

I CORINTHIANS: HANDLING BELIEVERS' PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

XVII. Adhering To Belief In The Bodily Resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58

A. Adhering To Belief In Christ's Bodily Resurrection

(1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. The people Paul discipled in Corinth lived in a city that was known for its immorality, alcoholism and worldly pursuits (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians: The City of Corinth," p. 1619), so the formidable influence of the city's culture on the Corinthian believers left Paul addressing "(a)berrant beliefs and practices of an astonishing variety" in his letters to them, Ibid.
- B. However, in a vision Paul received from God as he ministered at Corinth in Acts 18:10b NIV, God told him, "I have many people in this city," so Paul was to keep on ministering regardless of the trials he faced there.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Paul began a defense of the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, showing its key role in the very gospel we must believe for the salvation of our souls. We view this passage for our edification:

II. Adhering To Belief In Christ's Bodily Resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

- A. Belief in the bodily resurrection "was incompatible with Greek philosophy" much like it is incompatible with evolutionary scientists and Liberal Theologians today. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 404) Actually, "(t)he Greeks wanted to get rid of their bodies, not take them on again!" (Ibid.)
- B. Some believers at Corinth yielded to Greek philosophy and denied the bodily resurrection, so Paul countered it by testifying of Christ's bodily resurrection as a key part of the Gospel of salvation, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11:
 - 1. Paul declared that he was currently making known (*gnorizo*, "make known," in the present tense; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 162) to the Corinthian believers the Gospel that he had first preached to them, what they had received and by which they were saved, 1 Corinthians 15:1-2a.
 - 2. He added in 1 Corinthians 15:2b that the alternative was for his readers to have believed in vain, for Paul was setting up his readers to see the futility of believing the Gospel of Christ if Christ was not raised!
 - 3. Specifically, the Gospel included belief in Christ's bodily resurrection as essential for salvation, v. 3-10:
 - a. First, Paul delivered to his readers what he had also received directly from Christ (cf. Galatians 1:11-2:10) that Christ died for our sins according to Old Testament Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15:3 with Isaiah 53:5.
 - b. Second, Christ was buried according to Old Testament Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15:4a with Isaiah 53:9.
 - c. Third, Christ bodily rose again the third day according to Old Testament Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15:4b with Isaiah 53:10b, Leviticus 23:4-14, and 1 Corinthians 15:20.
 - d. Fourth, Christ was then seen alive after His resurrection by multiple, credible witnesses, 1 Cor. 15:5-10:
 - i. He was seen alive after His resurrection by Christ's disciple Peter, 1 Corinthians 15:5a.
 - ii. Jesus was then seen alive after His resurrection by the Lord's other disciples, 1 Corinthians 15:5b.
 - iii. Christ was next seen by more than 500 believers at one time, the majority of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this Corinthian epistle, 1 Corinthians 15:6. This claim by Paul is a powerful evidence of Christ's resurrection, for Paul's readers themselves could have interviewed over 250 believers who would testify that at one time they had seen Christ alive after His resurrection!
 - iv. Later, Jesus was seen alive after His resurrection by James, then of all the apostles, a wider group than Jesus' 12 disciples, "but were all distinguished by having seen the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 9:1) which made Paul the last of their company," 1 Corinthians 15:7; Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 542.
 - v. Last, Paul saw Christ alive after His resurrection "as of one born out of due time" (KJV), a phrase meaning that Paul "considered himself abnormally born because he lacked the 'gestation' period of having been with Christ during His earthly ministry (cf. Acts 1:21-22)," Ibid.; 1 Corinthians 15:8.
 - vi. Paul added that he was not fit to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the Church of God, but by God's grace he was saved, and he labored more abundantly as an apostle to disciple men than the other apostles due to the grace of God that worked in him, 1 Corinthians 15:9-10. Paul's dramatic conversion and greatly changed life provides strong evidence for the reality of Christ's resurrection that Paul needed to believe to receive eternal life and experience his changed life.
 - 4. Paul added that this was the Gospel that he and all the apostles gave and his readers believed, 1 Cor. 15:11.

Lesson: *We must believe the Gospel of Christ's death for our sins, His burial and bodily resurrection to be saved.*

Application: *May we then hold firmly to belief in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*