

# The Resurrection of the Body – Part 1 (1 Corinthians 15:1-19)

Expository Lessons from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

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## I. Introduction and Review

- a. We have come to **1 Corinthians 15**, the famous chapter in the New Testament that is focused on the resurrection of the dead.
- b. Most of the text is devoted to answering a rhetorical question Paul raised in **1 Corinthians 15:12**:
  - i. “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?” (**1 Corinthians 15:12**, NKJV)
- c. There were some members of the Corinthian church who believed in Jesus (that he was the Christ) but did not believe in the general resurrection of the dead.
  - i. In other words, they did not believe that on the Last Day, all the dead would be raised and restored to their physical bodies (somehow transformed) prior to final judgment.
- d. For many years, even as a Bible teacher in a large Christian church, I was confused about this myself and did not grasp the meaning of what Paul was clearly saying in this chapter.
  - i. Going to funerals, I would typically hear reassuring statements about how the soul of the recently deceased person was *now in heaven with the Lord* (while the remains of their physical body were obviously in a casket or in a small cremation box or urn, prior to burial in the ground).
    1. Many church sermons would be along the same lines:
      - a. Judgment was essentially immediate and individual upon death.
      - b. The body was finished and done for. It had served its purpose.
      - c. The person's soul (only) would live on and could be saved for eternity.

2. Biblical passages alluded to might include:
    - a. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" (a sentiment expressed in **Ecclesiastes 3:20** and **12:7**)
    - b. "Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; nor does corruption inherit incorruption." (**1 Corinthians 15:50**, NKJV)
    - c. Regarding what Jesus said to the thief on the cross as they were both being crucified: "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (**Luke 23:43**, NKJV)
  3. While this was generally my own understanding, I also believed that there would be a Day of Judgment when Jesus returned, as stated in **Matthew 25** (Sheep and Goats illustration) and elsewhere.
    - a. I now recognize that this belief clearly did not fit with the idea of immediate personal judgment and going straight to heaven upon death.
    - b. Without being aware of it, for many years I managed to hold onto two ideas that were contradictory!
- ii. I started reading the early Christian writings over 20 years ago.
1. The early Christian writings challenged my understanding of many things, including my understanding of the resurrection from the dead.
  2. The first primary source I read was *We Don't Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, published by Scroll Publishing, which features modern translations of two early Christian apologies:
    - a. *Octavius*, by Mark Minucius Felix, (a debate between pagan Caecilius and Octavius, a Christian, while walking along the sea near Rome) written c. 150-210 AD; and
    - b. Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, addressed to the emperor and leaders in Rome, written c. 160 AD.
  3. One of the great surprises I found in reading these two early Christian works was that they not only believed in the resurrection of the body, but considered it to be *a foundational Christian doctrine*. As I read these two apologies, I came to the

realization that what I believed and had been teaching did not line up with the early Christians on a fundamental teaching!

4. From *Octavius*, by Mark Minucius Felix:
  - a. “As you can see, the philosophers said many of the same things we are saying. But that isn’t to say that we are copying them. Instead, they imitated the shadow of truth by taking from the divine announcements of the prophets. For example, two of the greatest thinkers, Plato and Pythagoras, taught a corrupted version of our doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. *According to them, however, the physical body is forever dissolved, and the soul alone lives forever.* They further corrupted the truth by saying that the souls of humans pass into new bodies, including those of cattle, birds, and beasts. Such an opinion is so absurd that it’s worthy only of a clown, not a philosopher. Nevertheless, in the context of our argument, it’s sufficient to note that even in the teaching of the resurrection, your wise men agree with us to a degree.”
    - i. *[My Own Reaction to the Above: ‘Oh, no! What he refers to as a corrupted version of the Christian doctrine, what the Greek philosophers were teaching, is what I had been taught, and what I believed!']*
  - b. “But who is so foolish to deny that man, who could originally be formed by God, can also be re-formed by God? Who can deny that man was nothing before he began to exist and that he is nothing after death? And that since it was possible for him to be formed from nothing, it’s also possible for him to be restored from nothing? Obviously, it is more difficult to create something that has never been than to merely repeat something that has already existed.
  - c. “Do you think that simply because something is withdrawn from our feeble eyes, it perishes to God? Every body – whether it has returned to dust, dissolved in the sea, or changed into smoke and ashes – is withdrawn from us, but it is reserved for God. It has simply been placed, so to speak, in the custody of the natural elements. So we do not fear any loss from

cremation, as you have charged. We simply adopt the ancient and better custom of burying in the earth.

- d. “Notice how all of nature foreshadows a future resurrection. The sun sinks down, but then rises again. The stars pass away each morning, but then return. Flowers die, but they bloom again the next season. Trees lose their leaves in the autumn, but they return in the spring. Seeds do not flourish until they have decayed or been buried. (**John 12:24**) So a body in the grave is merely like the trees in winter, which appear to be dead. What hurry is there for the leaves to revive and return while it is still the dead of winter? Just as the trees must wait until spring, we must wait for the springtime of the body before its resurrection.”

- i. (Source: Quote above taken from *We Don't Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, a modern translation published by Scroll Publishing, 'Octavius', chapter 8, pp. 58-59. Original can be found in Mark Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, chapter 34, in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 4, p. 194)

- 5. From Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, written c. 160 AD, addressed to the emperor and leaders in Rome:

- a. “Listen to your own oracles. Listen to your philosophers – men like Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates. Take note of the poet Homer, who wrote that Ulysses inquired of the souls of the dead.
- b. “Since you respect the views of such people, show the same respect for our beliefs. We certainly hold a firmer belief in God than they did. For we expect to obtain our own bodies back again, even though we may die and be buried (**John 5:28-29**). Though this may sound impossible to you, we are convinced that nothing is impossible with God (**Luke 1:37**).”

- i. (Source: Quote above taken from *We Don't Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, a modern translation published by Scroll Publishing, 'The First Apology of Justin Martyr', chapter 4, p. 87. Original can be found in Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapter 18, in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 169)

- c. “Actually, our teachings should not seem that strange to you. The philosophers you so admire taught many of the same things we do. For example, Plato taught that Minos would punish the wicked. That’s essentially the same thing we teach, except we say it’s Christ who will judge. And we say the wicked will be punished in the *same* bodies they have now, after their bodies and spirits are re-united. Also, we say that their punishment will be everlasting, not merely for a thousand years, as Plato taught.”
- i. (Source: Quote above taken from *We Don’t Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, a modern translation published by Scroll Publishing, ‘The First Apology of Justin Martyr’, chapter 10, p. 108. Original can be found in Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapter 8, in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 165)
- d. “I have shown that everything has happened exactly the way the prophets predicted it would. Shouldn’t this convince us that their prophecies about things that are still in the future will happen just as they predicted? Take note that the prophets predicted two different comings of Christ. First he would come as a dishonored and suffering man. This has already occurred. Then he would come from heaven with glory, accompanied by his host of angels. At that time he will raise the bodies of everyone. (**Matthew 25:31-32**) He will clothe the bodies of the worthy with immortality. He will send the bodies of the wicked, endowed with eternal sensibility, into everlasting fire with the wicked demons.
- e. “The prophet Ezekiel said concerning the resurrection of the dead: ‘Joint shall be joined to joint, bone to bone, and flesh will grow again.’ (**Ezekiel 37:7-8**) Every knee will bow to the Lord and every tongue will confess him. (**Philippians 2:10-11**)
- f. “Hear what the prophet said about the punishment and sensation of the wicked: ‘Their worm will not rest and their fire shall not be quenched’ (**Isaiah 66:24**). Although the wicked may repent once that happens, it will be to no avail.”

- i. (Source: Quote above taken from *We Don't Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, a modern translation published by Scroll Publishing, 'The First Apology of Justin Martyr', chapter 12, pp. 124-125. The original can be found in Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, chapter 52, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 1, p. 180)
- 6. After reading these two early Christian writers weighing in on this topic, I was staggered that I might have completely misunderstood something that was such a foundational part of the original Christian faith.
  - a. This sent me back to the Scriptures. After reading the early Christians, it opened up my eyes to see what Jesus taught, and especially to the significance of what Paul was saying in **1 Corinthians 15**.
  - b. While I had believed in the immortality of the soul, this was not the same as also believing in the resurrection of the body! This was the Gnostic-type heresy that Paul was going after in **1 Corinthians 15**. To some degree I (along with much of the modern Christian world) had been lulled back into this ancient heresy.
- 7. This is not a minor theological 'fine point'.
  - a. Belief in the resurrection of the dead is one of the six "elementary principles" of the faith, from **Hebrews 6**.
    - i. "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, *of resurrection of the dead*, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits." (**Hebrews 6:1-3**, NKJV)
    - ii. Considering the "elementary principles of Christ" in this passage, it struck me that I was wrong in my understanding of two of the six foundational beliefs:
      - 1. the fifth (resurrection of the dead, referring to bodily resurrection); and

2. the sixth (eternal judgment, that all would be raised body and spirit re-united, and all people judged at the same time, on the Last Day).
- b. Belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead is included in the *Apostles Creed*, an ancient statement of faith that I assume was used before someone was baptized (due to the Father/Son/Spirit structure).
- i. The *Apostles Creed* is:
    1. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth;
    2. "and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell [= *Hades, or the lowermost parts*]; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
    3. "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic [= *universal*] Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen."
  - ii. It struck me that the one thing in the ancient Apostles Creed that I had not believed (because I did not understand it) was the statement near the end, "I believe in...*the resurrection of the body*"!
  - iii. In the ancient church, someone had to believe in the resurrection of the body and confess it as part of their faith before they could be baptized. If someone did not believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, it was an indication that the person might be subject to a heretical belief system, such as some form of Gnosticism.

- c. From the beginning, Christians defended their belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead in the face of ridicule from the worldly philosophers (for example, as Paul faced in Athens, in **Acts 17**).
  - e. Jesus Himself confirmed this foundational teaching.
    - i. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (**John 5:28–29**, NKJV)
      - 1. What is in the grave, but the body of the deceased person? When Jesus says “all who are in the graves... will come forth”, he is speaking about the bodily resurrection of the dead upon His return.
    - ii. Recall that at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus cried out, “Lazarus, come forth!”, after which the man who had been dead for four days rose from the dead, body and spirit re-united, and came out of his tomb. (**John 11:43–44**, NKJV)
      - 1. At the Second Coming of Christ it will be like this, except that EVERYONE in their tombs will hear his voice. Instead of crying out “Lazarus, come forth”, He will call for *all the dead* to come forth from their graves!
  - f. **The Challenge Before Us:** To properly understand this foundational Christian teaching. To fully grasp God’s plan to save us completely (body and soul) in the end. Furthermore, to be equipped to explain this to others (including addressing some of the common objections).
  - g. **Question I Asked Myself:** Is there *anything else* in Scripture I might have missed?
    - i. For me, in reading the early Christians, this was the first thing I stumbled on that caused me to go back to the Scriptures and take another look. I discovered that the early Christians had it right in the beginning. I recognized that the group I was with had been influenced by others and had failed to restore this foundational teaching of the original faith.
    - ii. This was the first area (of many) where I felt compelled to reexamine what I had been taught and go back to the Scriptures.
    - iii. This was the first step, for me, leading to a transformation of my faith.



- iv. **Caution:** Let us proceed carefully, with our eyes and the Scriptures wide open!

## II. The Foundation Laid by Paul

- a. Read **1 Corinthians 15:1-11**.
- b. **Question:** What is “the gospel” (= “*the good news*”)? How do we understand it, and how do we describe it to others?
  - i. Commonly today, the “gospel” is presented following a format similar to the so-called ‘The Romans Road’ or ‘The Four Spiritual Laws’.
    1. Starts with me and my problem (sin / misery / alienation from God and others).
    2. Explains that faith in Jesus is the only way to fix the terrible situation I have gotten myself into.
  - ii. Often combined with modern marketing approach to meeting ‘felt needs’ such as:
    1. Desire for those who feel isolated or alienated to find a supportive community and faithful friends.
    2. Desire to fix relationship problems that many are facing, such as in their marriage or with their unruly children.
    3. Fix personal problems that might be related to various sins (for example, due to drugs, alcohol, financial irresponsibility, immorality, gluttony or other sins of the flesh).
    4. Desire for uplifting, emotionally gratifying ‘worship experience’, or social programs tailored to meet the desires of each social demographic group.
    5. The promise of a ‘better life’ here in this world, plus eternal life afterward (almost like a ‘bonus’).
  - iii. Popular modern market-driven, ‘seeker-friendly’ presentations of the gospel can make the Christian life sound like following a recipe in a cookbook. The assumption is that if you do everything ‘right’, then your life in this world will turn out great.
    1. The problem: that isn’t true. It is false and deceptive advertising on the part of preachers!
    2. Satan exists. He is real and present, and is always trying to destroy our lives. Consider the outcome of the lives of Paul,

Peter and the other apostles. Consider the life and death of Jesus, and how the prophets were treated in general throughout the Old Testament.

3. The truth is, after we become Christians, our life in this world *may well become even worse* (at least from the perspective of things valued by the world around us).
- c. **Different Question:** What was the gospel *that Paul delivered* to the people he preached to, including to those in Corinth?
- i. Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures* (in other words, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies).
    1. Here are just some of the examples of prophecies about Christ dying for our sins “according to the Scriptures”:
      - a. The **Genesis 22** story of the sacrifice of Isaac that foreshadowed God’s sacrifice His own beloved son,
      - b. The **Isaiah 53** prophecy about the Suffering Servant,
      - c. The **Exodus 12** story about the Passover Lamb, which foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus,
      - d. The **Numbers 21** story about the bronze serpent lifted up in Wilderness, as discussed by Jesus in **John 3:14-15**; as well as
      - e. **Psalm 2, Psalm 21/22, Psalm 68/69.**
    - ii. He was *buried*.
      1. Establishing that he was truly dead.
    - iii. He was *raised on the third day* according to the Scriptures (again, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies).
      1. There are many prophecies that point to the resurrection of Christ, including:
        - a. **Psalm 15/16**, and
        - b. **Deuteronomy 18:15-19, 1 Samuel 2, 2 Samuel 7, Ezekiel 34** which speak of God “raising up” a prophet/priest/king/shepherd.
      2. Prophecies that speak specifically about being raised “on the third day” include:

- a. **Hosea 6:1-3**, and
  - b. **Jonah 1-2**, an unusual true story that also provides an allegorical-style prophecy about Christ (as alluded to by Jesus in **Matthew 12:39-40**).
- iv. He was seen by multiple eyewitnesses after being resurrected.
- 1. The apostles were willing to go to their deaths and take the gospel message to the entire world, even after seeing what had happened to Jesus (being tortured and then brutally executed on a cross).
  - 2. A powerful explanation of the significance of this witness was given by Eusebius in his *Proof of the Gospel*, book 3.
- d. This was how the gospel was presented in the beginning: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Proof of these things was provided, compelling evidence of the fulfilled prophecies and eyewitness testimony.
- i. Either it happened or it did not!
    - 1. Proof provided by Paul to his unbelieving listeners: the evidence of many fulfilled prophecies and multiple reliable eyewitnesses.
  - ii. Throughout the book of **Acts** we see multiple examples of this approach to presenting the gospel to unbelievers. This was the predominant way that Peter, Paul, Stephen and Apollos presented the gospel.
    - 1. In most (but not all) of the examples we find in **Acts**, the gospel was being presented to Jews.
  - iii. In **Acts 17**, Paul preached to the Greeks (who were Gentiles) in Athens. Again, Paul used the fact of the resurrection of Jesus as proof of what he was preaching.
    - 1. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (**Acts 17:30-31**, NKJV)
  - iv. This also was the spiritual foundation Paul had laid in Corinth, which also was a *predominantly Gentile* community.

1. “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: *You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.*” (1 Corinthians 12:1–2, NKJV)
- v. Justin Martyr, who was a Samaritan and had studied Greek philosophy, explains this is how he came to faith in Christ (someone introduced him to Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus).
- vi. From the opening lines of the first chapter of Justin’s *First Apology*, we know that Justin was addressing the Roman leaders, including the emperor, the senate, and the philosophers in Rome. After defending the Christian faith against rumors and baseless attacks, Justin goes on to show that what the Christians believed was true and reasonable, and based on the evidence of fulfilled prophecies.
  1. “Someone might ask, ‘Isn’t it possible that Christ was simply a human who performed mighty works through the magical arts and thereby only *appeared* to be the Son of God?’ However, our belief in Christ as the Son of God is not based merely on the assertion of others; it is founded on compelling evidence. What originally convinced me and many others is the fact that the events surrounding the life of Jesus were foretold in advance. We have witnessed with our very eyes that things have happened just as they were predicted. When you read these prophecies, we think you will also acknowledge that these are the strongest and truest evidence.
  2. “Centuries ago, there were certain men among the Jews who were prophets of God. Through these men, the prophetic Spirit foretold things that would happen in the future. As these prophecies were spoken, the prophets arranged them in books in their own Hebrew language...
  3. [*Justin then explains how the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek in Egypt during the time of Ptolemy. The resulting Septuagint (LXX) could be read and understood by those Justin was addressing, to confirm what he was asserting.*]
  4. “...In the books of the prophets, we find prophecies about Jesus our Christ They foretold His coming. His being born of a virgin and growing as a man. His healing every type of disease and sickness and even raising the dead. His being unrecognized and hated. His crucifixion, death, and resurrection. His ascension into heaven. And His being the Son of God. It was also predicted that He would send persons into every nation to proclaim these things and that it would be primarily the

Gentiles who would believe in Him. His appearance was predicted by a succession of prophets through the centuries. The first was 5,000 years in advance. Others were 3,000 years in advance. Then 2,000 years. Then 1,000 years. And finally, 800 years in advance.”

- a. (Source: Quote above taken from *We Don't Just Speak Great Things, We Live Them*, a modern translation published by Scroll Publishing, *'The First Apology of Justin Martyr'*, chapter 11, pp. 114-115. Original can be found in Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapters 30-31, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 1, p. 172-173)
- e. Either Christ was bodily raised from the dead, or He was not.
  - i. From W. Stanley Jeavons, in his classic textbook *Elementary Lessons on Logic*:
    1. “...Give a careful attention to the very simple laws of thought on which all reasoning must ultimately depend. These laws describe the very simplest truths, in which all people must agree, and which at the same time apply to all notions which we can conceive. It is impossible to think correctly and avoid evident self-contradiction unless we observe what are called THE THREE PRIMARY LAWS OF THOUGHT...”
      - a. The Law of Identity
        - i. “Whatever is, is.”
      - b. The Law of Contradiction
        - i. “Nothing can both be and not be.” A quality cannot be both present and absent at the same time and place.
      - c. The Law of the Excluded Middle
        - i. “Everything must either be or not be.”
          1. A line is either straight or not straight.
          2. A rock is either hard or not hard.
          3. An action is either virtuous or not virtuous.

4. Water is either hot or not hot. (FYI, 'lukewarm' is within the category of "not hot".)
  5. Jesus *rose from the dead*\* or He did not rise from the dead.
    - a. \**Rose from the dead* defined as: bodily resurrected, old physical body transformed, having flesh and bones, empty tomb, ate food afterward; not a ghost.
- f. **Question:** *Why* should we use this more logical type, evidence-based approach, tied to the fact of the death burial and resurrection of Jesus, as opposed to the more subjective, emotionally-based appeals that are much more popular in most churches today?
- i. Some might think, "That kind of reason-based approach might work for you, Chuck, but after all, *you are an engineer!* Many (perhaps most?) people today are more driven by their emotions, feelings and personal subjective experiences.
  - ii. However, this is not just my own engineering-type 'logical mind' that prefers this approach to presenting the gospel. This is how it was presented in the beginning - not only to the Jews, but also to Gentile unbelievers.
    1. As Paul challenged Festus: "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason." (**Acts 26:25**, NKJV)
- g. Why we must build on this foundation today.
- i. This foundation is solid. It does not move. Since it is based on facts and evidence, it does not shift with circumstances (such as disappointments in this life, unfulfilled personal desires, personal emotional distress, changing feelings), nor does it crumble under pressure.
    1. Either Jesus rose from the dead on the third day (proving He was the Son of God), or He did not.
  - ii. **Question:** What do you think is likely to happen to those whose faith has been based on emotional appeals and promises of a better life or community in this world?

1. **Answer:** Satan can easily exploit this. He brings difficult challenges in our life to “sift us like wheat” (**Luke 22:31**), seeking to turn us away from the faith.
2. Consider some of the trials that Christians can be called to face in this life:
  - a. Our spouse leaves us.
  - b. Our family falls apart. Our children go in a completely different direction.
  - c. Our loving, supportive network crumbles when we see friends abandoning the faith, getting pulled into sins of the flesh, and getting seduced by what the world has to offer.
  - d. Church leaders we thought were so good are exposed as frauds pushing humanistic agendas. Or hypocrites. Or as leading double lives, enslaved by serious hidden sins.
3. If your foundation was built on anything other than the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, *for the sake of your salvation*, I implore you to take the time to *fix that foundation!* Build your spiritual life on the foundation that can never be shaken, so that you will be able to withstand any challenge that Satan throws at you.
  - a. Just as the foundation of a house or other building can be repaired and upgraded, a person’s *spiritual foundation* can be repaired and strengthened as well.

### III. The Resurrection of Jesus is Everything

- a. Read **1 Corinthians 15:12-19**.
- b. Some are preaching that there will be no resurrection of the dead.
  - i. However, if the dead are not raised, *then Christ was not raised, either!*
  - ii. And if Christ was not raised, the Christian faith falls apart.
- c. *If* Christ was not raised from the dead:
  - i. Paul’s preaching is empty/in vain.
  - ii. Your faith is empty/in vain.
  - iii. Paul and the apostles are false witnesses about God (= liars).

- iv. Your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!
  - v. Those who have ‘fallen asleep’ in Christ (figurative for death, including those who died as martyrs) have perished. They are lost and without hope.
- d. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” (**1 Corinthians 15:19**, NKJV)
- i. I recall once hearing a preacher say that *even if this is not true* (Christ raised from the dead, being the Son of God), he insisted that the Christian life was *still the best way to live*. Even if it was built on a lie.
    1. However, Paul did not see it that way at all!
    2. Paul had an *awful* life after becoming a Christian (from a worldly perspective). He was rejected by his own people, beaten, jailed repeatedly and ultimately beheaded for his faith in Rome (according to historical accounts).
    3. Consider how he described his life after becoming a Christian, in **2 Corinthians 11:22-29**.
  - e. Also, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then Jesus Himself was a liar and has zero authority, *even by His own words*. He stated before He was crucified that He would rise from the dead on the third day.
    - i. Read **John 2:13-22**.
      1. Jesus’ authority is in the sign of His resurrection on the third day. Destroy this temple (= His body) and it (His body, which had been destroyed) would be raised up on the third day.
    - ii. This was the definitive sign, as Jesus confirmed in **Matthew 12**.
      1. “But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’” (**Matthew 12:39-40**, NKJV)

#### IV. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus

- a. If we consider the accounts of the resurrection in all four gospels, it is clear that He was bodily resurrected from the dead. He was not simply a ghost or a spirit. He had a physical body after His resurrection. It was the same body He had before His death, but in some way transformed.



- i. The tomb was empty. There was no dead body in it. (**Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20**)
- ii. His Jewish opponents were unable to produce the body, and therefore made up a fake story that His disciples had stolen it (**Matthew 28:11-15**).
  - 1. The same false account was still being circulated among the Jews in the days of Justin Martyr, c. 160 AD, as recorded in Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, chapter 108; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 253.
- iii. “Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you.’ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.” (**Luke 24:36-43, NKJV**)
- iv. “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.” (**Matthew 28:9, NKJV**)
- v. The famous account of Jesus providing evidence of His physical resurrection to ‘doubting Thomas’ in **John 20:19-29**.
- vi. Luke’s opening comments in **Acts**.
  - 1. “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (**Acts 1:1-3, NKJV**)

## V. Jesus as the Firstborn from Among the Dead

- a. Jesus set the pattern that those who follow Him in life will also follow Him in His death and resurrection. If we remain faithful, what happened to Him will happen to us!

- i. As Paul said: “Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—that the Christ would suffer, that He would be *the first to rise from the dead*, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22–23, NKJV)
  - ii. Also from Paul: “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is *the beginning, the firstborn from the dead*, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18, NKJV)
  - iii. From John, in the opening of the **Book of Revelation**: “[grace and peace from the Father, and the seven Spirits]... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, *the firstborn from the dead*, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood....” (Revelation 1:5, NKJV)
- b. Jesus was “the firstborn from among the dead”. If we look to His example, we can grasp what will happen to all those who will follow after.

## VI. The Resurrection of the Dead Changes Many Things for Us

- a. God’s plan is to save not only our souls, but our bodies as well. Death will be completely defeated in the end.
  - i. The grave is not the final resting place for our bodies, any more than the tomb was the final resting place for the body of Jesus.
- b. Man, who was created body and spirit, will be completely saved (body and spirit) in the end.
  - i. Our bodies, which will be saved in the end, are also involved in our conversion (since the body will be saved as well, not merely our spirits or souls). Our bodies are “washed with pure water” in baptism, as we believe in our hearts, repent, and pledge a good conscience to God. (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:28, 1 Peter 3:19-21, Hebrews 10:22, Titus 3:5)
  - ii. Sins that involve our spirits and our flesh are more serious in nature than sins that only involve our spirits, as Paul explained in **1 Corinthians 5-6**.
    - 1. “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality *sins against his own body*. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;

therefore *glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*" (**1 Corinthians 6:18-20**, NKJV)