

1Corinthians 18-11-25b

We're ready now to resume our study in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Brethren, I declare to you the gospel. I preached it.

You believed it. It makes a difference, unless you believed to no purpose. Look at verse 12.

If Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, verse 13, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and your faith is also empty. Remember verse 2? Did you believe to no purpose? Well, if Christ is not raised, you did believe to no purpose, and we preached to no purpose.

He doesn't say if there's no atonement. He doesn't say if there's no God. He doesn't say if there was no pillar of fire and pillar of cloud.

He doesn't say if there was no David, or there was no Moses, or there was no Daniel. There was no Noah and the ark. He says if Christ is not raised, the whole Christian faith enterprise runs aground.

It is pointless. It is empty. And it's interesting because I suspect if you asked most Christians, what is the central truth of your faith, they would say, well, Jesus died for my sins.

It's a wonderful truth, and it's true, but it's not the central truth. Paul says, if Jesus died and died for sins, but He's not raised, your faith is empty. You're yet in your sins.

Read it. Verse 15, we are found false witnesses of God. Notice he has given the eyewitness testimony in the first part of the chapter.

All of these are false witnesses. The Old Testament prophets are liars because they said the Messiah would rise, and He didn't rise. The Lord Jesus Christ is a liar, or at best, delusional, because He told them over and over again, not just in overt ways.

If the Christian church was going to make up a Savior and make up the New Testament scriptures and go back and put words in this mythical Jesus' mouth, they would have to be some of the greatest literary geniuses in history because a lot of what Jesus said was cryptic, and the disciples didn't understand it. In some cases, they even rejected it. Take the example of rising on the third day according to the scriptures.

If you look at the Old Testament, where does it say Messiah will rise again the third day? Paul says, according to the scriptures, He rose the third day. Well, where is that? It reminds me of Jesus talking to Nicodemus in John 3, and He says, you must be born again. He says, I can't crawl inside my mother and be born again.

Jesus says, are you a teacher in Israel and you don't know about rebirth? You don't know about

the spiritual birth? How can you be a teacher in Israel and not know this? And you say, okay, if He's a teacher in Israel, then He's an expert in the Old Testament scriptures. Where do the Old Testament scriptures talk about being born again? Well, it's not laying there on the surface, but a teacher in Israel ought to know. So, raised on the third day according to the scriptures is a truth that is taught in the Old Testament, but it's not necessarily self-evident.

One of the scriptures is Hosea 6, verse 2, which says, after two days He will revive us, on the third day He will raise us up that we may live in His sight. Well, this is Hosea. In our survey of kings and prophets, we looked at Hosea's role in the later years of Israel, and us, plural, seems to be talking about the nation.

But what is it really saying? In Christ, all are made alive. And because Christ is raised the third day, everybody else's resurrection after two days and on the third day. Think about the reverse flip side of the coin.

What's the flip side of life? What's the flip side of resurrection? It's death, right? What did God tell Adam in the garden? All the fruit of the trees in the garden you may freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, don't eat it. Because why? In the day you eat thereof, in the day you eat thereof, you will surely die. Well, did He take a bite and keel over? Like that kid I was talking about in the movie that fired the shotgun and, he's down.

Down for the count. No. Death was assured at the point that Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Death was inevitable. It was certain. It was sure.

The process began. Well, on the third day, after the second day, when the Lord Jesus is raised, early in the morning on the third day, after two full days in the tomb, which is all day Friday and all day Saturday, early in the morning on Sunday, the third day, which of course is our Thursday crucifixion. I cannot help but emphasize that every time it comes up.

Jesus crucified on Thursday, put in the tomb on sundown, three days, three nights in the heart of the earth. What did Jesus say about being raised on the third day? The only sign that this generation is going to get, the only sign, is the sign of Jonah. And as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

Not part of three days and two nights. Three days and three nights. Early in the morning on the third day.

After two days he will revive us. On the third day he will raise us up. In the day that Adam ate the fruit, the human race began entering into death.

On the day that the Lord Jesus was raised, we all started entering into the potential of life. Jonah was inside the fish. This is Jonah 1.17. The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow

Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Matthew 12.40. I just quoted. The Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Isaiah prophesies the resurrection of the Messiah in Isaiah 53.10-12. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

He has put him to grief. When you make his soul an offering for sin. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Isaiah 53.10. You make his soul his life. This is nephesh. This means life in Hebrew.

You make his life an offering for sin. He shall see seed. He shall prolong days.

And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the labor of his life, his soul. And be satisfied.

By his knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify many. For he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great.

And he shall divide the spoil with the strong. Because he poured out his nephesh, his life, his soul, unto death. Isaiah 53.10-12. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

And yet, he is going to see seed. And he's going to prolong days. And he's going to have the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand.

He'll see the fruit of giving his life. How can he do that unless he comes back? It is all in Isaiah 53.10-12. The Old Testament as a whole bears witness to the resurrection on the third day. There was an early Jewish tradition talking about the expectation of the Messiah that looked at Psalm 16.8-11. Psalm 16.8-11. I have set the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. We just looked at this Psalm, right? Psalm 16. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices.

My flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Sheol. Nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.

You will show me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

It is an anticipation of entering into Sheol, entering into death, and yet leaving there and enjoying pleasures at God's right hand. That plus Psalm 110.1. The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. The enemies seem to have prevailed in crucifying the Lord.

God says, sit at my right hand until I vanquish these enemies. You can't sit at somebody's right hand unless you're dead, or you're an Inca, or an Aztec, or whichever one of those used to

parade around their dead kings. They didn't pay any attention to the fact that they died.

Their clans and their households just carried their mummies around, sat them at the table, had them in parades. The South Americans needed to be wiped out. You think the Spanish were bad? The people they wiped out needed wiping out.

Let me tell you. You go back and read 1491, that book. Those people were ripe for destruction.

They're just viciously evil, and corrupt, and deathly minded. Mel Gibson tried to explain a little bit of that in that Apocalypto movie, or whatever it was. Anyway, you can't sit at someone's right hand and enjoy pleasures after death unless you have been raised.

So the Jews, the Pharisees, and the scribes, and the scholars of the law, in ancient days, figured out the resurrection looking at Psalms 16, 8-11, and looking at Psalm 110, 1. And this is referenced in Acts 2, 25-36. This is Peter's Pentecost Day speech. Acts 2, 25-36.

David says concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, my tongue was glad. And he's quoting Psalm 16.

You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of joy in Your presence. Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day, but not the Lord Jesus.

It's an empty tomb. And it was known within seven weeks of when it happened. Pentecost is 40 days after the Feast of Firstfruits, and Jesus was raised.

And 40 days later, Peter is preaching an empty tomb, and a raised, and resurrected, and glorified Christ. Early Christians considered Easter Sunday the third day following the death of Jesus, on Thursday. On that Sunday, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to the women, Mary Magdalene, the two men of Emmaus, Peter, and the ten disciples in the upper room.

Then He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Here, and in the next three verses, Paul lists the people to whom Jesus appeared. Now, this is a brave thing if it's all made up.

But, of course, it isn't. Paul here is listing physical resurrection appearances. Jesus has already ascended, and when He appears to Paul on the Damascus Road, it's a little bit different thing.

Jesus was physically manifest. He is in vision, appearing to Paul and to John on the Isle of Patmos, for example, as a communication from Heaven. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father from the Ascension onward.

And those appearances after the Ascension are of a different type. And, by the way, how many times did the resurrected and ascended Lord appear to Paul? Here's a little trivia question for you. You want to know your Bible well? How many times did Paul see the resurrected Lord? Twice.

Twice. He gives three different accounts of the first time he saw Him on the Damascus Road. But, if you go to Acts 23.11, there is a plot against the Apostle Paul.

But that night the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome. And the Lord stood by him, so he saw him again. Once at the beginning of his apostolic ministry and once nearer to the end.

Two appearances. The first one, but these were visionary. Now, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision in Acts 18.9 and 10.

The Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city. So he heard from the Lord a few times, saw Him twice. What does Paul mean when he says he was seen? This is a very calculated use of Greek, because people saw Him, but some doubted.

Remember the disciples saw Him, but some doubted? Because His appearance was changed. Mary Magdalene didn't recognize Him, thought He was the gardener. The people on the road to Emmaus didn't recognize Him until He uncovered His head and said the blessing.

And they recognized Him more by what He said than by how He looked. The disciples that saw His post-resurrection appearances had to be convinced. He says, It is I. And why do you have to say that unless people are saying, Who are you? Jesus looks different in His resurrection body.

It's manifestly apparent. So, as one person has put it, there was a certain ambiguity in the appearances. People had to hear Him talk, and had to see the nail prints and so on.

Thomas didn't believe it was Him, partly because He wasn't really recognizable. But when he saw the nail prints, then he says, My Lord and my God. So, this is interesting, because we do not know what we will be like, what we will be like Him.

And we will have a glorified body like He's got a glorified body. And what's something of an encouragement is, we won't necessarily look like we do now. The essential us will be there, but it's going to be an improvement.

It is, I think, personally, and this is the Sam Hall, unbroken snow, standing out in the middle of the weeds theory, like no shaman in the garden. I believe that there is a reflection of our spiritual progress in our resurrection body. I think the Lord had no form or comeliness that we should desire Him in His incarnation.

But when He was raised, He is the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, and the transcendentally most handsome human being that has ever been, because He is the ultimate human being. And the reason the disciples took a little time to recognize Him is, His spiritual beauty is now reflected in His resurrection body. And He is the Lamb who was slain throughout Revelation.

And the glory of that accomplishment and that attainment is now, I think, reflected in His spiritual body. And the same is true for us. However we may be regarded looks-wise in this life, whatever our pluses and minuses and hereditary and experiential pros and cons, I think the capabilities, the appearance, and the overall utility, functionality, and possibilities for our resurrection body will be in some way determined by how far we get in our walk with the Lord in this life.

And inner beauty will become outer beauty. And if we are pretty lackadaisical, we'll probably be lackadaisical in our capabilities. This is why some will be qualified to walk with the Lord in white.

Others, I don't think, will be able to keep up. The Lord's walking. You know, we've got a dog now that his back wheels don't turn like they used to, and you want to go for a walk in the woods, and it's all He can do to keep up.

It didn't used to be that way. But He doesn't have the physical ability to do what He might want to do. Well, will we have the, quote, physical ability in the resurrection to keep up with the Lord, to sit with Him on His throne, to rule with Him in white, to partake with Him of the hidden manna? It depends on what we do here.

The resurrection is motivation to redeem the time and to make as much progress as we can, to use the circumstances of our lives. It's not all Bible class and sitting around, you know, sharpening the finer points of a doctrinal stance. It is the practical application.

Do you want a doctor operating on you that has read every textbook on the operation? Or do you want a guy that's done this, like the LASIK guy? I've done over 6,000 LASIK operations. Well, I hope you were paying attention for all of them, but I value the experience. You know, is he going to see something in my eye that he hasn't seen somewhere before? I think about repairing pianos.

You know, do you want somebody like I was when I first started out a couple of years ago and, you know, I barely know where to put the tuning hammer? Or do you want somebody that has, you know, seen all kinds of things that are wrong with an action and different kinds of repairs that need to be done for a string or a pedal or something else? Do you want somebody with experience? God wants people with experience in the eternal future, and He's giving us the opportunity to gain that experience now. We are in a fallen world. We push against resistance.

We overcome. We improvise and adapt and overcome in this life, and it qualifies us for service. It makes us potential for opportunities in the future.

We lay a treasure for ourselves. We can be rulers over many things if we are faithful in a few things. It leverages.

It amplifies. It plays into the future if we're aware of what's going on now. So the resurrection is critical.

It is the nexus. It is the transition point. It's what makes our faith make sense.

Look at what Paul says here. Verse 17. If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile.

It doesn't say if He didn't die for your sins. How many different things could you substitute for the first part of that sentence? What Paul says is, if Christ is not risen, the Christian faith is a waste. It's the resurrection.

Not even the death for sins. Not even the atonement. If the lamb stayed dead, we're done.

If you don't have the Azazel goat who goes off into the wilderness still alive, they didn't just kill the goat and we're done. There's a living goat. The leper being cleansed in Leviticus 14.

There's not just a bird that is killed and his blood poured out for the sanctification, the cleansing of the leper. There is a living bird that is daubed with the blood of the dead bird. How do you represent resurrection when you don't have the power of resurrection as an Israelite priest? You use two birds who are identical.

One dies, you identify the second one with the blood of the first bird and set him free. He's alive. And the great message of the gospel is just like what you see in these little plywood signs in people's yards on Easter Sunday.

He is risen. It's the central truth. And so don't miss this quiz question.

If there was such a thing as a pearly gate and St. Peter is standing there and says, why should I let you in? He might say, it's like Monty Python, what is your favorite color and all the rest of it. What's the flying weight of a swallow? And if you don't answer right, you get ejected over the thing. Well, the central question is, what is the central truth of the Christian faith? Christ is raised from the dead.

That's the central truth. You get into a discussion with somebody who's skeptical of Christianity. The truth of the faith, the proof of the faith, the proof of the existence of God, the proof of the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says, Christ has been identified as the Son of God, not by wonder signs and miracles, not by Old Testament prophecy, by the resurrection from the dead. Declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection. The resurrection identifies Christ.

The resurrection proves there is a God. All of these skeptical, naysaying, you know, spitwad slingers that want to try to assail Christian faith have to deal with the resurrection. And the resurrection has the strongest historical evidence of just about anything.

Because there were eyewitnesses contemporaneously vetted, identified, and the Christian faith begins in their lifetime, and nobody disputed the resurrection. They tried to explain it away, but they couldn't refute the empty tomb. So, he was seen.

He appeared to the twelve. He appeared to five hundred. He appeared to James, and then to all the apostles.

Last of all, he appeared to me, as to one untimely born. During the Lord's earthly lifetime, his brethren did not believe in him. John 7-5 tells us that his immediate family were skeptical.

Yeah, you know, the older brothers off his rails. But the Lord Jesus appeared to his brother, his half-brother James, and James believed. And James becomes the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, and the head of the Jerusalem council, and so on.

He's numbered with the apostles, although he's not an appointed apostle. There is a careful delineation. If you look at 1 Corinthians 9-5, do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Kephas? So, you have the apostles, you have the brothers of the Lord, and then you have Peter listed separately, because they knew Peter in Corinth.

So, Paul references meeting James in Galatians 1-19. He says, I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. And when he is released from prison, you look at Acts 12-17, motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.

This is Peter talking, and he said, Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren. He departed and went to another place. So, Paul considered James, Peter, and John the three pillars of the church in Galatians 2-9.

James, Kephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me. They gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. Paul reported back to James and the elders in Jerusalem in Acts 21-18 and 19.

Paul went in with us on the following day to James and all the elders were present. When he greeted them, he told in detail the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. This is Luke talking about Paul in Acts 21-19.

So, this was powerful testimony. How else are you going to prove the risen Lord short of a personal appearance in the moment to you individually except by eyewitness testimony? It's not just one or two. It's hundreds.

So, if this is not true, all of these people are liars. All of them are complicit. All of them have gotten together and concocted this massive lie.

And you ask yourself, why? What do they gain from it? Many of them died martyrs' deaths. They were hounded. The Jews were hounded out of Jerusalem, lost their property, were sent into the diaspora.

You have the rampant persecution. They were at risk from then on of being persecuted by the Romans as worshipping somebody other than Caesar. Kurios Kaisar, Caesar is Lord.

Or Kurios Yesu, Jesus is Lord. And they would say, you've got to say one of those two things right now. And if you say Kurios Yesu, into the Colosseum you go.

Into the pit you go. Unto death you go. Say Kurios Kaisar, say that Caesar is Lord, we'll let you go.

And scores, hundreds, thousands of first and second century Christians died martyrs' deaths because they would not deny the Lord Jesus. And we don't face anything like that in this day. Who would die for a hallucination? Who would die for a concocted story? You don't have martyrs for that one.

There's nothing to gain. They didn't gain political power. They didn't gain financial resources.

There was no advantage other than that which is beyond resurrection. They earned for themselves a wonderful inheritance. And it is the heavenly inheritance that is the motivation.

And these are not impressionable people. These are not gullible people. Gullible people would find a way to rationalize away the faith and not be killed for it.

Not suffer the loss of all things as Paul did. I suffer the loss of all things for the sake of Christ. I count all my former attainments as refuse for the sake of Christ.

Imprisonment, abuse, forty lashes minus one three different times for a hallucination. What's Paul getting out of it? And the others. So the eyewitness testimony is powerful.

And Paul cites it here. Scripture cites it here. And it is compelling.

There have been books written about the evidence that's given in the New Testament for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus by trial lawyers who say this would stand up in any court of law as the basis for a decision. There is enough evidence here that is of such a quality that it is beyond reasonable doubt that the tomb was empty and the only explanation the only reasonable explanation is that God raised Him from the dead. Nothing else fits.

Nothing else works. So he says in verse 20 Now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death and we're back to Adam whereas by one man sin entered the world and death by sin so that death passed upon all men because all have sinned in Adam all die in Christ shall all be made alive.

Right? It is people say well it's so unfair that God holds me accountable when I wasn't there in the garden and I didn't eat the fruit and why do I have to be born in sin? Well guess what? In the same way that you didn't ask for being conceived in iniquity and born in sin you don't have to do anything to be saved. In fact you can't do anything to be saved. You can't do anything to not be corrupt.

You are corrupt by birth. You are corrupt by construction. By the inevitable process of reproduction.

We're all corrupt. It's been that way since Adam got kicked out of the garden and Cain and Abel and Seth were born. We're all descended from either Cain or Seth and by extension from Shem, Ham and Japheth.

All of us traced back and we're all corrupt. And we didn't ask for it. We didn't get a choice.

You don't get to pick your genetic makeup or what the status you have is before God. But guess what? You also don't have to do anything to have that all remedied. All you have to do is accept the gift of its removal, revocation and renunciation.

You can be reconciled. You can be redeemed. You can have your sins propitiated.

You can be restored. You can be given new life. And in the same way that Adam began to die on the day that he ate the fruit, we begin to live on the day that we accept Christ.

And we grow into our eternal life. We are being saved. We are being renewed.

We are growing up into the standard of a mature man. We are in this earthly life being given the experiences and the equipment and the discipline whom the Lord loves, He chastens. It doesn't say anything about chastening in the eternal future.

It's now that we receive this training and instruction and correction in righteousness. It's now that this is our childhood. This is our preparation to enter into the maturity of the resurrection life.

So we want to make the most of it. And we're not supposed to be sitting around in Bible class all day and quoting verses to ourselves and singing hymns. We're supposed to be living life.

We do our tasks. We fulfill our responsibilities. We hit our marks.

We invest our time. We organize our thoughts. We establish goals.

We respect our values. We create a system of priorities. And we function in our daily life.

And the grace of God and the resources that God gives us in the Holy Spirit and in the Word inform us. And it is that process of learning by doing. We don't sit our children down and explain to them about what they see.

We turn them loose and let them play. And they learn how the physical world works and how vision works and how hearing works. When you hear a noise of a certain quality, that thing is behind you.

And you hear something else, it's above you. You hear it a different way and it's to your front left. We don't sit down and explain that all in a class.

Turn your kids loose. Let them play. This is the hazard, by the way, of sitting around in front of a flat screen all day long.

And they're beginning to measure now. Pediatricians and other scientists are measuring manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination. And children in the most recent generations are woefully deficient on average.

Because they are not experiencing life the way God lets us experience life. Your experiences count for something. God in heaven is orchestrating the highs and the lows, the easy path and the difficult path for a reason.

And we gain eternal knowledge and eternal capability and eternal potential by the things that God carefully and individually puts in our lives to prepare us for resurrected life. It is precise. It is fine-tuned.

Your life is as fine-tuned as the universe itself. It is fine-tuned as the solar system and the planets hold their orbits and the stars maintain their paths and the planets in the galaxies. The events in our lives are carefully calculated.

Not too much. Not too little. No temptation is going to overcome you but such as is common to man.

And with it God makes the way to cope. It is we are not tested beyond what we are able to bear. There is always a path.

There is a resource. God gives us the formula to solve the problem, He gives us the knowledge to accomplish the task, and many times we don't know in this life why we are stretched and why we are challenged and why we push against a weight, but believe me, we will understand it by and by, and we will look back and say, what a gracious God to prepare me, I am ready for this opportunity to serve and to reflect the glory of the Lord because of a great difficulty He sustained me through back in my earthly life. It counts.

We know this by faith. God is not going to explain everything, this is why you have a health challenge, this is why you have a financial challenge, this is why you have a relationship challenge, this is why you have a social challenge, this is why this impediment or that difficulty or this hill to climb or that mountain is in your path that you have to go around or under, He is not going to explain it now, we know by faith that it counts, that God knows what He is doing and the wisdom of men is foolishness to God and the wisdom of God is often foolishness to men, it doesn't make sense to us, but we trust that God knows what He is doing in the same way that children trust their parents when they take them to the doctor and they have all kinds of insults inflicted on them by strangers, I say, well, I wouldn't sit still for this, but my mother said it's okay, my dad has sent me down here for this, so if they say it's okay, they know more than I do, I will submit. Out of love and respect for my parent, I don't understand this, but somebody smarter than me does and you wind up not getting smallpox and you wind up not

getting a lot of things that you are vaccinated against and that you are protected from by the miracle of modern medicine.

So, what's the upshot here? As in Adam, verse 22, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. Now, you say, well, this is universal Unitarianism or something here because in Adam everybody died, so in Christ everybody is going to live, so you don't have to make a salvation decision because the whole human race fell in Adam, the whole human race is going to be raised in Christ. People have tried to make this argument, here is the difficulty, what does it mean to be in Adam? Is there any human being that is not in Adam? Anybody not descended from Adam? They haven't made a test tube boy yet, we don't have Dolly the sheep, and even then they are going to take the materials from the descent of Adam.

They didn't invent Dolly the sheep out of silicone, they cloned a sheep. So, all humans are in Adam, so all humans die. The inevitability and the ubiquitousness of death is because we are all in Adam.

In Christ shall all be made alive. So, in Paul's mind, is everybody in Christ? No, because he says in another place, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

Some men are and some men aren't. So, there is a smaller group that are in Christ. In Christ shall all be made alive.

But, each one in his own order. Christ the firstfruits. He is first.

That resurrection is definitional. He is the firstfruits. In the same way that Adam was the firstfruits of death, so to speak, and everybody after that in him would die, Christ is the firstfruits of resurrected life, and everyone in him will enjoy at a subsequent point that resurrection life.

Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming. Those who are Christ's at his coming. Now, Paul is not here comprehending all of history.

What about the Old Testament saints? Are the Old Testament saints in Christ? Is this the rapture or the second coming? He is talking to the Corinthians about their situation. He is not talking about Old Testament saints. So, this is not a comprehensive coverage of resurrection.

This is about those who are in Christ, and that is Church Age believers. Moses is not in Christ. Elijah is not in Christ.

Daniel is not in Christ. Job is not in Christ. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, one of my favorite Old Testament guys, is not in Christ.

Joshua is not in Christ. Joseph is not in Christ. Old Testament saints are not in Christ.

The body of Christ is in Christ. Read the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus. Read John 16 and

17.

I in them, they in me, all of us, one in the Father, Jesus is talking to his Father about that. We are unique, and that is all that he is talking about here. So, he only needs to talk about one coming, and this is the rapture.

Each one in his own order. Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming. There is a subsequent resurrection, seven years after that, at the end of the tribulation.

The Old Testament saints are going to be raised, each in his own order. Christ is the firstfruits, those who are Christ's at his coming for those who are Christ's, which is us, the rapture. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and authority and power.

And Paul jumps to the end of the millennial kingdom. After Gog and Magog, after surrounding the camp of the saints, after the great white throne judgment, then comes the, and this is not the end in the sense of it's all over, this is, then comes the goal. You know, to what end am I doing this? It doesn't mean I'm going to lock the door and turn out the lights, right? Then comes the fulfillment of the purpose.

Then comes the consummation. Then comes the fulfillment of all things. Then comes the fulfillment, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, puts an end to all rule and authority and power.

He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. There won't be a need for the suppression of evil. There won't be a need for ruling with a rod of iron.

There won't be a need for the ongoing battle against darkness. When the end comes, rule and authority will be done away with. You don't need it.

Everybody is serving out of a voluntary love for God, a wholehearted desire to obey and to fulfill and to be part of what God is doing. You don't need authority in that case. You don't need subjection.

You don't need discipline. You don't need consequences. You don't need punishment.

You don't need judgment. But he must reign, he must exert authority until all these enemies have been put under his feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Death is not destroyed until the end of the millennial kingdom. There are guys who will die at the age of 100 and be said to be just children in the millennium. There will be death penalty in the millennium.

There will be ruling with a rod of iron and breaking in pieces as a potter's vessel. If you break a potter's vessel in pieces, it's not a vessel anymore. You have killed it.

Last enemy is death. He has put all things under his feet. When he says all things, it is evident that he who put all things under him is accepted.

This is God the Father. And it's another evidence of the Trinity. You have God the Father putting all things under the Lord Jesus' feet, everything except himself.

He's not going to subject himself to the second member. Now when all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God may be all in all. And you have the author of our salvation, God the Father, reigning supreme, the Lord Jesus and all the rest of us serving voluntarily under that first person of the Trinity, authority.

Then he goes into a little digression here in verse 29. What will they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead do not rise at all, why are they baptized for the dead? Why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? This gets back to the eyewitness testimony. Why would these people stand themselves in jeopardy if they didn't believe in a resurrection? We got to eat, drink and be married today.

Tomorrow we die. I want to stave off death as long as possible. This is the view of the materialist and the atheist.

We've got to prolong life as long as we can because when it's over, it's over. So let's do what we do while the sun shines. Why do we stand in jeopardy? I affirm by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus, I die daily.

In other words, I put myself in jeopardy every day and I risk death every day. And he puts his life on the line every day. He invests his life in the things of God every day.

He dies to self. I die to myself and I live to the Lord. I die daily.

If in the manner of men I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? Why would these people, why would the apostles put their lives on the line, invest themselves in the purposes of God and in the preaching of the gospel? What benefit is it? If you get thrown in the arena with wild beasts in Ephesus, why would you do that? You've got some kind of a persecution complex and yet you've got in the beginning a dozen and then 500 and then 2,000 and you look at Acts at the multiplication of the church and these people are all putting themselves at risk. For what? For that which is beyond this life. It is the resurrection that defines Christianity.

If the dead do not rise, let's eat and drink. For tomorrow we die. It doesn't say be merry.

Let's eat and drink. Tomorrow we die. Do not be deceived.

This is a deceptive argument. Evil company corrupts good habits. Awake to righteousness and do not sin.

Some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. What does it mean to not have the knowledge of God? What is God up to? How does God prove His existence? The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is central. You got questions? Go back and start at the resurrection. Everything is built on that fundamental truth and it makes a difference.

It ought to make a difference. It is one of the most practical truths there are. Am I suffering? Am I slaving away? Am I having difficulties? Why do I put up with this? It is the hope of the resurrection that God has a purpose, that God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, your labor of love and your patience of hope.

God records it. God sets store in it and sets store by it and builds an inheritance based on it. God appreciates it.

He knows what it is. The Lord Jesus seated at His right hand knows what it is. He has been here.

He has done that. It is our faith based on the knowledge of the truth of the resurrection that makes our life make sense. It is powerful.

Paul says, I do not count myself to have attained anything. I press to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Why? Because I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

That I may come to know Christ and the power not of His atonement, not of His redemption, not of His reconciliation, not of His golden rule, not of His wonderful attitude, suffer the little children. I want to know the power of His resurrection. That's where the power is.

Well, we'll pick up and conclude this section of 1 Corinthians 15 next time, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank You for the wonderful truth of the resurrected and living Lord Jesus who has enabled us to speak to You as Your children, to come into Your presence, to endeavor to follow His example of faith and obedience. We pray that as we reflect on these things, God the Holy Spirit will minister to our hearts in a productive way, in a way that is meaningful and motivating and helps us make sense of our own lives and the things that You bless us with, the things that You challenge us with, so that when the Lord Jesus does return to take us to Himself and to bring us before Your throne, we will be qualified to appreciate it, we will be qualified to serve, we will be enabled to dwell and to function in the coming kingdoms in a way that makes the work of the Lord Jesus on our behalf worthwhile, that is pleasing in Your sight.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.