

Series on First Corinthians

By Doug Hamilton

1 Corinthians 15:20-34 "The Big Effect of Jesus' Resurrection"

In the last lesson we focused on the Big Message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In this section of chapter fifteen we will learn some of the deeper implications of Jesus' resurrection. There are three important thoughts up for discussion.

1) Through Jesus' resurrection, He blazed the trail for us!

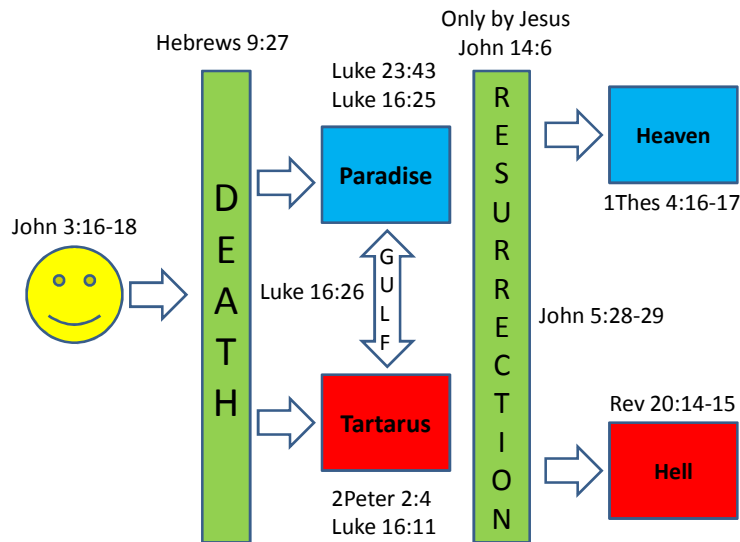
1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

- Christ blazed a trail for Christians to follow by being permanently resurrected from the dead. In this way He earned the titled "*the first fruits of those who are asleep*".
 - Well into the earthly ministry in Matthew 16:16, Peter correctly assumed that Jesus was "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"
 - It was upon this fact that Jesus responded in Matthew 16:18 "*...upon this rock [the fact that He was the Christ] I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*"
- God resurrected Jesus from the dead on that third day by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11) and in so doing confirmed Him the "*son of God with power*" (Romans 1:5).
 - This was clearly stated by Peter in the infancy of the church in Acts 2:30-32 "*And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne,*³¹ *he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.*³² "*This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.*" He was quoting David from Psalms 16:8-11.
 - Hence Jesus can say in *Revelation 1:18* "*...and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*"

1 Cor 15:21-22 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.
²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

- Adam was told what "*...not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17)*), but did it anyway (*Genesis 3:6*). He blazed a trail into sin and death. His curse of death is found in *Genesis 3:19* "*...For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.*"
- We all fall short of the glory of God (*Romans 3:23*) and the wages of our sin is death (*Romans 6:26*). We are led acceptance of Adam's sin into the death, but can be delivered by Christ into eternal life.
- *Genesis 3:22-23* Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.
- We needed Jesus to blaze the trail back to the tree of life which was forsaken through sin.

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Jesus blazed the trail to Hades (Acts 2:30-32), resurrected (Luke 24:6) and ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11).

2) Through Jesus' resurrection, He has put to death our fear of death!

1 Corinthians 15:23-25 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

- *James 1:18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures. When we entered the covenant of salvation TO Him and die faithfully IN Him, we will follow the path WITH Him into the resurrection from the dead. We are the best that He has to offer the Father and He deeply desires to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).*

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

- Quoting Psalm 110:1, we realize that David prophesied of the coming subjection of all to power of Jesus. David said, "*The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adoni), sit here at my right hand until I make thy enemies the footstool of my feet*". David prophesied that the Father (Jehovah) to the Christ (Adoni) that all things will be subjected to Him.
- It is through Jesus, the "Resurrection Trailblazer", that we are freed from the grips of dead that is upon us all. *Hebrews 2:14 "...through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."* The #1 weapon of the devil is our fear of death.

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- Jesus has put our fear of death to death!

3) Through Jesus' resurrection, we gain the strength to live for Him!

1 Corinthians 15:29-34 Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? ³⁰ Why are we also in danger every hour? ³¹ I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. ³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." ³⁴ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

- There was so much chaos in the Corinthian church that there were actually some church members that were baptizing for the dead..."probably members of their families—who had already died." -Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Volume 3: Romans to Philemon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- We must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:15-16), but we cannot believe whatever we desire. Three MUST beliefs we must have are all found in this chapter.
 - We believe that Jesus was dead, buried and resurrected (15:13).
 - We believe that we are facing a future death, burial and resurrection (15:52)
 - We must believe belief is that we will live a life of death, burial and resurrection (15:31).
- It is in the latter that Paul wants to draw their minds back to reality. Many in the church have been living immorally, divisiveness and pride. They were not living a sacrificial life and needed to be reminded. In this case he would contrast himself.
 - Paul died daily for the cause of Christ.
 - He lived the hard life of missions.
 - He kept a high level of morality in his life.
- Their ignorant "baptisms for the dead" had lined up with their "dead living in the baptism". They must flee immorality, sinful behavior and the people that encourage such.
- We who believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus not baptized for the dead, but for their own soul. They are being quickened together with Jesus to walk in the newness of life.
 - Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
 - 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
 - Col 3:12-13 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
- We enter Christ with a baptism for the living! He gives us the strength to live for Him!

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Three important things to remember about Jesus' resurrection:

- 1) Through Jesus' resurrection, He blazed the trail for us!
- 2) Through Jesus' resurrection, He has put to death our fear of death!
- 3) Through Jesus' resurrection, we gain the strength to live for Him!

In the next lesson we will finish the chapter by answering the questions of 15:35 “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”