

1 Corinthians: The Body of Christ vs. A Body in Crisis  
New Pilgrim Baptist Church Bible Study  
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9/11/24

**Unity over the Resurrection (1 Cor 15)**  
**“Getting the Resurrection Right” (1 Cor 15:1-20)**

Biblical Contextualization

After Paul has addressed all of the issues related to Christian leadership, ethics, worship, and the gifts of the Spirit, Paul turns to the question of the resurrection from the dead. Apparently, the some of the members of the church were questioning the legitimacy of a future resurrection from the dead for the church, belief that bodies would rise again. To some, especially within a Greco-Roman context, would scoff at such a belief. Resurrection seemed utterly ridiculous and unnecessary for them. But for the church and most Jewish people, the coming resurrection was absolutely essential. Paul takes the moment to re-explain the origin of resurrection belief and implications for believing it in the church.

**1. Believing in the resurrection is fundamental to true belief in the gospel (vv. 1-12)**

Paul begins his argument by reminding them that the initial message that he preached to start the church, the preaching of the gospel, was centered in the bodily resurrection of Jesus as Messiah. Their salvation in the gospel hinged on this belief. And this belief was not founded in fake tradition but a living tradition passed on through the Scripture and living witnesses who all saw Jesus alive after death. The Scripture predicted that the Messiah would (1) die for our sins and (2) be buried and raised on the third day. Then, Jesus was seen by the Peter and the twelve, over 500 believers, James his brother, the apostles and Paul himself. The death of Jesus is historically agreed to by scholars around the world. The resurrection of Jesus, though questioned by many of those same historians, offers the best explanation for why Christianity still exists today.

**2. If Jesus is dead, then faith is pointless and we are wasting time. But Christ has been raised and we are saved! (vv. 13-20)**

If there is no future resurrection, then the Messiah has not been raised from the dead. And if Jesus is dead, preaching is empty and pointless, faith is pointless, and the church is miserable because we believed in something that was false. Paul explains, the preacher of Jesus is a false witness because he has spread a lie that Jesus is alive when he isn't. And if Jesus is dead, we are still in our sins because God's atonement has not happened. And if people are still in their sins, and there is no atonement, those who died as believers are lost. If in this life we are only able to hope in Christ, then we are in bad shape. Real life is meant to lived for humanity in a body that has been made free of corruption. The promise of the resurrection guarantees this. Christ is the first fruit of humanity. His resurrection head the rest and provides the unshakeable promise of our future glorification.