we have Him and He has us – we want more of Him and we want Him to have more of us until we are consumed by Him.

Paul is Saying; “Don't even think about becoming a Christian if this is all there is to living. That would be totally stupid and a waste of time.”

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT

*WHEN YOU SAY THAT*

## FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

**3b.) That God has promised to welcome us at the end**

**v.20**

***But now Christ is risen*** from the dead,  
and has become the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.

This is an “Unapologetic Declaration of Fact”

Jesus **IS** risen and you must deal with that.

Leviticus 23:10-11

“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. :11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; ***on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.***”

On the 17th day of the Nisan moon the firstfruits of the barley harvest was gathered and waved before the Lord in celebration.

**Matthew 28:4-6**

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. :5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. :6 He is not here; for He is risen,

On that Spring Morning in 32 A.D. Jesus is raised up from the grave. He is the **firstfruits** from the dead. On the very day He fulfilled that feast.

**As Jesus Christ was dying on the cross it was the Feast of Passover in Israel (a coincidence?)**

Jesus rose from the dead three days later - As Jesus Christ rose from the dead it was the Feast of Firstfruits in Israel. He was resurrected on the very same day that the priests in Jerusalem presented the "firstfruits offering" to the LORD – which represented that the entire harvest belongs to the LORD.

Can anyone tell me on what weekend it was when Jesus was crucified?  
It was the weekend of the Jewish calendar – celebrating the biblical Feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits.

**First comes Passover**

**Leviticus 23:5**

On the **fourteenth** day of the first month at twilight *is* the **LORD'S Passover**.

**1 Corinthians 5:7b**

For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

**The Next Day comes Unleavened Bread**

**Leviticus 23:6**

And on the **fifteenth** day of the same month *is* the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** to the LORD

**John 6:41b**

He said, "I am **the bread** which came down from heaven."

**On The Next Day comes The Feast of 1<sup>st</sup> Fruits of the Harvest**

**Leviticus 23:10-11**

"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. :11 He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.

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WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT  
WHEN YOU SAY THAT  
FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

3c.) That God has provided to us the way

v.21

For since **by man** came **death**, (*Adam*)  
**by Man** also came the **resurrection** of the dead. (*Jesus Christ*)

We naturally, supernaturally struggle with death, with suffering, with pain,  
with hardship. Why – because it wasn't the way we started out.

**The Apostle Paul Here Teaches by Contrast.**

“just as sin entered the world thru the first man Adam and sin was passed  
down to us – so Jesus Christ becomes the last man - the last Adam and  
through Him redemption is passed down to us.

**Romans 5:12,14-15**

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death  
spread to all men, because all sinned... :14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even  
over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type  
of Him who was to come. :15 But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense  
many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ,  
abounded to many.

O look, she has her mother's nose and her father's eyes.  
So we have Adams fall.

**WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT**

**Notice Please:**

That “Hope” and “Resurrection” is linked together in this Passage. That's intended by God.

**Doubters, Skeptics, Unbelievers, Agnostics**

This is where you begin. This is where we all are renewed and restored back into the reality.

**“GIVE THEM THE CROSS”**

*End of Study*

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