

1 Corinthians 15:12-20, 35-58 Resurrection.

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Introduction. On what is our hope of eternal life based?

Vs 12-23 The resurrection of Christ

A central teaching of Christian preaching was that Christ has been raised from the dead. If Christ had not been raised from the dead then Paul's and others' preaching is false, and believers' faith in Christ is futile because they are still bound by their sins. So those [believers] who have 'fallen asleep' (i.e. died) are lost, there is no hope for them. (see 1 Cor 15:3-8). 'But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep'. Christ has paved the way by conquering death and sin and this can be seen by his resurrection from the dead. All those who are ('in Christ') united to Christ have the sure hope of following our Lord Jesus Christ into this new life through the resurrection from the dead.

Problems/complications: Why does there seem to be a period of waiting after we die and 'go to be with the Lord' before our future resurrection from the dead? (Eph. 2:11-14; Jn. 14:15-21).

Vs 35-58. The believer's resurrected body.

Vs 35-37. Because the resurrection of the dead seems impossible, especially when viewed as a resuscitation of the body, some have asked the rhetorical question, 'How are the dead raised?', meaning 'it's not possible!'. Paul responds by describing them as foolish, that is they are people who have failed to take God into account (see Ps. 14:1; 53:1; 92:6).

Vs 38- 46. Each part of creation has been given a 'body', or a 'splendour' fit for its divine purpose. In a similar way God has given humans bodies fit for this earthly life and will give us new bodies fit for an eternal 'heavenly' life. Paul contrasts the 'two' human 'bodies' each fit for different lives. Paul is not using his analogies to describe the 'stuff' of the 'natural' or 'spiritual' body. He is using the analogy to contrast our body, first in its essential characteristics as earthly (belonging to present age) and then as 'heavenly' (belonging to the age to come,).

Vs 47-49. Paul contrasts the first earthly Adam, with the second heavenly Adam (Christ). Human earthly likeness will be replaced with Christ-likeness.

Vs 50-56. The 'mystery' is that God will **change** both believers who are alive and those who have died 'in a flash...at the last trumpet' (heralding the end of this age and the return of Christ). They will be raised with new bodies fit for the new eternal age. Death will remain for most but 'the sting of death'-sin- has been removed. Because the requirements of the law -obedience to God- has been fulfilled by Christ on our behalf.

Vs 57-58 'But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!' 'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm'.

Reflection/Response. Our future hope in being raised from the dead to living with God forever is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. How does our 'labour in the Lord' show our gratitude to God for what He has done for us in Christ? How does our future hope impact on our present living?

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