

# I CORINTHIANS 15

## THE GOSPEL EXPLAINED

### STUDENT GUIDE

#### DAILY BIBLE READING

DAY 1	I CORINTHIANS 15: 1-34
DAY 2	I CORINTHIANS 15: 35-49
DAY 3	I CORINTHIANS 15: 50-58
DAY 4	I CORINTHIANS 15: 1-34
DAY 5	I CORINTHIANS 15: 35-49
DAY 6	I CORINTHIANS 15: 50-58
DAY 7	I CORINTHIANS 15: 1-58

*The journey we have taken through 1 Corinthians reveals a never ending set of problems the congregation faced. As we enter the home stretch in chapter 15, we are confronted with a problem almost unimaginable for Bible-believing Christians of today: doubt concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The denial of bodily resurrection stems mainly from three groups. The **materialist** insist there is no existence beyond death. Second, the **pantheist** argues at death, we all slip off into a sea of everything, merging with all other forms of energy. Third, the **Platonist** believes the soul is immortal but the body ceases to be. In fact, one should long for release from the body's "prison." Each of these views attempts to pull the rug from under the Christian faith by denying the resurrection of the body. Paul gives us the definitive Christian response.*

#### OUTLINE

##### 1. Paul Explains How the Gospel Saves Us From Death (vv. 1-34)

In broaching the theme of the Gospel, Paul opens with a clear affirmation of what the Gospel is (1 Cor. 15:1-4). In Paul's most concise statement about the Gospel, three assertions are clearly presented.

*A.) Paul notes the prominence of the resurrection (vv. 1-4).* Our faith is not built upon sand castles in the sky. Instead faith is built upon historical, verifiable facts. And, what are the facts? Jesus died "for our sins." He took our place on the cross, "according to the Scriptures." All was predicted beforehand. Afterward, "He was buried." He put away sin by His sacrifice. But while His death is the first element of the Gospel, it is not the last. Jesus did not stay in the grave - "He rose again", His resurrection indicates God's approval of His sacrifice. Our foundation is the resurrection — the ground upon which we stand.

*B.) Paul observes the proofs of the resurrection (vv. 5-7).* Like Luke in Acts as he referred to "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3), many proofs of the resurrection existed. One proof was the public nature of the resurrection, appearing openly to up to several hundred people (v.6).

*C.) Paul notes the power of the resurrection (vv. 8-11).* The greatest proof of the resurrection's reality is the biography of Paul. Jesus gave him a new life (v.8), a heart-felt lowliness (v.9), and a ceaseless labor for the Lord (v.10).

*D.) Paul notes the point of the resurrection (vv. 12-34).* In other words, Paul queries the implications the resurrection has and divides the implications into three categories. He speaks about *personal implications* of the resurrection (vv.12-19). Paul raises a series of conditionals; that is, "ifs." What "if" Christ is still dead? What "if" there is no such thing as resurrection? Without the resurrection, our preaching is adversely affected (v.14a). The absence of resurrection results in negative implications on our faith (v.14b). No resurrection means our witness is negatively impacted. What testimony would we have if we had no resurrection? (v.15). Also our dying is affected (vv. 18-19). If Jesus is still dead, there is no hereafter. The Apostle speaks of *historical implications* of the resurrection (vv. 20-28). The resurrection has implications for past history (vv. 20-22) as well as prospective history (vv. 23-28). Finally, Christ's resurrection has *ethical implications*

(vv. 29-34). We died with Christ (vv. 29-32). Our old life was crucified with Him (cp. Gal. 2:20a). Yet now we live for Him (vv. 33-34; cp. Gal. 2:20b).

## **2. Paul Explains How the Gospel Summons Us To Life (vv. 35-49)**

Centuries ago, Job asked if men died, would they live again? (Job 14:14). Paul forces us to come to terms for an answer.

*A.) Paul discusses the proofs of the new body (vv. 36-41).* In his discussion, he begins by affirming the physical body's *continuity* (vv. 36-38). Only by the power of God is this a reality. Paul next affirms the physical body's *adaptability* (v.39). Humankind have bodies adapted for their natural habitat. Hence, it should not surprise us that God plans a new body for a new environment — eternal life in heaven.

*B.) Paul discusses the perfection of the new physical body (vv. 42-44).* The natural body we possess Paul contrasts with the spiritual body we shall have in the resurrection. So far as our natural physical body goes, it is obviously flawed — corrupted, dishonorable, and weak. However, the spiritual body we are going to have in the resurrection is perfect.

*C.) Paul discusses the purpose of the new physical body (vv. 45-59).* Again, we find the focus on two men — Adam and Christ. The characteristics of the first Adam are stamped upon us presently in this world. The characteristics of the last Adam will be featured in our physical bodies in the resurrection.

## **3. Paul Explains How the Gospel Shelters Us For Eternity (vv. 50-58)**

The final section of chapter 15 represents Paul's climax to his teachings on the resurrection. Paul offers, in his closing thoughts, precisely the victories Jesus won for us.

*A.) The personal reality of our victory was won (vv. 50-53).* The key to understanding Paul's meaning is the twice-used phrase, "we shall all be changed" (vv. 50-53). In other words, our change is necessary.

*B.) The powerful realization of our victory was won (vv. 54-57).* Paul goes into great detail to show us how Christ's victory procures for us a glorious victory over death and the grave. As for the substance of the victory, Paul pictures death as a fearful monster with a poisonous sting (vv. 54-57).

*C.) The practical results of our victory were won (v. 58).* No truth is more practical to the Christian's life than Jesus' resurrection from the dead. He won the victory for us over sin, death, and the grave. The reality of this victory is our life will result in a life of confidence (v. 58).

## **Wrap Up**

*Because the tomb is empty, our labor is not empty. We have results here and now because of Jesus' empty tomb. And, in the end, we are promised a secure, eternal life of blessed existence with the Lord. Nothing compares to the Christian life! Make sure you make your life right with God before you delay another moment. Jesus promises to him or her who comes to Him, he will never turn away. Come to Jesus today.*