

**END TIMES PROPHECY & REVELATION PART 1**  
**1 CORINTHIANS 15**  
**THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE**

***The Lord's Day, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018, Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-26***

*In 2004 I began a series of sermons on the New Testament, starting with the gospels, (which I called "The Ministry of Jesus"), and since that time, we have gone through the whole New Testament, until last Lord's Day, when we completed the **Epistle of Jude**. So, to complete the whole series on the New Testament, God willing, we only have **The Revelation** to go. Since The Revelation is mainly about what may be called 'End Times Prophecy' (or eschatology), I have decided to do, as I have done a few times before, a topical study of End Times Prophecy, which includes the book of Revelation.*

*A good place to start such a study is in **1 Corinthians 15**, which is all about the resurrection of life. In this chapter, Paul speaks particularly of the resurrection as it pertains to the saints of God. He says nothing of the judgment, except that he briefly mentions Christ's triumph over His enemies. He says nothing of the torments of the lake of fire. His whole discourse is focused on the wonderful things that are in store for the saints when Christ returns!*

**TO CONSIDER THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE IN ITS PROPER CONTEXT, LET US OBSERVE THAT, WHILE PAUL'S FOCUS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15 IS ON THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE, JESUS SPOKE OF TWO RESURRECTIONS IN ONE EVENT AT THE SAME TIME – THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE AND THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION: John 5:26-29, "5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 5:28 Marvel not at this: for **the hour is coming**, in the which **all that are in the graves** shall hear his voice, 5:29 And shall come forth; **they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**"** *He uses different terms to describe what happens to the wicked ("the resurrection of damnation") and to the just ("the resurrection of life"), but He clearly speaks of one time and one event, actually one resurrection, and it is all to occur at Christ's return, as is clear, from the fact that, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." This also harmonises with all other references to the resurrection and the judgment.*

*There is no need to be confused about the resurrection – there is to be one resurrection, but since it involves two entirely different groups of people, it is both the resurrection of damnation and the resurrection of life.*

*Therefore, I take the Words of Christ here as a subject heading for all that Paul teaches in **1 Corinthians 15**.*

*This is not an exhaustive coverage of the doctrine of resurrection, but it is full of instruction on the subject Paul has in mind: i.e. **the resurrection of the just, or the resurrection of life**.*

### **1. THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE ESTABLISHED BY CHRIST**

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE? WHAT DOES YOUR 'FAITH' CONSIST OF?**

*For example, do you believe your doctor, when you have blood tests and are prescribed life-saving medication on the basis of all the latest medical science? Most people do. You wouldn't waste your time seeing a doctor if you didn't believe in the diagnosis, and medication, and the science behind it!*

*A few years ago, a 'bombshell' was dropped by the ABC news, an article called, "**The pressure to fudge medical research findings**". Excerpt:*

*.....Dr Fang's findings were published in the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science in 2012. It revealed that **67.4 per cent of retractions were attributable to misconduct, including fraud or suspected fraud (43.4 per cent), duplicate publication (14.2 per cent), and plagiarism (9.8 per cent).***

*"Incomplete, uninformative or misleading retraction announcements have led to a previous underestimation of the role of fraud in the ongoing retraction epidemic," he wrote. "**The percentage of scientific articles retracted because of fraud has increased 10-fold since 1975.**"*

*Now, with those few facts in mind, do you sometimes donate money to the Heart Foundation, or to cancer research? Do you buy the food items which carry the famous Heart Foundation tick? If so, what is your faith based on? Is it based on the opinions of one expert or another, on the pharmaceutical companies who make billions out of selling drugs, the opinion of your local doctor who follows the most up-to-date 'science', and is your faith sometimes based on complete and utter rubbish, on fabrications and outright lies? The fact is, we really don't know! But I thank God, my faith in Christ is not based on such a wobbly, human foundation as this!*

**NOW WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST, WHAT IS YOUR FAITH BASED ON? You say, “Oh yes, I believe in Jesus! But which 'Jesus' do you believe in? Do you believe in the Jesus of the Roman Catholic Church, who appears everywhere in graven images still hanging on a cross, who, the priest tells you, you cannot reach without going through Mary first? Do you believe in the 'Jesus' of the Methodists and Baptists and other Arminians, a Jesus who **would** save you if he **could**, but it is all up to you to **make a decision**, so they tell you? A 'Jesus' who, after you've made that decision, cannot guarantee that you are safe yet, because you might weaken, and turn away? Do you believe in the 'Jesus' of the Deists (like most Christians today), who say He loves everybody but can't really save anybody, a 'Jesus' who is apparently allowing the world (which the Bible says He created) fall into chaos, just because He has turned all the decision making and control over to sinful men? A 'Jesus' who has apparently made a great mistake, because the world He created is now in chaos, and He is powerless to do anything about it (a Jesus who, like the politician, Pontius Pilate, washes his hands of the responsibility for the chaos all creation has descended into)? Or do you believe in the 'Jesus' of the Eastern Mystics, who, **they** say, didn't really die and rise again from the dead and ascend into heaven where He reigns and rules the nations as we speak (according to Scripture), but escaped to India where he had a wife and brought up children of his own, and died, and is just another dead guru? All these are actually false Christ's, because they are not Saviours but mere examples to be followed; they are not “the Lord” (Jehovah), Who is Creator and Sovereign Ruler of all things – they are not the Jesus Whom the apostles preached!**

**ACCORDING TO PAUL'S DOCTRINE HERE, IT IS (THEORETICALLY) POSSIBLE TO “BELIEVE IN VAIN!”** Of course, you have “believed in vain” if you have believed in “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4) whom the apostles never preached, but here Paul talks (theoretically), more specifically, of another way to believe in vain. He gets right down to the one most important thing. He takes the “sword of the Spirit”, the Word of God, and he divides humanity into two distinct groups – **those who believe in Christ's resurrection, and those who don't: 1 Corinthians 15:1-2**, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” You could “believe in vain” by believing the wrong thing, by believing a lie (like believing the Heart

Foundation or the cancer research). In other words, **you could “believe in vain,” if the gospel was untrue – if Christ did not really rise from the dead!** He is saying to the Corinthians, “You have believed the gospel of Christ, and your souls are saved in believing, even as I preached to you from the beginning, and now, some among you are saying, ‘Is there really a resurrection of the dead?’” “Well, just what is it that you believed? **Did you believe in the risen and reigning Christ at all? Because if the risen Christ I preached to you is a fraud, or a figment of my imagination, then you are lost and I, who preach Christ, am the greatest fool of all!” 1 Corinthians 15:12-19,** “15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 15:13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15:15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 15:16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

**THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A KIND OF FAITH IN CHRIST FOR THIS LIFE ONLY** – as the examples I mentioned: some see Him only as an example to follow, or as a would-be Saviour, not really a Saviour at all! But Paul says such are of all men most miserable! Such an unspeakable misuse of the gospel and of the name of Jesus, is like taking a bucket full of the most expensive pearls, and feeding them to swine! That would be a complete and utter misuse of the pearls, and a complete and utter rejection of their true value – so it is with Christ, if you take Him merely as an example to follow, or as a would-be Saviour who would love to save everybody but cannot, you completely reject His real value. Let us ask ourselves, Do we believe in vain, or do we wholeheartedly believe in the risen and reigning Christ Whom the apostles preached, of Whom the Scriptures testify on every page?

**THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS ESSENTIALLY ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.** After putting this argument to the Corinthians, and showing them that their faith must have foundations, if it is to be of any use to them, Paul goes on to say, “15:20 **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**” He is the first man to rise bodily from death and to experience bodily immortality. The saints in heaven are

*immortal, but their bodies have not yet been raised – they still sleep in the dust of the earth. Your soul, even now, is immortal – it will never be extinguished, but will spend eternity, either with Christ, or without Him. But Christ is risen from the dead and is the firstfruits of them that slept! Enoch and Elijah were taken straight up to heaven – they didn't die – but Christ died and rose again, He is “the firstfruits of them that slept”!*

***How can Paul say this so confidently?** Why does he not say to them, “Well, you just might have a point. Maybe He didn't actually rise? Does somebody else have a viewpoint? Let's call a meeting and discuss and dialogue, and see if we can come to some consensus of what we believe. We are far removed from Jerusalem. Most of us here are not Jews anyway. Perhaps we should **interpret** this gospel in a way that is more culturally acceptable to the Greeks?” Did Paul entertain such thoughts even for a moment? Was Paul like the fake preachers in the pulpits of the many liberal churches of today? God forbid! Well, what is the reason for Paul's stubborn, dogmatic, unchanging confidence in preaching the risen Christ? He is just so adamant! Is he just a hard-headed bigot? Is he just ignorant and arrogant, like so many others? Of course not! He preached the Truth of God! He preached the very foundation of our faith!*

***MANY PEOPLE TODAY THINK THE TERM “FAITH” MEANS SOMETHING YOU JUST CHOOSE TO BELIEVE, BUT WHICH CANNOT BE PROVEN.** They think the terms “faith” and “sound reason” are mutually exclusive, but this is not the case. They think that “faith” is not a reasonable thing, and that if a matter is reasonable, then it is not a matter of faith, but this is not what Biblical faith is all about. The Lord doesn't expect His people to believe some fantastic story, which has no foundation, and no evidence to back it up – that is like believing in fairies. Mark Paul's words here very clearly, that that is not what Christianity is all about! Christianity is not about believing in something unreasonable and unprovable, it is all about believing the plain Truth – the real and historical Truth of Christ's death and resurrection!*

***Paul has good sound and rational reasons why he believes, and why his belief is unshakable.***

***HERE IN OUR TEXT, ARE THREE WAYS CHRIST HAS ESTABLISHED THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION:***

***FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE SCRIPTURES:** Twice Paul cites the Scriptures as the basis for his belief in the risen and reigning Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4,***

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins **according to the scriptures**; 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day **according to the scriptures.**” *Both the death and resurrection of Jesus are soundly predicted in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures – the prophets from the beginning of time had predicted a Christ Who would both die and rise again, and ascend to heaven's throne! And Christ Himself also predicted this. Let us just take three examples:*

**Psalm 16:9-11**, “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” *(Peter preached these very words of Psalm 16 on the Day of Pentecost – according to Acts 2.)*

**Hebrews 11**, “17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.” *(The apostle Paul is pointing out that this offering up of Isaac was a type, a picture-prophecy of the death and resurrection of Jesus. There are many such types in Old Testament ritual and ceremony as well.)*

**Matthew 27:62-64**, “Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.”

**NOTICE THAT PAUL GOES TO THE SCRIPTURES FIRST TO ESTABLISH HIS FACTS.** *He could have talked non-stop for a week about his own personal experiences; he could have called on others to give their 'testimony' to agree with his, but he went straight to Scripture. The Scriptures are the Word of God, and any preacher worth his salt will rely on them as such. The two Old Testament Scriptures I refer to, as examples of what Paul meant by “according to the Scriptures,” are the Scriptures that Paul studied, they are the Scriptures that*

*Jesus learned from as a boy, and we still have them today, and they still testify, that centuries before Christ appeared, they predicted He would die and rise again and ascend into heaven!*

**SECONDLY, THE TESTIMONY OF THE TRUE APOSTLES OF CHRIST:** *Paul did appeal to the real life experience of the apostles as witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. But notice, they are not ordinary human experiences and feelings he appeals to, but **tangible** witnesses. You and I can talk about our experiences; the Corinthian Christians could have talked about **their** personal experiences, even visions and dreams, and marvellous providences of God, which are wonderful evidences to us, of the reality of the risen Saviour, **but the experiences Paul refers to, are the eye-witnesses to the very Person of Jesus Christ, when He was on this earth – those who walked and talked and ate with Him, who saw Him scourged and crucified, saw his dead body carried to the tomb, felt the awful heartache of losing their Messiah Who had wrought miracles among them for 3 ½ years, even raising the dead, and then was gone, lifeless, and then – the joy of seeing Him again after He rose from the tomb, walked and talked with Him again, ate fish with Him by the sea, saw Him for many days, saw Him literally ascend up to heaven in a cloud. Paul sets them forth systematically: “15:5 And that he was seen of **Cephas (Peter)**, then of **the twelve**: 15:6 After that, he was seen of **above five hundred brethren at once**; of whom the greater part **remain unto this present**, but some are fallen asleep. 15:7 After that, he was seen of **James**; then of **all the apostles**. 15:8 And last of all he was **seen of me also**, as of one born out of due time.”*** Over 500 eyewitnesses, on at least 6 separate occasions, and most of these witnesses were alive when Paul wrote this epistle! You may say, I have seen a vision of the risen Christ – Good for you, but it proves nothing. You and I are not eyewitnesses to the risen Christ – witnesses yes, but not eyewitnesses, witnesses because we testify of the Word of God. Do you realize that that is why so many churches which have majored on so-called 'personal testimony' in evangelism, are so weak and ineffective as witnesses to Christ? They have turned to their own experience instead of the Word of God! Do you realize that is why churches today are so weak, which believe in the modern-day ministry of apostles and prophets and healing ministries? Because all their efforts are expended in trying to prove something God never told them to prove – God doesn't have to show the world He can still do miracles! But God has **commanded** His Church to preach the risen Christ, **according to the Scriptures!**

**THAT IS THE WEAKNESS OF TODAY'S CHURCH, IT NO LONGER PREACHES THE WORD OF GOD, BECAUSE IT NO LONGER BELIEVES THE WORD OF GOD – IT PUTS THE EXPERIENCES OF MEN ABOVE THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.** *You think I am exaggerating? But men preach their own experiences; they preach other men and ministries; they preach healing and prosperity; they preach psychology; they preach new and innovative programmes (the twelve steps, church growth principles, seeker sensitive church models, youth programmes, promise keepers, purpose driven lives, the liberating of women, etc. etc.); they preach about the Word of God; they also preach that the Word of God is not perfect, that it contains mistakes; they preach versions and translations of the Word of God – but how many actually, just simply and honestly, preach the Word of God as the Word of God? How many really preach Christ, as Paul did? Sadly, not many today! And that is why the Christian Church is “the tail and not the head” in our world today!*

*I say this to point out that when you preach the doctrine of Christ and His apostles and prophets, you are preaching the very Word of God. When you preach the Scriptures as the very Word of God, you are standing squarely on the one foundation Christ has laid for His glorious Church – Himself, and His apostles and prophets, who also preached Him and expounded His doctrine!*

**THE OFFICE OF THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST IS MARKED BY AN IMPORTANT PROOF OF THEIR CALLING – THEY PERSONALLY SAW THE RISEN LORD.** *(The apostles who first preached Christ, saw Him in the flesh, and were given the same miraculous powers He Himself exercised while He was on earth),* **1 Corinthians 15:5-10**, “And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am.” ***Here is also the testimony of Luke the evangelist: Acts 1***, “1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 1:4 And, being assembled together with



them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 1:9 **And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.** 1:10 **And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.** 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 1:21 **Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.** 1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph

called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” *The twelve apostles were all close friends of Jesus, and all eyewitnesses to His resurrection!)*

*Whether this action was correct or not, whether or not Peter was impetuous as he had been in the past, in trying to arrange God's business for Him, whether or not they should have “tarried” even on this matter instead of rushing in and making a decision, and whether or not Paul (not Matthias) was actually that twelfth apostle God had chosen to replace Judas, you can make up your own mind. But one thing is clear, that it was understood by all the apostles, that part of the uniqueness of their calling and ministry, was that they had seen the risen Lord Jesus face to face. There are men today who say they are apostles, but they lie, because they have not seen the risen Lord Jesus face to face – all true, God-ordained apostles, did see Him face to face!*

**THIRDLY, THE APOSTLE PETER PREACHED THE SAME RESURRECTION AS PAUL DID:** *we might well note indirectly from the text, that the apostle Peter, whom Paul mentioned as a witness to Christ's resurrection, preached by the same example, as he led the apostolic charge on the day of Pentecost, i.e. he preached the risen and reigning Christ: Acts 2:29-36, “2:29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 2:32 **This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.** 2:33 **Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted,** and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, **The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,** 2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. (quoting *Psalm 110:1*. Peter also quoted from *Psalm 16*, as we have already observed.) 2:36 **Therefore let all the house of Israel***

**know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

***THEREFORE, PAUL'S ARGUMENT HERE PINS HIS WHOLE FAITH, AND CALLING, AND MINISTRY, ON THE ESTABLISHED FACT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.***

***15:13-19***, “15:13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15:15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 15:16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

***So we may well conclude that the fact of the resurrection of life is established beyond any doubt by Christ Himself, and all His apostles gave themselves wholly to preaching the risen Christ, and in all of this we have the most solid, historically proven, foundation conceivable, for this risen Christ, Who also said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25), is also testified to by all the prophets, by all the Scriptures!***

***So, here is the fact of the resurrection established by Christ. May God bless His people again and again, with the unspeakable joy of knowing with all our hearts, the unshakable foundation on which we stand: Christ crucified, dead (having remitted our sins), buried, and raised again the third day, and ascended into heaven, whence He reigns over all things until the last of his enemies (death itself) is put beneath His feet! Amen.***

Continued, The Lord's Day 12<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

In our study of **1 Corinthians 15** thus far, which I have called “**The Resurrection of Life**”, we have already noted, **The Fact of The Resurrection Established by Christ Himself**, by the testimony of the Scriptures and of His chosen apostles.

## 2. **THE ESSENCE OF THE RESURRECTION IS IN CHRIST**

**We have seen that Christ's own real and historical resurrection, is the proof and foundation of the doctrine of the resurrection, but we also see that He is the essence and substance of it. 15:17-22, “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”**

**NOTICE THE TERM “IN CHRIST.” IT SPEAKS OF BEING SPIRITUALLY AND ETERNALLY JOINED TO CHRIST. When Jesus prayed to His Father, as High Priest of His Church, interceding, He said, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are**” (John 17:11). So, as God and His Only-begotten Son are inseparable, in eternal union, so are Christ and His Church. Put simply, the apostle's doctrine is this: **Union with Adam is death, but union with Christ is life eternal!****

One of Charles Wesley's hymns “And Can it Be?,” expresses this doctrine well: “No condemnation now I dread; **Jesus and all in Him is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed with righteousness divine.**” Our life, and all our righteousness, even our righteous standing eternally before God, is in Christ, not in ourselves! In Adam, our bodies are dead even while we live, but in Christ, even while our bodies are decaying, we are alive eternally in Him! This is absolutely marvellous!

We have just noted that Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and so, the resurrection (when a dead body comes back to life) is all about life itself. Only God can give life. Only God has life to give. All other beings are created by Him. This is why Jesus could say that He is the resurrection and the life, as He also said (John 14:6), “I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” **Jesus Christ, as the God-man, as**

**“God ... manifest in the flesh,” has life in Him that no other being does, because He is God Almighty, and therefore the essence and source of all life!** The apostle John opens his marvellous gospel with this very concept: **John 1:1-9**, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. **1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.** 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” It was Charles Wesley again, who made this truth so well-known in “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” – “Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace; Hail the Son of Righteousness; **Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.**”

**THEREFORE, AS PAUL TEACHES, HAVING LIFE IS ALL ABOUT BEING “IN CHRIST!”** If you are not in Christ, you have no life in you. Somebody will say, “But I am a Buddhist, and I also have life in me.” Sorry, you are mistaken. You are deceived. What you have (which we might call 'natural life' or 'mortal life') is not the life of God at all; mortal life is a mere fading reflection of true life. 'Mortal' means dead, or dying, or subject to death. The term 'mortal life' is almost a contradiction. In other words, you think you have life, but just hold that thought for a few years, maybe a few decades, and soon enough you will realize death is inevitable; death is what you really have, not life at all! While you are in this world, you are not really living, but dying by degrees! Only those who are “in Christ” have life which never dies, “everlasting life.” Jesus made this very plain to the Jews, and what He said to the Jews 2,000 years ago, applies equally to all religious people today who “think” they have life because of what they do, or because of their particular kind of religion: **John 5:39**, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” The Jews were close to the mark – at least they searched the Scriptures! Yet they missed the mark because they failed to see that life is found in Christ alone! But how many today, who look for eternal life actually bother about the Scriptures? The Jews missed the mark; they missed the great Eternal Subject of the Scriptures – the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! And they

*refused to come to Him, as He said. How many today refuse to come to Christ? They would rather any other god, any other religion, but they will never find life in anything other than Jesus! You must be “in Christ” if you want eternal life. And if you are not in Christ, your inevitable physical death will be your eternal ruin!*

*This important point, of the necessity of being in Christ, is further reinforced by another point Paul makes, in that those who are to be partakers of the “resurrection of life” when Christ returns, are those who are “in Him” before that day. So, Christ is the essence of resurrection life.*

### **3. THE ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION – CHRIST FIRST, THEN ALL WHO ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING**

*1 Corinthians 15:20-23, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive.** 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward **they that are Christ's at his coming.**”*

*When the apostle speaks here of being “made alive,” he is speaking of being **made bodily alive again at the physical resurrection**, but the context is about those who are “in Christ,” “**they that are Christ's at his coming.**”*

**THERE IS A DIRECT PARALLEL BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE ALL THE WAY THROUGH:**

***FIRSTLY**, Adam was made “in the image of God” (**Genesis 1:27**, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”). Adam had a sort of conditional immortality when he was first created (he could continue to live if he continued to obey God). In this, Adam was like God, but not entirely. He did not possess eternal life at that point, because he lost this life when he sinned: **Genesis 2:16-17**, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for **in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**” Although Adam's soul continued in immortality, his body died after 950 years. He was dead while he lived and his fellowship with God was severed – this is both physical and spiritual death.*

***SECONDLY**, believers are reborn spiritually, or regenerated, in Christ: **John 3:3**, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot***

**see the kingdom of God.”** *We receive from Adam an immortal soul which must return to God for judgment, and a mortal body which is in need of resurrection life, which is found in Christ alone.*

**THIRDLY**, when Christ died, and His dead body was placed in the tomb, His body 'slept' but His soul did not sleep: As He was on the cross about to die, one of the two thieves on crosses beside Him, turned to Him and acknowledged Him, calling Him “Lord,” and asked to be remembered by Him when He comes in His kingdom, Jesus answered, “Verily I say unto thee, **To day** shalt thou be with me **in paradise**” (**Luke 23:43**). Therefore, the Scriptures plainly teach that Christ, the eternal “Lord from heaven,” Who cannot die, went directly to heaven the same day his body expired on the cross, and the born-again thief, according to the Lord’s express promise, went to heaven with Him the same day!

**DANGEROUS CULTS, SUCH AS THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, TEACH A FALSE DOCTRINE CALLED “SOUL-SLEEP.”** This false doctrine is immediately overthrown by this Scripture, and all other Scriptures which agree, but it is dangerous for two reasons: **FIRSTLY**, because it takes away the immediate hope of all believers who die, by denying the promise of God that we shall “depart and be with Christ,” as Paul also said (**Philippians 1:23**), and **SECONDLY**, it gives false hope to those who die and are not in Christ, who die in their sins, by telling them they just 'sleep' until the resurrection and then are merely destroyed (annihilated) after the resurrection and judgment, whereas Scripture teaches that they are immediately upon the death of their bodies, cast into hell, where they suffer torment “in flames” (**Luke 16:24**), and at the resurrection are judged and thrown into the lake of fire where their punishment continues for ever (**Revelation 14:11**, “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name”). Likewise when Jesus spoke of the goats and the sheep at the judgment, He said (**Matthew 25**), 46 And these shall go away into **EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT**: but the righteous into **LIFE ETERNAL**.) There can be no excuse for those who deny the immortality of the soul and the everlasting punishment of the lake of fire – such people are not Bible-believers at all, they are bare-faced liars, because they stubbornly contradict what the Bible plainly says in many places!

**So we see that, since time began, having life and immortality, has always been a matter of being in Christ and having the life of Christ in you.**

**IF YOU ARE NOT “IN CHRIST” NOW, IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ABSOLUTE AND ETERNAL UNION WITH CHRIST NOW, YOU HAVE NO HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE, BUT ONLY HELL FIRST, THEN THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION (John 5:29).** Are you “Christ's”? Do you know that you are in Him now? You must be His, if you are to be saved at the last day! **There is not a more important matter than this for a human being to consider while he lives – the question, “Am I in Christ?”** It is pointless to ask yourself, “Have I done enough to be saved? Or, “Do I feel as if I am saved?” Or, “Am I worthy to be saved?” Or, “Has God somehow confirmed His love for me with miraculous signs?” Or, “Will I be saved if I failed to keep the correct Sabbath?” Or, “Will I be saved because I am baptized? Or if I am not baptized? Or baptized the right way or with the correct formula?” None of these things count! If you want to know the answer to the most important question you will ever face in your lifetime, ask yourself this one thing, “Am I in Christ?” (or to put it in other terms, “Did Christ die for me?” “Do I have an interest in the Saviour's blood?”)

**WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO BE “IN CHRIST”? PAUL MAKES IT VERY PLAIN: “IN ADAM ALL DIE!”** If you are a human being, (a son or daughter of Adam), according to the Scriptures you are already “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1); you are already dead “in Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:22)! **When John the Baptist testified that there is life in Christ alone, he also testified that living man is already dead and under condemnation: John 3:36,** “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” - *if the wrath of God “abideth”, it continues, which means the sinner is already under the wrath of God, whether or not he ever considers the question of coming to Christ, and if he does consider Christ, and fails to believe, then the wrath of God merely continues for ever upon him!* A little earlier in this same chapter, is recorded the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, the Pharisee, who came to Him by night and asked questions about the kingdom of God. Jesus taught him his same doctrine: **John 3:18,** “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already,** because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” **The unbeliever is condemned already,** because he is already “dead in trespasses and sins”, already under the wrath of God, already dead in Adam, and he has rejected the only remedy, i.e. to believe on Christ!



**Death is a major problem, if you want to have life! You can't escape death by *thinking* you may not die - “in Adam all die!” But it is only “all” who are “in Christ” who shall be made alive, only “they that are Christ's at his coming”!** Nobody escapes physical death, not even children who have never lived long enough to sin – even babies who are still-born, die in Adam, because “in Adam all die!” (Paul uses that argument in **Romans 5:14**, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” He is saying death is universal and inescapable for all who are *in Adam*, i.e. all human beings, including those who have not personally sinned! He is speaking of physical death here – even babies die.) But in Christ all the infants who have perished shall be made alive – **Physical death claims all that are in Adam, but Christ, Who is life itself, claims eternally all who are in Him, and He claims the “little children” for Himself, for although they are counted guilty of Adam's sin, they are not guilty for any sin of their own.** Thank God, Christ has atoned for Adam's sin, and the sins of all His elect! The elect are those whose names were “written in the book of life from the foundation of the world” (**Revelation 17:8**), “in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (**Revelation 13:8**), all those who were “chosen ... in him before the foundation of the world” (**Ephesians 1:4**). All these God, in due time, effectually calls to Himself, whether it is infants at their departure from this life, or those of age who answer God's call before they depart this life, and He presents them all to Christ, as the fruit of His atoning work – as Jesus said Himself, in **John's gospel**, “6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but **should raise it up again at the last day.** 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that **every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**” And so all the elect are in Christ, and all are raised up and glorified at the last day, in the general resurrection of all flesh.

**But some say, “My religion is as good as yours. You shouldn't discriminate.” Well the Bible discriminates! Paul discriminates! Jesus discriminates! All the Scriptures say with one accord, “You must be in Christ, and in Christ alone, if you are to have eternal life.”**

***But then some deny the gospel truth, that you are already dead in Adam (many professing 'Christians' deny this!). Well how can a dead man expect to have life by denying he is dead in the first place? (we are talking about both physical death and spiritual death – spiritual death is being separated from God Who is life). Physical death follows spiritual death, but physical death is not the greatest problem. Many people don't want to have real life, eternal life, because they enjoy this death too much. But they are blind and can't see that this mortal life on earth is very short, and that it really is just death in disguise (If you have signs of aging, aches and pains, loss of strength or memory, by all means seek God's help, but don't worry too much, look up, your redemption draweth nigh, you are nearer the time to depart and be with Christ!). But some forget this life has a very terrible ending, which is not really an ending but ongoing punishment for rejecting the counsel of God. When that day comes, all men will know they really are dead in trespasses and sins. And yet, even believers who are already alive in Christ (spiritually) are dead (physically) in Adam. For those who have difficulty accepting this doctrine, wouldn't you think that the very fact of physical death would be enough to convince them? But of course, spiritual death involves blindness, they cannot see what is obvious to 'Blind Freddy'!***

***THERE IS NO OTHER EXPLANATION FOR THE REALITY OF PHYSICAL DEATH, BUT ADAM'S SIN AND THE CURSE OF GOD – IT IS A MATTER OF HEADSHIP WHICH IS A DOCTRINE LARGELY FORGOTTEN AND REJECTED BY MANY! Even unbelieving scientists say that there is no reason why the human body should die – it is so expertly made, it is equipped to live for ever, it has all the mechanisms in place to repair itself! But what the unbelieving scientists don't get, is that God is the only source of life, and so, He can give, and He can take away, and He has taken away; He has cursed the whole family of Adam with death, because He imputed Adam's sin to all his posterity. Job knew thousands of years ago, what these clever scientists still don't know today: when Job's children died, he said, (Job 1:21) “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” You see, until we grasp this doctrine of sin and death and resurrection, as Job did, we will be constantly living in rebellion against our Maker, constantly striving against His sovereign and wise purposes, constantly second-guessing God, constantly challenging His all-wise decrees and providences. So, let us hear this glorious doctrine of the resurrection of life, and rejoice in it, and rejoice in Him Who has enabled us to see and believe!***

**MANY THINK THE SIMPLE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.** Somebody might say, “Well that's an amazing mind-bending theory you believe in, that all died in Adam! But surely it is nothing more than self-deception. It makes no sense at all.” And so they justify themselves for rejecting God's counsel. But here is the sense, here is the reason for God's wisdom: God did not make a mistake, as so many Evangelicals really think. He didn't say, “Whoops, Adam has now made himself a sinner! What will I do now?” This is so ridiculous, and theologians argue about it, and invent theories about it, but the Word of God explains it very plainly. The glorious creation of God is not just a can of worms which has been opened, a cat that has been let out of the bag, a horse that has bolted! No! He Who framed the worlds with His Word (**Hebrews 11:3**), and Who “declareth the end from the beginning” (**Isaiah 46:10**), was not taken by surprise with one sinful and rebellious act of Adam! God planned all this for His own glory, and for the blessing of all His own children. God knew He had made man mortal and frail and prone to error, and He knew man would inevitably sin, so He planned that that sin of Adam, (and the rebellion of all men), might be triumphed over with the redemption of His own children in Christ, and so **He designed that the fall should be through one man, so that the redemption could also come through one man.** Yes, “In Adam all die,” but “in Christ shall all be made alive.” And, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (**15:45**), He is “the Lord from heaven!” (**15:47**). (“quicken” means life-giving!) So that in the end of it all, the triumph will be shouted, “Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory?” Can you see the pure, crystal-clear simplicity of God's wisdom, how it completely destroys the wisdom of the wise, the sophisticated, convoluted wisdom of this world? Charles Wesley wrote “Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed with righteousness divine!” **He understood that both death and life are a matter of headship – they are imputed!** We die because we are in Adam, but we live only if, and because, we are in Christ (Adam is the head of the whole, dead human race, but Christ is the Head of all who believe and live! Adam's sin, imputed to his children, condemned us; but Christ's righteousness, imputed to His children, acquitted us! Adam's mortality gave us death; Christ's immortality gives life eternal to every believer!). **Many Christians today don't understand headship, and even can't accept it, because to them it is unfair.** They judge God as unjust because He condemned all for Adam's sin. They think, What a pity God had to allow a beautiful world to be destroyed? They are short-sighted. They cannot see

God's grand plan of redemption! **Headship is an ongoing reality of God's order in marriage and the family:** Many Christians are modernising their wedding ceremonies; they have done away with the old fashioned vows, where the man is recognised as the head, and he takes on that responsibility, and the woman vows to obey him. They so often write their own vows – well they can write their own vows if they must, but God does not accept them. He sees them as an act of rebellion against Him. They can even attempt to rewrite history, but they cannot erase it, they cannot change it, and they should realize this, because they still die in Adam! **They may ignore human history, or deny it, or rewrite it, but they cannot escape the headship of Adam, nor the death imputed to them by God because of Adam's headship.** Thank God that as a true believer, you can say with Paul, **“In Adam all die,” but “in Christ shall all be made alive.”** Your condemnation at first was not because of your own sin, it was reckoned to you in Adam, long before you had opportunity to sin! As a believer today, your acquittal and pardon and gift of eternal life had nothing to do with your own actions or decisions, it was imputed to you in Christ, by grace alone!

But here's the twist – the sinner who does not come to Christ for pardon, is condemned for his own sins. God, the just Judge is mightily vindicated, as He condemns guilty sinners who refused to repent.

**THIS SCRIPTURE ALSO TEACHES US THAT THERE ARE NOT MANY PHYSICAL RESURRECTIONS TO COME, (AS SOME FALSELY TEACH), BUT ONLY ONE,** as we observed at the beginning of our study. In the light of the many popular end times theories, this is a most important lesson for today's Church. There is no end of popular books on prophecy which claim there are many resurrections, but **the Scriptures teach us there is only one, at the end of this world, when Christ returns:** “15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 15:23 But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits;** afterward **they that are Christ's at his coming.**” **In Israel, under the Law of Moses, they were commanded to keep a feast called “Firstfruits.”** In it, they waved a single sheaf in the air (Leviticus 23:10-11), which was called **“the firstfruits” of the harvest – this waving of the sheaf in the air is Christ in a figure of the resurrection; NB it was waved on the “morrow after the sabbath”, i.e. the first day of the week, which is when Christ rose – He is the Firstfruits.** Israel did not have many and varied occasions, when they brought a few sheaves here, and then a few sheaves there, into the barn, any more than a farmer does today, but **after the “firstfruits,” it was the full**

**harvest - “they that are Christ's at His coming!”** *The firstfruits were a token, and a promise of the full harvest, and so is Christ's resurrection a token and pledge for all who believe on Him. There are no further resurrections, neither before nor after “the end,” nothing between Christ's resurrection and the general resurrection of all flesh when Christ returns! Anybody who teaches otherwise is teaching false doctrine, and anybody who predicts other events is a false prophet. The Scriptures make it so plain that nobody who really wants to know the truth can get this wrong.*

**But some say, “Yes, but then after Christ's return, there are other aspects to God's programme.”** *But only in the minds of certain false teachers, not in the Scriptures – the Scriptures teach only one event: the resurrection, then the end! “15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.” When you watch a movie, and the words, “The End,” come up on the screen, the show is over; there is nothing more! Sometimes you are disappointed at the end of the movie – you wanted to know more of the story, and likewise, when Christ comes, many who have been given the false hope of another chance to repent, will be bitterly disappointed, because, “Then cometh the end!” When Christ returns, the Scripture says, “**then cometh the end!**” **And at that time, if you are not in Christ, you perish,** you are cast into the lake of fire to be punished for ever for your own sins and rebellion against God! There are books written, and movies made, about the people “left behind” when Christ comes – they are all human fabrications and lies, “doctrines of devils” from the ‘father of lies’ himself! When Christ comes, there will be nobody left behind, all will be judged, there will be no second chance. There will be no cave to hide in, no cans of baked beans to live on - “Then cometh the end!” The goats shall be separated from the sheep, and the goats will depart into everlasting fire, therefore we have:*

#### **4. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE RESURRECTION – CHRIST COMES IN JUDGMENT**

*All evil and all enemies of Christ shall be judged, and all the saints and all the labours of the saints shall be rewarded:*

**15:24-34, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is**

**death. (We have noted in a previous session, that Paul doesn't really speak of judgment in this chapter, except by this brief mention of the destruction of all Christ's enemies – unbelievers are Christ's enemies! Do you sometimes think there is no justice in this world? Well just wait and see – all Christ's enemies are being destroyed, one by one, as we speak – for, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27) – In this world, many criminals seem to escape justice), but they cannot escape the ultimate justice, after the resurrection, when they must all face their Maker. Daily men lie, and cheat, and steal, and murder, and abuse and oppress their fellow-man, but judgment day is coming for these enemies of Christ!) 15:27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? (It is not for 'the dead' we are baptized; Christ is not dead; we are baptized unto Him Who is risen and reigning for ever!) 15:30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 15:32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”**

##### **5. THE MANNER OF THE RESURRECTION – WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM**

*Not only are the saints rewarded, and their labours for Christ proven to be “not in vain,” but we shall be like Him; we shall have “spiritual bodies” which never thirst or hunger, or suffer pain and disease!*

*How are the dead raised up? (As if such a concept is impossible, as if the decayed remains can't possibly be recovered)? They are changed! They are glorified! They are infinitely better than the mortal body which decayed! Just as a dying grain of wheat is infinitely surpassed by the green and living plant it produces, so does the spiritual body of the resurrection surpass the decayed, mortal remains. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God!”*

***In conclusion***, let us recall that we have seen, *The Fact of the Resurrection Established by Christ and His apostles; The Essence of the Resurrection is in Christ Himself; The Order of the Resurrection – Christ First, then all who are Christ's at His coming; The Consequence of the Resurrection – Christ Comes in Judgment, and this is at the very end of the world; all are judged, both the righteous and unrighteous are rewarded, and you must be “in Christ” before that day, if you are to escape His awful judgment; and lastly, The Manner of the Resurrection – we who believe shall be Like Him.*

*Next week, God willing, we will begin to see how **The Revelation** given to John, expands on this glorious victory we have in Christ, and vibrant hope in the resurrection. There is nothing mysterious about Paul's doctrine, he makes all things abundantly clear. Let us rejoice with Paul in the words of his conclusion: “15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” At the resurrection, when Christ returns, death shall be no more and we shall be immortal! Glory to God alone!*

***WHAT IS OUR HOPE? IN WHOM DO WE TRUST?*** *Paul began this epistle to the Corinthians by stating his calling as “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” He then boldly set forth the triumph of preaching Christ crucified, although both Jews and Greeks despised the message; he boldly challenged the Church to follow Christ and not men; he boldly renounced all idols and false gods as devils; he now finishes with the triumphant shout, to the glory of God alone, in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and He declares that Christ, “the second man” (the second Adam), is “**the Lord** from heaven!” (15:47) (**by the way the Pope's bibles omit the words “the Lord”!**). The first Adam gave us death, but the second Adam is life itself! He is not dead; “He is not here, but is risen!” (Luke 24:6) We who are baptized into Christ are not baptized for the dead – He is risen! He liveth for ever! And He reigneth eternal!*

***THERE ARE TWO RESURRECTIONS – THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST WHO IS THE “FIRSTFRUITS”, AND THE RESURRECTION OF ALL MANKIND AT THE DAY OF CHRIST’S RETURN, when He comes to judge the quick and the dead. If you are a believer today, your new birth in Christ is the consummation of His resurrection – at your new birth you were made a partaker in Christ’s historic resurrection – this is called in Revelation 20:6, “the first resurrection”, on which, “the second death hath no power”! So, if your hope is in Him only, Who is “the Lord from heaven”, Who died and rose again, and ascended up where He was before, then you are already partaker of the first resurrection (the new birth) and are ready for that great day of the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of all flesh! Amen.***