

St. Andrew**Academy**

1 Corinthians: You think you've got problems!

Week 7

*The Resurrection of the Body
1 Corinthians 15*



Paul saves the most important issue for the last!!

- ❖ Simply put, at least some of the Corinthian Christians deny the resurrection of the dead.
- ❖ This probably reflects their overemphasis on the “spiritual” at the expense of the “physical.”
 - They consider themselves so rich in spiritual gifts that this resurrection of the body stuff just seems crass and yucky!
- ❖ We see here the beginnings of Christian *gnosticism*. Gnostics would come to deny even Jesus’ crucifixion
 - In later gnostic writings, the “real Jesus, the spiritual” was depicted as being above the cross looking down at the inferior, spiritual body of the man.
 - “Gnostic” is from the Greek word, *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.”



The Kerygma (the apostolic message) proclaims the resurrection of Christ (vv. 1-11)

- ❖ This is the *Good News – the evangelion – the gospel – the proclamation that Jesus is Lord*. It is foundational to all that Paul and the apostles claim. Like the Lord's supper, Paul has passed on to the Corinthians what was passed on to him.
- ❖ Jesus **died** . . . and was buried.
- ❖ Jesus **was raised** . . . and hundreds of people saw him.
- ❖ This is not complicated, nor metaphorical, nor some sort of higher truth, it is not about some higher spiritual plane – this simply happened!!
 - And . . . and all this was in accordance with the Jewish scriptures (vv. 3-4). Jesus is the culmination of the OT story.



Denial of the resurrection of the dead negates the gospel (vv. 12-19)

- ❖ Jesus was raised. It happened. Board a bus and go talk to some of the hundreds of witnesses!
- ❖ Since it happened, how can the Corinthians now deny their own resurrection.
 - These are Greeks. Surely some of them were influenced by Plato, for whom humans are "souls" are trapped in imperfect bodies awaiting their escape.
- ❖ If Jesus was not raised, then all Christians are fools and deserving of pity. Why? Because they (we!!) have believed a lie.
 - It is simple really . . . No resurrection, then no Good News, no salvation from sin. Jesus was just another failed would-be Messiah.



Because Christ has been raised, all who belong to him will be raised (vv. 20-28)

- ❖ Paul's focus here is on the Christians, the elect, God's chosen.
- ❖ Christ is the *first fruits* of the resurrection. He is first, all those who belong to him will follow! It is really one big event.
 - All die as Adam died . . . All will be raised as Christ has been raised!
- ❖ Jesus' resurrection means that he defeated death and, hence, sin. Death came into the picture as a consequence of sin (Genesis 3). Paul uses military language and imagery to paint a picture of this victory.



If the dead are not raised, hope, suffering, and faithfulness are pointless (vv. 29-34)

- ❖ If there is no resurrection, then all this 'stuff' that we are doing and hoping for are useless.
 - Paul seems to be talking about some sort of baptism of the dead ???
- ❖ If there is no resurrection, everything that Paul has endured has been for nothing!
- ❖ If there is no resurrection, then we might as well "eat, drink, and make merry!"
 - Without the resurrection, the entire structure of Christianity (and Judaism) collapses. For a look at a world without God, turn to Ecclesiastes.
- ❖ "Bad company ruins good morals" is a Greek maxim of the day.
 - Paul evidently believes that part of the Corinthians' problem come from hanging around with 'bad company.' They are going too far to try to make the gospel acceptable to their pagan neighbors.



What kind of body is the resurrection body?

(vv. 35-49)

- ❖ Who really knows?
- ❖ Our resurrection will be like Jesus'. What happened to him will happen to us. Our resurrected body will be like his.
- ❖ We will exchange perishable for imperishable.
- ❖ V. 44 – exchanging a *physical* (*natural* in NIV) for a *spiritual* body.
 - We exchange a *soma psychikon* for a *soma pneumatikon*
 - We exchange a body animated by our natural souls for a body animated by spirit, God's Spirit.
 - The Jerusalem Bible: "When it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the spirit."



Both the dead and the living will be transformed

(vv. 50-57)

- ❖ Paul pauses and begins to summarize.
- ❖ There is both continuity and discontinuity at work here.
 - We will still have bodies . . . but we will be transformed . . . whether we are living or dead when Jesus returns.
- ❖ The defeat of death won't be final until Jesus returns (the *parousia*) but it is assured.
 - Sin, death, law . . . all have been subdued, defeated by Christ. This is Good News! Victory is ours through Christ.
 - Perhaps we can see how salvation through Christ, and not apart from Christ, is woven throughout the New Testament. We are saved by being "in Christ," so that we might be able to make his victory own.

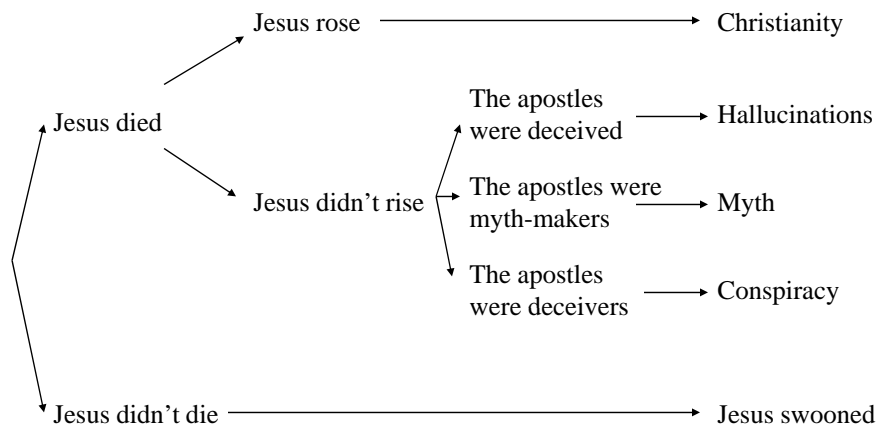


Therefore, our labor is not in vain!!

(v. 58)



Most of the Possibilities



from Kreeft & Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, InterVarsity Press, 1994



New Testament Timeline

