

I Corinthians 15 is the most comprehensive teaching in the Church Epistles about the resurrections. Three major topics are handled in this chapter: the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection from the dead of the just, and the resurrection's impact on those who are alive at the time.

I Corinthians 15:1 and 2

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Apparently the Corinthian church was giving heed to wrong doctrine about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some were saying there was no resurrection. This chapter logically and forcefully reproves this error. Later in the first century, the resurrection again is wrongly divided, for in II Timothy 2:18 we are told that some were teaching the resurrection had passed already. The reason this subject is under constant

attack is because the resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity. Man's salvation and the believer's hope are based upon the resurrections.

Verses 3 and 4

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures

According to the Scriptures, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the sea monster's belly, Jesus Christ would also be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He died at approximately three in the afternoon. After three nights and sometime after 3:00 p.m. on the third day, he arose. There were many eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ. The following verses elaborate.

Verses 5-8

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Six post resurrection appearances are recorded here, some of which are also noted of in the Gospels. Other post resurrection appearances are recorded in the Gospels that are not stated here, such as Mary Magdalene, the two men on the road to Emmaeus, and the eleven when Thomas was not present. The point is that many people saw Jesus Christ after he was raised from the dead. Since these people were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ, how could anyone say that he was not raised? Paul makes a logical dissertation pertaining to the resurrection of Christ.

Verses 12-20

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

The word “resurrection” is from the Greek word *anástemi*, meaning stand up. Therefore, the word “resurrection” means a standing up, a rising from the dead. This *anástasis* is used twice in Hebrews 11

which is speaking about a time before Jesus Christ was alive.

Hebrews 11:35

Women received their dead raised to life again [*anástasis*]: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection [*anástasis*]

As we can see from this verse, the words “raised to life again” and “resurrection” were both translated from the word *anástasis*. A number of people in the Old Testament were resurrected from the dead before Jesus Christ was. The great distinction between these people and Jesus Christ is that once he was resurrected, he never died again. Everyone else who had been raised from the dead died again. Jesus Christ is the firstfruits because he was the first one to get up from the dead and stay up but not the last one. He is the prototype of all those who will be resurrected from the dead at the resurrection of the just.

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Jesus Christ was the firstborn from the dead, or the first given up from the world of the dead, but he is not the last one.

As we continue in our study of I Corinthians, we will see that Jesus Christ and his resurrection are the type or example for those that will be raised in the resurrection of the just.

. . . To be continued