

1 Corinthians 15 --- Introduction (False Doctrine)

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ” --- Colossians 2:8 (KJV)

“Don’t let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ” --- Colossians 2:8 (NLT)

A major challenge that shepherds (pastors, teachers, leaders) have is shielding the sheep (children of God) from spiritual toxins, poisons, viruses, etc. Those beliefs, doctrines, practices, mind-sets, deceits, fabrications, distortions, and philosophies which can create colossal error, suffering, and massive destruction of their lives and eternities.

As Christians, promoters of the Truth, we must be careful not be drawn into these “traps” which could dissolve our faith in God, relationship with God, and spiritual growth. We must resist forces that can tear us away from the Truth of God and from His Light - - creating spiritual blindness...causing us to walk in darkness (lies)! For example, John in his 2nd & 3rd epistles speaks of the significance of “walking in truth” - - having a lifestyle in which the Word of God (The Holy Bible) is the foundation (Matt. 7:24-27), and CLEAVING to those truths! We believe the Bible is the inspired and only infallible written Word of God!

We also believe - - “...no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time (at any time) by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). We further believe “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). God is the Author of the Bible! God’s Truth is the Word of Life which is designed to prevent us from being polluted, corrupted, deceived, overcome, & destroyed by the poisons, toxins, plagues, viruses of the world!!

There is a deep concern in our country now about the Ebola virus...People are fearful and panicking because they don’t want to become infected, sick, and possibly perish. They don’t want their natural lives to be harmed...this has become priority. But is there consideration regarding the poisons, toxins, viruses being carried in people’s spiritual lives??? Atheists, Agnostics, Idolaters who are infected with the viruses of unbelief, denial, vain philosophies, and rejection of holiness / Truth. Many are suffering from the virus / disease of spiritual necrosis (dying spiritually) for they are without relationship with Jesus Christ (rejecting His Blood sacrifice for their sins). Their natural priorities supersede spiritual priorities. (Necrosis – death of an organ due to disease, blood supply).

We must “walk in truth” and not resist nor create “justifications” to continue in practices that “appear” harmless, “acceptable”, satisfying the flesh when we are given the Word of Truth. There are those who subtly promote philosophies, false doctrines, beliefs, etc. which are contrary and combative against God’s Truth. They are birthed from the “madness of men’s minds” and the “mind of Satan.” For instance...Horoscopes. We have grown up with this belief, practice it, & naively teach it to our children as if it is Gospel -- reliable and valid. This belief that celestial bodies such as stars and their alignment have the power to determine a person’s future (astrology).

God was infuriated with those who practiced these demonic philosophies and incensed with His people for believing and trusting in them as the truth. The egregious sin was that their trust in these deceptions superseded their trust and belief God's words! God considered this abominable, paralleling it to witchcraft, necromancy, wizardry, etc. (Deut. 17 & 18). God demanded that anyone who promoted such wickedness within the congregation (Deut. 17:5) was to be stoned to death. His people even outrageously worshipped these celestial bodies as if they were gods and sacrificed their children to them! (Manasseh, king of Judah - 2 Kings 21:1-6).

How can I proclaim Christianity and the Bible as my authority, yet my decisions are influenced by the "horoscope" and not the Holy Word of God and His Holy Spirit??? Walk in the Truth...Here's my future according to the Lord: "...I know the thoughts I think towards you saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end" (KJV); "I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (NLT) (Jeremiah 29:11). How foolish to trust in the stars instead of trusting in the One who created the stars? The Star to look to for our future is Jesus Christ -- "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16). We cannot allow ourselves, as Paul said to the Galatians(3:1), to be "bewitched" (meaning cast a spell, beguile, seduce, hypnotize) - - "O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth..." What toxic teacher or spiritual con artist tricked you into believing lies???

A question for today...Who bewitched you into believing: 1) You can know your future through the stars 2) The Creation came by a "Big Bang" 3) Man evolved from a monkey (Evolution) 4) In God's Eyes, two people of the same sex taking vows is Marriage 5) Reincarnation???? Reincarnation -- Belief that upon biological death, one's spirit begins a new life in a new body of flesh (entering the flesh again). Between 10 to 25% of Christians believe!!!???

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud (a fool), knowing nothing, but doting (sick or obsessed) about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim 6:3-5).

Anyone teaching contrary to the dogma (doctrine) of the church is committing HERESY and is an HERETIC!!! They subtly take a bit of the truth and combine it with falsehood to deceive others to believe (syncretism). "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them who are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure: but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (void of judgment)" Titus 1:14-16. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition (warning) reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus 3:10)

John (1,2,&3), Peter (2), Jude, Paul (Colossians, Philippians, Galatians, Corinthians), and of course our Lord Jesus Himself warred against these religious and spiritual frauds... HERETICS! False teachers promoting toxic doctrines, infecting true believers in God and the body of Christ with their deadly spiritual viruses - - Opposing the Truth of God and depriving Him of the glory which is due to Him! (REMEMBER: The source of these things is wickedness in the hearts of men & the Satanic forces of evil). Paul (Philippians 3:2) called these heretics and frauds “dogs” --- “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision”...These toxic teachers or as Paul called them “scavengers” deceived Christians in believing that physical circumcision was necessary/mandatory for salvation. No!!! We are saved by Grace (Ephesians 2:5)! To the Galatians (3:1 & 11)... Don't be foolish! Who tricked you into believing justification comes through the Law??? “...The just shall live by faith” (3:11) - - We are saved and justified by faith in Jesus Christ!!!

The apostle Peter speaks of these teachers in 2 Peter 2:1, “...there shall be false teacher among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord...” Peter says in 2:3, “...through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...” 2 Peter 2:12, “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” They are good for nothing...only to be slaughtered like an animal! They are good for nothing...2 Peter 2:17, “These are wells without water...” (KJV) “These people are as useless as dried up springs of water...promising much, delivering nothing...” (NLT). Jude, just as Peter (Jude 10 & 12) categorized these perverters of the Truth as “brute beasts”, “clouds without water”, and “trees without fruit...twice dead!!!” John in 2 John 2:7, “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist”

A major heresy or spiritual venom (toxin) these holy men of God were warring against during this time was the philosophy of Gnosticism. This venomous philosophy derived its name from the Greek word “gnosis” meaning knowledge - - this highly toxic doctrine which permeated the church taught that:

- (a) Salvation could ONLY be obtained through “special knowledge”**
- (b) Special knowledge promoted the transition of souls from the physical to spiritual realm**
- (c) Salvation could NOT be received through Jesus Christ**
- (d) Intellect “transcended” faith, there was no salvation in “faith”**
- (e) Gnostics believed they were more “intellectually advanced” than Christians**
- (f) Matter is evil and Spirit is good...therefore God is good and Creation is evil**
- (g) An angel or secondary god created the universe (matter), not God because God is good**
- (h) The body (matter) is evil, but a man's soul is good...therefore the deeds a man performs in his body cannot bring contamination & damnation to his soul**
- (i) Since bodies are matter and evil, Jesus Christ, who is also good, did not have a physical body!!! The ultimate denial of the Incarnation, Ministry, Atonement/ Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection, and Second Coming of Jesus Christ!!!**

Did not our Lord and Saviour warn us (Matt. 7:15), “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” - - Lord Jesus said, “Take heed and beware of the leaven (doctrine) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6). They wanted The Lord Jesus dead because they did not want the people to know the truth! The Sadducees were the Jewish sect that condemned & denied the belief of resurrection...Jesus called these false teachers “serpents and vipers” in Matt. 23:33 for just as vipers do, they strike their victims, fill them with venom, and cause them to die (spiritually). The heart (mind), in the spiritual sense, is filled with venom (corrupted).

But Hallelujah, what the enemy meant for evil, God transformed it into good. Because of these malicious, wicked attempts to deny the Resurrection (Deity) of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul was motivated and inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the most detailed, enlightening, and emancipating explanation of the Resurrection (of the body).

Notable Resurrections:

- 1) Elijah’s resurrection of the widow of Zarephath’s son (1 Kings 17:17-23)**
- 2) Elisha’s resurrection of the Shunammite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:17-37)**
- 3) The male corpse thrown into the tomb of Elisha that came back to life (2 Kings 13:21)**
- 4) Jesus’ resurrection of Jairus’ daughter (Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56)**
- 5) Jesus’ resurrection of the widow of Nain’s son (Luke 7:11-17)**
- 6) Jesus’ resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1-44)**
- 7) The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20)**

The Resurrection Of Christ, Of The Dead, and The Resurrection Body -- Chapter 15

- (a) Verses 1 - 2: Paul’s introduction of this chapter begins as an “exhortation” to the Corinthians to remember and cleave to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the Truth), in which he preached to them, and they accepted (received). It is the same Gospel of the Resurrection in which they declared faith in and by which they are saved (have Salvation) Paul says unless, they believed something (Christ’s Resurrection) that was a fairy tale and never true in the first place. The indelible mark Paul intends to make upon the heart of the Corinthians is that if there is no such thing as the Resurrection or bodily resurrection, then they were not saved at all! Heretics who denied the Resurrection/resurrection were viciously attacking the Truth of the Gospel. The Resurrection/resurrection was/is a fundamental principle of Christianity --- so hold fast (cleave) to the Truth/truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Walk in truth)**
- (b) Verses 3 - 4: Paul delivered (preached) to the Corinthians the Message that he received by Divine Revelation (Acts 9 -- Saul/Paul’s Conversion by the Resurrected Christ near Damascus) that the Eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ became human, never sinned, and was crucified (The Crucifixion) for the sins of all mankind. The Lord Jesus was buried, and after three days He arose from the dead (The Resurrection). Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty that our sins deserved according to the Scriptures (Isaiah 53: 1-12) and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures (Psalm 16:9,10). Christ’s Resurrection verifies that He paid the full price for the penalty of sin - - Jesus Christ is our Risen Saviour!!!**

- (c) Verses 5 - 7: In these verses, Paul provides undeniable evidence that a Resurrected Christ appeared (visually) to hundreds of people which included the Apostle Peter, the remaining apostles, James (Jesus' half-brother), and more than five hundred brethren (Believers) most of whom were still alive.**
- (d) Verses 8 - 9: Paul testifies to his own personal encounter (Christ's Appearance) with the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9). He was on his way to Damascus in order to persecute Christians (the Way) in Damascus when "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven..." Paul, unlike the other apostles, did not have an "earthly" relationship with the Jesus they knew (born at the wrong time). Paul humbly considered himself the least of all the apostles and considered himself unworthy to be called an apostle because of the cruel and vicious way he persecuted the church of God (Christians).**
- (e) Verses 10 - 11: Paul became an Apostle "abruptly" and did not receive the "training" the other Disciples did, nevertheless, he accomplished more than all of them. "Labouring more abundantly", Paul traveled further, established churches, and wrote more Scripture (writing half of the New Testament -- 14 out of 27 books). Yet, Paul acknowledges and declares that it was not by his own power or might, but his success came by "the grace (favor) of God." In verse 11, Paul declares that it didn't matter which Apostle or "vessel" God used for the Corinthians to hear the message of the Gospel, but that they believed the Truth which was preached.**
- (f) Verses 12 - 13: These heretics and toxic teachers, in opposition to the Truth of the Gospel and Paul, were masquerading and promoting the lie that bodily resurrection was not a reality - - it was an egregious and abominable denial of the truth! And in denying the truth of bodily resurrection to the "asleep" Believers, then The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was being rejected also! This again was a horrendous contradiction of a main doctrinal principle of Christianity: The Lord Jesus Christ was Resurrected from the dead after three days, and those who "die in Christ" will also be resurrected! Paul emphatically declared that if they rejected bodily resurrection for Believers, then they also rejected the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- (g) Verse 14: Paul enlightens them to the fact that if Christ's Resurrection was a fable, then preaching the Gospel was vanity or useless (worthless). The Lord Jesus did promise that he would rise from the dead (John 2:19) on the third day. If He did not then he would be considered an imposter, without Divinity, and unworthy of trust. Without His Resurrection, there would be NO SALVATION and His Death would be without significance. Jesus' Resurrection was proof that He is who He said He is: The Only Begotten Son of The Living God! His Resurrection also validated Jesus' Relationship with The Father, and validated the Father's Approval of His Works. Finally, if the Resurrection was a fabrication, then their faith and trust in Christ would be vain or worthless also.**
- (h) Verse 15: Paul declares that if the Resurrection was preached with feigned words or falsely, then the Apostles were false witnesses concerning God. They were ignorantly preaching a message that was not true...in other words they were "lying on God."**

- (i) **Verses 16 - 17:** Paul emphasizes again that if you reject the reality of resurrection for Believers in Jesus Christ, then you are also rejecting the Holy Resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). Jesus declared this prior to Him raising Lazarus from the dead. ** Therefore, if you deny The Resurrection of Christ, then your faith in Him is worthless, you are still condemned for your sins and without any Forgiveness for your sins (Unjustified & not Justified). **Justification is the Judicial act of God in declaring a sinner as “righteous” because of his acceptance and belief in Jesus Christ’s Crucifixion for his/her sins, and Resurrection as Lord and Saviour.
- (j) **Verses 18 - 19:** How tragic then for those who died believing in the Lord Jesus Christ... they are dead forever! There is no hope in their future for them to ever “live again” and be with the Lord forever. Their faith was completely useless or worthless. They were deceived and those of us living now have been deceived and have hoped in something that is vain or worthless. What a miserable existence to sacrifice and suffer for the sake of Christ without the expectation and hope to be resurrected and abide with Him in Eternity! Paul incessantly continues to attempt to make panoramic to the church in Corinth how foolish and dangerous this heresy regarding the Resurrection is!
- (k) **Verse 20:** Paul emphasizes again that the Resurrection of Christ is Divine Reality and NOT a deception nor fallacy, and Jesus Christ is the “firstfruits of them that slept” (“firstborn from the dead” -- Col. 1:18 / “firstborn of the dead” -- Rev. 1:5) referring to the assurance or guarantee the Resurrection of Jesus Christ symbolizes. Jesus Christ’s Resurrection is a Divine Guarantee for Believers of being Resurrected from the dead. (Firstfruits -- An agricultural term referring to a “sample” of crop from the field prior to the full harvest. This was an example or foretaste of what was to follow)
- (l) **Verses 21 - 22:** Adam, the first man, brought sin and death into the world through his disobedience towards God (Gen. 2:17 & 3:1-24; Rom. 5:8-21). This was the ultimate breach of relationship with God. But the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, through Incarnation came as the “second” Man and the Ultimate Sacrifice for the sins of Adam or all mankind. Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection give Justification and Resurrection to all who believe on Him. By Adam’s sin and disobedience all died, yet through Jesus’ sinless life and obedience, all who believe on Him shall be made alive! Glory be to the Lord for He took away “death’s sting” and the “grave’s victory” (15:55).
- (m) **Verses 23 - 24:** God is a God of Order and ALL He does has Purpose. Jesus Christ, as our Saviour and “Commander” was Resurrected first. Next, those who died as Christians (declaring faith in Jesus Christ) and as His servants and “troops”, shall be resurrected (raised from the dead) at Christ’s return (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 -- The Rapture). Jesus Christ, the Son of God and “image of the invisible God”, was Resurrected and given by God “all power in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, upon the completion of the Rapture of Christ’s Church, and the manifestation of other prophetic events (e.g., God’s enemies cast into the Lake of Fire), the Lord Jesus Christ will return the Rule/ Authority to His Father who gave It.

- (n) Verses 25 - 26: Nevertheless, Christ will continue to Operate in the Power and Authority His Father has given unto Him until all of God's enemies are completely destroyed, with death being the last enemy. Revelation 20 references the beast, the false prophet, the devil, death and hell (the grave).**
- (o) Verses 27 - 28: Emphasis again is placed upon God giving His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, His Power over everything in heaven and earth or "over the works of His hands" (Psalm 8:6). God The Father continues to be Sovereign and His Son, even though given Control by The Father, continues to be subject to The Father. Therefore, once God's enemies have been conquered and the Son has completed his Mission, the Son shall return the Authority to The Father.**
- (p) Verse 29: The Lord's Death/Burial and Resurrection is symbolized through a Believer's water baptism. The Believer, by willingly being baptized, demonstrates faith in Jesus Christ's Resurrection that he/she will be resurrected by Jesus also. At time of Paul's writing, Christians were under fierce persecution and some were unable to participate in the act of baptism because they were murdered. They died as martyrs for refusing to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, other believers were baptized for them. Yet Paul makes the point that if you all don't believe in Christ's Resurrection, then why even practice this baptismal ceremony??? To engage in this practice and doubt/deny Christ's Resurrection is senseless!**
- (q) Verses 30 - 32: Christians were being persecuted viciously and cruelly for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their lives were in constant jeopardy. Paul's life was constantly in danger because of his fearlessness, boldness, and tenacity in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He made enemies wherever he traveled and there were those who devised plots to assassinate him. In addition to those perils, he withstood extreme weariness, physical pain, hunger and thirst (2 Corinthians 11:22-28)...Paul's enlightening point to the Corinthians was why endure this magnitude of extreme persecution and suffering for the Gospel and there is no Resurrection??? If there is no Resurrection then it would make sense for one to abandon the Gospel and avoid this unnecessary suffering and persecution. Nonetheless, Paul proclaims to them as certain as he rejoices in Christ concerning the Corinthians, his life is in jeopardy daily. He references the incident with the blood-thirsty craftsmen (beasts) in Ephesus who wanted him dead for negatively impacting their business of selling silver shrines (statutes) of the Greek goddess Diana (Acts 19:21-41). Paul's preaching of the Gospel of Christ opened the hearts of many people to realize that statutes made by a man's hand is no God at all (Acts 19:26). The enraged men started a city-wide riot and Paul's traveling companions (Gaius & Aristarchus) were drug into the amphitheater. Paul intended to rescue them, however, officials and friends pleaded with him not to in order to avoid possible death. Again, Paul's point is why endure such madness if the Resurrection is a fallacy - - might as well seek life's pleasures and make every day a party like the Epicureans! **Epicureanism -- Doctrine of the Greek philosopher Epicurus which rejected the belief in the "after-life" and zealously pursued indulgence in the "pleasures of life" and the avoidance of pain.**

- (r) **Verses 33 – 34: Emphatically Paul commands the Corinthians: Don't Be Fooled!!!**
Don't be tricked or conned by these toxic false teachers giving corrupt instruction, like the vipers they are, with "forked-tongues!" The audacity these "beasts" have to teach in opposition to the Resurrection and our Resurrection. Do not associate with them and their wicked teaching for "bad company corrupts good character." Making association with evil people and entertaining their corrupt doctrine will bring massive destruction to one's life. Paul further exhorts them to WAKE UP!!!! Come to your senses and believe the truth and in the Truth (Jesus). Paul was truly ashamed that there were those without the "knowledge of God", who were not true believers, but camouflaged themselves as teachers of the Truth. They were "wolves in sheep's clothing" devouring the Truth from the hearts of the Corinthian congregation without any regard or care for the monumental damage being done. Paul was also displeased with the carelessness displayed in allowing these "beasts" to promote their distorted doctrines. (1 Timothy 4:1 -2)
- (s) **Verses 35 – 37: The Corinthians posed the question to Paul...How are dead people raised to life again? What type of body will a person who was dead but raised to life have? There existed Corinthians who not only rejected the Resurrection because they were "poisoned" by others, but also those who rejected the Resurrection because they decided the Resurrection was too difficult to understand - - Paul undoubtedly called them fools!!! Not having an understanding of the Resurrection should not give the Believer reason to doubt. He was clearly agitated by their ignorant and skeptical questions, yet he begins to enlighten their understanding of "resurrection" using a common illustration of nature. When a seed is sown into the ground, it can't be transformed into a plant bearing fruit (brings forth life) until it dies first (John 12:24). Understand, the seed sown into the ground is not the plant that will be grown, or in other words the seed is not the final result that will be produced. And the plant that will be produced directly correlates to the type of seed that was planted.**
- (t) **Verses 38 – 41: Paul continues to explain that in this, God ordained the process of "sowing and growing." God has given each seed its own type of "body" or its own features and characteristics once its grown or "resurrected." The Apostle Paul is laying the foundation for it to be understood that there will be a panoramic contrast regarding the glory of our resurrected bodies, and our present earthly bodies. He highlights that God has created different types of flesh (bodies) such as men, fish, birds, and many other types of animals. Even though they are different creatures, what they have in common is a fleshly (terrestrial) body. God also created heavenly (celestial) "bodies" and yet the splendor of each (terrestrial & celestial) is different. Regarding the celestial bodies of the sun, moon, and stars, they vary in splendor from one another. For instance, the sun is brighter than the moon and even stars differ in beauty and brightness from each other. Paul is using the evidence of The Creator's "Handiwork" to convince the doubting Corinthians that since the Creator has the Power to create "bodies" of varying degrees, SURELY He has the power to create Resurrection bodies for His Church!!!**

(u) Verses 42 - 44: Paul begins to illuminate the contrast between our present mortal bodies (temporal), and our future immortal bodies (eternal). He emphasizes that these mortal, earthly bodies are corruptible or perishable and subject to decay, disease, and death. But glory to God in that our resurrected (eternal) bodies shall be incorruptible, not subject to decomposition, decay, disease, nor death! Since God has the Power to create objects such as “celestial bodies” then does He not have the power to transform us from having terrestrial (earthly) bodies to celestial (heavenly) bodies??!!

These bodies we have now bring disappointment and dismay in our lives - - they become weak, susceptible to sickness, disease, injury, malfunction, break-downs, imperfections, wear & tear, age, and sin. And once lifeless, they have no “glorious” appearance at all. Nevertheless, for those who die in Christ, these bodies which are “buried in weakness” shall be raised, resurrected full of God’s Power and Glory - - not subject to the earthly elements and limitations the fleshly (terrestrial) body was subject to. Paul’s focus was to emphasize to the Corinthians that a earthly or natural body will be buried, however, a heavenly or spiritual body will be resurrected - - clearly distinguishing the difference between the natural body and the spiritual body. The natural body is designed for one’s earthly existence, and the spiritual body will be designed for one’s eternal existence.

(v) Verse 45: Paul again revisits the contrast that he emphasized, in verses 21 & 22, regarding the impact that Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ had upon the existence of man. God gave Adam physical life by breathing “into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen 2:7), and all of us are descendants of Adam. We bear his image and characteristics having earthly, mortal bodies and through Adam, man “inherited” or received sin and death. But through the Lord Jesus Christ, “the last Adam”, man has “inherited” or received Reconciliation and eternal life. We shall be “quickened” (John 5:21) or resurrected by our Saviour Jesus Christ, “bearing His image” and resembling Him in our resurrected bodies! (Philippians 3:20 - 21)

(w) Verses 46 - 47: To further encourage the Corinthians to believe the truth, he highlights God’s “Divine Order” --- first natural, then spiritual. The natural man Adam was presented first, then Jesus Christ the spiritual Man. Man is not born into the world as a spiritual being, but first as a natural being with a corruptible (earthly & earthy) body. For man is created from the earth or “dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:17). The first man’s origin was from the earth. Then man becomes a spiritual being by receiving an incorruptible, resurrected body which is prepared for eternal existence (of course by having Christ as Saviour). For in contrast to the first Adam, the second Adam’s origin is NOT from the “dust of the ground” or earth, but heaven.

(x) Verses 48 - 49: Humans are born with earthy/earthly bodies just like Adam’s body. Yet, for the believers in Jesus Christ, we will receive heavenly/spiritual bodies just like Christ’s. Just as man has a body like Adam’s in this earthly life (Adam’s image), we shall have a body just like Christ’s (Christ’s image) in our heavenly life. Paul reinforces the theme of this chapter in that our bodies will undergo a “Divine Transformation” from the natural (corruptible, earthly, & sinful) to the spiritual (incorruptible, heavenly, & sinless). (Philippians 3:20 - 21)

(y) Verse 50: Paul continues to emphasize that Believers will be “Transformed” at the Return of Christ...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. These corruptible, earthly bodies are not made to inherit an incorruptible, heavenly place as the Kingdom. These earthly bodies we have now, which are subject to disease, decomposition, and decay, are not suited for eternal existence. Again, these present, temporary-state, corruptible bodies that we have now cannot dwell in heaven where corruption does not exist, and is a place of eternity. “Divine Transformation” will take place in the bodies of the Believers, both the dead and the living. This “transformation” will occur so that the body (flesh) becomes incorruptible. (**Note: Some believe in the idea Christians will reside in heaven eternally as “disembodied spirits” or spirits without bodies. Our bodies shall be spiritual, but “spiritual” does not mean nonmaterial.)

Reference Luke 24:39 -- The Resurrected Christ said, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.” Jesus then consumed a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb.

Reference John 20:27 -- The Resurrected Christ said to Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

Reference Luke 16:19 -31 -- “...the beggar (Lazarus) died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Believers shall have bodies which have been “Transformed” into the incorruptible and immortal - - prepared for eternity with Christ!

(z) Verse 51 - 52: All believers in Jesus Christ will not experience physical death. There will be living believers at the Lord’s Return, and the living shall receive a transformed, incorruptible, immortal body just as those who experienced physical death and their bodies are in the ground, the sea, etc. In the blinking of an eye (in an instant), Believers (Christians) who have died will be raised with their transformed, incorruptible, immortal bodies first; then the living believers will be transformed. This Divine event is known as The Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 17).

****Note:** In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian church he provides this scripture, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). Paul infers there exists is state of disembodiment for Christians who die before Christ’s Return. Therefore, there would be three “states of existence” for many Believers:

(a) Life in an earthly, mortal, corruptible body

(b) Life as a disembodied spirit and dwelling with Christ (state between death & Rapture)

(c) Life in a transformed, heavenly, mortal, incorruptible body

****Note:** All Believers will not experience (b) Life as a disembodied spirit because all Believers shall not sleep (verse 51) or experience physical death.

- (A) Verse 53 - 54:** Paul emphasizes that this Divine Transformation of the Believers from a state of corruption to incorruption, and from a state of mortality to immortality, (for those who died and those who are living) **MUST** and **WILL** be performed by the Lord! Because God already Declared hundreds of years prior (Isaiah 25:8) that, “He will swallow up death in victory...” The Lord shall Triumph over all His enemies: the beast, the false prophet, the devil, death and hell or the grave (Revelation 20) & (Colossians 2:15).
- (B) Verses 55 - 56:** Death and hell have no power (sting) and no victory over Believers because Christ has already conquered them by His Resurrection. God Declared in Hosea 13:14, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction...” Death received its “sting” or power because of sin - - when Man sinned against God in the Garden, Death came into existence. The strength of sin is the Law because the law brings condemnation upon the transgressor: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them” (Galatians 3:10). “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20).
- (C) Verse 57:** “...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8) - - Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was Manifested (came to earth) to destroy (overcome) the enemy of God (the devil) and the elements associated with him: Sin, Death, and Hell (the grave). Jesus’ Resurrection negated the effects of Man’s sin in the Garden, His Crucifixion and Burial. Jesus was Resurrected from the dead with Victory over them all. And because Jesus Christ conquered Death and Hell by His Resurrection, the Believer (Christian) shall be victorious over Death and Hell also!! These enemies have no power over Believers! “Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...” (1 John 5:1) (Born Again) “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4) “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5) - - Believers also overcome and have victory over the “fate” of those “serving” the world or who have committed themselves to the world and all its sensualities, and not Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!!!! We have the victory over death and the grave through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!!! Because He rose, we shall rise also!!!
- (D) Verse 58:** Paul, by the Holy Spirit of God, has solidly and indisputably established the Truth of Christ’s Resurrection, and the future Resurrection of the Believers in Jesus Christ. Therefore, your faith in Jesus Christ and your obedient, faithful efforts in performing His Will is **NOT** useless! The faith you display in Jesus Christ and the work you perform for His glory is **NOT** in vain - - therefore always persevere, be unwavering, and perform in abundance regarding the work of the Lord. The Lord will reward those who labored faithfully: “And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22:12) “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life...” (Revelation 22:14). “Let no man beguile you of your reward...” (Colossians 2:18).