

**I Corinthians Lesson # 33**  
**The Resurrection of Humankind**  
**Pentwater Bible Church**  
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*I Corinthians 15: 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Now that the fact of a resurrection of the Lord Jesus has occurred the text turns to restate this fact and affirm that Jesus was *first* to be resurrected. Paul uses an OT term of firstfruits from Exodus 23: 16, 19 to give us the sense that more resurrections will follow. The OT term refers to the seven festivals of Israel. They were an agrarian culture and therefore had festivals to celebrate the different events of the year. The first three festivals also represent Jesus' first coming in Bible typology. They occur in the spring. They are: Passover, Unleavened bread and First Fruits. Fifty days following First Fruits is Pentecost. The three main fall festivals are: Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles. The second three represent Christ's second coming.

Passover represents the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world for us. We essentially become "covered by the blood" once we accept the Lord into our lives (Rev 1:5; 7: 14). It is our decision just as it was the ancient Israelites decision to mark the doorposts and the lintel with the blood of the lamb. Once we choose this we are "Justified." God provides several actions, which occur at the moment of belief. We call this "Born Again" It is easy to understand Nicodemus' inability to comprehend this, since he was not yet born again at the time of his conversation with Jesus in John 3.

1. Justified, we make peace with God
2. Receive the peace of God
3. Sanctified, begin to grow more God Like which lasts throughout our lives
4. Receive the Holy Spirit as an earnest deposit to be redeemed by God at either the rapture or the moment of our death whichever happens first
5. Endowed with Spiritual Gifts

If the ancient Israelites chose not to put the lamb's blood on the doorpost the destroyer would kill them. God did *not do the destroying*. It is important to note this as He provided the salvation. If we choose not to accept Christ upon death we go straight to hell. There is no redemption after that for the unbeliever.

Unleavened Bread represents the riddance of sin in our lives as we become sanctified in the Lord Jesus. Once we are justified we begin the life long process of becoming Christ like or growing in Christ. This is the sanctification process. Unleavened Bread lasts seven days and getting rid of leaven in the household, which represents sin is a sign of obedience. For those who do not rid their houses of leaven they are cut off from Israel or ex-communicated. If a New Testament believer continues to sin on a regular

basis he has probably never been saved and will perish. He will be cut-off from a personal relationship with The Lord here and in eternity. The requirement for this in Unleavened Bread in the OT is they must be in disobedience for all seven days.

The First Fruits represents The Resurrection and it is the day following the Sabbath of the Passover. Jesus died on Passover, Unleavened Bread starts on Saturday and First Fruits (Resurrection) is on the first day of the week or the day after the Sabbath.

Pentecost, which is fifty (50) days after First Fruits, represents the Church age since the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). We are raised to live forever. In the Old Testament the doctrine is found in Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; and Hosea 13:14. In the New Testament it is clearly expressed in John 5:25-29 and Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15.

The Resurrection of the dead *Believers* occurs in five stages. It is called the first resurrection. The Bible teaches in 1 Cor 15:20-23 that there is an orderly progress of stages. This shows that all of the Christians shall live again or be resurrected and that there is an *orderly progression* of the stages of resurrection. Scripture makes it clear that there is an order or sequential nature to the first resurrection. The Greek word for *order* is *tagma*, which is a military term that is used to denote a sequence of troops of soldiers marching in a procession or in battle. (Strong's Greek word # 5001; *tagma*) There is one troop first, followed by another troop or division, and so on. The point is that not all the righteous will be resurrected at the same time, but rather in a definite sequential order. So before the thousand-year Millennium is established the saints are resurrected in their proper order and after it the unbelievers. So the first resurrection happens in five stages.

1. First Christ rose from the dead.
2. Resurrection of the Church age believers at the Rapture. ( 1 Thessalonians 4:16)
3. Resurrection of the two witnesses in the middle of the Great Tribulation.  
(Revelation 11:11-12)
4. Resurrection of Old Testament Saints (Isaiah 26:19)
5. Great Tribulation Saints (Revelation 20:4)

The second resurrection is for unbelievers only and it happens after the one thousand year Millennial kingdom on earth. (Revelation 20:13)

Paul states the "two men" doctrine in verse 20. The first man of all creation, Adam caused sin to come into the world. As the father of mankind Adam in his sin brought death to everybody (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 5:12). But because of the obedience (Philippians 2:8) of another Man (1 Timothy 2:5) resurrection will come to all those related to Him by *spiritual* birth. This grand truth is expanded in Romans (Romans 5:12-19). Those who are a part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) will one day follow the lead of their Head (Colossians 1:18), but will not do so immediately. It will be an orderly process occurring in five stages. The second stage is what we are waiting for at this time. It has been about 1976 years so far.

What does the Bible mean by Christ being the "First Fruits" of them that slept? He was the first of all persons to be resurrected.

*I Corinthians 15: 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

The next stage is the resurrection of the Church (I Thessalonians 4: 13-18). This will be followed by the two-witness of Revelation 11: 11-12 during the Great Tribulation. When the Tribulation ends Christ will set up His Kingdom for a thousand years here on earth. When this is complete Christ will give the Kingdom to God the Father signifying the end of all the creation during the time-space continuum.

*I Corinthians 15: 25-26 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

The text here gives personhood to the term death, which is actually Satan (I Corinthians 15:55; Hebrews 2:4). Death will finally be ended when Satan is finished (Revelation 20:10). The single act that provided for Satan's final demise was the death and resurrection of Christ.

*I Corinthians 15: 27-28 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

This passage is teaching us that all things, which mean even the unsaved, will be subject to Christ. When the Millennial Kingdom comes to an end there will be a transfer of authority from Christ Whose work will be finished, to God the Father. Ultimately the power and authority of the Kingdom must be turned over to God the father. The Messiah must rule until each enemy of man must be placed under subjection. Since there will be death in the Millennium the transfer cannot occur until the Millennium is finished. The God can be all in all or the sole authority. Christ will not rule in the eternal order.

*I Corinthians 15: 29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*

Paul here held up the teaching of being *baptized for the dead* was a practice of some who denied the Resurrection. He was not in any way giving credence to the heresy that one can be saved after death and baptized at that time.

*I Corinthians 15: 30-32 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*

Paul now emphasizes the certainty of the resurrection by the way he led his own life. His life was in constant jeopardy as he brought the gospel to a world that was hostile

the message. In other words if this life was all that there was, why face all the opposition he experienced? The Epicureans and other philosophical men before them would be right—pursue pleasure and avoid pain (Epicurus *Letter to Menoecus* 128). But Paul knew there was more, and his life testified to that fact (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; II Corinthians 4:16-18).

*I Corinthians 15: 33-34 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God I speak this to your shame (NASB)*

Paul finished this section of Scripture with a direct command: Do not associate with people of bad morals and more specifically false teachers. False teachers must be avoided (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1) because though they claimed great knowledge they were in fact ignorant of God (1 Corinthians 8:2). This is a command associated with resurrection denial. It came from corrupt teachers. The point is this: Don't listen to false teachers or associate with people who have low morals. Their ideas and life style practices will influence you. When their ideas enter your mind they will cause confusion and cause you to doubt God and His Word. DON'T DO THIS!

What will corrupt good morals? Association with heretics, those with bad morals or false or inaccurate teachers

*I Corinthians 15: 35-49 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

This section discusses the nature of the bodies of the resurrection of the believers. It is important that we completely understand this because we will experience this some day. The following points are made:

1. Most think this is foolishness
2. We have the example of nature to see how God does this
3. When a seed such as an acorn falls from a tree it is dead
4. It goes into the ground then comes back to life with a brand new body
5. There are many types of bodies visible to us in nature and in the heavens
6. Our bodies are corrupt; that is they are susceptible to aging and decay
7. Keeping with the seed illustration our bodies are put into the ground (sown) in dishonor (decay, aging and death) and raised in glory without the aging and decay. That is power.
8. It goes into the ground as a natural body and it is raised as a spiritual body
9. The two bodies are different characteristics
10. Adam the first man was made a living person, a human body.
11. The last Adam (Christ) was made a life giving spirit because He was raised from the dead with an immortal body. He was the firstfruits of all that would be resurrected.
12. In like manner our bodies are first natural and when we are resurrected will be spiritual bodies.

This is the answer to question #3: Do we have to die to be resurrected? The answer is yes for those who die before the Rapture and no to those who are alive on earth at the time of the Rapture.

This is the answer to question #4: When the Bible speaks of the first and second man of whom does it speak? It speaks of Adam as the first and Christ as the second (last) man?

The point in all human history when this will occur is not give to us in Scripture. Christ even said we would not know the day or the hour (Matt 24:42). The best information we have been provided is that it is yet future to us today and sometime before the Great Tribulation.

The earliest indication that there would be a rapture and resurrection prior to the Great Tribulation is found in Luke 21: 34-37.

*Luke 21: 34-37 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.*

After Jesus described the Great Tribulation to His followers he states that it will come upon the entire earth. In other words no person living on the earth can escape the Tribulation. But there is one way to avoid it and that is to be off the earth. If one is a believer one will be off the earth as a result of the rapture. The means of escape is to stand before the Son of Man (Jesus).

*1 Th 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

The seven stages are:

1. The Lord Descends
2. With a Shout
3. With the voice of the Archangel
4. With the trump of God
5. The dead in Christ rise first
6. We that are alive join them in the air
7. We meet the Lord in the air and are ever with Him.

*1 Corinthians 15: 50 Now this I say, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Paul now turns to those who are not dead and raised when the rapture occurs. In order to go into the Kingdom the believers of today must have immortal bodies. That is we must die then raised. Those who are alive and remain alive when this happens (I Thes 4: 15, 17) will be transformed to our immortal resurrected bodies.

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