

## **Exercise: 1 Corinthians 15 Resurrection & the Logic of Belief**

### **15:1,2 Introduction—the *heart of the gospel* message**

### **15:3—11 *Fact of Christ's resurrection—the evidence of scripture & eyewitness***

- Exhibit A Scripture
- Exhibit A Appeared to Peter
- Exhibit B Appeared to the 12
- Exhibit C Appeared to 500 in Jerusalem, some who remain
- Exhibit D Appeared to James and the apostles
- Exhibit E Appeared to Paul, the undeserving servant of Christ

### **15:12—19 *Necessity of the resurrection: if there is *no* resurrection, then...***

- Implication A Christ has not been raised, contrary to the facts of vss.3-11
- Implication B Vanity of preaching and faith in Christ
- Implication C Paul is a false witness
- Implication D Dead are truly dead—the grave is the end
- Implication E Faith in Christ is pitiful

### **15:20—28 *Hope in the resurrection: 15:20a “but now Christ has been raised”***

- Christ raised as first fruits, promising a future harvest
- Both death and resurrection brought through one man

### **15:30—34 *Motivations: “Why are we in danger every hour?”***

- No reason for avoidable suffering if this life is all there is
- Be sober minded

### **15:35—49 *What is a resurrected body?***

- Like a seed, the body must die first to produce new fruit
  - Adam became a living soul (Genesis 1:26-28)
  - The “second Adam” a life-giving spirit (see also Romans 5:12—19)

### **15:50—57 *Resurrection to life *immortal and imperishable****

- Perishable cannot inherit the imperishable kingdom
- Mystery: trumpet will blast, the dead will rise to immortality, then those alive will be transformed (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:13—18).
- What a victory over death!

**15:58 Be steadfast and immovable, knowing our toil is not in vain**

**Content** (Muscle)

*Identify and define unfamiliar, historically significant, and theologically key words*

### **Christianity and the Greco-Roman Religious World View**

Much of Christian doctrine became clarified and written in the context of difficult debate.

*Greek Dualism.* Reality is divided into the spiritual and the physical. Humans are spirits encased (or enslaved) in a body.

*Doctrinal implications:*

Christology

Full humanity (1 John 1:1, 4:1,2; John 1:14)

Full Deity (Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3)

Bodily resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-17)

Bodily resurrection of Christians (1 Corinthians 15:12,18,19, 50-58)

Singular authority of Christ to forgive sins and to rule creation (Colossians 1:15-20)

*Practical implications:*

Asceticism and License

License: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:12-20

Asceticism: Colossians 2:20-23.

*Spiritual illumination by mystical experience*

Mystery religion in the Roman Empire

Mystical awareness through bombastic ritual

Secret knowledge given to the initiate (1 Timothy 6:20)

### *Doctrinal implications*

Objective revelation in propositional terms, in the face of the tendency toward "gnosis" and false teaching (1 Tim. 6:20,21; Col. 2:8,9; 2 Cor.10:3-5).

Importance of historic fact (1 Corinthians 15:1-10; also Luke 1:1-4)

### *Practical implications*

Orderliness in group gatherings (1 Corinthians 11:20-22;14:6-19).

Faithfulness to the word of God stressed (Romans 12:1,2).

*Cyclical view of history.* The theory of eternal recurrence, that the cycle of both nature and history is eternal and unchanging. There is no ultimate purpose to human history, as it is not really going anywhere. Importance of biblical eschatology (1 Thess. 4:13-5:11). the biblical hope of the Kingdom of God is a linear view of history. That is, there is a beginning point (Gen. 1:1), followed by a meaningful sequence of events, culminating in the parousia.

## **Church and Greco-Roman Culture**

Christianity became the driving force in social transformation (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11)

### *Slavery*

Scope of slavery in the Roman world

Nature of slavery in the Roman world

Biblical teaching on slavery:

Slave status in the church (Philemon 8-21)

Freedom is to be valued (1 Corinthians 7:20-24)

Household principles (Ephesians 6:5-9)

Condemnation of slavery (1 Timothy 1:10 cf. Ex. 21:16; Philemon 8)

### *Jews and Romans*

Unity of the body of Christ in context of deep ethnic divisions (Galatians 3:28)

Practical care for one another (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor, 8,9)

Distinction between diet and circumcision: culture vs. doctrine

Circumcision and the Law (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:2-4)

Meat sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)

### *Family*

Importance of marital faithfulness and commitment in context of Roman household duties (Ephesians 5:21ff.)

### *Government*

Subordination to the government (1 Timothy 2:1-3; Romans 12:14—13:7)

For a helpful discussion of critical issues relating to New Testament teaching on church and society, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*.

### *Example of cultural and theological analysis: 1 Timothy 1:12—17*

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinner, among whom I as foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

“King eternal”—a key word (*basileia*)—sovereign, ruler, king

- Note central importance of the Kingship of Christ:
  - In the O.T. (Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1—10; Psalm 2)
  - In the gospels (“Son of David”, Matthew 25:34,40...)
  - In the epistles (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 15:3; 17:14; 19:16...)

“Glory”—a key word (*doxa*)—bestowing honor to one who is superior

- The eternal King is worthy of all praise

In the O.T. the presence of divine glory in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34);  
Moses is allowed to see the glory of God (Ex. 24:9—17)...

In the N.T. the glory of God was manifest in Christ (Lk. 9:28—36; Heb.  
1:3)

### ***State the theological meaning of main point and supporting points***

Example from 1 Timothy 1:12—17 A Prayer of Paul

Main point: Begins and ends with *praising God* (v. 12, 17)

- The Lord is indeed worthy of our praise! The main point focuses on the absolute “otherness” of Christ, as eternal, invisible, and immortal. Yet, at the same time, He is our King and Lord—he relates to us in history and personally.
- Note the details of word study on “King” and “glory”
- Gratitude is the only appropriate, sane, response to genuine understanding of the greatness of Christ.

Supporting Point #1: We praise him because he gives us strength (v. 12)

- Note that we operate on the basis of the power of the invisible, eternal, immortal King. (that’s why we can “do all things” Phil. 4:13)
- Specifically, his strength is evident in:
  - Putting us in his service—no one is qualified to be God’s servant, yet what a privilege it is.
  - In his eternal being, he has more grace and mercy than I have sin

Note that Paul does not deny responsibility in his ignorance (that’s why he is the foremost of sinners)—it is a culpable ignorance, especially since he was part of the religious elite.

Supporting Point #2: We praise him because of his redemptive power (v. 15)

- An *a fortiori* argument—if Christ can save Paul, he can save anyone!
- The Judge of the universe is patient—note the repeated formula of the O.T., as Jonah said, “for I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to

anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity” (Jonah 4:2).

- If we understand, as Paul did so keenly, the depth of our sin, we will be driven by gratitude and thanks to Christ.

### ***Application (Skin)***

How does the argument of the paragraph affect the original audience (and ours) in terms of actions, attitudes, convictions?

Example 1 Timothy 1:12—17

As Paul encourages Timothy in the next paragraph to “fight the good fight”, it is crucial for him to know why and how. This prayer of Paul’s supplies it for him:

- *Gratitude motivated*—How extraordinary is Christ’s salvation, that we have not only forgiveness, but the honor to be pressed into the service of the King!
- *Divinely empowered*—It is Christ who strengthens us. Timothy was all too aware of his fear and anxiety.
- *Drawing focus to the Lord*—in contrast to the human speculation characteristic of the religion practiced by so many in Ephesus—and U.S.

### **Moving From Text to Teaching**

*priority #1: Clarity*—the logic of the text

*priority #2: Discovery*—fresh awareness of the import of the text’s meaning

#### **Inductive Exercise: 1 Timothy 4:6—16 Structure Analysis**

Context and paragraphs. In pointing *these things* out (relating context of 4:1—5)

*you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus*

(HOW) *constantly nourished on the words of the faith and sound doctrine*

which you have been following.

(CONTRAST) But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit for old women.

(HOW) On the other hand, *discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;*

for bodily discipline is only of little profit,

but godliness is profitable for all things,

since it holds promise in this life and the future life.

It is a trustworthy saying, deserving full acceptance.

For this is why we labor and strive,

because we fixed our hope on God, the Savior of all men, especially believers.

(HOW) *Prescribe and teach these things.*

(HOW) *Let no one look down on your youthfulness,*

but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity,

(HOW) *show yourself as an example to believers.*

(HOW) *Give attention to the public reading of scripture,  
to exhortation and teaching.*

(HOW) *Do not neglect the spiritual gift in you,*

which was bestowed through prophetic utterance

and laying on of hands by the presbytery.

(HOW) *Take pains with these things and be absorbed in them,*

[**result**] so that your progress will be evident to all.

(HOW) *Pay close attention to yourself and your teaching;*

*persevere in these things;*

[**result**] for as you do, you will insure salvation for yourself and your hearers

**1 Timothy 4:6—16 The Good Servant of Christ**

Main Point: We, like Timothy, are called to be “good servants.” See Matt. 25:21; I Cor 4.12

- “good” (*kalos*)—a faithful servant. We are all called to be servants, but what does this look like? This passage relates to key skills and character qualities

Supporting Point #1: ***Servant’s nourishment***

How? *By continuing to drink deep from words of faith and sound doctrine*

- “sound” (*hugiaino*)—healthy, as Jesus’ words produce health and restoration (cf. Luke 18:42)
- *Antithesis:* worldly fables (*mythos*) fit for old women

Application point: you can’t give what you don’t have. As you are fed by God’s word, it spills over into effective ministry to others

Supporting Point #2: ***Servant’s discipline***

Why? *For the purpose of (eusebeia)--god-likeness*

- *Antithesis:* bodily discipline is of little profit
- But true god-likeness is profitable:
- Promise of life (*zoe*) now and in the future
- We labor and strive in hope, because God is the Savior of all

Application point: basis of our labor is the hope of Christ in this life and the next life—the gospel is all about life

Supporting Point #3: ***Servant’s priorities***

What it looks like: *being an example* to the believers

- In speech, conduct, love, faith purity
- In *public reading of scripture*
- In *hard work in your area of gifting:* (note: commission; cf. 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 1:6; Acts 13:2,3; Acts 6:6). “spiritual” is not in the original

Effect of a godly servant:

- affirmation—progress made evident to all
- persevere, thus insuring salvation (*sozo*) to hearers

Application point: Substance and focal point of our labors for Christ grow through character