

The Fact Of The Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

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Now, when I say this is a great chapter, I'm not overstating that. It is one of the great chapters. If you were to do a series of great chapters in the Bible, this would be right up there on top of that list. The subject of the chapter—listen to me very carefully—this is going to be super important for you to understand this chapter because it synchronizes and harmonizes with God's plan of redemption and it also is so important when we think in terms of eschatological truth, which is future truth, of the Lord's coming and our resurrected body and life beyond the grave and the eternal state. It synchronizes with all these important doctrines. I'm going to try my best to make it simple and keep it clear. I just want the text to be understood and come alive. This is one of my favorites, and I pray that it would become one of yours. When you want to study the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the resurrection of the physical body, both of the righteous and the unrighteous, and the resurrection of Christ, this is the key chapter in your Bible.

The problem in the church at Corinth for which Paul wrote was, I believe, turn with me to verse 12 real quick. In verse 12 Paul says, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead"—and He is—"how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" That was the problem going on in Corinth for which Paul is addressing in this chapter. Keep in mind why Paul wrote what he wrote, it will help you when you read this to understand why Paul said what he said. Seemingly what's going on in Corinth is they had believed in Jesus Christ—they believed He died for their sins, they believed He rose from the dead, and they were forgiven—but they did not believe—listen carefully—that our physical bodies would be resurrected from the dead. They believed that we would just be spirits in heaven. Why is that? Because they were Greek in their thought, and Greek thought minimized the importance of the physical body.

Whenever you get away from Christianity or Judeo-Hebrew roots, you find a minimizing and a despising of the physical. It all becomes esoteric and becomes spiritual, and they minimize and downplay the physical. What they were not believing was that one day their physical body—your physical body, my physical body—would be metamorphosed and become immortal, eternal glorified body free from sin, sickness, and death. What a glorious hope that is. That's what the Bible teaches, but they weren't believing that, yet Paul is showing them the inconsistency. They believed Jesus rose from the dead, ". . . how say some among you"—he says—"that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

When Jesus was here on earth and preaching, He actually dealt with this subject. There were the Sadducees who did not believe in life after death or the resurrection of the body, and remember they came to Jesus trying to trap Him. They gave this hypothetical story about a woman who was married to a man and her husband died. Under the Levirate Law of the Old Testament, the nearest of kin in his family were to actually marry this wife that was widowed and raise up children in that man's, that died, name. It was Jewish law. So, she married the

second husband, the second husband died as well. Then, she married a third husband. Now, when I say husband, these are brothers all from one family. So, the brother gets married, he dies; the next brother in line marries the wife, he dies; she marries again the next brother, and he dies; all the way down to seven brothers. Now, about halfway through this list I would've been checking what she's putting in their coffee, and if I were number five, I'd say, "No, thank you. I'm not going to marry that woman. She's a black widow. I'm not going to get near her."

They tell this story about this woman who had seven husbands and said, "In the resurrection, which husband will be her husband?" They thought, We've got Him! They didn't believe in the resurrection, so they concocted this story. Jesus said, "You do err in a couple ways: You do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God," and that's the problem we have. We don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. He said, "In the resurrection, there is neither going to be marrying or giving in marriage." We'll be like the angels, so we're not going to be having a husband or a wife or married in heaven. We'll be as the angels. There'll be no need to procreate because we're not going to die, and we're not going to have to worry about that. They thought they had tricked the Lord, and surprisingly, Jesus set them straight saying, "You need to know the Scriptures, and you need to know the power of God."

There's another false group from this early Roman-Greco time that was influencing the church with false doctrine. They were known as Gnostics. The doctrine was known as Gnosticism. By the way, it's not dead, it's alive and well in the world today. Gnostics didn't believe that God created the world because they believe God is Spirit and good. They believed everything that's physical, and physical matter, is evil, therefore God does not create physical, so God actually sent out this demigod from Him, this emanation, and then another emanation, another emanation until eventually there was this demigod that was so far from God that he was evil, that he created the heavens and the earth and created our bodies. They thought that everything physical was evil, and only the spiritual was good.

It took another branch of doctrine known as Cerinthianism where they taught that Jesus did not have a physical body, that when Jesus came to earth, He was just kind of a ghost body or a spirit body. They actually taught that if you were to reach out and touch Jesus, that your hand would go right through Him, kind of like Casper the Friendly Ghost; and that when He walked on the beach there by the Sea of Galilee, He left no footprints. They don't believe that Jesus actually had a physical body. This kind of mystic eastern mysticism is very prevalent even today, and sadly in some churches and Christian circles, there has been a denial of the physical resurrection of the body. They believe the body will be discarded, it will be decayed, God's not going to redeem the body. You'll have a new body, but it doesn't have anything to do with your old body. Some of you might be saying, "I like that idea. I don't want this body in heaven. I'm trying to get rid of it." It'll be you, but it'll be new and improved. Trust me, you'll love it. It'll be amazing.

All through this chapter we're dealing with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. I'm going to give you a very simple outline. First, we're going to cover verses 1-28. It's going to take about three weeks to get through this chapter. I'm going to give you three main points outlining

what we cover tonight. First, what Paul does is talk about the resurrection of Christ, verses 1-11. In verses 1-11, he starts with the resurrection of Christ. What we're going to discover is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is linked to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. As Jesus physically, bodily rose from the dead, so will we physically, bodily rise again from the dead. Paul starts with the gospel that was central to the gospel, the resurrection, and in the first eleven verses he deals with Christ's resurrection. That's the foundation, and you realize that this resurrection of Jesus Christ is importantly linked with all these other doctrines.

Verse 1, "Moreover, brethren"—every time we find that phrase 'brethren' in the book of Corinthians, it's indicating a new section—"I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if"—or, better yet, since—"ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." I want to stop right there for just a moment.

Paul starts with the gospel that brought them salvation, had in its foundation the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you take out the resurrection of Jesus Christ, guess what? There is no gospel. Not only is there no gospel, there is no salvation. He's going to point out to them that they were actually saved because of a resurrection, that is, Christ's resurrection.

The gospel there is a reference to the good news. The word "gospel" means good news, and we have one of the greatest definitions of the gospel in the Bible in this text. He says, ". . . the gospel which I preached"—I love this, twice Paul mentions the fact, once in verse 1 and then in verse 2, that he preached the gospel. That's what the Church is to be doing today, they're to be heralding, preaching, proclaiming the gospel. ". . . I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." He says, "I preached to you the gospel, unless you believed in vain."

What does he mean by, ". . . unless ye have believed in vain"? When we get down to verse 14, he's going to say, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." So, if you put your faith in Jesus Christ, but He didn't really rise from the dead, then a dead person can save no one, right? A dead person can't help you, a dead person can't save you, so what good would it do to have faith in Jesus Christ? You believed in vain.

Verse 3, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." Paul says number one of importance, number one in order, is that Christ died for our sins. Notice he says, ". . . according to the scriptures,"—which here are Old Testament Scriptures. We don't want to take the time to go through all the references in the Old Testament to Christ's death, but obviously we could write down Isaiah 53, right? Every believer should know Isaiah 53, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . and with his stripes we are healed." It describes the suffering servant of Jehovah who is actually Jesus Christ who died for us.

So, first of importance, Christ died for our sins. Notice there that the death of Jesus Christ was

substitutionary. He died, why? For our sins. He didn't die for His sin, He died for our sins, and he's referring to those who are believing in Jesus Christ. The Cross was a substitution for our sin; the Cross was a redemption for our sin. He bought us at the Cross. The price He paid was His own precious blood. The Cross was a reconciliation for our sin, we were estranged from God.

Remember Sunday morning I talked about that we were actually at enmity with God, we were running from God, and now we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, so we are brought back to God. We are reconciled through the Cross of Christ.

Fourthly, we see that in the Cross we find that Christ propitiated God the Father's wrath by substituting Himself in our place and paying the penalty for our sins. Propitiation means He paid the price to satisfy the demands of God's holy law which was broken so that we could be forgiven and free.

The second facet of the gospel says that He was buried, Jesus was buried. That is a statement to indicate He physically, literally died. Not a good idea to bury people who aren't dead, right? Those are the nightmare dreams you have, being buried alive. Jesus was dead, He was buried, and then it says, “. . . and that he rose again the third day”—get that in there—“according to the scriptures.” Did you know the death of Christ, the burial of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ were all prophesied in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Let me give you one reference to the Old Testament on the resurrection, Psalm 16:9-10 where David said, “. . . neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” David wasn't referring to himself; obviously, he was referring to Messiah. It's prophetic. It's Messianic, referring to Jesus Christ. He would be resurrected. There's also typology in the Old Testament where Jesus said, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Now, what happened to Jonah? He came out of the whale, right? I've always wanted to title a sermon on Jonah, “Barfed on the Beach.” The whale spit Jonah out on the beach, but for three days he was in the belly of the whale, and then he came out.

Another example of this is Genesis 22 where God tells Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and . . . offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” That mountain, by the way, would be Moriah, and Moriah would actually be Mount Calvary or Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. So, he takes his son Isaac, whom he loved, the first time the word “love” appears in the Bible, “. . . thine only son . . . whom thou lovest,”—Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, and they journeyed for three days and three nights to the land of Moriah. As they were going up the mountain to give his son as a sacrifice, Isaac said to his dad, “Dad, here's the wood, here's the fire, but where's the sacrifice?” I love what Abraham said to his son. He said, “God will provide himself a”—sacrifice. There's an interesting way you can look at that, two ways: God will provide a sacrifice or God provides Himself as He said as the sacrifice for our sin. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. God's literally provided Himself a sacrifice for our sin.

You know how Isaac was taken off the altar and the ram that was in the thicket of the bushes, taken out, and he was placed on the altar instead of Isaac. That's a picture of the Cross. We find it all the way through the Old Testament. We can spend all night just following those verses.

In verse 5, Paul begins to speak about the historical event of the resurrection in that He was seen. So, Jesus died, Jesus was buried, Jesus was seen. He rose again from the dead. The reason Christianity still lives today is because Jesus rose from the dead, the tomb was empty, He was seen, and lives were changed. He's still changing lives today.

Look at verse 4, “. . . and that he rose again the third day”—verse 5—“And that he was seen of Cephas”—that is a reference to Simon Peter. Remember Peter had denied the Lord three times that he knew Him, so Jesus had a private interview with Peter to make sure Peter knew that he was forgiven, and then in John 21 that he was recommissioned to feed the sheep. So, He appeared to Peter, “. . . was seen”—notice the repetition of the phrase ‘he was seen.’ He's trying to establish the historicity and the scientific fact that He was physically resurrected because He was seen. “. . . then”—He was seen—“of the twelve,”—verse 5, Peter and the twelve. By the way, these appearances in the post-resurrection appearance of Christ, this list is not exhaustive. But, He was seen of the twelve, verse 6, “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.” Again, that's a cool thought, five hundred people at once said, “We saw Jesus risen from the dead.”

One of the ways to try to explain away the resurrection is to say that some of the disciples, and maybe the women as well, wanted to see Jesus raised so bad that they had a hallucination, that they were just hallucinating and kind of like a mirage on the desert—they thought they saw Him but really didn't. How do you get over five hundred people to hallucinate on one thing at one time? Pretty hard, right? If someone committed a crime today, and five hundred people said they saw him do it, maybe not in our court system today, but should be, that would be enough to send them up the river for life, right? If five hundred people said, “We saw him rob that bank,” he should be sent to prison. The witnesses that saw Him, and he said, “. . . of whom the greater part remain unto this present”—are still alive, I'll give you their phone numbers. You can call them up. You can interview them. Check it out. “. . . but some are fallen asleep,”—which is a reference to death.

Verse 7, “After that, he was seen of James”—this ‘James’ here, there are several James’ in the New Testament, this is actually James of the epistle of James in the New Testament who's actually the brother of our Lord, or the half-brother of Jesus. Mary and Joseph had other children, so Jesus had brothers. He was the big brother. But they didn't really believe in Jesus until after He was resurrected from the dead, and the Lord appeared to them. Can you imagine that? Your brother, your half-brother, is actually the Savior of the world! That's amazing. He appears to James, verse 7, “. . . then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” I love this, verse 10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain;

but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach,”—we proclaim, k 7 ýss Ûy6 æ@ so ye believed.”

Paul says, verse 8, “And last of all he was seen of me,”—but he refers to his conversion on the Road to Damascus when he saw the risen Christ, and he became “ . . . as of one born out of due time,”—which is an interesting phrase. In the Greek it conveys the idea of an untimely birth. We actually get our word “abortion” from it; we get our word “miscarriage” tied into that. John Wycliffe, in his translation there, has a dead-born child. He’s actually saying, “I was kind of born prematurely, and compared to the other apostles I was like a dead child. He’s actually downplaying his position and his importance. But truly Paul was converted in a miraculous way. So, alongside verse 8, I would put Acts 9, Paul’s conversion.

Remember when Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, and the Lord appeared to him at high noon and a bright light “ . . . shined round about him . . . from heaven: 9 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . it is hard for thee to kick against the goads,”—and the man, Paul, who was known as Saul then, said—“Who art thou, Lord?”—that I might serve You. “And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” Can you imagine how mind-blowing that must’ve been? He was on his way to arrest Christians. He was putting them to death, and the Lord appeared to him and revealed Himself. You talk about a radical conversation, and the Lord spoke to him. Think about that. “Who art thou, Lord? . . . I am Jesus”—and, “I am dead,” probably. If you hear Jesus, I’m dead because I’ve been persecuting Your people.

But then he was taken into Damascus. Ananias came and prayed for him. His eyes were opened. He went blind, and his eyes were opened. That’s where he was converted. We refer to radical conversions today as a “Damascus Road experience,” Saul of Tarsus radically saved. I don’t know about you, but I’m so glad he was. God saved Saul, and what an amazing man he was. So, he says, “ . . . as of one born out of due time.”

Verse 9, “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet”—or fit—“to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” But Paul says, “But by the grace of God”—in my life —“I am what I am.” You have Paul’s conversion, verse 8; Paul’s transformation, verse 9; and then Paul’s obligation, “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” So, we preached Christ, Him crucified, you believed, and you are saved. He’s trying to point out to them that the doctrine of the resurrection is center and foundational to their salvation.

Again, I love the fact that Paul said, “ . . . his grace . . . was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” I love Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 12 about his thorn in the flesh when he said, “God, would You take this thorn away?” God said, “No, but I’ll give you My grace, and My grace will be sufficient for you:

My strength will be made perfect in your weakness.” Paul said, “Most gladly then I’ll glory in my weaknesses because then the power of Christ can rest upon me.”

The second section we move to in verses 12-19 have Paul’s personal proof for resurrection, period. Paul’s giving personal proof and arguing for the resurrection or for resurrection, period. Christ’s and ours. He says, verse 12, “Now, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead,”—and He is—“how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” He’s trying to show them the inconsistency, how illogical it is. You put your faith in a Man who died and rose again from the dead—Jesus rose from the dead—yet you don’t believe in the resurrection? How does that work?

In Romans it says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” So, you need to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ to actually be saved. Paul’s just showing them in verse 12 their inconsistency. “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen”—it’s kind of like, “Duh, think about it.” If Christ’s not risen, if there’s no resurrection from the dead, then Christ is not risen. I’m going to number that number one. There are different ways you can number these and come up with different numbers, but there’s going to be like eight things that he’s going to say logically or the implication to if Christ be not raised. So, “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen,”—number one.

Verse 14, “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain,”—that’s number two. First, then Christ is not risen; secondly, preaching is vain. Why would we preach that you could be saved if Jesus is not alive? Then, also, your faith, your trust, is in vain. In other words, we are saved by grace through faith, “. . . and that not of yourselves,”—I believe that’s a reference to your salvation—“It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” So, God saves us by His grace, but it’s through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul says, “And if Christ be not risen, then . . . your faith is also vain.”

Verse 15, “Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” Again, Paul’s arguing for the resurrection: “. . . then is Christ not risen,” verse 13; verse 14, “. . . preaching . . . is . . . vain, and your faith is also vain; verse 15, “Yea, and we are found false witnesses”—we’re liars—“because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain”—and here’s the sixth—“ye are yet in your sins.”

This is why on Easter when I’m preaching the resurrection I talk about what does it mean? It means this pardon—our sins can be forgiven. If Jesus did not raise from the dead, when you celebrate the resurrection at Easter time, which, by the way, for Christians every day is resurrection day. We live in the power of Christ’s resurrection. We can celebrate the fact that our sins are forgiven because Christ is risen.

Verse 18, “Then they also”—If Christ be not risen—“which are fallen asleep”—again, this is a

picture of death for the believer. This is a metaphor for the believer's death, "fallen asleep." If you've ever been to a memorial service with an open casket or seen in a mortuary someone that is in a casket, they tend to look like they're sleeping, so the Bible uses that phrase. It only refers to the physical body—the soul does not sleep—and it conveys a temporary state.

I don't know if you can tell or not, but I took a nap this afternoon. You say, "Yeah, you need to wake up." Now, when I took my nap, I set the alarm so that I could wake up. I didn't kiss my wife goodbye, sign my "Last Will and Testament," say, "I'll never see you again, I'm going to go take a nap." When I take a nap, I plan on getting up, don't you? Well, when you fall asleep—die in Christ—there's going to be a great gettin' up morning. You're only sleeping. That's why I love this idea of the cemetery. Do you know what the word "cemetery" means? Resting place or sleeping place, so we lay their bodies in the grave waiting for the resurrection. They're going to wake up. They're going to get up. They're going to be resurrected. It's a temporary state. It's only the body, and it's only used in the Bible for Christians and never used for the soul, which does not sleep.

Verse 18, "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Paul used that phrase "fallen asleep" in 1 Thessalonians 4 when he talked about those who have died in Christ before the rapture that they will be the first to be resurrected, " . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up"— *harpáz* *ÒÀ* snatched up, raptured—" . . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Verse 19, "If in this life only"—by the way, verse 18 is seventh, if Christ is not risen, our loved ones have perished. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, our loved ones who have died have perished. I can't tell you how many times I've stood just like this looking over a congregation in the church or in a cemetery looking at those that were there and be able to speak these words, "Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there's no hope of ever seeing your loved ones again. He's the only hope beyond the grave." Amen? So, how important is this resurrection. So, "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." That's the eighth in our list. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ,"—now—"we are of all men most miserable." There is hope beyond the grave in Jesus Christ.

As you go back over this list, Christ is risen from the dead, and that's what we're going to see in verse 20. Secondly, verse 14, " . . . our preaching"—is not—"in vain;" our faith is not in vain, we have been forgiven, we're not in our sins; verse 18, those who have died in Christ have not perished, we will see them again; verse 19, we do have hope beyond the grave not just in this life, but thank God we have hope beyond the grave.

My last section is verses 20-28, here we have the assurance of our resurrection. Notice the contrast, "But now,"—so he said, if we only have hope in Christ in this life we're miserable—"is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." That phrase "firstfruits," we're going to read it a couple of times, the firstfruits in the Old Testament where when they would have their fields and it was time to harvest them, they would take a portion of

the harvest and bring it to God in the temple and dedicate it to God. It's like the tithing of your field. They would actually have what's called a "wave offering," where they would take the grain and bring it to the temple, they would wave it before the Lord, and they would offer it to the Lord.

A couple things about "firstfruits." Jesus' resurrection is the firstfruits in the sense as He was resurrected, we will be resurrected. When you actually gave that wave offering to the Lord, and you gave that first bit of grain from your field to the Lord, it was a foretaste, a precursor, to more grain that would be harvested. It's kind of like a downpayment. When you buy a car, or a house—and cars are as expensive now as houses used to be or are now, \$600 thousand for a car. It's just crazy. When you make a downpayment on a house or a car, it means that more money is to follow, right? You make payments, and make payments, and make payments, and make payments. Maybe if you stay there long enough you buy your house and pay it off and you're mortgage-free. It's all done, and that's a blessing. But when you give a downpayment on anything, what're you saying? You're saying, "I'm going to bring more money. I'm going to finish the deal, finish the transaction. There'll be more money to follow."

When Jesus rose from the dead, He was the downpayment. He was the forerunner. He was what we would say the prototype. When you study the body of Jesus' resurrection, you gain a lot of understanding about what our bodies will be like. He was able to be touched. He was able to be seen. He was eating. He was talking. He said, "Touch My hands and My side. A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see Me have." When we get to heaven, we'll have bodies just like that. He could appear and disappear. I mean, talk about how cool we can freak our friends out in heaven, you know, it's just going to be amazing what we could do—no limitations to these glorified bodies. His body was the firstfruits. He was the prototype of those who sleep. You're going to see that not only saved people but unsaved people, their bodies will be resurrected as well. They'll be resurrected to damnation; we will be resurrected to salvation. But we both will be resurrected, and we will have bodies that will be eternal—some to everlasting life, some to everlasting damnation and destruction.

Let's go into verse 20, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept,"—this is also a section known as doctrinal proof. Verse 21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." The first reference "by man" in verse 21 is a reference to Adam. You know the story of Adam and Eve. By the way, if you don't believe in the historicity of Adam and Eve, then you're going to have a problem with the New Testament, you're going to have a problem with these verses because if there was no first Adam that sinned and brought death into the world, there would be no last Adam, Jesus Christ, who conquered sin and death, rose from the dead, and brought eternal life into the world.

So, ". . . by man"—Adam, bringing sin into the world—"came death . . ." What a horrible thing death is. It's not part of God's plan or design. It's the consequences of man's sin. He said, ". . . by man"—that second 'man' is a reference to Jesus Christ—"came also the resurrection of the dead." Now, though there were people in the Old Testament, and Jesus Himself raised people from the dead in the New Testament, listen to me very carefully, they did not come back from the dead in a glorified, eternal, immortal body. They were resuscitated, brought back. They

had to die again. Jesus was the first human ever to die and conquer death and the grave and rise victoriously from the dead. So, you have the first man, Adam; you have the last Man named Adam the last in verse 21, Jesus. He brought “. . . the resurrection of the dead.”

And then he explains, verse 22, “For as in Adam all die”—you see, this is why every human being eventually dies. The statistics on death are quite impressive—everyone living will die. No one can save their soul from the hand of the grave, right? So, death brought in by Adam. “. . . even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign”—it’s referring to Jesus Christ, He’s going to come back and reign. This is where it gets into future eschatological facet of Christ’s future reign. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” I love that! The last enemy destroyed is death.

Verse 27, “For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.” In other words, God the Father was not put under God the Son. Verse 28, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” This is very, very heavy doctrinal stuff. I’m going to make just a few statements to try to make it simple, and when I come back to it, I’ll get a running start and touch on it once again.

Basically, we have the two Adams, Adam the first and then Adam the last being Jesus Christ. The first Adam sinned and brought death upon an entire human race. Every time someone dies we can trace it all the way back to God saying to Adam, “. . . for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” They died spiritually, they were separated from God; and then they died physically. Then you have in the Bible, “He died; he died; he died; he died; he died; he died.” So, Adam brought death from his sin; Jesus, the last Adam, brought the resurrection from the dead. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” If you’re a Christian, you’re in Christ, you are saved, you will be made alive. But “. . . all be made alive,”—don’t let me lose you here, means that all people, all humans, will be resurrected. Not all go to heaven, but they will be resurrected. Some are going to be judged, and we’ll see this in the text.

Verse 23, “But every man in his own order”—there’s an order to the resurrections. There’s not just one big general resurrection, it starts with Christ. “Christ the firstfruits”—follow with me closely, verse 23. The resurrections, and I hope I don’t confuse you, can be put in two categories. It shouldn’t be too hard to figure out, two categories, right? The first category—the first resurrection. Got that? It’s pretty simple. The second category—the second resurrection. The first category are all saved starting with Jesus Christ, all saved individuals. No saved individuals will be a part of the second resurrection. The second resurrection will only be unbelievers, and they will all—human beings who rejected Christ or died without Christ weren’t in Christ—be resurrected at the end of the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment, and they will be judged and then thrown into the second death, Gehenna or the lake of fire. So, first

resurrection, all saved and starts with Jesus; the second resurrection, all the wicked dead at the end of the Millennium, the thousand years, the Great White Throne, the books are opened, the names are not found and they're thrown in the lake of fire.

The first resurrection has different stages. Listen to me carefully. The first is Jesus Christ. We've pretty much have seen that clearly. He's the "firstfruits." Do you know what the second one is? The rapture. When the rapture takes place there will be a resurrection of all those who died in Jesus Christ. Sometimes we talk about the rapture and we only think in terms of those who are alive when we are raptured who will be transferred or translated to heaven—go from life to life—but if you die before the rapture, and many have and many still are dying before the rapture, you will be resurrected and reunited with your soul and spirit which is in heaven in what is now called the intermediate state. When you die right now before the rapture, you go to heaven to be with the Lord, but you don't have your new body. You won't get it until the rapture. This is where a lot of people don't understand when in 1 Thessalonians Paul said, ". . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first" You say, "Well, how does that work? I thought they went immediately when they died to heaven to be with the Lord?" They do, but their bodies will not be resurrected until the rapture. The rapture has two facets: the resurrection of those who died in Christ, the translation of those who are alive in Christ.

So, the first resurrection, first two phases, first Christ then the rapture, dead in Christ, their bodies raised and reunited with their soul and spirit in heaven. We are transferred. Now, who doesn't want to be alive and remain when the rapture happens as a Christian? I can dig it! I could dig the uppertaker not the undertaker. I could dig being caught right up to heaven not having to deal with the death of the body just translated into the presence of the Lord.

Go back with me to verse 23, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Listen to me carefully. Also, at the Second Coming, and for that you need to read Revelation 20 where you'll find Old Testament saints and tribulation saints, it would seem (I can't be super dogmatic about it) that Old Testament saints because they're not a part of the Church and tribulation saints who died in the tribulation not a part of the Church, they will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, so it says they lived and reigned with Christ for one thousand years. That is the first resurrection. Then, the second resurrection is a thousand years later. For one thousand years Christ will reign on earth. Now, some question whether or not there'll be a literal thousand-year Millennial reign Kingdom of Christ on earth, but I think it's interesting that in the same physical earth in which Jesus the Messiah was despised and rejected and crucified and risen will be where Christ will come back to reign in power and majesty and glory; and every eye will see Him when He comes in His Second Coming. So, He will come back where He was rejected, where He was despised and crucified, and He will come back in complete and fulfill the covenant promise to David, the Davidic covenant, that on David's throne Messiah would reign, and it would be an eternal reign.

It's speaking here of the future thousand-year reign of Christ, verse 24, and at the end of that Millennial thousand-year, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God,"—which is the Millennium on earth—"even the Father; when he shall have put down all

rule and all authority and power.” If you mark your Bible, highlight your Bible, check out verse 24, “. . . when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,” and at the end of that you have verse 26, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Can you dig that? I can dig that. He’s going to have all power, all authority, all rule, and he’s going to abolish death—no more death. Praise God! Revelation 20:4-6 and Revelation 20:11-15.

Jesus then, “For he hath put all things under his feet”—God the Father put all things under God the Son—“But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.” So, God the Father was not under God the Son for God the Father “hath put all things under”—Jesus Christ.

Verse 28, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him,”—that’s the day we long for, ‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven’—“then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him”—so, Jesus Christ the Son is going to give the Kingdom to His Father and submit Himself underneath the Father—“that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Read Revelation 21 and 22 where we see that there’s going to be a new heaven and a new earth. Amen? And, death will be abolished and all things will be placed under God the Father. That’s what we call the eternal state.

How our hearts yearn and long for the Lord to come to reign for a thousand years and then the Kingdom will be submitted to the Father, there’ll be a new heaven and a new earth, and we will dwell with Him forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Amen? Praise be the Lord.