

## Importance of the Resurrection – Part 2

There is a logic to Paul's treatment of the resurrection.

First he establishes that it is not a new doctrine but one prophesied in the Old Testament. He uses that as his first witness, the Word of God. He points to a couple of passages. Two witnesses are sufficient in Biblical reasoning.

Secondly, he calls up human witnesses to the resurrection. Many of these sightings were documented in other places in the New Testament. And, as Paul points out, many of these human witnesses were still alive some 20 years after the resurrection when he was writing the book of 1 Corinthians.

Then Paul follows the logic of those who deny the resurrection. The logical conclusion of that line of reasoning is that there is no valid Christian faith. It is useless. Start with a faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah, follow the assumption that He was not resurrected per Old Testament prophecy and you end up with a contradiction. This indicates that either the initial assumption (there is no resurrection) or the logic flowing from it or both are flawed. Paul's logic is sound. So, his argument demonstrates the veracity of the resurrection of Jesus.

### **Resurrection of Christ Predicted in the Old Testament**

Paul starts with the Scriptures, the Word of God and fulfilled prophecy.

**1 Corinthians 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

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The Scriptures prophesied the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah.

**According to the Scriptures.** Paul is repeatedly referring back to the Old Testament to emphasize that the doctrine of resurrection is not something new. Let me repeat this for emphasis: the doctrine of resurrection is not something new in the New Testament or the Church Age. So Paul can refer back to “Scripture” or the Old Testament as a foundation for the present explanation. The difference is that in Paul’s day resurrection is not a future “hypothetical.” Someone has already been resurrected, namely Jesus Christ. Now Paul is about to provide the proof of that resurrection. And since there has been a resurrection, the gate is now open and ready for us who will be resurrected after the rapture.

Paul uses Psalm 16:10 to establish this fact of fulfilled prophecy in a Jewish Synagogue on a Sabbath. His argument is documented in Acts chapter 13. You can get the complete context if you want by starting from Acts 13:1. Here, starting in verse 32, he is relating the good news (gospel) to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Messiah) using Psalms.

**Acts 13:32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,**

The promise was made in covenants between God and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is faithful. That is stated repeatedly in the Old Testament Scriptures. The resurrection of Jesus fulfilled prophecy.

**Acts 13:33 that God has fulfilled (perfect tense = completed action in the past with enduring results) this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the**

**second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’ (Psalm 2:7)**

**Acts 13:34 As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ (Isaiah 55:3 via the LXX and interpreted by Paul)**

**Acts 13:35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’ (Psalms 16:10)**

**Acts 13:36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;**

**Acts 13:37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.**

He is referring to Psalm 16.

**Psalm 16:10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.**

He uses logic in analyzing Psalm 16. The Holy One cannot be David since David died and underwent bodily decay. But the Holy One will not undergo decay.

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The Sadducees in Jesus' time understood the concept of resurrection but did not believe it. This was documented by Mark:

**Mark 12:18 Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) \*came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying,**

The part in parentheses is in the New Testament Greek text. The Greek does not have a parenthesis like English, the NASB put them in for clarification. The Pharisees did believe in a resurrection.

It is interesting to note, that as far as I can find, there is no technical word in the Old Testament for resurrection. There are descriptions but nothing like Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Daniel chapter 12 comes close, "to awaken from sleep." He calls it waking from sleep.

**Daniel 12:2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.**

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, sleep can refer to both what we understand as sleep at night and sleep that is death.

**1 Kings 2:10 Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.**

Obviously in this passage, sleep refers to death which precedes the burial of David.

The context is key to understanding which sleep is meant.

Also 2 Kings 4:31 (resuscitation from death); Jeremiah 51:39,57 (death); Job 14:12 (death); Isaiah 26:19 (resurrection); Daniel 12:2 (resurrection). As many pastors have said many times, the Hebrews were very "show

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me” in their thinking. So rather than have a technical word like the Greek in the New Testament, they describe it from various perspectives. The one from the Psalms deals with no corruption of the body after burial.

**Isaiah 53:10 But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.**

In Isaiah 53:10 the Messiah will die as a “guilt offering” but will prolong His days. In other words, He will die but continue to live.

Jesus gave the resurrection as a sign based upon a typology from Jonah:

**Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”**

**Matthew 12:39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;**

**Matthew 12:40 for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

The point is that after three days and three nights, Jonah was vomited up on dry land. So Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

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Remember, some nuances about the gospels. They were written during the Church age to Church Age people. But they narrate events that happened in the previous dispensation that was under the Law of Moses, the Torah.

I cannot leave the Old Testament references to resurrection without going back to the first-written book of the Old Testament, Job.

**Job 19:25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.**

**Job 19:26 “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;**

**Job 19:27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!**

There are some who do not see resurrection in these verses. They translate “destroyed” in verse 26 as something else. But, the usual Christian interpretation is that this refers to resurrection.

Resurrection is also referenced in Psalm 17:15; Ezekiel 37:1-14 (Dry Bones); Daniel 12:2; John 6:44; John 11:25 (I am the resurrection...)

**Christ's Resurrection Attested to by Eyewitnesses (15:5-11)**

**1 Corinthians 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

Note that in Paul’s list, Cephas, the Aramaic name given to Simon Peter by Jesus. It means rock or stone. “Peter” is the Greek translation of this Aramaic name. Peter is listed first. He was not the first to see the resurrected Christ.

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Cephas (Aramaic meaning rock, stone) → Peter (Greek Petros meaning rock)

**1 Corinthians 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;**

**1 Corinthians 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;**

The list that Paul provides is not a complete list of everyone Jesus appeared to.

The first person was Mary Magdalene in the Garden. Mark 16:9-11 and John 20:11-18. When I read the account in John chapter 20, I often get a tear in my eye. I can understand the intense emotion of Mary Magdalene at seeing her resurrected Lord from the text. From the text, she did not initially realize she was speaking to the resurrected Jesus. When she did realize, she grabbed Him and wouldn't let go. For those who were military brats, you might remember your father being away on a temporary duty assignment. When he returned after a week or maybe months, you run to him and grab his legs and yell with joy, "Daddy!!!" So it was with Mary Magdalene. "Rabboni" or "Teacher."

Actually, what no one seems to take into account is the fact that the first witnesses to the resurrection, even while it was happening were the guards posted to ensure no one stole the body.

**Matthew 28:2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.**

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**Matthew 28:3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.**

**Matthew 28:4 The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.**

Unnamed women in Matthew 28:9 We are not told who they are. Likely they included the women from Matthew 27:55-56.

Cephas (1 Corinthians 15:5a). The narration of this meeting is not documented other than the mention here by Paul. Herman has said several times, that Peter was the first person that Jesus sought out after the resurrection.

The Twelve (1 Corinthians 15:5b). Note it says “the twelve.” At that point, there were only eleven, yet they are called “the twelve.” Apparently this is a title for the group of the “12” disciples whether there were twelve in attendance or not. Remember, Judas, at this point is dead. Matthias was really just a placeholder for Paul. But it is said that he was a witness to the resurrection. That was one of the criteria for being considered a replacement for Judas Ischariot. Thomas was not present for the first appearance to the twelve (John 20:19-23; John 20:24).

There is the account of Cleopas on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35.

The five hundred (1 Corinthians 15:6). At his point in Paul’s ministry, perhaps around 55 AD, many of the five hundred were still alive and could attest to the resurrection.

James Jesus half-brother (1 Corinthians 15:7a)

The rest of the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7b)

Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8-11)



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Paul here identifies himself as the “least of the apostles.”

**1 Corinthians 15:8 and last of all, as to one untimely born (the Greek can also mean a miscarriage), He appeared to me also.**

**1 Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.**

**1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.**

**1 Corinthians 15:11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.**

Now the foundation is laid for the rest of Paul’s defense of resurrection. The Word of God said the Messiah would be resurrected. Then Paul listed witnesses who actually saw the resurrected Messiah and in some cases actually touched Him. Continuing on, Paul provides a proof by contradiction<sup>1</sup>. He assumes resurrection is false and then shows the contradictions that leads to. In other words, if the argument is proved false, then the assumption must be wrong and the resurrection is true.

There are Seven Disastrous Consequences if there is no Resurrection (15:12-19)<sup>2</sup>

1. Christ not raised (13, 16)
2. Preaching in vain (14a)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proof\\_by\\_contradiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proof_by_contradiction)

<sup>2</sup> <https://slbc.org/sermon/resurrection-so-what/>

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3. Faith is in vain (14b, 17a)
4. Apostles are liars (15)
5. We are still in our sins (17b)
6. No hope for the dead in Christ (18)
7. We are pitiable (19)

**1 Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

Here is Paul, pastor-teacher, addressing the doubters in Corinth. Paul just gave extensive documentation that the resurrection of Jesus did occur. They may be like Thomas. But at this point, the witness of the many should suffice. So Paul provides convicting logic with faith busting consequences if Jesus was not resurrected. Resurrection is an essential doctrine. Without it there is no Christianity.

There are some in modern time that rejected the resurrection. One in particular was a lawyer named Simon Greenleaf. He decided to take the gospel accounts and apply to them the modern rules of evidence. So, if the gospel accounts were presented in a courtroom today would they be accepted as valid witness accounts? The gospels passed his test. He became a believer as a result. He documented this in a book (946 pages long) that is freely available on the internet.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34989/34989-pdf.pdf>

Paul proceeds with the logic.

**1 Corinthians 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;**

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**1 Corinthians 15:14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.**

**1 Corinthians 15:15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.**

**1 Corinthians 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;**

**1 Corinthians 15:17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**

The resurrection is seen as validation of Jesus' work on the cross. If God the Father did not raise Jesus, then the cross work of Jesus has not been validated and we cannot claim that the sin problem has been taken care of.

**1 Corinthians 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**1 Corinthians 15:19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.**

Two Benefits of Christ's Resurrection (15:20-28)

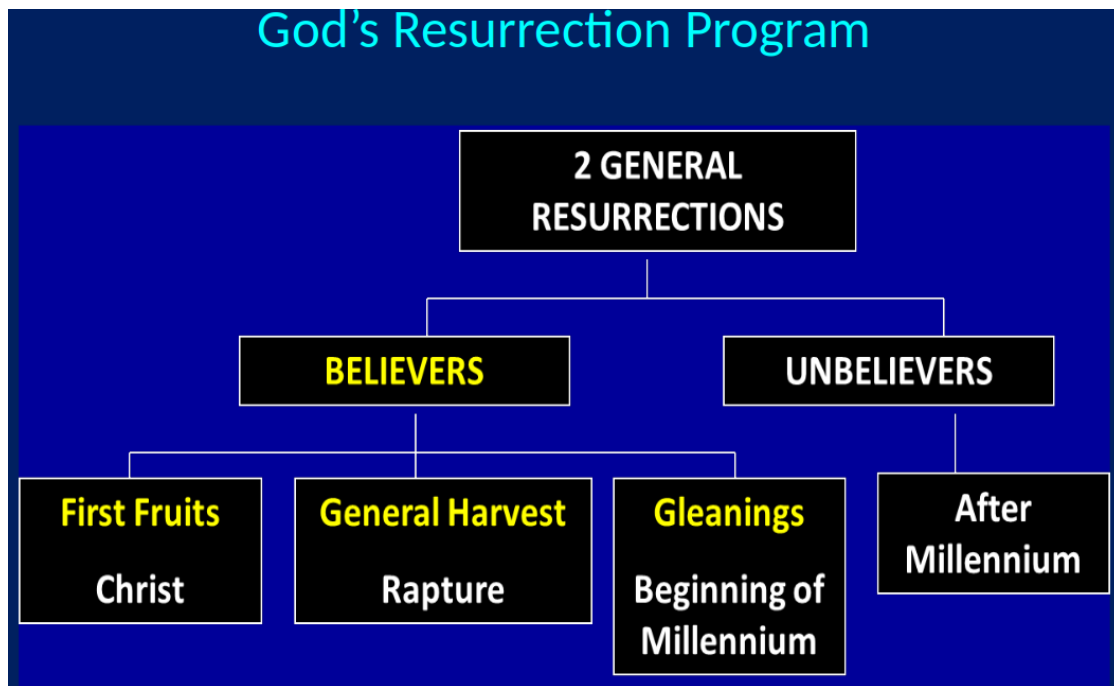
1. Guarantees believer's resurrection (20-23)
2. Guarantees the Father's ultimate victory (24-28)

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**1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.**

**Has been raised.** Perfect tense = An action that was completed in past time with ongoing results. The accusation against the resurrection has been proved false.

Paul identifies Jesus at the “first fruits.” This is a harvest term. Andy Woods applied the harvest paradigm to resurrection since Paul applied it to Jesus. This would make a great study, the application of the Jewish harvest paradigm to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and believers. Perhaps next year at this time.



Harvest Theme applied to Resurrection by Andy Woods<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://slbc.org/sermon/daniel-057-resurrected-unto-reward/>

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**1 Corinthians 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.**

Throughout Paul's writings he compares the fall of Adam to the saving work of Jesus. Last week I compared the single act of faith by Adam and Even in Satan's lie to the single act of faith an unbeliever can express toward Jesus Christ for salvation. One man's sin lead to death; so one sacrifice on the cross leads to life.

**1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

This is a good transition into the order of resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,**

**Order.** The Greek word is *tagma*. It is used of a military order, like a battalion. It has the context of a military parade or review. Most commentators leave it at that.

The following description of the order of the heavenly review is from Herman Mattox.<sup>4</sup>

“The first resurrection occurs in four orders or echelons or battalion review. The Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 15 is *taxis* and can refer to order, nature, orderly manner or regiment, legion or battalion. The review stand has God the Father. The various orders will march by for review by the God the Father.”

1. The first company to walk by is known as Alpha company. Alpha company is Jesus Christ. He is the first to be in

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Easter/notes/Resurrection%20of%20Jesus%20Christ.pdf>

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- Resurrection. He is the first in Resurrection body and He is known as the first fruits. Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; Acts 2:31-34
2. Bravo company is next to march in front of God the Father. It will be the Church at the rapture.
  3. Charlie company comprises believers in the Jewish age. This includes Jews and Gentiles throughout the Old Testament. And all those Jews and Gentile believers of the Tribulation. Study Daniel 12:13; Isaiah 26:19-30; Matthew 24:31; and Revelation 20:4
  4. And the last to rise up out of the Resurrection is Delta company. Those in this resurrection will be the Millennial saints.

The recipients of this letter live in the Roman empire. They are familiar with conquest by Roman armies. When a nation resists the Roman empire, the army conquered them. Those left alive are paraded in Rome in a victory parade sometimes called a “triumph.” By using the word “tagma” the recipients of the letter would think of that parade. Here are some pertinent quotes from Wikipedia:

“The Roman triumph (triumphus) was a civil ceremony and religious rite of ancient Rome, held to publicly celebrate and sanctify the success of a military commander who had led Roman forces to victory in the service of the state or, in some historical traditions, one who had successfully completed a foreign war.”

“Some ancient and modern sources suggest a fairly standard processional order. First came the captive leaders, allies, and soldiers (and sometimes their families) usually walking in chains; some were destined for execution or further display. Their captured weapons, armour, gold,

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silver, statuary, and curious or exotic treasures were carted behind them, along with paintings, tableaux, and models depicting significant places and episodes of the war. Next in line, all on foot, came Rome's senators and magistrates, followed by the general's lictors in their red war-robos, their fasces wreathed in laurel, then the general in his four-horse chariot. A companion, or a public slave, might share the chariot with him or, in some cases, his youngest children. His officers and elder sons rode horseback nearby. His unarmed soldiers followed in togas and laurel crowns, chanting "io triumphe!" and singing ribald songs at their general's expense. Somewhere in the procession, two flawless white oxen were led for the sacrifice to Jupiter, garland-decked and with gilded horns. All this was done to the accompaniment of music, clouds of incense, and the strewing of flowers.”

Note the reference to “processional order.” That is the significance of “tagma” here in 1 Corinthians. Jesus Christ will lead the resurrections in a specific order as a parade celebrating His victory before God the Father. And we will be there in that parade! Wow!