

Worksheet 12: 1 Corinthians 15:1–58

Introduction: In chapter 15, Paul turns to one last issue to which he devotes extended attention. Apparently, some individuals in the Corinthian church denied the bodily resurrection of believers (15:12).

Paul begins to address this idea by establishing that the resurrection of Christ is an historical fact (15:1–11). Then, in 15:12–34, he shows how belief in the resurrection of Christ contradicts denial of the future resurrection of believers. If the dead are not raised, Paul says, then Christ’s resurrection is creative fiction and Christian faith and preaching is “empty” (15:14).

After developing his rationale for accepting both the resurrection of Christ and believers, Paul then answers potential objections regarding the form of the resurrection body in 15:35–58. Using numerous analogies, he explains that the resurrection of the dead involves a transformation of the physical body into an “incorruptible” body (15:54). As a result, the believer can look forward to the glory of the resurrection and victory over the present struggle with sin (15:57).

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1–9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10–6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10–4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1–13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1–11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12–20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1–16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1–40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1–11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2–34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1–14:40)
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1–31)
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1–13)
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1–40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1–58)**
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1–4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5–24)

¹ The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. After reviewing post-resurrection appearances of Christ to the apostles, Paul claims that he and all the other apostles preached the resurrected Christ (15:11). What does the unanimity of apostolic preaching teach us about Christ's resurrection?

2. In 15:13–19, Paul lists the logical consequences of denying the resurrection of Christ. Describe the importance of the cross and resurrection to the Christian faith.

3. Why is it necessary for the resurrection of the dead to come “by Man” (15:21)? How does Rom. 5:12–21 help us understand this passage?

4. What is the single point of comparison in the various analogies Paul uses in 15:36–41? How does this similarity contribute to Paul's point about the resurrection in 15:42–45?

5. What does Paul mean when he says, “the strength of sin is the law” (15:56)?

6. What means does God use to give us the victory over death (15:57), and what guarantee do we have that this victory will occur?

7. Why does Paul conclude this chapter with a challenge to continued faithfulness in the present life (15:58)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
