

## Introduction

1. It seems there were those in Corinth that were teaching there would be no resurrection of the dead (cp. 2 Timothy 2:16-18) and so it was necessary for Paul to write and defend the doctrine of the resurrection. But he actually goes on to say much more. Here is a brief outline of the chapter:
  - a. The resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-11).
  - b. The resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12-34).
  - c. The resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:35-58).
2. Toward the end of the chapter, Paul refers to what he says about the resurrection as a “mystery” (1 Corinthians 15:50-53). The English word *mystery* means something that is unfathomable, unknowable. In common parlance it means “something that can’t be worked out”. However, the Greek word refers to something that was once hidden but has now been made known. This is best illustrated by Paul’s words: “The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints” (Colossians 1:26; cp. Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-4).
3. What is *the mystery of the resurrection*? What has been revealed about the resurrection, though it may have been hidden in times past? These are the questions we shall seek to answer in this lesson.

## I. THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

### A. Jesus and the apostles proclaimed the resurrection of the dead:

1. Jesus proclaimed that *all* will hear a call and come forth from the grave – those who have done good to a resurrection of eternal life and those who have done evil to a resurrection of eternal condemnation (John 5:28-29; cp. John 6:39-40, 44, 54).
2. The apostles proclaimed the resurrection of the dead:
  - a. Peter and John proclaimed a general resurrection of the dead and “gave an instance and proof of it in the resurrection of Christ, affirming that He was risen from the dead” (Dunagan) (Acts 4:1-2).
  - b. Paul expounded on the necessity of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-23).
  - c. Paul proclaimed his hope in the resurrection (Acts 23:6; 24:15).
3. The resurrection is a source of comfort to all true believers: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

### B. The resurrection will be achieved by the power of God:

1. The Sadducees (a sect of the Jews) denied that there would be a general resurrection (Acts 23:8); they believed that this life is all there is to enjoy. They even came up with a scenario that they believe proved there would be no resurrection (Matthew 22:23-28). However, Jesus said they were mistaken because they did not know the scriptures or the power of God (Matthew 22:29). There will be a resurrection and it will be achieved by the power of God, and with God all things are possible (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Luke 1:37; 18:27).
2. Paul says that just as God raised up Jesus, so He will raise us up by His power (1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14).

## II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### A. "All" means everyone!

1. Jesus made it clear that *all* would be raised from the dead at the Last Day (John 5:28-29).
2. Paul clearly defines "all" when he says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Every person that has lived or is yet to live is a descendant of Adam and we know that all men will die (Romans 5:12-21; Hebrews 9:27; Ecclesiastes 3:20). All men die but all men will be resurrected.

### B. A resurrection of life and a resurrection of condemnation:

1. The good or the just will be raised to receive eternal life (Acts 24:15; John 5:29).
2. The evil or unjust will be raised to receive eternal condemnation (Acts 24:15; John 5:29).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:5-11).

## III. THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION

### A. On the Last Day.

1. Jesus said that He himself would raise everyone on the Last Day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54).
2. Shortly after making that promise Jesus was crucified, buried, resurrected, and ascended into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:22-36). Yet we know He will return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11) and so we wait (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). In the meantime we partake of the Lord's Supper in which we proclaim the Lord's death "till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The fact, agent, and universality of the resurrection had been taught in some measure by prophets (cp. Job 19:25-26; Daniel 12:1-3), but they were looking into a darkened glass. But what had been partially revealed was made clear and plain by Christ and the apostles.

### B. On the Last day when Christ returns.

1. We know the resurrection will occur on the Last Day and we know that Christ will be returning, but we need to show that these two events are linked. Paul says, "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:21-23). You can see clearly that the resurrection of the dead will occur at Christ's coming, which is obviously the Last Day.
2. Those who believe that Christ will establish an earthly kingdom at this time (and establish a paradise on earth) will be both disappointed and shocked because Paul says that this is the time when "He delivers the kingdom to God the Father" (1 Corinthians 15:24; cp. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). You see, the kingdom exists now (Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13); it is a kingdom that came without observation (Luke 17:20-21); it is a kingdom that is not earthly or of this world (John 18:36).
3. What about the exact time? Paul says, "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2). It will be a very noisy day: the sound of the last trump when Christ returns (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) and the sound of the universe passing away (2 Peter 3:10).

#### IV. THE BODY OF THE RESURRECTION

- A. Our physical body will serve as the “kernel” from which comes an incorruptible and immortal body in which to house the soul (1 Corinthians 15:35-37).
  1. Our physical body...
    - a. Is sown in corruption but raised in incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:42).
    - b. Is sown in dishonor but raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15:43a).
    - c. Is sown in weakness but raised in power (1 Corinthians 15:43b).
    - d. Is sown as a natural body but raised as a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44-49).
  2. Paul wrote to the Philippians saying the same thing in this way: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).
- B. Those alive at Christ's coming will also share in this glory (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) and their bodies will also undergo this change instantly.
  1. This is necessarily inferred because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50).
  2. So their bodies will also be transformed in an instant (1 Corinthians 15:51-52); in which that which is corruptible and mortal will put on incorruption and immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53-54).

#### Summary And Application

1. If we accept the fact that the Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), then we believe all that is taught therein.
  - a. The future resurrection is a fact because both Jesus and the apostles proclaimed it.
  - b. It will be a general resurrection, i.e., every person that has ever lived and died will be called from the grave.
  - c. It is a resurrection of judgement because some will be raised unto eternal life and others will be raised unto eternal condemnation.
  - d. The resurrection will occur on the Last Day when Christ returns.
  - e. Those who have believed in Jesus will be resurrected and instantly transformed, i.e., given a immortal, spiritual body that is appropriate for heaven.
2. The English the word “hope” refers to a desire or wanting something to be the case. But the Greek word refers to an expectation of something. Paul didn’t simply *wish* that there might be a resurrection; it wasn’t a case of “Well, I do want there to be a resurrection but I guess we won’t know if there is or not until Christ returns”, he had an earnest expectation of it (Romans 8:25; Acts 24:15). Concerning the hope we have: It is the reason we now rejoice (Romans 5:2; 12:12; 15:13; Hebrews 3:6) and serves as an anchor for our souls (Hebrews 6:19).
3. Things we must do if we have this hope...
  - a. We must hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (Hebrews 10:23).
  - b. We must be ready to give people who ask a reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15).
  - c. We must purify ourselves (1 John 3:3), i.e., “Cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).