

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Thanks, Therefore"

1 Corinthians 15:57, 58

Introduction

1) The Spirit of God has revealed through the apostle Paul the details of the Rapture (vv. 50-56). When the trumpet sounds, the dead are raised, and the living changed--death is swallowed up in victory.

2) Death has had a sting, namely sin. Sin has had its strength, namely, the law (vv. 55, 56). But with the Rapture comes the total and absolute victory over death and its bases. Glory to God. How this victory is wrought and what it means are clearly the final thrust of this chapter. Let your heart be made glad with these two items:

1. A CONSIDERATION OF THANKS. v. 57.

It is interesting that the word for "thanks" is the same as the one for "grace." Hence, the verse is really stating that the child of God graces God Who has previously graced him! Thanks is offered:

- a. To a person. God is the object of the thanks. Indeed, His Name is given first in the verse in Greek for emphasis. It is to God that all thanks belong. Grace always exalts the Lord (cf. Gal. 1:5, 10).
- b. For a victory. The present participle shows that the victory is a present experience of the child of God. It will be fully realized at the Rapture, but the believer may now act upon what God has given him!
- c. Through a means. The link between the victory and the saved one is the Cross of Christ. He is "ours," hence personal. He is "Lord," hence the Sovereign One. He is "Jesus," hence the Saviour. He is "Christ," hence the Anointed One and Messiah. We owe all to Him.

2. AN EXHORTATION OF PRACTICE. v. 58.

The consecutive particle shows the conclusion of the entire matter: "therefore." An affectionate phrase introduces this final charge for Paul loves

the Corinthians. It is God's concern which should move us to heed His Word.

- a. To become someone. The verb is the present imperative and means to "become." Better: "keep on becoming." This gives the idea that one is to show himself in certain ways. Two are mentioned:
- 1) Steadfast. This word suggests establishment in the faith. The settled Word of God should bring about a strong spirit of unwaveringness. The flexibility of the modern has little to help him here.
 - 2) Unmoveable. Whatever assaults may come, one is to be intransigent. Too many move like waves or winds. Today's world cries "love" and has produced a crop of moveable persons. God's true love in the heart echoes "stand therefore!" God help us in this.
- b. To abound somewhere. The verb here is a present participle. The thought, therefore, is of one constantly overflowing his edges. The "work" is what He calls us to perform, not what He does for us (Eph. 2:10). This should be done indefatigably, for it is "always."
- c. To know something. Here is another participle noting assured knowledge. It springs from the confirmation of one's faith. It is on a par with "abounding." Work produces knowledge. The best answer to doubt, then, is work! The "labor" here is "toil." It is not vain, a word in Greek meaning it does not lack substance or nature. It has reality. Fruit, as such, is not in view. The sphere in which this labor really counts is under His authority, for it is "in the Lord."

Conclusion. The Lord has saved us (vv. 1-11). Christ was raised to prove our own upcoming resurrection (vv. 12-28). In view of this, true believers take a stand (vv. 29-34). Their bodies will be adapted to heaven (vv. 35-50) and this at the Rapture (vv. 51-56). What else is there to do, but give thanks and live unto Christ (vv. 57, 58). Amen.