

## ***Eleutheros Newsletter***

November 2019

### **News of Interest**

Looking for Christmas gift ideas?

Quality Christian books are always a good idea!

[www.eleutherosbooks.com](http://www.eleutherosbooks.com)

Eleutheros Books has been in contact with a mission minded pastor from Oklahoma who has a connection with a Bible College in India. There is a possibility that the three online courses that have been developed by this ministry can be integrated into the school there. Please pray for God's leading in this!

### ***Continued Thoughts on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ***

**[1 Corinthians 6:14](#)**. *And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will raise up us by His own power.*

Earlier in this chapter Paul said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you:

*But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" ([1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#)).*

To many these are "horrible sins." Some might even consider them to be unforgivable. Thank God for [Romans 5:20](#), "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"!

When sin runs into God's grace it does not win!

Paul wants to assure people who have gotten saved from these backgrounds (frankly, that is *all of us!*) that he will raise them up because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

**[1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)**. *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures.*

Notice that Paul says he delivered the simple Gospel message "first of all."

He was not "ashamed of the Gospel" ([Romans 1:16](#)) and made himself "all things to all men" in reaching lost people ([1 Corinthians 9:22](#)). The message was consistent. Christ

died. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. These truths never change and were delivered *according to the Scriptures*.

So, few today are as zealous to present this basic Biblical message. Paul made sure he did so “first of all”!

Just as important, He did all this “according to the Scriptures.” While humor, personal testimonies, and answering questions about other matters may have their place, we must remember ultimately that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” ([Romans 10:17](#)).

The reason we can have assurance in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that we are basing it on the clear revelation about it from the Bible, God’s holy Word!

[Romans 15:12f](#). *Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

The question about resurrections springs naturally from the proof of the fact of the resurrection of Christ (note verses 1-11 of this chapter) and the continual preaching which Paul here assumes. “If Christ be preached” would well be translated “since Christ is constantly preached that He rose....”

There were sceptics in Corinth, possibly in the church, who denied the resurrection of dead people just as some men today deny that miracles happen or ever did happen. Paul’s answer is the resurrection of Christ as a fact. It all turns on this fact!

“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen” ([I Corinthians 15:13](#)). Paul here is insisting that there *is* such a thing as the resurrection from the dead because if the contrary is true, Jesus is dead.

He goes on to explain how serious this really is. If He has not raised, 1. Our preaching is vain. 2. Our faith is vain. 3. We are false witnesses. 4. We are all still lost in our sin. These are thoughts from [I Corinthians 15: 14-17](#).

What would be the value of preaching a lie or suffering for something that never happened!? More important, if Christ did not rise from the grave, we have no hope of eternal life! How could a dead Savior honestly say that those who believe in Him will “never perish” ([John 3:16](#)).

On the other hand, “now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept” ([15:20](#)). He rose first; believers will rise after Him.

Paul’s argument here is basically this: how could a risen, holy, eternal, loving Savior not offer eternal life!?

Paul continues by sharing illustrations in [15:35-44](#). He is again refuting the argument that there can be no resurrection from the dead (15:35). Obviously, seeds are dead before they spring forth with life (15: 36) and what comes forth is something quite different from

what was originally sown (15:37-38): “And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body

that shall be, but bare grain. It may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.”

Paul goes on to say that the resurrection of the bodies of believers should be likened to the sowing of seeds in the ground. “So also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” ([I Corinthians 15:42-44](#)). Jesus Himself likened the sowing of seed to the preaching of the Gospel in [Matthew 13](#).

Then Paul describes Jesus as a “second Adam”: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven” ([I Corinthians 15:45-47](#)).

Paul is using simple illustrations to emphasize the glorious truth of eternal life in a glorified body. A natural picture-- Seeds are sown as lifeless, yet they produce grain by God’s power. A picture from history-- Adam sinned; that fact caused depravity in all and therefore death. Jesus, however, came as a man Who produces life because He rose again!

Next, Paul explains an important theological truth. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” ([I Corinthians 15:50](#)). We cannot save ourselves, but those who believe in Jesus “shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” ([I Corinthians 15:51](#)). Jesus’ resurrection causes this miracle to take place “in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” ([I Corinthians 15:52](#)).

Paul concludes by offering great hope. “For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must Paul on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, Which giveth us the victory

through our Lord Jesus Christ” ([I Corinthians 15:53-57](#)). Such great hope surely has a practical application: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” ([I Corinthians 15:58](#))!

**[II Corinthians 4:10-11](#)**. *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are*

*always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

It would be an understatement to suggest that Paul had experienced considerable pain and difficulty in his ministry.

Consider the circumstances he endured:

Although many have the idea that he was “dynamic,” he was not a good speaker. “His speech is contemptible” ([II Corinthians 1:10](#); see also [Acts 20:9-12](#)).

He was not physically very strong ([II Corinthians 10:10](#)).

He eventually learned to trust the Lord, no matter what kind of financial situation he faced: “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” ([Philippians 4:12-13](#)).

This trust extended to his physical needs as well as his financial needs: “*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: For My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong*” ([II Corinthians 12:7-10](#)).

It is fairly clear that Paul had a serious eye problem. Some feel this may have been the “thorn in the flesh” mentioned in [II Corinthians 12](#). “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me” ([Galatians 4:13-15](#); see also [Galatians 6:11](#), indicating that Paul had to write the signature to the epistle using large letters, apparently because of an eye problem).

He struggled mightily against sin at times, speaking of wanting to do what was right but not always doing it ([Romans 7](#)).

He had a spirit that would not allow itself to stop serving God even though the circumstances often were very difficult: “We're troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed” ([II Corinthians 4:8-9](#)).

He faced many dangers. “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in missions more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watching’s often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not” ([II Corinthians 11:23-29](#))?

He even faced a serious bout of depression but ended up trusting in God: “*For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Which raiseth up the dead*” ([II Corinthians 1:8-9](#)).

His confidence in the resurrection (note [II Corinthians 1:9](#)) was so strong that he was willing to endure all these things and even surrender his will to God: “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me*” ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

There surely could be *no doubt* that Paul was sincere when he declared, “*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” ([Philippians 1:21](#)).

How could one man suffer so much and yet maintain a vibrant spiritual life? Answer: “*For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh* ([II Corinthians 4:11](#))! Paul was so confident in His faith that he considered suffering to be an opportunity for the resurrected life of Jesus to empower him. Can any other fact of history have such power!?

We will continue these thoughts in the next newsletter.