

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

What was Paul reminding the Corinthians of (v. 1)? The Gospel and its place in their lives. The good news which he had preached to them, which they had received, and on which they now have taken their stand.

What was the caveat he added (v. 2)? If they "held firmly" to the gospel they had received.....that Paul had preached to them.....they would continue to experience God's deliverance as they lived day by day. However, if they were not persevering in the Christian faith, this is evidence that they did not have saving faith in the first place (Judas e.g.). "Evidence" works both ways.

What did Paul receive and then pass on to them (vv. 3-4)? The heart of the gospel, i.e. the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He died to pay the penalty that our sins deserved. This was all according to the testimony of the Scriptures. (Isaiah 53:5-6; Psalm 16:9-10) This should always be the litmus test in all matters relating to our faith: "What do the Scriptures say?"

What was the follow-on message (vv. 5-8)? Paul provides a list of those who were eyewitnesses of the resurrection. **Why is this important?** To address those skeptics doubting the truth of the resurrection. If anyone wanted to contest the truthfulness of what Paul was saying, most witnesses were still alive and could be questioned.

How was Paul abnormally born (v. 8)? He was not part of the original group of apostles. He had not lived with Christ as the others had. His entry into the apostolic office was not "normal." The others were invited to follow Jesus. Paul's conversion was sudden – He was snatched from his former way of life.

How would you describe Paul's attitude/perspective on his apostolic role (vv. 9-11)? In v. 9, He is filled with a spirit of unworthiness because he was the last, like a runt, not part of the original group of apostles. He felt less deserving of the office because he had been an opponent of the church (Acts 22:4; 1 Timothy 1:15-16) which he now served (2 Corinthians 4:5).¹ While the other apostles were building up the church, he was tearing it down.

v. 10 He realized, however, that his past was simply a backdrop on which to display the grace of God, the grace to which Paul had been so responsive. Indeed, Paul was without peer in his devotion (9:19-27). He had worked harder than any of the other apostles, as he traveled more, suffered more opposition, wrote more New Testament epistles, and founded more churches. Yet Paul knew and ministered with the recognition that it was not his power but God's grace (2:4-5) which produced results (3:6).

v. 11 In the final analysis it was not the messenger but the message which was important -- that the crucified Christ became the resurrected Christ -- the message that Paul preached and that the Corinthians believed.

What is Paul's theme in vv. 12-34? The absolute certainty of the resurrection. **In vv. 12-19, what is Paul listing/addressing?** Paul lists the consequences of denying the resurrection. He is saying, "How can you deny the resurrection? Christ has already been raised from the dead. It's a done deal!"

v. 13 To deny a bodily resurrection in principle was to deny the resurrection of Christ.

v. 14 If there was no resurrection, the apostles' preaching rested on a lie and the Corinthians' faith would be useless since its object would be a dead man.

v. 15 If there were no resurrection of the body, the apostles would not only be in error, they would also be "false witnesses ... against God." They would have been preaching something untrue about God, namely, that He raised Jesus Christ—when He really had not.

v. 16 If resurrection is an utter impossibility, then there can be no exception to it including Jesus.

v. 17 If Christ was still dead and, in the grave, the believer is without any hope of forgiveness or eternal life. Our journey ends at the cross. The Resurrection was God's validation that the redemption paid by Christ on the cross was accepted by God and satisfied His wrath (4:25). Without the Resurrection there could be no certainty of atonement and the Corinthians would remain in a state of alienation and sin.

¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

v. 18 As for those who had died believing in Christ, their case would be absolutely hopeless. If Christ did not rise, then their faith was just a worthless thing.

v. 19 If we have nothing to hope for on the other side of the grave, the Christian life would not be worth living ("*we are to be pitied more than all men*"). We have been deceived. That is, we have no forgiveness of our sins in the past, and we have no advantage over unbelievers in the present.²

How does Paul relieve the tension of the previous verses (v. 20)? Paul triumphantly announces the indisputable fact of the resurrection of Christ and the consequences that follow. He used the "firstfruits" metaphor to assert that the resurrection of believers is absolutely inevitable. God Himself has guaranteed it. His resurrection demands our resurrection, since otherwise death would remain undefeated.³

How did Paul trace the origin of both death and the resurrection of the dead (v. 21)? It was by man that death first came into the world. That man was Adam. Through his sin, death came upon all men. God sent His Son into the world as a Man in order to undo the work of the first man. Thus, it was by the Man Christ Jesus and His sinless life and atoning sacrifice that there came the resurrection of the dead.

How do the descendants of Adam And Christ compare (v. 22)? All who are related to them are affected by their actions. All who are "in Adam" i.e. his physical descendants (all of mankind) will suffer death (separation from God). All who are "in Christ" i.e. who are related to Christ by faith, will be made alive at the resurrection, raised from the dead to dwell eternally with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 20:6).

What is the sequence of those who will be resurrected in the unfolding of the final events? (v. 23)? First is the resurrection of Christ Himself. He is spoken of here as the first fruits. First fruits were a handful of ripened grain from the harvest field before the actual harvest started. Christ's resurrection is the pledge that ours will follow.

Secondly are those who belong to Christ at His coming. Paul did not give a complete explanation or timetable of the various resurrections here. His point was that the resurrection of all Christians is just as certain to take place as Christ's which has already taken place.

What/when is "the end" (vv. 24-25)? At the close of Christ's Millennial (1000 year) Reign, when He has destroyed all His enemies, the Lord Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father.

What is the last enemy to be destroyed (v. 26)? Death itself. Our *defeated* enemy...defeated because of the resurrection. Death has lost its sting. Death no longer holds any power over us. We are heaven-bound! At the Great White throne judgment after the 1000-year reign of Christ, death and Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14).

How would you describe the relationship between Father and Son (vv. 27-28)? God has decreed that all things shall be put under the feet of the Lord Jesus (Psalms 8:6). i.e. into subjection to Christ. Of course, God Himself "is excepted," and will not be under the rule of the Son of God.

Finally, God will be the head of everything (Romans 11:36): "all in all." Supreme and sovereign. The earthly millennial kingdom will end, and everything will merge into the eternal kingdom of God. Christ will be made subject to His Father forever.

The Son Himself being made subject/submissive to the Father in no way suggests that the Son is in any way inferior to the Father. All three persons of the trinity are equal in deity and dignity. The subordination referred to is one of role and function. The Father is supreme in the trinity; the Son carries out the Father's will (e.g. in creation, redemption); the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to vitalize life, communicate God's truth, apply His salvation to people and enable them to obey God's will/word so that the triune God will be shown to be supreme and sovereign in all things.

²-Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on 1 Corinthians, 2019 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 285

³ Ibid.