

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 1: INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL)

Is the concept of resurrection taught or even referred to in the Old Testament? W. R. West wrote what most of us have been raised to believe: "There was some light given in the Old Testament on the afterlife, but the doctrine of the resurrection, life, and immortality, which Christ taught, were new" (robertwr.com/resurrection.pdf).

Next Question: Should we use the Old Testament to help us interpret the New Testament? Or should we use the New Testament to help us interpret the Old Testament?

Most today claim we should use the new to interpret the old, not vice versa. Contrariwise, however, under other circumstances, these same folks will quote this old man-devised adage: "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, while the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed." Hmmm. Well...

Methinks, of course, that we shouldn't limit ourselves to either; i.e., we should allow all of the Bible to assist us in interpreting all of the Bible. Besides, God commended the Bereans for using the Old Testament Scriptures to verify if what Paul taught was true. So doing such obviously isn't a flawed practice; in fact, it actually seems more logical to use that which is old and well known and accepted to aid in the understanding and confirmation of that which is new. Don't ya think? So...

When we consider the subject of resurrection, should we read our ideas of the resurrection back into the prophets? Or shouldn't we rather be sure that the teachings of the prophets determine our ideas of the resurrection (if indeed they alluded to this topic)?

This is, in fact, what I believe Paul did in reference to the very theme under consideration: let's read Acts 21:27-28, 24:14-15, 26:6-8, & 21-23. Now...

Not only do we find that Paul's teaching concerning the resurrection was founded in the Old Testament Scriptures, but (and it's only logical) all of Paul's teaching concerning biblical eschatology was founded in the Law & the Prophets: Acts 14:19, 17:4, 18:4, & 19:26 for examples clearly inform us that he went into the synagogues every sabbath in order to persuade his people, the Jews, from their own Scriptures.

In fact, think about this: If Paul were giving completely new revelation on the resurrection than what was contained in the Old Testament, how could he have said that he was teaching "nothing" but what Moses and the prophets said would occur?

The simple truth is this: If we don't realize and admit that Paul did indeed use the Old Testament Scriptures when he taught on the subject under consideration today, establishing the background for a fair-minded study of the controversial chapter of First Corinthians 15, then we may as well discontinue our study right here. Now...

With this behind us, it should be no shock to us whatsoever when I say that Paul even alluded to the Old Testament Scriptures when he penned First Corinthians 15, even directly quoting from Isaiah 25:8 & Hosea 13:14.

Referring back to what we read in Acts 21, 24, & 26, consider this: When Paul preached the hope of Israel based on the Old Testament's teaching of the resurrection, the people took it as an attack on the Jews, the Law, and the temple. Why?

I've taught on the resurrection from 1 Cor. 15 and was never accused of attacking the Jews, the Law, or the temple. So what's the connection? Could it be that it was because we haven't preached the hope of the resurrection from Moses and the prophets like Paul did? Yet that's the Gospel he preached! See...

Paul's concept of the resurrection wasn't that fleshly bodies would come out of holes in the ground at all, because that's not what Moses and the prophets spoke of!

Think about it: Have you ever heard anyone preach a sermon on the resurrection and even refer to the Old Testament Scriptures? Yet that was Paul's foundation for what he taught.

The Old Testament foretold the resurrection quite a number of times, not the popular view of fleshly bodies coming out of the ground, but a lot about the resurrection of Israel and the results of that event for every human who ever lived and would ever live. The Old Covenant spoke of how Israel would die, be planted like a seed, and be resurrected or transformed, which is why Paul could quote his conclusion in 1 Cor. 15 from Isaiah 25 & Hosea 13, chapters dealing with the time of fulfillment falling on the occasion of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

Besides Isaiah 25 & Hosea 13, which we'll get to later in our study of 1 Cor. 15, there are other Old Testament passages which deal with resurrection (even if that particular term isn't employed):

Ezekiel 37 refers to the death of Israel, with God telling them in verse 5 that He would cause breath to enter them that they might come to life.

Daniel 9:26-27 speak of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, a passage Jesus quoted from in Mat. 24, indicating that it would be fulfilled in His generation; then in Daniel 12:2 (a verse Jesus referred to in Mat. 13:43), Daniel foretold a national resurrection which would occur when the power of the holy people would be completely shattered (v. 7). In fact...

If one really wants to get technical, not only did Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, and Daniel speak of this resurrection, but, according to Peter in Acts 3:24, "All the prophets, from Samuel and those who followed, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days," the days of ... as he put it ... refreshing and restoration (vv. 19-21).

What's also interesting is that hardly any (if any) scholar on Earth has ever taken such Old Testament passages as even alluding to the modern teaching of the resurrecting of physical bodies from the ground, that which we've always heard concerning 1 Cor. 15. More accurately, I think is the following:

Israel was dead, destroyed, and in captivity to their sin; so if they were going to be saved, there needed to be a resurrection which would occur when God destroyed Jerusalem, redeeming the righteous from death and destroying the impenitent. [4/10]

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 2: MORE INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL)

In our last study we showed that Paul's doctrine of resurrection was based on Old Testament teaching; in fact, he specifically said, "I have stood witnessing both to small and to great, saying **nothing** besides the things that both the *prophets* and *Moses* spoke of as about to come" to pass (Acts 26:22, YLT). So...

Now that we've discussed resurrection in the OT and Paul's allusion to such in Acts, let's ... before we get directly into First Corinthians 15 itself ... spend some time focusing on this letter in general.

Keeping in mind, as pretty much everyone agrees, that the resurrection is directly associated with Jesus' coming in judgment (2 Tim. 4:1), let's consider Paul's many time statements in First Corinthians.

1 Cor. 1:4 & 7-8: "I thank my God always ... that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Firstly, notice that these brethren lacked none of the miraculous gifts. Secondly, they were eagerly awaiting their Lord's revelation. Thirdly, they were eagerly awaiting the day of the Lord. And... Fourthly, they knew Jesus' coming would be at the end. Now...

Isn't it interesting that Paul indicated the miracles would last until Jesus returned? Do we have miracles today? No. So what should that tell us about Jesus' coming? Well, not only does such signify that He's already come, but Paul's language to these brethren in Corinth in the AD 50s indicates that he expected (at least some of) them to be alive when Jesus came, having had the power of miraculous gifts until that time.

1 Cor. 4:5: "Judge nothing before the time [what time?], until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts; and then each one's praise will come from God."

Firstly, if you read back from verse 1, you'll see that Paul was saying, "Don't make judgments about me right now, for all about me will be made clear once the Lord has come"; i.e., Paul and what he taught would be vindicated.

Secondly, from the way this statement reads, notice how it's implied that AFTER Jesus has come, then they will be capable of judging Paul's motives and teachings righteously, implying that they'd still be alive after that event.

1 Cor. 7:26-31 [Read].

Firstly, isn't it noteworthy that Paul used the same sort of language here that Jesus used in Mat. 24:19-22 concerning His coming, indicating that what was happening in the AD 50s was partly in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy? [Read]

Secondly, if the coming and end implied in this 1 Cor. 7 passage hasn't occurred, then shouldn't we still be advising folks to remain unmarried, even though that 2000-year-old "distress" is past and gone?

1 Cor. 10:5-11 [Read].

Firstly, notice that Paul applied the typology of what occurred in OT times with those brethren in THAT time: "our" (vv. 6 & 11), "we" (v. 6), implied "you" (v. 7), and "us" (vv. 8-9).

Secondly, it's obviously important here to emphasize Paul's last statement: just as the end of slavery to Egypt and the giving of the law of Moses came upon Israel before entering Canaan, so the end of slavery to sin and the giving of the law of Christ came upon those Christians before or at AD 70: Paul wrote, upon *us* "the ends of the ages have come" (v. 11). Now...

Heading back to the idea of miraculous gifts...

1 Cor. 13:9-10 read, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

Firstly, this passage indicates that, since miracles no longer exist, that which is perfect has come! When? When Jesus came and brought it, of course.

Secondly, keeping the pronoun "we" in mind, Paul was obviously speaking of something that applied to them in their time, something that they would experience, corresponding perfectly back to 1:7, viz. that Jesus would confirm them with miracles until the end—when He'd return.

At this point, let's just consider more relevancies for chapter 15 thru-out this letter.

It's clear, especially from 1:10-13 & 3:3-9, that the primary crisis being dealt with in First Corinthians was dissension among them, dissension that was directly related to problems primarily between Jewish and Gentile Christians, between those who thought Peter (the apostle to the Jews) and Paul (the apostle to the Gentiles) had essentially created different sects by teaching different things when they actually weren't.

In chapter 1 Paul condemned their division, thanking God that he had not baptized any more than he had since that obviously only fueled the fire.

In chapter 2 he demonstrated that he was no greater than the other apostles, especially Peter, in order to tone down the Paul-Party; these folks, as we'll see later (in 1 Cor. 15), were denying the resurrection to "some."

In chapter 3 he explained how all the apostles built on the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; some just seeded, while others watered.

In chapter 4 he ended this section against their sectarian attitudes by warning them to not be making rash judgments concerning apostolic authority matters or against each other until the Lord came, by/at which time they would better understand all things.

In chapter 5 he dealt with the idea that those with whom they shouldn't associate are out-and-out sinners, like fornicators, not those who were merely Jewish or Gentile in their origin; racism is condemned by God.

In chapter 6 he, in the same vein as chapter 5, touched on the matter of unrighteously judging one another, and how that *sinners* wouldn't be allowed into the kingdom, having nothing to do with their genetic makeups.

In chapter 7 he spoke of matters associated with "the present distress" that God's people were under (and which would only get worse), implying that they, whether Jewish or Gentile Christians, were or would all be the recipients of persecution and should therefore be sticking together, not fighting among themselves.

In chapter 8 he wrote concerning Jewish and Gentile differences when it came to the eating of meats, mainly teaching them how they should treat one another when they disagreed.

In chapter 9 he spent time defending himself against those who had wrongly accused him in matters concerning his behavior toward Jews and Gentiles.

In chapter 10, somewhat related to chapter 8, he discussed the attitude of some of the Gentile Christians toward their Jewish brethren and how that the Lord's supper was a meal that was supposed to demonstrate unity, not division.

In chapter 11 he continued discussing the Lord's supper and how that they'd have been better off not even observing it if they weren't going to observe it correctly, viz. including each other in it without animosity.

In chapters 12—14 he discussed their rivalry over the use of spiritual gifts, how that they were abusing those in somewhat the same way they were the supper.

In chapter 15 he dealt with their conflict over who would and would not be resurrected, something, incidentally, that's connected with the subject of miracles in chapters 12—14. Why? Because Ezekiel 37 as well as Joel 2 tie the giving of the Spirit (with His miraculous gifts) to the resurrection of Israel. So while the Gentile Christians were given & allowed the use of these gifts as well, some of them were turning around and denying the resurrection of some of the Jews who were promised the Spirit and His gifts. Lastly...

In chapter 16 he encouraged the Gentile Christians to make a collection of funds for their Jewish-brethren-in-need to help heal their strife, something God hates.

Let's keep this theme of dissension between Jewish and Gentile Christians of the first century in mind for our next installment of these studies when we'll actually get right into First Corinthians 15.

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(PART 3: VERSES 1-11)

Let me say right off here that in this paragraph it wasn't Paul's purpose to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead or that there was to be a resurrection of the dead; rather, his goal was to prove that the apostles were all in agreement on the resurrection. So, that being true,...

These brethren had no grounds for being divided over what inspired men (especially the apostles Peter and Paul) taught concerning resurrection.

Verses 1-2: Brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received & in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

Firstly, notice that Paul referred to these folks as brethren who had received the Gospel message; this indicates that, although they had problems among themselves concerning the resurrection of the dead, we'll see that none of them were expressing a problem with the resurrection of Christ. In fact...

In 1:7 Paul said that they believed in the coming revelation of Christ, and in 4:5 he said that they believed in Christ's coming again; likewise, they didn't doubt their own resurrection. But we'll soon see what they were denying about the resurrection. Furthermore...

Isn't it interesting that, although Paul jumped all over the "some" in this chapter concerning what they were saying, he still recognized them all as "brethren"? If the popular view of this chapter is true—that "some" were denying the resurrection of Christ &/or denying resurrection in general, do we actually believe Paul would've continued to affectionately refer to them as his "brethren"? Would we call such folks "brethren"? Certainly Not! In fact, I hardly think Paul (or anyone else for that matter) would've baptized anyone who denied the resurrection!

Secondly, to remind ourselves of our introductory material, Paul's preaching on the resurrection was based on nothing but the teaching of Moses & the prophets, and Moses & the prophets knew nothing about a resurrection of biological bodies out of holes in the ground; yet Paul said he preached what they preached or wrote about, and—on top of that—such is what the Corinthian brethren had "received." So...

These brethren knew much more about Moses & the prophets concerning resurrection than we generally do today; so unless we acquire the knowledge of the same background that they had, we can't possibly grasp Paul's teaching in this chapter. Can We?

At the end of this chapter, Paul appealed for the fulfillment of the OT prophets, including Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13; again, no one on Earth interprets those OT prophecies as having reference to physical, bodily resurrections! So...

Since Paul didn't preach another gospel to the Corinthians, we shouldn't expect that he advocated something that the prophets never taught; yet when folks today are asked what their hope of resurrection is, we hardly ever, if ever, hear the same answer Paul provided—that his hope of the resurrection was based on nothing but what Moses & the prophets said would come (Acts 26:22).

Verses 3-4: For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

These "Scriptures" would naturally be the OT Scriptures. Right? Certainly! And, of course, we can find a number of passages that foretold the death of the Messiah (e.g. Isa. 53 & Psa. 16). However...

Even though we might find various passages concerning the Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection, only one OT passage touches on His resurrection occurring on "the third day": Hosea 6:1-2 have Hosea saying to God's OC people, "Come and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight." Notice...

1. This passage actually speaks of the resurrection of OC Israel, not Christ. But...
2. Since Paul said that the resurrection of Christ happened according to the Scriptures, and since Hosea 6:1-2 is the only passage in the OT that speaks of the resurrection of anyone on the third day, then Hosea 6:1-2 must also speak of Christ in the sense that He represents God's Israel.

This very application by Paul is a hint at who was being denied resurrection by some at Corinth; i.e., they weren't seeing that Jesus was (true) Israel and that (true) Israel was Jesus or epitomized within Him—the two cannot be separated. Anyway, we'll get more into this later. Getting back to Hosea for a moment...

I think it's important to be aware of a literary device called *inclusio* in which two related references in one text book-end the ideas presented in another text that contains references to the first text. In other words...

In our case, for example, Paul alluded to Hosea 6 at the beginning of his resurrection discussion in 1 Cor. 15:4, then Hosea 13 at the end of his resurrection discussion in 1 Cor. 15:55, indicating to his readers that 1 Cor. 15 is essentially a treatise or commentary on at least Hosea chapters 6—13. And...

This is demonstrated by the fact that Paul's general thoughts in 1 Cor. 15 can be found in the underlying book of Hosea: [1] sowing/planting of Israel, God's seed in 1:4 (Hosea's first child was named "Jezreel," lit., "God sows" in the earth, cf. 2:23); [2] Israel died (1:5); [3] a harvest was appointed at the resurrection (6:11 & 13:14, quoted in 1 Cor. 15:55); [4] Adam's death/transgressing the covenant (6:7 & 13:1); and [5] Israel as the firstfruits (9:10).

Verse 5: And that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

Peter, the apostle to the Jews, the one some were calling/naming themselves after, was the first one Paul brought up here. But, even so...

Peter wasn't the only one to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection, as Paul's chronological list goes on to demonstrate, beginning with the twelve.

Verses 6-9: After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of all the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Even though Paul also was privileged to be an eye-witness of Jesus after His resurrection, he devalued himself, probably in order to take another shot at those who comprised the Paul-party there.

The point seems pretty clear that all the apostles and even non-apostles were of the same standing in that all of these folks were eye-witnesses of Jesus' after His resurrection. And...

Who was Jesus again according to verse 4? That's right: Israel. All these folks witnessed, in this contextual sense, the resurrection of Israel in Christ. It was only left for those of the remnant to accept their place within that Israel-Messiah before His return to demolish the rejecters.

Verses 10-11: But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

By the term "therefore," Paul stated his conclusion to the first section of this chapter: his argument was not that Christ died, was resurrected, or that the Corinthians would be resurrected, for they already believed those things; rather, he summarized his point by stating that all the apostles preached the same Gospel—they were all united on their Gospel, including its teaching on resurrection, and they were all preaching it from Moses & the prophets.

Peter and Paul were not divided, only the Peter-party and the Paul-party were! How much sense did it make for the Corinthians to divide over it? As we saw in verses 1-2, the Corinthians had received the universal teaching of the apostles, embraced it, and stood in it (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5-9).

Whether the Corinthians believed in resurrection wasn't the issue, since Paul said they did; but "some" denied resurrection of some dead folks, as we'll see in the next study. Again...

Paul preached the hope of Israel from Moses & the prophets, the resurrection of Israel at the coming of Christ in judgment in AD 70.

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 4: VERSES 12-19)

Before we examine Paul's argument based on the consequences of the belief of some of the Corinthians about the resurrection, we need to understand a Greek verb tense and a Greek voice that Paul's readers used in their everyday language.

Once Paul got into the meat of his argument, he used this verb tense and voice in *numerous* statements, meaning that we cannot grasp the power of his argumentation if we fail to comprehend the implications of this tense and voice.

In most of our translations, the present, past, and perfect tenses are translated well, but in First Corinthians 15 the present tense with the passive voice has *not* been well translated in most versions. Why? Well (although it's an obvious judgment-call), once we see what Paul was saying in a correct translation, I think it'll become apparent that there was/is translator bias involved.

While the present tense with an *active* voice indicates what the subject *is doing*, the present tense with a *passive* voice indicates what's *being done to* the subject; but as we consider this chapter, we'll see times when a passive is changed into an active or even *worse* when a present is changed into a future. What? Don't believe that such gall exists? Well, let me share a couple of cases with you right now.

1. Most versions translate the present passive phrase *ei vekroi ouk egeirontai* in verse 32 like this: "If the dead do not rise." Did you notice that the translation isn't passive, but active? I.e., instead of something being done *to* the dead (the dead being passive in the action), the dead are doing something of their own accord (they're activating themselves). So here's how it should be translated: "If the dead are not being raised." So why would translators alter the voice in this phrase? Because to retain the passive voice with the present tense one must translate this phrase in such a fashion that it indicates an action in the process of occurring at the time of the writing; i.e., Paul was arguing that "the dead are being raised" when he wrote First Corinthians!
2. Most versions translate the present tense sentence *eschatos echthros katargeitai ho thanatos* in verse 26 as "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death." Did you notice how the present tense was changed the future tense? Now notice how this present tense statement should be translated: "The last enemy, death, is being destroyed (or more literally, is being made ineffective)." Even in my Kingdom Interlinear, a book which, in my experience so far, nearly always retains the tense of the original in its translation on the side, exchanged the present tense for a future. Why do that unless it's because it just doesn't correspond to one's theology or traditional belief? Well...

We'll encounter numerous other cases of mistranslation in this chapter as we continue on in our studies. Right now let's review some things from our previous discussions: (1) the main problem in the church at Corinth was division, division primarily it seems between a Peter-party and a Paul-party over misunderstandings

concerning the missions and teachings of those two eminent apostles; (2) Paul's resurrection theology was rooted in the Old Testament and its promise concerning the resurrection of Israel, without which all others could not claim and enjoy the same; and (3) Paul demonstrated in 1 Cor. 15:1-11 that he & Peter (as well as all the other apostles) were actually in agreement on what they taught, implying that they should also be agreement, but, obviously, they weren't. So now...

Let's consider Paul's continuing argumentation in verses 12-19. (I'm going to be reading these verses in a more literal fashion than found in our regular versions.)

Verses 12-13: Since Christ is being preached that He has been raised out from among [the] dead ones, why are some of you saying that there is (present tense) no resurrection of [the] dead ones? But if there is (present tense) no resurrection of [the] dead ones, then Christ has not been raised. So...

The resurrection problem at Corinth was that some Christians there were denying resurrection to "the dead ones." And who were they exactly?

Were they "the dead" in general? Nope, because in verse 18 Paul said, "Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." See, by the term "also" Paul was obviously referring to another group, and by the phrase "fallen asleep in Christ" we discover that this group was made up of Christians who had died (cf. v. 6), while "the dead ones" were not "in Christ." Next question...

Were the "dead ones" of verse 12 comprised of both the saint and sinner? Nope, because in verse 20 Paul said, "Christ has been raised up from out of the dead ones and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

By the phrase "raised up from out of the dead ones," Paul was saying that Jesus was once part of that group to which some at Corinth were denying resurrection, thus those "dead ones" must have been dead saints. And...

By the clause that Jesus "has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep," Paul (who I believe had here merged the groups of verses 12 & 18 into one) was implying that since Jesus was the firstfruits of this combined group, then the rest of them would likewise be raised, meaning that they were also saints. (Interestingly, 1 Cor. 15 never even deals with unbelievers.) So...

Since the resurrection-deniers weren't denying resurrection to those who had died "in Christ," then what group of people can we come up with who would be considered saints but not "in Christ"? That's right—folks who lived faithful to God *before* Christ came on the scene, which of course would very much upset Jewish Christians. So...

Due to our introductory remarks about the prevailing problems in Corinth between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, I believe Paul here (just as in chapters 9—11 of Romans) was dealing with the Gentile position that Old Covenant saints (those they seem to have named "the dead ones") would not be allowed a part in Christian resurrection. So...

The first consequence Paul mentioned for not accepting the truth that faithful pre-Gospel, pre-experiencing of the Spirit Israelites would be included in the resurrection is that, since Jesus Himself was an Old Covenant faithful (being born under the Law, etc.), they had to also deny that Christ Himself had risen from among those dead ones who would follow His lead in resurrection (something he gets into in verse 20).

Verses 14-16: If Christ hasn't been raised, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain. Moreover, we're found false witnesses of God, because we've testified of Him that He raised up Christ whom He didn't raise up—if in fact [the] dead ones aren't being raised. For if [the] dead ones aren't being raised, then Christ hasn't been raised. So...

The second consequence that Paul stated is in verse 14, namely that Paul's preaching was all in vain, since (as we noted earlier in Acts) it was rooted in the hope of Israel's resurrection (something the Paul-party obviously misunderstood).

The third consequence that Paul stated is also in verse 14, namely that if Israelites were denied resurrection, then non-Israelites could/would also not be resurrected, for it was to the Jew first, then to the Greek and so on; Jesus said that salvation (which is bound up in resurrection and vice versa) was/is of the Jews (John 4:22).

The fourth consequence Paul mentioned is in verse 15, namely that the apostles were all false witnesses, and that would include, of course, Paul as well as Peter. Lastly for our study in this session...

Verses 17-19: If Christ hasn't been raised, your faith is futile, and you're still in your sins! In fact, even those who've fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we're of all men the most pitiable. So...

The fifth consequence Paul mentioned is in verse 17, namely that the Corinthians were still in their sins if, in fact, the dead ones, the Old Covenant faithful, were disallowed their promised resurrection. (This essentially means the same thing as what he said in verse 14 concerning how that, by denying resurrection to Israel, they were thereby denying it to/for themselves and everyone else, for that matter!)

The sixth consequence Paul brought up is in verse 18, namely that if his preaching were false, then all those in Christ who had died (which, of course, included Gentile as well as Jewish Christians) have just been lost, since there was no resurrection for them.

Paul finished up this section in verse 19 by indicating that not only are the apostles all false teachers, but they're also—of all men—the most to be pitied for suffering as they were, essentially, for a sham (cf. vv. 29-32)! But it wasn't a sham—there was "hope in Christ," Paul said; and he always connected resurrection-hope with the hope of Israel's resurrection to life (cf. Acts 23:6, 24:15, 26:6-7, & 28:20).

Side-note: Notice that Paul hasn't said anything about "what" was involved in resurrection (such as "bodies" for souls or spirits, etc.)—it's all been about "who" was involved.

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 5: VERSES 20-23)

OK, after writing to the Gentile Christians about the logical consequences of their rejection of the resurrection of the OC saints (and I believe "the dead ones" were limited to the OC saints because of Paul's usage of Hosea's prophecies about OC Israel in this chapter), Paul turned to discuss positive things concerning the resurrection and kingship of Jesus.

As we begin this study, let's keep in mind that Adam died two deaths: spiritually the day he sinned and physically centuries later; likewise, Jesus died two deaths: physically on the cross and spiritually when God forsook Him as He bore our sin. (I'm going to be reading these verses in a more literal fashion than found in our regular versions.)

Verse 20: Now Christ has been raised out from among [the] dead ones, having become the firstfruit (always singular in the NT) **of those who've fallen asleep.**

In the last section I mentioned how that I believe Paul was combining into one body (the body of Christ, as it were, spiritual Israel) both "the dead ones" of verse 12 and those "fallen asleep in Christ" of verse 18, indicating their solidarity. Why? Because if OC Israel (i.e. "the dead ones" of v. 12) didn't get hers (i.e. the fulfillment of her promise for new/spiritual life [via resurrection, of course]), then NC Israel wouldn't even come into existence, much less be given spiritual life (also via resurrection, of course). Anyway, with that in mind, I believe...

This group of "those who've fallen asleep" (the "in Christ" being dropped) is a reference to that united group of saints who have, as we say today, passed away, whether they lived before or after Christ's resurrection (and, of course, prior to Paul's writing here); and Jesus, as the head of that body, was the firstfruit or the first to rise from among the dead ones who, as His body, would, logically, follow Him in resurrection.

This is reminiscent of Heb. 2:5-17; but, although we'll try to get back to that passage more at length later, verse 10 is especially appropriate here: "For it was fitting for Him [God] ... in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Author of their salvation [Jesus] perfect through sufferings." This verse is significant because the term "author" means "leader," the one out front experiencing the battle ahead of others (which is perhaps why the KJV renders it as "captain")—that's Jesus. In fact...

As he was preparing to launch into his talk with the Roman Christians in chapters 9-11 (essentially about the same topic as 1 Cor. 15), in 8:29 he said of Jesus that He was "the firstborn of many brethren," which should, in turn, remind us of James 1:18 in which James told his readers that he and they (first generation Christians) were the firstfruits of God's creation. So...

Let's discuss the Jewish idea and typology of firstfruits a little.

Leviticus 23 describes two stages of harvesting: the firstfruits (from which was taken a firstfruit to be offered by the High Priest to the Lord) followed by the rest of the harvest. Likewise...

Christ, as the firstborn of the dead (Col. 1:18)—that lone sheaf of Lev. 23—was the first of the firstfruits (cf. Exo. 23:19a), and the firstfruits were, as James said spoke of in 1:18, the first generation of Christians or, as Paul spoke of in Romans 8:23, those who experienced the power of the Spirit of God (cf. Eze. 37, et.al.), a subject Paul had just spent three chapters talking about prior to this one (1 Cor. 12–14, then 15).

In Matthew 13, Jesus said, “The harvest is at the end of the age” (v. 39). What age? He went on to say, “As the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of THIS age” (v. 40). What age? Jesus’ age, Jesus’ generation (Mat. 24: 34). What age? The Mosaical age, the age the Jews expected to end once the Messianic age began. So...

What would happen? “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, and [He] will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (vv. 41-43).

What’s really interesting to me about this passage is (1) how that in verse 43 Jesus alluded to Daniel 12:3, and (2) that such is even admitted by the non-preterists who created our reference Bibles! Why is this interesting? Because...

Firstly, Daniel 12:2 speaks of the resurrection as occurring immediately prior to the righteous shining, and secondly verse 7 defines the time when “all these things shall be finished” as being “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered,” perfectly corresponding to what Jesus said in Matthew 13! So...

Since 1 Cor. 15 teaches us that Christ was the firstfruit of that generation of firstfruits, meaning that the harvest would be consummated soon, not 2000+ years in the future, for that would defeat the purpose of a firstfruit; the Lord had accepted Jesus, the firstfruit, as well as the firstborn (both mentioned in Lev. 23:10-12), so all things were ready! Also consider this:

Jesus, in this case, was both the Offering and the Priest who made the offering; i.e., He offered Himself to God, as Lev. 23:11 says, on behalf of the people.

Once God accepted the firstfruit offering, the general harvest was “full-speed ahead,” consummating, of course, in AD 70 when the entirety of the harvest, this time, was presented to the Lord of the harvest, God the Father (leading perfectly into verses 24-28, which, sadly, we won’t be getting to today).

Verse 21: For since by man came death, by Man also came [the] resurrection of [the] dead ones. (Cf. Goodspeed, Young’s, & 20th Cent. NT on this verse next time around!)

This, of course, is speaking of the same subject-matter as Romans 5:12-21 which we don’t have time to get into, but you might want to consider it for yourself later on.

As we know, Adam, by breaking covenant with God (Hosea 6:7), died “the day” he did so (cf. Gen. 2:17 & 3:5), introducing sin-death for his descendants. So...

Jesus, who Paul later called the second and last Adam (vv. 45-47), came in the form of man (Heb. 10:5, and "Adam" means "man") as well as a Jew (Heb. 2:14 & 17) and under the Mosaical law of God (Gal. 4:4) in order to remedy the death of Adam, i.e. sin-death or spiritual death (separation from God).

The same apostle, writing about the same thing in Romans 5:12, said in paraphrase, "Just as through one man [Adam] the sin entered into the world and therefore the death entered through that sin, so the death [that which Jesus came to render ineffective (1 Cor. 15:26)] spread to all mankind for they have all sinned." And later...

In Romans 6:23 he wrote that "the wages of the sin is death," meaning that, since we still die physically after Jesus paid our debt of sin, the death of Adam that we suffer when we sin is sin-death or spiritual death (separation from God). So...

By presenting Himself bodily after His death to more than 500 men over a period of 40 days, Jesus proved that He was raised out from among the dead one (those separated from God). In other words, He paid the debt that was owed, the sin-debt (if you will); He mended our relationship with God. How? By living a perfect life and dying the perfect sacrifice, He merited eternal life and by grace shares it with us, His siblings.

Verse 22: For as in Adam all are dying, even so in Christ all will be made alive.

(No, this is not a mistake: the latter part of this verse is in the future tense, future for them, of course; I'll explain why I think it's in the future tense here momentarily.)

The terms "as" & "so" clearly indicate that whatever life was/is lost "in Adam," was/is found "in Christ"; we've already discussed briefly how that it was fellowship with God or spiritual life that cannot be found in Adam (or man in general, Adam meaning man), so that's exactly what can be found in Christ (or deity)—reconciliation to God and thus eternal life. Now...

Why is the end of this verse in the future tense, while most of the rest of 1 Cor. 15 is in present tense? Because Paul was looking toward the consummation of the then, present tense, resurrection of the dead. I.e....

Just as any *process* in life has an ending goal that it's reaching toward, so the resurrection, during Paul's time, was a process that would reach it's intended goal at the end of that generation, that harvest, if you will. Incidentally...

The only other place in this chapter which speaks directly of the resurrection as being in Paul's future is near the end of his discussion: "We shall all be changed—in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet ... the dead will be raised incorruptible..." (vv. 52-53). So...

Just as Adam's death was an opening of his eyes to the death of his fellowship with God, so it was to be with the consummation of the resurrection of 1 Cor. 15. I.e....

At that time, the faithful of all ages were reconciled to their Creator in the twinkling of an eye; as a body they experienced the restoration to the relationship Adam had with God before his fellowship with Him was severed. Thus...

The promise of Jesus in John 14:1-3 and 1 The. 4:13-16 was fulfilled!

Verse 23: But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruit, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Whereas it seems that "some" at Corinth were not going beyond allowing resurrection to the firstfruits (i.e. Christ and those "in Christ"), Paul, based on his argumentation in verses 1-19, concluded that the others, the OC saints, didn't only belong to Christ, but they would *also* be resurrected at the consummation of the harvest, for the "firstfruits" were their pledge of their promised resurrection in such prophets as Ezekiel & Hosea.

In Romans 11, toward the end of Paul's discussion with the Gentile Christians in Rome concerning the same issue, he wrote, "So all Israel will be saved." When? It goes on to say when "The Deliverer will come out of Zion" (v. 26). When did Jesus come out of Zion? In His *parousia*, His return, when He "appear[ed] a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Incidentally...

After Paul wrote that at the end of Hebrews 9, he went on to write about Jesus' imminent return in chapter 10, and His coming for His OC saints in chapter 11, whose resurrection, Paul wrote, would/could not be experienced apart from NC saints; listen: "All these [OC saints] ... did not receive the promise [of a better resurrection (v. 35)], God having provided something better for us that they should not be made perfect apart from us (v. 40). Wow! How much more clear can one be?

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 6: VERSES 24-25)

Well, after spending twelve verses discussing who was to be resurrected and in what order they'd be raised, Paul continued his discussion on resurrection by writing about its connection with "the end" and what that would mean concerning their relationship to God and Christ in verses 24-28 (though, sadly, we'll only get to verses 24-25).

Again, keep in mind that I'm going to be reading these verses in a more literal fashion than what you may have in your versions.

Verse 24: After that, the end when He presents the kingdom to God the Father, having stripped all government and all authority and power of its control.

The phrase "after that" refers, of course, back to verse 23 in which Paul spoke of the fulfillment of the eschatological resurrection promised and prophesied in the Old Testament; i.e., after the spiritual raising of everyone who had the right to be in the body of the resurrected, "the end" could be considered to have arrived.

Now for the key question: What "end" was he talking about? The "end" of what? Well, due to the immediate context here, there are at least two things we can be certain of:

1. This "end" is directly connected to the coming of Christ (v. 23); and...
2. This "end" is connected with the resurrection of the saved! So...

Since logic dictates that we find other passages in God's Word which may help us define this "end," let's do that. Firstly...

Let's recall that when Paul was taken captive because of his resurrection teaching (Acts 21:27-28 & 24:14-15), he defended himself before Agrippa, saying that what he taught concerning what was about to be fulfilled was nothing but what Moses and the prophets promised would happen (Acts 26:22). Now with that in mind...

It shouldn't surprise us to discover that Daniel (which, by the way, immediately precedes Hosea that we've said is Paul's background for 1 Cor. 15) also directly connected resurrection with an "end." What end? Let's see.

In 12:2 an angel prophesied to Daniel concerning a time when "those who sleep ... shall awake"; there's the resurrection. Then in verses 6-11...

When the questions "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" and "What shall be the end of these things?" were asked, the angel said, "When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished"; then, referring back to Daniel 9:27, he went on to be even more precise by speaking of "the time when the daily sacrifice" would be "taken away, and the abomination of desolation" would be "set up." Secondly, just in case this wasn't clear enough...

Jesus Himself referred to Daniel's prophecy when, in His discourse about the demise of Jerusalem & its Temple, He said, "the kingdom will be preached ... to all the nations, and then the end will come. So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place..., then let those who are in Judea [not the entire planet] flee to the mountains" (Mat. 24:14-16). Further...

After providing numerous signs of "the end" *as well as His coming* (and remember, that's when Paul said the resurrection would occur [1 Cor. 15:23]), Jesus then said, "Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (v. 34). Now...

Do you remember what question was asked of Jesus to which all this was a reply? Matthew 24:3 tells us that the disciples asked, "What will the sign of *Your coming* and of the end of the age?" **Case Closed!** So...

Even though we could spend an inordinate amount of time continuing to *needlessly* establishing this further, the obvious answer to our initial question of what was "the end" to which Paul referred in 1 Cor. 15:24 is not "the end of time" (a phrase nowhere found in Scripture, by the way), but Daniel's "time of the end" (12:4)—the end of Judaism and the Old Covenant mode of existence, giving way to what even F. F. Bruce called the "resurrection age" (cf. Luke 20:35-36). Now...

How close was that to when Paul wrote 1 Cor. 15? Pretty close, for when he wrote Timothy just a few years later, he spoke concerning how Jesus was "*about to* judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1, the only verse in the Bible, by the way, that contains all four of the main end-time events: the coming of Christ, the coming of the kingdom, the resurrection, and the judgment). In fact...

Let's not forget that Paul had just told these Corinthian brethren in 10:11 that "the ends of the ages" had come upon them. Well, back to our text...

At this "end," Paul said Jesus would've completed the stripping of control from all government, authority, & power. Hmm. What does that mean? Well, since I eventually want to put a study or two together on this business of NT principalities, powers, rulers, etc., and since I don't have time to get into it today, I'll be very concise here.

Firstly, let me define the original term for "stripped": the term *katargeo* may mean to destroy or abolish (e.g. 1 Cor. 13:8-10 when Paul wrote of the cessation of spiritual gifts), but it usually merely means to render something ineffective (e.g. in Gal. 5:4 when Paul said that Christ had become of "no effect" to those who tried to be justified by law).

In fact, earlier in 1 Corinthians Paul said nearly the same thing, utilizing the same term: 2:6 has Paul saying that "the rulers of this age ... are coming (or being bought) to nothing" (note present tense).

We'll go back over this slightly at verse 26 since Paul used the same word there.

Secondly, about the words government, authority, and powers, I currently believe that such terminology, especially in contexts like this one, isn't concerned with physical governments and rulers, but with spiritual principalities and powers in relation to those things by which man was held in spiritual/eternal separation from his Creator; in this very context Paul spoke of the destruction or end of "the law," "sin," & "death" (vv. 26 & 56)—spiritual matters. Related to this...

In 1 John 3:8 & Hebrews 2:14-15, the inspired writers wrote of Jesus having come to *katargeo* the works of the devil as well as his power of death, which I'm sure is somehow related to what Jesus said in John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

Another related passage is Ephesians 6:12 in which Paul wrote, "We don't wrestle against flesh & blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, [and] spiritual hosts of wickedness," which, by the way, was written only a few paragraphs after he spoke of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (2:2).

Lastly in this verse we're told that Jesus would present the kingdom to God the Father.

The original term for "presents" (*paradidomai*) is a bit tricky; by that I merely mean that whichever shade of meaning was/is intended must be ascertained by its context. Let's consider the following:

Paradidomai can refer merely to that which is spoken: it can mean to deliver a message of oral/written tradition (1 Cor 11:2); it can mean to recommend something or someone (Acts 15:40); it can mean to present something or something to another (Esther 2:13); or it can even mean to betray someone (Mat. 26:2). But note this: In the case of oral tradition, the messenger doesn't lose anything (i.e., he remains in possession of that which he shared with another), but in the case of betrayal, the traitor does lose something—he loses the one he betrayed, demonstrating why this word can also mean to abandon (Acts 7:42).

This term can also refer to physically delivering something (as a piece of mail) to someone (e.g. Mat. 25:14), or it can mean to deliver someone into the hands of another (as Judas did Jesus, Mat. 26:15). In this case, the delivery boy always loses that which he has delivered; i.e., he's no longer in possession of it. So...

Relative to 1 Cor. 15:24, the question for us becomes, "By delivering or presenting the kingdom to God, did Paul mean that Jesus would be thereby relinquishing the offices He held in that kingdom of its Prophet, Priest, Lord, and King?" God Forbid!

Remember when Israel rejected God as their King and appointed Saul instead (1 Sam. 8:7)? That, though grudgingly permitted by God, obviously wasn't His desire or choice; so, to deal with this situation, God chose someone for Himself—David, a man after God's own heart—through whom the kingdom would eventually be restored to Him (1 Sam. 16:1, cf. Acts 13:21-23). So..

An offspring—Jesus—from the lineage of David was born (not of the tribe of Benjamin as Saul, but of the kingly tribe of Judah, Rev. 5:5 & 22:16); and He was the One who brought the kingdom back to God after He put His enemies under His feet. In fact...

Bauer's Greek Lexicon says that the term *paradidomai* can mean to "restore" something to someone. And...

I found seven versions which translate this term as either "give back" or "return" in the Greek version of Deuteronomy 23:15: "You shall not return or give back to his master the slave who has escaped from him to you." (By the way, "establishes" [Gr. *diorthosis*] in Isaiah 62:7 means "to restore.")

Just as God remained Israel's true, though unacknowledged, everlasting King all the while they looked to a human as their king, so Jesus, through the right of His earthly lineage, became, like David—at God's behest, Israel's King, God's vice-regent (cf. Psa. 2:6-7), both physically and spiritually, eternally speaking.

How do I know Jesus, even after presenting the fulfilled, restored kingdom to God the Father, still reigns as king? Listen to these passages:

In Luke 1:32-33 when Mary was being informed about her son, the angel told her that "God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Acts 2:30, Heb. 1:8, & Rev. 3:7).

Ephesians 5:5 speaks of "the kingdom of Christ *and* God," while Revelation 11:15 says that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord *and* of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever"; further, in Revelation 22:1 & 3 we read of "the throne of God *and* of the Lamb." Besides...

Isn't it after a king has conquered his enemies that he then sits as king in full reign? That isn't when he gives up his reign, unless he's the one conquered! (Even Mark Bailey in his amillennial commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 said of this verse, "Earthly kings reign only after they have put all enemies under their feet"; but then he sadly went on to say, "however, Christ will stop His reign at that time." Interesting. Huh?)

The point is, "the end," as we've demonstrated, was the end of Judaism, of physical Israel, of the Mosaical dispensation, if you will—the time when King Jesus finished His conquest, restoring the kingdom to God who had, to an extent, separated Himself from it; He delivered this task to Jesus, providing Him with the authority and power to re-establish it in righteousness & holiness so that He, the Father, could make His abode in it without reservations.

Verse 25: For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

I believe the "all enemies" here refers to all physical as well as spiritual enemies, i.e. not just the spiritual powers we touched on earlier, but also the Roman and especially the Jewish harrassment and tormentors of God's new people.

We're going to have to close our study at this verse, so let's do so with a few thoughts concerning the word "until," a term that does not necessarily imply a change will occur after some specific point in time; changes do often occur after an "until" time, but the term itself does *not* necessitate that a change must transpire.

The point is this: just because Paul said that Jesus would reign until He has put all enemies under His feet does not necessitate that He was to relinquish his crown once He achieved that task. (We already touched on this earlier, but since Paul used this term here, we should focus on how it's used.)

Since Paul used this same term back in 11:26 when speaking of the observance of the supper ("as often as you eat ... and drink..., you proclaim the Lord's death **till** He comes"), and since we studied this sometime back, I'm merely going to repeat my notes from that study here.

Does "till" or "until" *always* imply result of termination (i.e. up to a point and not thereafter)? No, it doesn't. Note some other places where this exact same Greek term (*achris*) is found:

In Acts 7:17-18 Stephen said, "the people grew and multiplied in Egypt **till** another king arose." Did the people stop procreating once that next king ascended to his throne? No.

In Romans 5:13 Paul said, "**Until** the law, sin was in the world." Did sin cease to exist when the law came? Certainly not, for Paul went on to argue against that in most of chapter 7. And...

In Galatians 3:19 Paul wrote that the law "was added ... **till** the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made." Did the law end at Christ's birth? Of course not. In fact...

Thayer's says that *achris* is about "things that actually occurred and up to the beginning of which something continued," meaning that this term indicates a point of reference, *not* a point of cessation. [Cf. v. 28 & my notes.] Besides...

As we already noted earlier in numerous passages, Jesus' reign was prophesied to be an everlasting reign; one verse, however, that I didn't bring up is found in Matthew 25:31 in which we learn that at the end, Jesus sits, not quits: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory."

[7/4/10]

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 7: VERSES 26-28)

Well since, when I originally wrote my previous introduction I was hoping to get thru verse 28 but didn't, I'm going to repeat it here: after spending twelve verses (viz. vv. 12-23) discussing who was to be resurrected and in what order they'd be raised, Paul continued his discussion on resurrection in verses 24-28 by writing about its connection with "the end" (which we discussed at length in our last study) and what that would mean concerning their relationship to God.

Due to the great amount of material with which I wanted to deal in reference to verse 24 earlier, we were only able to talk about verses 24 & 25; so today I definitely plan to get through verse 28 so as to not drag out this series of studies on this chapter any longer than necessary, especially since there are other topics we want to discuss.

Once again, remember that I'll be reading these verses to you in a more literal fashion than what you have in the versions before you. As we touched on before concerning 1 Corinthians 15:26, it should read something like this: speaking of those the Christ was to overcome, Paul went on to say that...

Verse 26: [The] last enemy—the death—is being rendered powerless.

There are two things in this statement that are immediately apparent: (1) the tense of Paul's original writing was in the present—"is being," and (2) the original term for the NKJV's "destroyed" [*katargeo*] that we discussed at length in verse 24 is translated in accordance with the term "stripping" that we used in verse 24 and which also corresponds to the NKJV's "brought to nothing" in 1 Corinthians 2:6. Although the implications of these facts are fairly obvious, let's highlight them anyway.

Firstly, what comes to my mind is that translator bias seems *very* obvious. For how can a work like *The Kingdom Interlinear* be so detailed and careful concerning its translation of tenses throughout the NT, then (after obtaining one's confidence to the point that he may stop double-checking) turn around and blatantly change the present tense a future tense?! (And, no, I don't believe it's a typo, because the word-for-word English translation in the interlinear column is correct, but then it's altered in their version column.)

Secondly, it also seems very obvious to me that Paul wasn't speaking about the literal annihilation of "the death" under consideration here, but of how its hold on mankind would finally be released at the hand of the Savior Jesus Christ, at least for those who wish for the Savior to free them from its grip, for He won't force anyone to be released from their bondage if they don't wish to be; incidentally, this implies that Paul wasn't speaking about physical death. Doesn't it? So...

Paul was saying that this death (the death of verses 21-22, the sin-death associated with Adam) was—at the time he was writing by virtue of the Gospel of resurrection—in the process of being stripped of its power to keep mankind separated from his God. Now...

Why would Paul have made this statement in the context of this chapter? Well, let's get back the contextual problem of the "some" who were denying the resurrection (i.e. fellowship restoration) of certain "dead ones." And who were they? That's right, folks who died under the OC. They weren't denying resurrection to those who had died "in Christ," mind you, but to those who had died before Christ (as we've already studied at length). So...

It seems to me that what Paul was implying in verse 26 is this: Since Christ's very purpose was to render spiritual death powerless for those who desired life with God, then to deny that life to anyone of that class would be to deny it for everyone in that class, including those they considered "in Christ."

By disabling or disempowering spiritual death, Jesus was thereby, logically, giving eternal life to the faithful dead, regardless of when they died historically. So...

Though unobservable to the naked eye, the dead were being raised, principalities and powers were being annulled, and spiritual death was being incapacitated.

Verse 27: For "He has subjected all things under His feet." But when He says that "all things have been subjected," it's evident that it's with the exception of the One who subjected all things to Him.

We didn't take the time to get into this under-His-feet-subjection stuff in our last installment of studies since I knew we'd get to it here anyway. So let's consider it now by first referencing Paul's usage of this OT adage in another place.

We already alluded to Hebrews 2 (viz. vv. 14-15) back in our studies of verses 21 & 24, and now we can see another link to Hebrews 2. So let's **read verses 5-9** at this point. We don't have time to do the in-depth study of this passage that we did sometime back when we went through Hebrews 2, so we'll just recall some highlights to get us on the general track.

What we discover from a comprehensive study of Psalm 8:6 and it's close cousin Psalm 144:3 is that, essentially, Jesus was/is the epitome of what man's Creator meant for man to be. So...

Once He lived the flawless life and then became, by God's grace, the substitute for the flawed lives of mankind, He then everlastingly conquered—subjected under Himself—all enemies of that accomplishment, viz. Satan (aka the devil), sin, law, & death. (Incidentally, in 2 Tim. 1:10 Paul said, in an already-but-not-yet manner, that "our Savior Jesus Christ ... has disabled death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel"; i.e., it was a thing of such certainty that there was no doubt that He would indeed fully accomplish that task, very soon after this letter, in fact, just see 2 Tim. 4:1 and the Greek term *mello*. [Cf. 2 Sam. 22:12 & Psa. 18:9 where darkness, the representation of such things as under consideration here, are under the feet of Deity, i.e. He's in the light; darkness is nothing but a lack of light, just as wickedness is nothing but a lack of righteousness.]) Anyway...

So when the conquering King Jesus finished His task of subjecting both physical and spiritual darkness and wickedness underneath Him to the point that it's no longer possible for sin-death to defeat someone without his consent, the fullness of the knowledge and assurance of life and immortality could/can be enjoyed!

The one exception Paul provided concerning what/who all would be subjected to King Jesus was/is the Father. Why? Because, as we already considered at length in our last study, the Father and Son would reign jointly on the throne of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Verse 28: But whenever all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be subjected to the One having subjected all things to Him in order that God may be all in all.

Remember verse 24 about how that Jesus "must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet"? And remember how we said that the term "until" refers to a point of reference not a point of termination? And remember how that indicated to us that Jesus did *not* cease His reign after the "until" event? Well, although in reverse, think about this statement here in the same way.

Wasn't Jesus subject to the Father *before* this "until" event? I.e., did He become *un*-subjected to Jehovah when Jehovah gave Him the power to bring about man's redemption? Surely Not! In fact, it seems that it was at this point when Jehovah became His Father, meaning that, if nothing else, there'd be *more* subjection involved. Anyway, my point is this:

Essentially, Jesus' relationship to His Father did *not* change after this "until" event: He was obviously subject to the Father while His redemptive work was being accomplished (after all, even though Jesus was given all authority in heaven and earth, it was still the Father who was actually/ultimately making all the moves, Rev. 17:17), and He was still subject to His Father once it was completed. So...

Why would Paul make such a seemingly self-evident point? Well, I think the answer is found in the last part of this verse.

"That God [the Father] may be all in all." See...

Paul was covering all bases by clarifying for them that the Son, even though He'd still be reigning as King, would be (perhaps somewhat as before this whole plan was initiated) alongside His Father on the throne, as we noted in our notes on verse 24. However...

Now the question arises as to what this clause means, and here's what methinks: the initial "all" refers to things, while the following "all" refers to people; i.e., once Christ's work was perfected, then the Father, who had cut off fellowship with man due to sin, could then be *everything* to *everyone*, whether ethnically Jew or Gentile and whether physically alive or dead. And by the way...

This is the point to which I alluded in the intro. about how this paragraph reflects a change in deity's relationship with Paul's readers as well as all mankind throughout all ages, *past* as well as present to them.

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 8: VERSES 29-34)

After writing to these Christians about the fact of resurrection for OC saints as well as living saints of their time (vv. 12-23), and after following that up with resurrection's connection to "the end" and how the events of that time would wonderfully affect the relationship of all these saints with God (vv. 24-28), Paul went on in verses 29-32 to illustrate the foolishness of certain events in the lives of numerous Christians if indeed God, through the resurrection of these saints, does NOT become "*all in all*."

Then in verses 33-34 he chided some of these brethren for believing the lies of those who were teaching falsehoods concerning resurrection. Again...

I'll be reading these verses in (hopefully) a more literal fashion than what you have in your versions. So let's begin with one of the most controversial verses in the NT; I've read that there are at least forty interpretations of this statement by Paul.

Verse 29: Otherwise, what will they do [who are] being baptized on behalf of the dead ones? I.e., if [the] dead ones aren't being raised at all, why are they being baptized on behalf of the dead ones?

Firstly, it'd be helpful to determine who the "they" are here by reminding ourselves that "the dead ones" are the Old Covenant saints on whose behalf Paul had been arguing. Secondly, remember (as usual throughout Israel's history) the salvation of Israel was dependent upon the faithful remnant, this time upon their acceptance of the promised Messiah. And...

What's another name for the members of the post-Pentecost remnant? "Firstfruits" (James 1:18) or "Firstborn" (Heb. 12:23). And why were they called such? Because they were the ones being born or resurrected from (spiritual) death first, following Christ, that is. And when would the Nextborn (to coin a new term), the OC saints, be raised? At the "harvest," of course. So...

Since you can't have a harvest without firstfruits of the harvest (especially according to God in the OC as we discussed earlier), then OC Israel's fulfilled promise of life or restoration to God was based on the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah by post-Pentecost Jewish &/or Israelite saints. In Romans 11:5, Paul wrote in obvious gratefulness and in fulfillment of Isaiah 11:11, "At this present time there's a remnant according to the election of grace."

Let's read **Romans 8:18-23**.

What's "the redemption of the body" in verse 23 but the resurrection of the body in 1 Cor. 15:44? And what's "the creation" in verses 19-22 but God's old covenant people, Israel? (For to whom else would the "they" of verse 23—in contrast to the "we" of that same verse—be referring except OC Israel [which, by the way, corresponds to the contextual chapters surrounding Romans 8]?) So...

What's the point here? Well, that OC creation eagerly waited for the revealing of the children of God (v. 19 [cf. Heb. 11:9-10 & 13-16]), because by virtue of them (the firstfruits) they (the OC saints) would be delivered from sin-death (v. 21). And who were they but the "firstfruits" of verse 23 who were also awaiting the fulfillment of the redemption of the body by which they became full-fledged NC children of God (Luke 20:35-36)? So...

Just as the Gentiles were dependent upon the Israelites, the Israelites were dependent upon their faithful first century remnant, who were dependent upon Christ, who, of course, had already done His part by coming forth as the first-fruit of the firstfruits of the harvest. Now, let's reread 1 Cor. 15:29:

"What will the remnant do who are being baptized on behalf of their brethren, the OC saints?" I.e., if their being baptized in Christ isn't bringing life to their brethren who lived BC, then what do *you* suggest they do to fulfill the prophecy of God in Ezekiel 37 which in turn brings salvation to you Gentiles?! The thing is...

Whether I comprehend it completely or not, somehow, for some reason, God has linked the resurrection of OC saints to the acceptance of the Messiah by members of the first century remnant: when Paul was speaking in Hebrews 11 of the better resurrection to which OC saints looked forward (v. 35), he said in verse 40 that "they would not be made perfect apart from us." The NIV says it this way: "only together with us would they be made perfect."

Next, you may be wondering how baptism fits into all this. Well...

Recall Jesus' conversation with Nick at Night in John 3: When Jesus said, "You must be born again," He chose the plural form of "you," meaning that He was telling him, a Jew, that if he and his brethren wanted part in the kingdom of God, they'd have to realize that trusting in their fleshly births wouldn't cut it. I.e., they would have to be "born again" of a spiritual birth: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," He said to him in verse 5. Later...

Back in Romans again, this time chapter 6, we find Paul connecting baptism with salvation-resurrection: "For since we've been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (v. 5). See...

Even though each individual was obviously being baptized for his own sake, it appears there's a very good chance that, due to the teaching they heard/received from men like Peter and Paul who explained the former mysteries to them, first century Jews & Israelites understood that they, by being baptized into Christ, were, in essence, bringing to fruition the promises concerning the resurrection of Israel, the very prophecies on which Paul based his resurrection dissertation in 1 Cor. 15.

After this argument, Paul went on to ask in...

Verses 30-31: And why are we in danger every hour? Brethren, I swear by the boasting which I have over you in Christ Jesus our Lord, I am dying daily.

The boasting which Paul had concerning them was that he was the one who brought the word of salvation to them (1 Cor. 4:15), and they knew/agreed to this fact. So...

Based on that truth, he swore that he was dying on a daily basis for the sake of his ancestors; i.e., while some were merely being baptized on account of them, Paul went further and suffered hunger, thirst, beatings, and was even left for dead once, all for the sake of breaking the remnant away from the OC mode of existence (which Paul, in Romans 8:20, said was futile) in order to bring in "their fullness" (Rom. 11:12)—the salvation of "all Israel" (cf. Rom. 11:26). Related to this...

Concerning the "I am dying daily" clause, this should remind us of our in-depth study of 2 Cor. 4:8ff in which we demonstrated that Paul was referring to the persecutions he was enduring for the sake of bringing the church through the transition period and to perfection in Christ. Although this passage is far from the only one along these lines, let's read **2 Cor. 4:8—5:8** to remind ourselves of what Paul said to these same Christians at another time, somewhat of an expansion on 1 Cor. 15:30-31. Incidentally...

I used the term "swear" in this verse because there's a term that's used only once in all the NT—*ne*; of it Thayer said that it's "a particle employed in affirmations and oaths."

Verse 32: If according to men I've fought with wild beasts in Ephesus, what benefit [would that be] to me? If [the] dead ones are not being raised up, we should "eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (Isa. 22:13).

With the thought of 2 Cor. 10:2 in mind (viz. that some thought of Paul as one who "walked according to the flesh," i.e. according to the old mode of existence), the phrase "according to men" here might mean that Paul was saying, "If I went through that fiasco at Ephesus merely for the temporal rewards such as those of the Old Covenant order, what benefit would that be to my ministry? If the dead ones for whom I'm in part laboring aren't being raised, then we should 'eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'"

Paul's point is this: he (as well as others) were in constant danger and fear of their very lives on account of the very "dead ones" to whom some of these brethren were essentially denying eternal life. You know...

It's often been said that one of the greatest evidences of the truth of Christ's resurrection is that men have died for their conviction of that fact; likewise, Paul was saying that there were people like himself who were purposely placing themselves in mortal danger based on their conviction that what they were doing was producing the effect of raising the dead ones as prophesied. But...

According to the logic of this group of "some" (v. 12), Paul was wasting his time; but Paul knew better, for he realized that he was accomplishing a work that was helping to fulfill God's promise to Israel for their resurrection. Interestingly...

While in verse 29 Paul spoke of water baptism as being in one way associated with the salvation or resurrection of "the dead ones," in verses 30-32 he spoke of the baptism of suffering and death in part for them as well. Let's read **Matthew 20:20-23 & Luke 12:49-50** to see how what Jesus promised the apostles corresponds to what Paul's writing here in 1 Cor. 15.

Verses 33-34: Stop being deceived; evil relationships corrupt virtuous habits. [So] sober up righteously, and stop sinning, for some have ignorance of God. I'm speaking to you [like this to move you] to shame. (Cf. ASV.)

Although in most versions the latter part of verse 33 is in quotes as if Paul quoted it from some other biblical passage (as he was very much accustomed to do), I couldn't locate a reference that without doubt corresponded it. However...

I did discover this: a playwright named Menander either coined or copied a similar motto for his play called *Thais*: F. G. Allenson translated this line from Greek like this: "Communion with the bad corrupts good character." Coincidental? Probably not, for, as we know, not only was Paul a highly educated Roman citizen from Tarsus, someone very well versed in Greek idioms and literature, but he also evidently used them often to support his own teachings, especially when speaking to Greeks:

In Acts 17:28 he said to the Athenians, "as ... your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'" And...

To Titus, who Paul had left on the island of Crete, he wrote this about the Cretans: "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons'" (1:12). Anyway...

The point is that what Paul quoted that play merely supported a truth he intended to convey to those who knew better even without the Gospel.

Concerning the present tense verb "sin" in verse 34, I'm not sure if, as some versions indicate, it should be translated as merely "don't sin" (as though it were something they were in danger of doing) or if, as other versions indicate, it should be translated as "don't continue sinning" (as though it were something they were to cease doing). Personally I favor the latter, because it seems logical that he was referring to sin that they were committing while in their drunken stupor from which they were commanded to awaken to righteousness. Besides, if he could be righteous AND suffer as he was doing, surely they could at least be righteous! Now the question becomes...

What "sin" was Paul talking about? Well, methinks the answer to this question lies in the meaning of Paul's next clause: "for some have ignorance of God." Why? Because...

According to scholars Robertson and Plummer, the term for "ignorance" Paul chose is much stronger than the usual one: they wrote that this term isn't merely the absence of knowledge, but the failure or inability to take knowledge; this reminds me of what Paul said earlier in the letter to them at 3:2: "I fed you with milk and not solid food, for until now you weren't able to receive it, and even now you still aren't able to receive it." And why would they be unable to receive knowledge? Because they refused to grow, or they stopped their ears as those in Acts 7; in fact, Leon Morris said that the phrase "have ignorance of God" could very well be translated as "hold on to ignorance of God," reminiscent of the Sadducees of whom Jesus said concerning resurrection, "You are mistaken (or deceived) because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God" (Mark 12:24). Oh yeah...

This group of "some" at Corinth, like the Sadducees, "thought" they had knowledge, but Paul said earlier, "If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" (8:2). So anyway...

Paul seems to be gettin' onto all of them: the "some" because of their apparent and purposeful decision to *not* accept the truth in this matter (but rather to keep pressing their agenda), and the rest of them for allowing it to go on (recall 5:1-2); in other words, those not of the "some" just seemed to be complacent about what was going on, not realizing or caring about the significance of what they were permitting, even though they may have been in the majority. (I myself have personally witnessed numerous times when the majority refused to stand against the pushy minority, even when it was just one or two people!)

The main sin I see that was being caused and which would get worse if not nipped in the bud (and we can see that things in this vein did get worse over the next 10 to 15 years among the first generation churches, cf. Jude e.g.) is the sin of division it was causing between Jews (the root) and Gentiles (those being grafted in) which can easily be seen throughout this letter; in fact, I think chapter 15, which deals with probably the "main" issue, is Paul's conclusion regarding all the problems of division that we read about in this epistle.

[7/25/10. All these studies need a lot of refining, this one perhaps the most. Ran out of time.]

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 9: VERSES 35-45)

So..., Paul's thrust in this chapter was to make a case against the resurrection-deniers group of verse 12, arguing that there would *indeed* be a resurrection of those to whom they were denying resurrection; in fact, according to Paul, they were already, at the time of his writing, in the process of being raised. Right? Now...

After arguing against these resurrection-deniers, Paul then anticipated a question by some smart-aleck among them about the *nature* of the resurrection body that he had been discussing.

Verse 35: But someone will ask, "How are the dead ones being raised? In what body are they coming?"

In other words, in argumentation, "OK Paul, if those folks are being raised, then *how* are they being raised? In other words, *with* or *in* what sort of body are they coming forth?" See...

If we've been correct so far in our interpretation, especially about the two different groups of verses 12 & 18, then it seems as though the resurrection-deniers (v. 12) were *not* denying resurrection to those who they considered to have died "in Christ" (v. 18), i.e. in the body of Christ—the church. So the question of "in what body are they coming" makes sense, because they didn't consider those *before* Christ to be "in Christ." I.e., they seemed to be saying...

"Since one must be 'in [the body of] Christ' to have resurrection-life, then, Paul, pray tell, How are they being raised, i.e. in what body are they being raised?" [And don't fail to emphasize "they," for if this group had been denying resurrection in general, as the traditional view says, then they would've asked this question with the pronoun "we." Right? Certainly!] Anyway...

Before answering the smart-aleck's question, notice that not only did Paul never speak of resurrection bodies plural, but even the resurrection-denier's question placed the plural "dead ones" in a "body" singular!

In our last study we considered Romans 8:18ff, and in that passage we focused a little on verse 23 in which Paul spoke of a plurality of saints (including OC saints) as being redeemed in a singular body. You know, personally...

Just this one fact would tend to at least make me reconsider the traditional interpretation! Anyway...

Verse 36: Foolish! That which you are sowing can't be made alive unless it dies first.

Here's something to consider: the order is sowing, then dying, then rising—the same order Jesus presented in John 12:24 (i.e. unless a seed which has been planted in the earth dies ... it won't bear fruit). However...

This order doesn't correspond to the traditional interpretation. Does it? Do we bury folks *alive* so they can die then be raised? Of course not! That's just another of many reasons this chapter doesn't teach the resurrection of biological physiques from holes in the dirt. Why haven't we seen this before? So...

To what sort of resurrection DOES Paul's teaching here correspond? Spiritual resurrection; i.e., as we talked about a few lessons ago, the background of Paul's teaching here is Hosea in whose writing we find the sowing of Israel, the death of Israel, and the resurrection of Israel. As God's spouse, she was alive, but for her sin of adultery, God slew her, buried her among the Gentiles, then, as promised, she was spiritually resurrected, becoming that into which we've been graciously added. So...

The obvious reason Paul used the seed analogy is that it *isn't* the same as what occurs to us naturally; if he wanted to teach that, he could've just used what happens to us naturally—but he didn't. Did he? Why? Because Paul's teaching is about what God was doing and was going to do in fulfillment of His promise to Israel, something which does correspond to his seed analogy of planting, then death, then resurrection to new life.

Here's yet another dilemma for the traditionalist to consider: According to Paul here, in order for the body to be raised to life, it must first die, but then later in verse 51 he said that not everyone would die before Jesus returned; in fact, he said that those still living would be changed from corruptible to incorruptible. But how could that be if they must die first? Well, if we look at it as passing from spiritual death to spiritual life, then there's no problem. Is there?

One more significant point here is the present tense, taking their minds back to the idea presented earlier concerning the resurrection as being something that was already in the process of occurring at the time of his writing; i.e., just as the quickening of a seed is tied to the dying of that seed and vice versa (meaning that there's a transition which occurs from one stage to the other so that those stages are mixed for a certain amount of time), so there was a dying and a quickening occurring simultaneously during that generation of time. Listen to some related verses in Romans:

In 7:24, after Paul spoke of the agony of living under the law, he exclaimed, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Then later...

In 8:10 he wrote, "Since Christ is in you, the body [body of what? the body of death] is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Verse 37: And as for that which you sow, you aren't sowing the body that it will become, but mere grain, whether wheat or some other grain.

An interesting point to notice here is that this is the first time in this chapter for Paul to bring up the Greek term *soma* for "body." Why is that thought-provoking? Because, according to the traditional position, Paul's entire treatise here concerns what is raised; but, as we've seen, it has actually been about who is raised. Furthermore...

As Hosea prophesied, the body of Old Covenant Israel was sown in adultery/apostasy by God, died as His spouse in her sin, and was then transformed and raised by Him in a different form—our glorious New Covenant Israel!

Verses 38-41: But God gives to it [that “mere grain”] a body according as He willed and to each type of seed its own body. Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there’s one indeed of mankind, another of beasts, another of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly and that of the earthly are indeed different. There’s the glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars, with each star even being different in glory.

To me this seems to be a rant by Paul concerning their faith, if someone were to actually ask this question; i.e., if this question were asked, it wouldn’t be an argument against the main point of “who” was to be raised, but (as debaters do) it would be a smoke-screen question—something to either throw Paul off his game or to throw his audience off the main point, making them think, “Yeah, Paul, what about that?” So...

It appears to me that Paul was, in essence, saying, “It doesn’t matter so much with/in what body ‘the dead ones’ are being raised, because, as you well know, God has no problem taking care of that issue! Just as He’s always taken care of such, He can *and is* taking care of it in this regard as well.” And, especially since this is a matter of the spiritual realm—His own domain, surely they should trust Him with this. Nevertheless, Paul went on to discuss it for a little while. (Cf. the glory to glory idea in 2 Cor. 3:18.)

Verses 42-43: So also is the resurrection of the dead ones: It’s being sown in corruption; it’s being raised in incorruption. It’s being sown in dishonor; it’s being raised in glory. It’s being sown in weakness; it’s being raised in power.

Firstly, note Paul’s present tense: “So **is** the resurrection,” “it **is being** sown,” “it **is being** raised,” etc.; but there are many versions which take it upon themselves to translate these inspired words in the future tense (GWT, CEV, NLT, NIV, et.al.)!

Secondly, note Paul’s use of the singular “it” with reference to the plural “dead ones.” What does that mean? Well, it goes back to verse 35 in which Paul said, “But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead ones being raised? In what body are they coming?’” So...

By the singular pronoun “it” in verse 42, he was referring to the body of the dead ones; i.e., the body is the seed of Paul’s analogy. And...

Just as there are those who try to circumvent the language by changing the tense, so there are those who try to circumvent the language by audaciously changing the pronoun number from “it” to “they” (Ethridge, Murdock, et.al.)!

The terms “corruption,” “dishonor,” and “weakness” all refer to that which characterized the attempt to live by law, even the perfect law of Moses, which merely intensified sin (Rom. 5:20); i.e., since trying to merit fellowship with God by works doesn’t work due to weakness (causing only frustration, Rom. 7), it results only in corruption. (By the way, the term “dishonor” was often used in reference to someone’s citizenship had been revoked, something which, of course, fits God’s rejection of OC Israel.)

Verse 44: It’s being sown a natural body, but it’s being raised a spiritual body. Since there is a natural body, there’s also a spiritual body.

Firstly, not only does this verse clearly refute the idea of the resurrection of *physical* bodies, but it doesn't even support the idea of future individual *spiritual* bodies. The thing is, not only did Paul not use the plural "bodies," but he also didn't use the future tense; i.e., just as there was, *at the time he wrote*, a natural body, so there was *at that same time* a spiritual body. Why? Because of seed-metamorphosis, the transition which was occurring at the time.

Another thing which is very interesting about this verse is that the term Paul chose for "natural" is never used of a biological physique anywhere in the entire Bible; rather it's used to refer to the unregenerate man—man as he is when living according to the dictates of the flesh, which *the* Law or law in general only exacerbates.

Thayer's says of this term that it refers to one who is "governed by the ... the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion," which perfectly corresponds to its usage in James and Jude (the only other two to use this term): James said of selfishness in 3:15 that "This 'wisdom' does not come from above, but is earthly [and] sensual," while Jude said in verses 18-19 that those who were living "according to their own ungodly lusts" were "sensual people" who didn't have the Spirit [i.e. that which is from above] (vv. 18-19). Doesn't this fit well with Paul's "natural" versus "spiritual" in 1 Cor. 15? Sure it does. And...

As we'll see more about in the next verse, Paul's natural body was the one in which people were dead in their sin, i.e. the body of sin-death or, as Romans 7:24 phrases it, just the "body of death." What death? The death Adam experienced and in whom were included OC Israel. Consider our next and last verse for this study:

Verse 45: And so it has been written, "The first man Adam was made a living being," the last Adam a life-giving spirit.

See, "Adam" = "the natural body," while "Christ" = "the spiritual body." Let's think back just a little ways.

To be "in Adam" meant to be in the body of sin-death, and Adam was considered to be the head of that body: in verses 21-22 Paul said, "Since through man [is] death, so through man [is] resurrection of dead ones. For as in Adam all are dying, even so also in Christ all [including those God considered His BC] will be made alive." I.e....

"God has it all under control: just as there's a natural body that's in the process of dying and fading away, so there's also a spiritual body that's in the process of coming to fullness of life; being spiritual, it may be invisible and so incomprehensible to you, but you can be assured that you don't have to worry about that part of it all, for God is incorporating all those He considers His into this body, whether they've been baptized into it during the transition period or not."

Jesus, as the life-giving Spirit, provides life for the faithful of all ages, BC & AD, otherwise, all of Hebrews chapter 11 would need to be discarded.

One last thing interesting about verse 45 is the contrast that while Adam was made into a being who possessed life, Jesus was made a being who gives life.

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 10: VERSES 46-53)

Back in verse 35, Paul began answering a two-fold question: "How are the dead ones being raised? In what body are they being raised?" I.e., "Since folks must be in the body of Christ, and since those before Christ (e.g. OC Israel) weren't baptized into the body of Christ, then how are they being raised? Or, to put it another way, in what body are they being raised?"

Although Paul knew, I believe, that this was a smoke-screen tactic of the querist, he went ahead to answer the question, which I'm sure he knew would be helpful to some of them anyway, just as it is to us today; so I'm thankful he humored them.

Paul's reply to this question runs from verse 36 through verse 50, at least that's the way I see it; so, since we stopped at verse 45 in our last study, we're sort of in the middle of Paul's reply. So let's try to at least get through verse 50 now.

After writing about the natural body versus the spiritual body and Adam's body of death versus Jesus' body of life, Paul went on to say in...

Verses 46-47: Nevertheless the spiritual isn't first, but the natural, then the spiritual. The first man is of the earth ([made of] dirt); the second man is of heaven.

In verse 44, the verse from which this section springs, Paul said that there's a natural body and a spiritual body and that the natural body is what was being sown and dying while simultaneously giving rise to the spiritual body; then in verse 45, again—springing from the statement of verse 44, Paul said that Adam, the head of the body of death in Paul's theology here, was *created* as a being with life, while Jesus, the head of the body of life in Paul's theology here, is a life-giving being.

Although there very well could be more to it than what I'm presently seeing, right now the only reason I can see for Paul making these two statements of chronology is to set up his points in the next two statements concerning that which everyone who's honest with himself really desires, viz. to be one with the heavenly man, not the earthly man.

Verse 48: As is the earthly one, so also are the earthly ones; and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly ones.

At face value this seems to be just another self-evident statement. However...

One gem of truth I see here has to do with tense ... again: at the time of Paul's writing, he saw that there were those who were merely *earthly* in their existence (i.e. they were living merely in an earthly-minded or animalistic fashion, living purely by passion and lust); but he also saw that there were those who had chosen to displace that sort of life with one of a *heavenly* nature.

Verse 49: And just as we bore the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

As I implied in my comments on verse 48, Paul began to deal with the individuals within the body of Adam (the body of death) and the body of Christ (the body of life); see, for there to be a general body, there must be of necessity individuals to make up that body, and, in this case, they're individuals with the free will to choose their desired body.

At the time Paul wrote, there were individuals who had chosen to be (found) in (the body of) Christ, the body which was headed for the consummation of eternal life; so just as we talked about in verses 12-23 concerning how Paul spoke of the resurrection as occurring presently in his time (vv. 15-16) as well as reaching an ultimate fulfillment (vv. 22f), so here in verse 48 he spoke of individuals who were choosing resurrection-life, while in verse 49 he spoke of the ultimate (and soon, vv. 51-52) fulfillment of the resurrection of that body of individuals to eternal life.

Verse 50: Furthermore I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to inherit the kingdom of God, neither [is] corruption inheriting incorruption.

By the phrase "flesh and blood," I don't think Paul changed gears to talk about something different than that which is natural or earthly; i.e., he was still talking about those who live merely by flesh and blood as opposed to the spirit.

In Galatians 6:8 Paul said that "he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life," because "in [our] flesh, nothing good dwells" (Rom. 7:18). Besides, the clause, "neither is corruption inheriting incorruption," seems to me to just be another way of saying "that flesh & blood is not able to inherit the kingdom of God." Such reminds me of Rev. 21:27: "There shall by no means enter it anyone who defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." So...

What would those NOT in the book of life inherit? Rev. 21:8 says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have *their part* in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death." Once again...

Notice well the present tense: "flesh and blood **is** not able to inherit," and "corruption **is** not **inheriting**." Well...

Even though the next few verses go on to a different aspect of resurrection, viz. timing, let's go ahead and consider three of them since we have time.

Verses 51-53: Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all be laid to sleep, but we all shall be changed, in a split second, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For it will trumpet, and the dead ones will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For it's necessary that this corruptible put on incorruption and that this mortal put on immortality.

Back in my comments on verse 45 I mentioned how that I thought Paul was in essence just telling them that, even though all this spiritual/invisible activity may be incomprehensible to them, God was in control, He knew what He was doing, and it would all be taken care of; now, in this verse, he went on to even share with them more information concerning that which they may have not yet comprehended concerning when all this would occur. Remember now, this was Paul writing to Corinthians ca. AD 55!

Paul said to them, "**we** shall not all sleep" or die, "but **we** all [OC saints included] shall be changed." What? Some changed while they're still alive? How could that be unless the change Paul wrote about didn't have anything to do with their biological bodies? Well, it couldn't, of course; and this perfectly corresponds to the time statements found in passages such as Matthew 16:28, 24:34, et.al. Then...

He went on to say to them that this change, this spiritual metamorphosis, would occur "at the last trumpet." So the timing of "the last trumpet" must be determined. In this regard, a few things are interesting:

Firstly, in verse 54 Paul quoted from Isaiah 25:8, which is in an extended context of prophecy concerning the fall and rising again of Israel; notice Isaiah 27:13 for example: "So it shall be in that day: the great trumpet will be blown; they will come ... and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount..." When? Well, in the next chapter (Isa. 28) he went on to prophesy of the Messiah becoming the chief cornerstone (v. 16) and of tongue-speaking (v. 11), a prophecy, by the way, that Paul quoted in 1 Cor. 14 to show that it was being fulfilled in his time.

Secondly, in Revelation 10:7, immediately after verse 6 which essentially says that time was up, it says, "In the days of the sounding of the seventh [the last trumpet-sounding] angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to ... the prophets [e.g. Isaiah]."

Thirdly, whether for battle, feast days, etc., trumpets were blown to rally the people together in an assembly (Jer. 4:5, Joel 2:15f, et.al.), which corresponds to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:30-31: "The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven ... and [the tribes of the earth] will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." When? Well...

Not only did Jesus clarify this in verse 34 when He said that "this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled," but also...

In First Thessalonians 4:15-17, Paul, when speaking about the Lord's coming there—also with the sounding of the trumpet of God—wrote, "This we say to **you** ... that **we** who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep... Then **we** who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds," etc. When? During the generation of those then living. That's when.

Doesn't all this sound exactly like what Paul said to the Corinthians? "**We** shall not all sleep, but **we** shall be changed." Surely it does. And...

Fourthly, in the context of a prophecy concerning God saving His true Israel, Zechariah wrote, "The Lord ... will blow the trumpet ... and defend them.... The Lord ... will save them in that day as the flock of His people" (9:14-16). When? Well...

A verse just before this (v. 9) is quoted by Matthew and Luke as being fulfilled in their time: "Your King is coming to you ... lowly and riding on a donkey." This was obviously a reference to His initial coming. Then...

In the next verse Zechariah prophesied of the Messiah's next coming in NOT so nice a fashion: God, through His Christ "will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Sounds a lot like Revelation 11:15. Doesn't it? "Then the seventh [last] angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"

Consider this chart before we move on:

1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4, and Matthew 24 = the same event.

1 Corinthians 15	1 Thessalonians 4
15:23 - are Christ's at His coming	4:16 - the Lord Himself shall come
15:51 - sleep	4:14 - sleep
15:52 - the trumpet shall sound	4:16 - trump with a shout
15:52 - dead shall be raised	4:16 - dead in Christ shall rise

Matthew 24	1 Thessalonians 4 & 5
24:27 - coming (<i>parousia</i>)	4:15 - coming (<i>parousia</i>)
24:30 - clouds	4:17 - clouds
24:31 - sound of a trumpet	4:16 - trump with a shout
24:31 - gather together	4:17 - caught up together
24:36 - day or hour	5:1 - times and seasons
24:43 - a thief	5:2 - a thief
24:8 & 39 - took them all away	5:3 - sudden destruction
24:42 - watch	5:6 - watch

1 Corinthians 15	1 Thessalonians 4	Matthew 24
at His coming	Jesus' coming	Jesus' coming
last trump	trumpet	trumpet
dead saints raised	dead saints raised	angels gather saints
living saints changed	living saints caught up	angels gather saints
	coming in the clouds	coming in the clouds

We could go on and on with this, I suppose, but the lingering question which you may be asking is, "Was this trumpet meant to be one that man would actually hear?" And my answer is, I don't believe it was. However, there's a good chance that there was a trumpet blown in Jerusalem for a feast or something else trumpet-related that God chose to signal the beginning of the fulfillment of Jerusalem's final demise; the Jews just wouldn't have realized it, of course. But, personally, I believe it was something that occurred in the sense we find in John's visions in Revelation—something figurative or something that occurred in the heavenly realm as a signal that the day of the Lord had come for all things in heaven and earth to be brought together in Christ, thus ending and fulfilling the Old Covenant system and prophecies just as Jesus said in Luke 21:22. Lastly...

Paul here, as he did in 2 Cor. 5:1-8, wrote of how that the corruptible body (which would include the OC saints, Heb. 11, esp. v. 40), in its entirety, would be clothed upon with incorruptibility &/or immortality. Notice that he didn't say, "these corruptibles (plural) must put on incorruptibility," or "these mortals (plural) must put on immortality," but that "this corruptible (singular) must put on incorruptibility," and "this mortal (singular) must put on immortality."

Another way to say this would be, "this animalistic, natural body that has been put to death in Christ (Rom. 8:10) must be clothed with the spiritual, heavenly body," or (as Paul actually went on to speak of in the next verse) "this body of death, this body of Adam, must be *clothed over* with the body of life, the body of Christ" (symbolic of marriage), otherwise God couldn't in-habit it (John 14:2-3 & 23 & Rev. 21:3-4). So...

When Jesus came for His bride during that generation, after she was purified and prepared (Eph. 5), she (as 1 The. 4 indicates) met Him as she saw Him coming for her, then escorted Him here to live in/with Him in spiritual realms of glory (aka "the air") ... time without end. *That's* what I call "resurrection"!

[8/6/10]

A STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 15

(PART 11: VERSES 54-58)

Well, after five months of considering First Corinthians 15, we've finally arrived at the end of the chapter.

Although it has been five months and a grueling study, I still don't claim to comprehend every detail of this chapter perfectly; however, I *am* convinced that my present and overall understanding of it is **far** more accurate and factual than my previous understanding of it. In other words...

While I used to believe that Paul was writing about an individual, biological resurrection at an alleged end to the Messianic age due to traditional teaching in the churches of Christ, I'm now convinced through my own personal studies that he was actually writing about a corporate, spiritual resurrection at the end of the Mosaic age or the beginning of the Messianic age around AD 70. So...

With those comments in mind, as well as all that we've studied so far, let's finish our studies in First Corinthians 15 by considering verses 54-58.

Verse 54: But whenever this mortal should put on immortality, then will occur the saying which has been written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Now consider this closely relative to timing: In the previous sentences Paul said, "I tell you a mystery: we shall not all be laid to sleep, but we all shall be changed, in a split second, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For it will trumpet, and the dead ones will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (vv. 51-52).

Since we already spent quite a bit of time pinpointing the appointed occasion for this trumpet-sounding, all I'll do here is just remind us of the conclusion: it sounded at the time for the demise of Jerusalem, the temple, the OC priesthood, the law, etc., which corresponds to Paul's declaration that many of them would still be alive.

Now here in verse 54 Paul connected the demise of the last enemy—"the death" of verse 26—to that same point in time; i.e., at the same time that God put an end to Jerusalem, the temple, the OC priesthood, and the law, He also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 25:8 by putting an end to the last remaining enemy—the death—the thing which kept man separated from his Creator—sin-death. This means, of course, that at that time was also the end of sin (at least for those who desire the end of it through the Messiah), which also therefore perfectly fulfilled Daniel 9:24-27 concerning sin being put to an end at the time of the abomination of desolation. So...

Recalling the general context, what Paul was saying in verse 54 was that when that which was mortal—that body of death (cf. Rom. 7:24 & 8:10)—was enveloped by that which is immortal—the body of life in Christ, then, logically, the death which separated man from God, sin-death, would be swallowed up in victory by life.

Verse 55: "Death, where's your victory? Death, where's your sting?"

Just as Paul quoted from Isaiah 25:8 in verse 54 (which was from the heart of Isaiah's prophecies about the end times from chapter 24 thru chapter 29), so he quoted from Hosea 13:14 (which is from the end of God's prophecies through Hosea of obvious spiritual death & spiritual resurrection of Israel; otherwise, there would've been no Israelites left to receive the promises of God in the end times).

We've talked time and time again throughout these studies about Hosea being Paul's background for this chapter from beginning to end: after initially bringing Hosea to mind (cf. v. 4 w/ Hos. 6:1-2), and after talking about the sowing and dying of the body of Israel in order that she may be brought back into fellowship-life with God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-44 w/ Hos. 2:23 & 6:1-2), and after making an application about all of that for the Corinthians (vv. 45-50), Paul then talked about when this change was to occur (vv. 51-54), leading him back to Hosea at his conclusion: Hosea 13:14 to which Paul alluded has God saying, "I will ransom them [the Israelites] from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death. O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting?" (Mixture of the ASV & the NASB).

As with Isaiah 25:8, and as I've stated before, no real and honest scholar out there anywhere that I've ever heard of believes that Hosea was talking about a literal, biological death or resurrection, meaning that, since Paul said Isaiah and Hosea would be fulfilled at the time of Jerusalem's demise, this chapter does NOT concern the resurrection of material bodies from holes in the dirt but the resurrection of reconciliation to God. By the way...

In the first two verses of that Hosea chapter from which Paul quoted (chapter 13), we find this bit of helpful, interesting, and relevant information: speaking of Israel it says that "when he exalted himself through Baal worship, *he died*," past tense; then it goes on to say in present tense that "Now they [the Israelites] sin more and more." So...

If physical death was that about which Hosea and therefore Paul wrote, then how could the Israelites have gone on committing sin after that? Furthermore...

If the promise of Hosea 13 has NOT been fulfilled, then every jot and tittle of the Law has NOT been fulfilled, leaving no alternative but for us to believe that we're still under the law, since it couldn't pass before all things were fulfilled. How difficult is it to see that? Anyway, this point leads well into Paul's next statement:

Verse 56: But the sting of the death [is] the sin, but the power of the sin [is] the Law. And...

That's the literal rendering: *the* sting, *the* death, *the* sin, & the power of *the* law. So...

What's "the" sin? The sin of the context here (as in Rom. 5) is "the" sin of Adam which was the decision to go his own way, live his own life, by his own carnal desires, regardless of what God desired—it was essentially the sin of self-esteem, arrogance, conceit, & self-importance, i.e. the belief that he didn't need his Creator.

What's "the" death? It was the specific death associated with *that* sin, the same "the" death talked about in Romans 5 (which, by the way, is obviously spiritual death because Rom. 5:18 defines the death as "condemnation" as opposed to the life Jesus provides being "justification," thus nothing to do with physical death). And...

Since we're talking about this death being associated with the sin, i.e. the sin of Adam, then what was the death Adam died "the day" in which he sinned? That's right—spiritual death, he was separated from God, corresponding to his wish of dependence upon himself. (Sort of reminds us of the saying, "Be careful what ya ask for, 'cuz you might just get it.") So...

Like a scorpion, the sin is the stinger which inserted that venom which led to the death. But what gave the sin its power to achieve this? "The Law." And...

What's "the" Law? This seems too obvious to even spend time on here, but it was "the Law" of God through Moses—the epitome of law—perfect law. For those who wanted to prove they could live righteously by law, or for those who thought they could regain fellowship with God by law, God gave them the perfect law. But could man keep that perfect law which would indeed merit one's those things? No. So...

Since man couldn't keep perfect law (the only law worth keeping), then all that law ultimately did was intensify or, as Paul put it, become the strength of sin!

"The" Law, which was the epitome of any devised law, was sin's power to inflict eternal, spiritual death upon man; we just need to keep in mind that if the law from God couldn't reconcile us, then NO law can reconcile us, meaning that any law, all law, merely condemns—it cannot justify. So...

Here's the MAIN point here, so we MUST get this: Paul was saying that when the law (the epitome of all law) was removed, sin's power and sting was removed, and therefore the last enemy—verse 26's sin-death—was removed ... again, for those who accept Christ's sacrifice for them. So...

The end of sin, and therefore the end of sin-death, about which Daniel prophesied (9:24-27), occurred simultaneously with the removal or the end of the Law. And...

When was the Law removed in its totality? When that which represented it was removed, viz. the city of Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, and the Jews which all occurred around AD 70. Thus...

With sin-death destroyed, resurrection of the saints to spiritual life was the result. When? Thousands of years later? No, concurrent with the removal of the law—the power behind sin's sting. It's only logical. Is it not?

Verse 57: But thanks to God who is giving to us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

After all the times we've made sure to take notice of the tenses the Holy Spirit chose to employ throughout this chapter, we can't help but catch this one here as well: At the time Paul wrote this, God was in the process of giving those first generation saints the victory through Jesus Christ. This tells us two things:

It didn't happen at the death, burial, and resurrection or even at the ascension of Jesus Christ as so many claim. Because Jesus said on the cross, "It's finished," folks want to say that all was accomplished at that point; however, not only did He say that *before* He was even resurrected, but God also made this same statement later in Revelation (10:7 & 21:6), meaning that Jesus was referring to all that He could accomplish *on Earth* had been accomplished. Furthermore...

The statement of Paul that God was, at that time, giving them the victory through Jesus Christ tells us that it was an imminent victory, one that corresponded to the time statement he provided earlier in verse 51, viz. that some of those of his audience would not die before the time of the resurrection, the spiritual metamorphosis from the body of sin-death to the body of righteous-life, which corresponds to the time of the abolishment of the Law just a few years after this letter was penned.

Besides in First Corinthians 15, the term for "victory" here is only to be found one other time in the NT: Matthew 12:20.

This verse is part of a quote from Isaiah 42:1-7 about the coming of the promised Messiah; as with many OT prophecies about this event, this passage speaks of it as though it would be one event (and, in a sense, it was), even though we normally see it as two events: His first coming as a human baby, then His second coming later.

Here in Matthew 12:18-21, we can see God touching on both His coming as a nice quiet fella who came to seek and save the lost, then He's pictured as One who'd come in judgment. Listen: "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He won't quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He won't break, and smoking flax He won't quench, **till** He sends forth [lit.] the judgment to victory. And in His name Gentiles will trust."

Now to Paul's Last Statement in this Chapter:

Verse 58: Consequently, my beloved brethren, become settled, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Firstly, notice the term "consequently"; i.e., Paul seemed to be saying, "Since these things are presently being fulfilled through you, in your lifetime, you must become settled," etc.

Secondly, this verse verifies that Paul had been dealing only with the resurrection of saints, those who were on the very heels of finally and victoriously overcoming that notorious and dreaded enemy called "death." They, not the wicked of the world, were promised immortality. Let me add one more thing as we close:

Since there's no biological resurrection for us to expect, what remains for the righteous after death? Just listen to the comforting words of the Spirit to John in Revelation 14:13: "Write, 'Happy are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, let them rest from their labors, for their works follow with them.'" [8/26/10]