

1 Corinthians

Doctrine and Judgment

Class #13

Chapter 15:20-58

John: Doctrine or Judgment? 15:20-23

Doctrine

Having inexorably tied together His resurrection with ours Paul Expands Resurrection Teaching
20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits (*suggesting more to follow, v. 23*)
of those who have fallen asleep.

- He is not the first to be 'resuscitated' from the dead, but the first to 'resurrect' and in a different form, never to die again as those who were resuscitated do.
- For example Jesus 'probably' did not have blood. He shed it. If He did was not the same as His blood precross.
- He walked thru walls resurrected, don't recall Him doing that pre-cross.

How is it that He is the First Fruit of much fruit to follow?

21 For since by or thru man came death, by or thru Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

- In Order for our resurrection a Man had to sub for our sins started by another man and the same substitute man had to rise and open the door of Heaven to the resurrected dead that would follow.
- Paul in **Romans 5: 12** says: **Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men v.15 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.**
- It is the 'One Man' principle: One man made all sin and all proved they were sinners by sinning, and therefore One Man can make all righteous if they believe.

How so? The key word is 'in'

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (*meaning resurrection life*).

- The effects of sin = death and the effects of a righteous substitution = resurrection, wasn't just for the two key players Adam and Christ, but for all that were and are 'in them'
- By 'Pro-Creation' we are all in Adam and therefore dead and by 'New Creation' thru faith we are all in Christ and therefore partakers of His resurrection.

23 But each one in his own order (*implies a continuum over time*): **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at or in His coming or those who are Christ's and coming with Him at His coming.**

-1Thes. 4:13-15 says this about those who died in Christ before the Rapture. Focus on those dead in Christ when you read this:

13 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.

- 'Coming' is used not only for coming in the air at the Rapture of the church that is alive on earth, but it is also used for His 'coming' to the earth after the tribulation, His Second Coming.
- Now at His coming to the earth (not just in the air for the Rapture of the church), but up to His second coming, 'those who are Christ's at His coming to the earth', would include the tribulation saints who are martyred for their faith during the seven year tribulation prior His setting foot on earth. See Rev. 6:9-11, and 7:9-17. He will come with all saints in Rev. 19:11-14

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15:24 Then (after KA and judgments) comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

MacArthur: When He returns He will fight, conquer, rule, judge, and then, as His last work on the Father's behalf, forever subdue and finally judge all the enemies of God (Rev. 20:11-15), re-create the earth and heavens (Rev. 21:1-2), and finally deliver the kingdom to the God and Father.

27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says, "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He (*The Father*) who put all things under Him (*Jesus*) is excepted.

-**MacArthur:** for it is the Father who gave the rule and authority to the Son (Matt. 28:18; John 5:27), and whom the Son faithfully and perfectly served.

28 Now when all things are made subject to Him (*Jesus*), then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under *Him*, that God may be all in all.

-**MacArthur:** From the time of His incarnation until the time when He presents the kingdom to the Father, Christ is in the role of a Servant, fulfilling His divine task as assigned by His Father. But when that final work is accomplished, He will assume His former, full, glorious place in the perfect harmony of the Trinity.

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-**MacArthur** on 29-34: Paul's major thrust in 15:29-34 is: if you remove the resurrection, if you deny this crucial and wonderful truth of God's redemptive work, you have removed one of the greatest motivations the Lord gives for coming to Christ and for living for Christ.

29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

-**MacArthur:** As to what this verse does mean, we can only guess, since history has locked it into obscurity. ... We can be sure, for example, that it does not teach vicarious, or proxy, baptism for the dead, as claimed by ancient gnostic heretics such as Marcion and by the Mormon organization today. Paul did not teach that a person who has died can be saved, or helped in any way, by another person's being baptized in his behalf.

-A near kin in false doctrine is 'baptismal regeneration' Baptismal regeneration, the idea that one is saved by being baptized, or that baptism is in some way necessary for salvation, is unscriptural. The idea of vicarious baptismal regeneration is also far removed from biblical truth.

-If a person cannot save himself by being baptized, he certainly cannot save anyone else vicariously thru baptism or any other ritual.

The reasoning continues: 'if there is no resurrection of the dead....'

30 And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?

-.... if there is no resurrection!

31 I affirm, by the boasting in or about you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, (what is his boast?)... I die daily.

-An example of this is in Acts 23:12-13, when more than forty men took a vow that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. With enemies like that, no wonder Paul could say, "I die daily."

And this is his boast!

-“I die daily,” he does not speak of his spiritual identification with the death of Jesus. He does not speak of the spiritual putting to death of the flesh. He writes of the constant imminent danger to his physical life.

Is he being hyperbolic?

-Let's look at his history of suffering:

-From this letter **4:9, 11-13**

9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.....

..... 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

-His history of suffering for a resurrectionless Gospel (if there is no resurrection) is very prominent in **2 Corinthians**....

-1:8-10 8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.

-4:8-12

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

-6:3-5

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

-11:23-28

23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

-If there is no resurrection then who spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus and had Ananias tell him about 'how many things he must suffer for *Christ's* name sake'? He was warned about the future with Christ.

-This begs the question how does someone go thru these sufferings?

-The simple answer is resurrection power that came after His Ascension which of course was preceded by His Resurrection!

-In His resurrected state He said this to His Disciples in **Luke 24:45-50**

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.

49 "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

-See Acts 4:33, Rom. 1:4, Phil. 3:10

But He gives a current example

32 If, in the manner of men (*apart from the Resurrection power of Christ*),

-**BDAG** gives the meaning as "like an ordinary man" as opposed to "as a Christian sure of the resurrection."

v.32 cont. ... I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me?

-Beasts or wild animals were used repeatedly as symbols or metaphors for pagan rulers in Daniel 7...

Paul uses the metaphor of animalistic biting and devouring for destructive behavior between humans in Galatians 5:15.

-**Fee**: the metaphor is not a word about his struggle with opponents in general; rather, he specifies that it was with "wild beasts" in Ephesus. Since he is in Ephesus at the time of writing, and since a few paragraphs later (16:8-9 8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.) he refers to many who oppose him there, this is probably a reference to that struggle. The language of v. 31 would suggest that it was not simply an ideological struggle but, as often in his life, one that had exposed him to severe physical dangers as well. Beyond that, one would only be speculating.

-**Pillar**: This may be a different episode from the one he will mention in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, where he refers to "the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."

-By God's grace he knew and acted in a way consistent with the fact that, thanks to Christ, life has the last word, not death.

v.32 cont. ...If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" from *Is. 22:13b*

-Isaiah 22:13 depicts the reaction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem while being besieged by Assyria and facing the grim prospect of their impending annihilation (22:12-14). Instead of repenting, they decide to "party like there is no tomorrow."

-**Pillar**: As we pointed out in the comments on chapter 10, eating and drinking are often associated with idolatrous behavior in Old Testament and Jewish texts.

Don't let your false understanding of the resurrection justify immoral living

33 Do not or stop being deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

34 Begin now to Awake to righteousness living, and do not or stop sinning; for some (the evil company) do not have the knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame as to your conduct in front of unbelievers or the unlearned.

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35 But someone will say or ask,

- Though hypothetical here Paul is certain someone will ask this, probably because he has encountered it before.
- Plus ... there still remains the philosophical objection that must have crouching behind their denial of the resurrection in the first place.
- Inherent in their denial of the resurrection was the assumption that it had to do with reanimating existing corpses.
- Therefore, because they could not handle the how, they had given up the 'that'—the resurrection itself.

They will ask two things

#1- "How are the dead raised up?"

- So the question, "How are they raised?" is probably expecting an answer like "As reanimated corpses"; or "By the reassimilation of the disintegrated body parts."

#2- "And with what body do they come?"

- The second question, then, "With what kind of body will they come?" flows from the first and is related to it. It is a natural question that continues to be asked, perhaps even more skeptically, in the modern age. Dead bodies decompose and become part of the nutrients in the ground, and their molecules find their way into other living things. If those bodies have disintegrated and have been incorporated into other creatures, how can they be raised again? Will the dead come back in completely different and unrelated bodies? Or will they come in patched-up versions of their old bodies? As Ramsay MacMullen points out, "Resurrection in the flesh appeared a startling, distasteful idea, at odds with everything that passed for wisdom among the educated."
- The short answer to the how question is that the resurrection body will take place in a way similar to that in which a seed produces a plant or tree.
- The short answer to the question about the kind of body is that the resurrection body will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual—that is, it will be like Christ's resurrected body.

36 Foolish one,

- Speaks to their preconceived ideas about a bodily resurrection based on culture, idolatrous claims, or pure ignorance. Overall the culture thought the idea of an afterlife and especially a bodily resurrection was very foreign or ludicrous.
- This one stands as the "fool" in the OT sense—as the person who has failed to take God into account, therefore he is a foolish one..

v.36 cont. ... you, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps like wheat or some other grain that you sow.

"You, what you sow does not come to *life* unless it dies; and what you sow is not the body that shall be but a naked seed, perhaps like wheat or something else."

- This somewhat parallels what Jesus said in **John 12:24**:

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

- The difference is that in the John passage death is necessary to bring forth more fruit. In our passage body death is necessary (if the rapture does not occur) for the change from this body to a totally different yet human body.
- Therefore, it is possible for the dead to rise again, as their own experience of sowing grain gives evidence of and models.
- This current body is 'mere grain', seed for a more spectacular body.

OK Paul but what will the new body look and be like?

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body (that will arise out of the seed's death).

-The emphasis is not on its weakness but on its being simply a seed, with no vestige of its "afterlife" visible in the seed itself. Thus the emphasis is on the transformed nature of the "body" of the seed after its "resurrection.". The one "new birth life" is in two modes, one before and one after death and resurrection.

-The answer to the question "With what kind of body will the dead come?" is ultimately to be understood as an activity of God. That is why the person of v.35-36 is called a fool; such a question has left God out of the account.

-What pleases Him is to make for us a body in the image of Christ's body. **Phil. 3:20-21**

20 For our citizenship (and thus our home) is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Vs. 39-41 Elaborates on the last phrase of v.38: '...to each seed its own body'

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but *there is* one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

-Living flesh used here, but in v.40 there are bodies that are not flesh

40 There are also celestial (Heavenly) bodies and terrestrial (earthly) bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another or different.

-Although it is not clearly specified, the applications that follows suggests that Paul's concern is to emphasize that each is adapted to its own peculiar existence and environment, that "body" does not necessarily mean one thing only (= flesh and blood) since there are many kinds of bodies.

-There is a body suited for the earth environment and a body suited for Heaven and in our case as with Christ our new glorious body will be suited for both.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from another star in glory.

-When the heavens at night are viewed we see the varying glories of the heavenly bodies: The moon and by extension the sun in the day time and then the stars at night.

-Due to the fall the glory of the Terrestrial in all life forms faded away due to sin.

-With the Resurrection, starting with Christ, that glory will be restored as Paul will expound in vs.42-49

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Making application of vs. 35-41

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The body (the seed) is sown in corruption (the effect of sin entering thru Adam), it is raised in incorruption (the effect of faith in the Last Adam).

-The body was born in corruption and when it dies and goes into the grave it is sown in even more corruption!

43 It (the body as seed) is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.

It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural (psuche) body (tied to earthly life), it is raised a spiritual body (tied to Heavenly living).

In sum There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being (psychikos)." The last Adam became a life (root is 'zao')-giving spirit (pneumatikos).

-This quote is from the LXX of Gen. 2:7, the English translation is: **2:7 And God formed the human with earth from the land and blew into his face the breath of life, and the human came into being as a living soul.**

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

-Though seemingly obvious he makes the point that the natural comes before the spiritual.

-No one from the first Adam starts out spiritual, that follows thru faith, just as Jesus, the Last Adam, came after the First corrupted Adam.

-Being sons of Adam and with his passed on corruptible seed, comes before being Sons of God, born from above, whose spiritual bodies will fit anywhere that life in the Spirit requires.

The origins

47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust (only in 1Cor. 15, aka dry soil); the second Man is the Lord from out of heaven.

-The first man was shaped out of the ground, the Last Adam always was and came out of Heaven into the womb of Mary, took on a uncorrupted human body thru the working of the Holy Spirit, went thru the normal gestation process and was birthed the second man.

-Not only does this verse speak of origins, but it speaks of each Adam's outlook. One earthy, the other Heavenly!

'Second Man' implies two things:

#1-'Second' relative to Adam. It is like ok let us try again with an uncorrupted man. Let Him be tested, tempted and see how He does versus the first Adam. He passed all wilderness testings from Satan and attacks from the Jews and then He did something very spectacular, He died for all that came from the corrupted first Adam, and offered them new life thru faith in Him

#2-The word 'second' here also implies that there can be a third man or woman and then a fourth etc. Thank God it did not read: 'the Last Man'.

-**Last Adam** does not mean that no more 'men or women' will follow but it only implies the head of a race, a race, in this case of humans born from above, would the 'Last' head of any race of humans.

This contrast applies to their family members as well

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

-Are we heavenly? Has anyone accused me of being Heavenly minded, Heavenly lived or Heaven bound?

49 And as we have borne or wear the image (ikon) of the man of dust, we shall also bear or wear the image (ikon) of the heavenly Man.

-Some key NT Scriptures on 'image' for us to ponder:

-**Rom. 8:29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

-**1Cor. 11:7** For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

-**2Cor. 4:4** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

-**Col. 3:10** and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

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50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption (*they cannot coexist*).

- The word inherit is a compound word followed by a negative, 'cannot'.
- Cannot legally obtain or take possession. What cannot legally obtain or take possession as an inheritance?
- Adam's Flesh and Blood. Both are corrupted and must perish.

Verse 51 speaks about those who are alive on the earth when He comes

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep (*Christian death*), but we shall all be changed (*exchange corruption for incorruption*)—

- Mystery:** A truth not revealed in the OT only in the NT.
- The Mystery here per Dr. Arnold: 1 Corinthians 15:51, the mystery of the translation (*or change as it is worded in v.51*) will occur at the time of the Rapture.

His fuller explanation: In verse 51, Paul declares: *Behold, I tell you a mystery*. The Second Coming of the Messiah is not a mystery, for it was something well revealed in the Old Testament. In fact, there are more details about the Second Coming in the Old than the New Testament. Furthermore, the resurrection of the dead is also revealed in the Old Testament, so that is not a mystery either. Rather, the content of the mystery is found in verses 51–52. Paul states: *we all shall not sleep*, meaning all will not die. Paul continues, *but we shall all be changed*. He emphasizes the quickness of this change in two ways: *in a moment* and *in the twinkling of an eye*. This will occur *at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*. In verse 53, Paul describes the change: *this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*.

The content of the mystery is that there is going to be a generation of believers who will enter into eternity without first passing through the gates of death. This was not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament. The fact that this facet is the mystery would also imply that the Rapture itself is part of the mystery and, therefore, it is one of the reasons one must distinguish between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming. The Second Coming is not a mystery; the Rapture with its translation is a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament, and is one of the many reasons for Pretribulationism.

How long will it take?

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,

- A twinkle is much faster than a blink!

When will it happen? ...

at the last trumpet.

- A congregational trump announcing congregational movement: **Numbers 10:1-2**

10:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

2 "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps.

- It will be per 1Thes. 4:16 a trumpet blast when the Lord descends into the clouds and calls us up. It will be the last trump we shall hear this side of Heaven!
- In 1Thes. 4:16 there will be two confirming sounds that He is coming in the clouds for us: 1- A shout, the voice of an Archangel and 2- with the trumpet of God...

What will the last trump signal, what will happen? ...

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible (*the dead seed will yield an incorruptible body*), and we shall be changed (*an exchange or translation will occur*).

-1Thes. 4:13-18 clarifies this order: first the 'dead' then those who are 'alive'

13 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.

53 For this corruptible must put on or be clothed with incorruption (*no decay, as symbolized by acacia wood*), and this mortal must put on or be clothed with immortality (*an immortal, never die, never decay or corrupt body*).

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting?

O Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law (*and it says if you sin you get Hades*).

-Two questions are answered here.

1-Why does death sting so much?

-Unbelief, being a foolish one, leaving God out of the living and dying equations.

2-Why is it when the Law says 'do not' that's exactly what my flesh rears up and wants to do?

-The strength of sin is the law

57 But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory over sin and death and always, whether we fail or humbly succeed we have the victory) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What we are we to do with the Spirituals of chapters 12-15 in our everyday lives?

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast (*stand firm*),

-Puts into mind Eph. 6:10-13a and how we are to be steadfast

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God

58 cont. immovable (*not shaken in what you believe*), always abounding (*more than what is naturally expected*) in the work of the Lord, knowing (*perfect tense: Knowing by looking back and up to this day, seeing the fruit*) that your labor is not in vain (*empty handed*) in the Lord.