

What an unbelievable misery.

4. There will be NO GLORIOUS HOPE. v. 19.

Paul is instructed by the Spirit to use the perfect periphrastic for the verb "hope." This means that at the moment they are such as have until now hope in Christ in this life only. If there is no resurrection, if there is no reason to expect anything after this life, then there is no real hope left. "Miserable" means to "be pitied." It's as if one sees the blessings of eternal life escape him, when all inferior ones have been sacrificed to gain them. It's as if one has renounced earth for heaven, and instead of heaven finds himself in hell like other sinners. This would be a still sadder situation than that of worldly men who did not deny themselves of what they call pleasures whilst they lived on earth. If one had to add to all the sufferings of this life the final cruel deception of no afterlife, what intense pain results!

NOTE: The view of an afterlife is extremely important and sheds light on the current scene. It is employed as a matter of urging one to morality. Immortality is linked with morality. The moderns who deny God, the Bible, hell, and heaven live lives which intend for no accountability before a holy God. This is why the issues of the Word of God are so important for our society! It makes a difference.

Conclusion "But now is Christ risen from the dead" (v. 20). The truth of the matter is--there has been a resurrection and there will be others! In view of this, turn from your own devices and trust Christ as your Lord and Saviour! Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"If There Is No Resurrection"

1 Cor. 15:12-19

Introduction

1. The believable facts of the Gospel are clearly stated by Paul (vv. 1-4). The resurrection is one of the indispensable factors and there are indisputable witnesses of the event (vv. 5-11).

2. Using a first class condition (assuming facts to be true), Paul points to the essentials of the Gospel, including the resurrection, and states that this is what he is still preaching (present tense) and which the Corinthians did believe (aorist tense). Paul is amazed that there are some who actually contested a resurrection of any sort whatsoever (v. 12).

3. Up to now, most of what Paul found in error at Corinth was of a moral character, however, based upon wrong doctrine. Here he moves forthrightly with a doctrinal issue which claims moral overtones. What about the resurrection idea? How will things stand if there is none? Here are the answers:

1. There will be NO RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. vv.13,16.

Here is an intolerably important factor. It's as if Paul formulates the main point of his refutation of the Corinthian error at the very beginning. To postulate that there is just no resurrection of corpses from the dead is, in effect, to deny the literal bodily resurrection of Christ. It is this absurd situation--the acceptance of Christ's resurrection and the rejection of the concept of resurrection--which Paul found at Corinth. Incidentally, the verb, "risen" in both verses is the perfect tense suggesting that if there is no resurrection, then Christ in fact does not stand risen from the dead! Paul has turned his argument with the Corinthians here with tremendous force.

2. There will be NO WORTHWHILE PREACHING vv. 14, 15.
- a. No content. The word for "preaching" (v. 14) focuses on the testimony of the apostles. It comes from a root meaning to "herald." To perform the duty of a herald--if there is no resurrection--is considered "vain." This term means "empty." Apostolic preaching is therefore without content! But this is a reductio ad absurdum for the Corinthians themselves had believed the content of apostolic preaching (v. 11). A contentless preaching is to admit there is no resurrection. But then to do this is to offer fiction and not truth.
- b. No agent. The position of the apostles becomes totally unenviable. They are "false witnesses." In the original, this term means to be false witness of God (subjective genitive) and false witnesses with respect to God (objective genitive). The former makes untrue men and the latter and untrue message. In addition, the Greek preposition employed adds a fearful impiety to the situation and the whole thing turns out to be an act of violence against God Himself. To Paul, this is all a surprise as is marked by the verb "found." It's as if the apostles were suddenly all taken in the flagrant sin of falsehood.

NOTE: Paul is not denying that there were false teachers then (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:13) and most assuredly now, but the horror of being linked with them is too fearful a consideration for him.

3. There will be NO ESSENTIAL SALVATION. vv. 14, 17.
- a. No faith. Twice this is stated (vv. 14, 17). The reference here is to personal faith on the part of the Corinthians in relation to the facts of the Gospel. Paul wrote to Ephesus that faith and salvation are all a gift of God (Eph. 2:8, 9), but here personal faith is mentioned. The two lines of that which make

God the author of one's faith (John 6:44) and man responsible to exercise faith (John 3:16) are taught in the Bible. They are not contradictory, but complementary. Man is forever a responsible person! In one instance faith is taken to be without content or empty (v. 14), but in another it is considered as without effect (v. 17). The former Greek term makes their faith unreal while the latter makes it unable to procure for them as believers the salvation which they expect! How utterly important the resurrection is!

b. No forgiveness. This is expressed in the phrase "ye are yet in your sins." This is a deep doctrinal issue. Expiation of sin could only take place if the victim who accomplished it had been restored to life. That is the hinge for Paul's argument elsewhere (Rom. 4:25). The preposition "for" there can only mean "on account of" and is prospective with regard to "justification." He could not pardon sinners, if He Himself is not let out of the prison! If He remains incarcerated, it means that the debt of sin unpaid! There stands an indissoluble relation between the forgiveness of sin and the resurrection of Christ. No one really understands the doctrine of Scripture relating to resurrection until he sees it in this connection.

c. No felicity. Here is the conclusion of one's salvation. Those who die peacefully in their faith on Christ are actually perished (v. 18). The sharp contrast between "fallen asleep in Christ" and "are perished" is staggering. To close the eyes in the joy of salvation and to open them in the torments of perdition--this is the choice if there is no resurrection. The aorist of the verb "perish" points to an incident of history which is irrevocable and lands the persons in a state of perdition in which their soul remain forever under the weight of God's eternal condemnation!