

When Jesus Woke Up From the Dead



SABBATH—AUGUST 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, 9–19, 20–23; Luke 24:44–47; 2 Timothy 1:12.

MEMORY VERSE: “And if Christ did not rise [wake up from the dead], then what we told you was not true [correct], and what you believe is not true. . . . If Christ was not raised [if God didn't wake Jesus up from the dead], then what you believe is no good. Your wrong ways [sins] have not been forgiven” (1 Corinthians 15:14–17, WE).



Paul says that Jesus' resurrection is our only hope that God will save us.

DURING PAUL'S TIME, some people didn't believe in the resurrection. The resurrection is the time when the dead will wake up at the Second Coming. Why did people have a hard time believing in the resurrection? They saw what death did to the human body. They knew the body dried up and became dust. So, they didn't think the resurrection could happen. Many people think the same thing today.

Paul wants us to understand the Bible truth about the resurrection. This teaching is important. If Jesus didn't wake up from the dead, He is not who He said He is. If Jesus didn't wake up from the dead, the Cross has no power to change our lives. And our sins are not paid for. What hope do we have then? None. But our Lord woke up from the dead. He went to heaven. He will come back to take us home!

This week, we will look at 1 Corinthians 15 and its teaching on Jesus' resurrection. Some church members in Corinth were saying there is no resurrection. What is Paul's answer to this false teaching? Paul says that Jesus' resurrection is our only hope that God will save us.

**ANNOUNCING JESUS' RESURRECTION
(1 Corinthians 15:1–4)**

Paul starts 1 Corinthians 15 with the Good News that Jesus saves us from sin. What does Paul say about the Good News? (1) Paul preached the Good News to the Corinthians. (2) They believed it. (3) But now they must hold on tight to it. (4) Then God can save them (1 Corinthians 15:1, 2). Jesus' resurrection is important to our being saved (also read Romans 10:9, 10). As we saw, the resurrection is the time when people will wake up from the dead. The resurrection is an important part of the Good News. If we reject Jesus' resurrection, we really reject our faith in Jesus.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Luke 24:44–47; and Romans 1:1–4. What do these verses teach about the resurrection?

In 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, we read a short explanation about Paul's message. Notice how Paul says, "Christ [Jesus] died as a sacrifice [offering] for our sins. The Bible already said how that would happen" (1 Corinthians 15:3, EASY). Does "the Bible" in this verse mean certain verses in the Old Testament or the whole Old Testament? It doesn't matter. What's important is that Jesus' death and resurrection keep God's Old Testament promises.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:2, 11. Why does Paul include the idea of believing with preaching in these verses?

Before we can announce that Jesus woke up from the dead, we first must believe in His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:5–8 give us Bible proof that many people saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead. Many of these people were alive when Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:6). In this letter, Paul is really saying, "Go ask these people what they saw." So Paul was very sure that Jesus woke up from the dead.

The people who saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead were witnesses. That's why Jesus said they were " 'the people who have seen what has happened here' " (Luke 24:48, EASY).

What are our reasons for believing in Jesus' resurrection? Also, what other things do we believe, even if we didn't see them happen?



The people who saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead were witnesses.

OUR ONLY HOPE! (1 Corinthians 15:9–19)

In 1 Corinthians 15:9–19, Paul explains why we must not reject Jesus' resurrection. The resurrection was the time when Jesus woke up from the dead. Without the resurrection, we have no hope now or in the future.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:9–19. What do we lose if Jesus didn't wake up from dead?



**Without the resurrection,
we have no hope now or
in the future.**

Most non-Jews didn't believe in the resurrection. The Greeks believed that the spirit flew off to wherever the dead go when the body died. So, Paul starts 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 with a question that shows his surprise: "What? How can some of you say that there is no resurrection?" (1 Corinthians 15:12, writer's translation). Paul has a hard time understanding the people who don't believe in the resurrection. Many people saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:5–8). Worse, if Christians don't believe in the resurrection, they have no hope. If Jesus is in the grave, God can't forgive our sins.

If there is no resurrection, then Paul says: (1) Jesus didn't wake up from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:13, 16). (2) Our preaching is empty, without any promise (1 Corinthians 15:14). (3) Our faith also is empty. (4) We are false witnesses. (5) Our faith is useless (1 Corinthians 15:17). (6) Our sins aren't forgiven (1 Corinthians 15:17). And (7) the dead continue to sleep in their graves (1 Corinthians 15:18).

If the resurrection is a false teaching, our preaching and our faith are useless (1 Corinthians 15:14). So, if Jesus is not alive, our faith is a lie. Why? Because without the resurrection, God can't forgive our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). If so, we are false witnesses. If Jesus didn't wake up from the dead, we are lying to people when we tell them the Good News that Jesus can save them from their sins (1 Corinthians 15:15).

How can we understand 1 Corinthians 15 if the dead fly off to heaven (or to hell) right away after they die? Why is the teaching that the dead sleep so important for us to understand?

JESUS WAS THE FIRST (1 Corinthians 15:20–23)

Jesus' resurrection is real. As we saw already, the resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead. Yes, the resurrection happened. So, we can be sure that everyone who died in Jesus will wake up from the dead at the Second Coming (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–23. What does Paul mean when he says that Jesus “was the first one” (verse 20, WE)?

Jesus is named “the first one.” That’s because He is proof that the dead in Christ Jesus will wake up from the grave at the Second Coming (1 Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 20:5, 6). Jesus will bring the kingdom back to God the Father. Then the earth will be under God’s control again (1 Corinthians 15:25–28). Paul says that Jesus will put Himself under God’s control (1 Corinthians 15:28). How will Jesus do that? To answer this question, we must compare Jesus with Adam. Jesus became a second Adam to save us from sin (1 Corinthians 15:45). But Jesus will give Himself completely to the Father to serve Him. The first Adam didn’t do that.

In 1 Corinthians 15:29–34, Paul continues to talk about Jesus’ resurrection. Again, Paul says that rejecting this teaching is silly. Paul uses the teaching of baptism to help us understand what he is saying. Baptism is a symbol of our relationship with Jesus in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12). If Jesus didn’t wake up from the dead, then why do we get baptized? We can understand Paul’s thinking. What is hard to understand is his words about Christians who got baptized for people “who have already died” (1 Corinthians 15:29, EASY). What does Paul mean?

Does this verse mean that people got baptized for dead people who didn’t know Jesus? Did they get baptized because they thought that it would help save these people who died without knowing Jesus? Of course not! Some people decided to get baptized so that they could see their dead loved ones again at the resurrection. Also, some people chose to get baptized because they wanted to live the same as the Christians who died in Jesus. So, people didn’t get baptized **for** the dead. They got baptized **because** of them.

Think about Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 1:12. Why was Paul so sure about the future? How can we be, too?



Baptism is a symbol of our relationship with Jesus in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12).

A NEW BODY (1 Corinthians 15:36–41)



But our resurrected bodies will be made for our life in heaven and on the new earth. Our new bodies can't die.

In 1 Corinthians 15:35–39, Paul gives us a short talk about the resurrected body. The resurrected body is the body that Jesus will give us when we wake up from the dead.

Paul starts his short talk with two questions: (1) “How does God raise [wake up] dead people, to make them alive again?” And (2) “What kind [type] of body will they have?” (1 Corinthians 15:35, EASY). These questions are answered in 1 Corinthians 15:36–49.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:36–41. How do these verses answer the questions in 1 Corinthians 15:35?

Paul uses three examples to help his readers understand what happens at the resurrection. As we already saw, the resurrection is the time when God’s people will wake up from the dead at the Second Coming. (1) Paul’s first example compares the body to a seed. The body is the same as a seed that first must die. Then the seed can become a plant. This change is a miracle. Paul’s teaching is plain: the resurrection is a miracle from God. (2) Next, Paul talks about how God gave animals and people different types of bodies to live on this earth. In the same way, God will give us new bodies for our lives in heaven and on the new earth. (3) In Paul’s final example, he talks about the body we will have when we wake up from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:40–42). We will have “very beautiful” bodies (1 Corinthians 15:43, EASY). The resurrected body will be much more beautiful than our bodies now.

Paul compares the bodies we have now with our resurrected bodies. The bodies we have now are made for life on this earth. Our bodies die. They are weak and can sin. But our resurrected bodies will be made for our life in heaven and on the new earth. Our new bodies can’t die. They are powerful and spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:40–44). Paul uses the same Greek word “sōma” for both our bodies now and our resurrected body later. But our new bodies won’t be the same as the ones we have now. Praise the Lord!

Paul doesn’t use the word “spiritual” (EASY) to mean we won’t have bodies. In Philippians 3:21, Paul says that Jesus “will change these weak bodies that we have now on this earth. He will make them become strong and beautiful, like [the same as] his own body that he has in heaven” (EASY). We will have real bodies. But they won’t get sick or die.

OUR FINAL WIN OVER DEATH (1 Corinthians 15:54–57)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:54–57. What do these verses teach us about our final win over death?

Paul starts the last part of 1 Corinthians 15 with a surprising teaching: “Our weak human bodies cannot go to heaven, to join God in his kingdom there. Our human bodies will die. They cannot share in something that will continue for ever” (1 Corinthians 15:50, EASY). Many Bible readers think Paul is teaching that we won’t have bodies in heaven. But that isn’t what the verse teaches. Just as we saw in 1 Corinthians 15:42–49, Paul is comparing the bodies we have now (or even our dead bodies) with the resurrected body. The resurrected body is the body we will have when Jesus wakes us up from the dead. The bodies we have now are ruined with sin and can die. But the resurrected body is clean from sin and is everlasting (1 Corinthians 15:50, 53, 54). In short, Paul is saying that our bodies need to be changed in a big way first before we can go to heaven.

Paul uses the words “bodies of flesh and blood” (1 Corinthians 15:50, ERV) to mean the natural bodies that we have now. In these bodies, we can choose to sin. In Jewish writings, the words “flesh and blood” mean sinners. That’s why our bodies must be changed when Jesus comes back. He must make them perfect and holy to match our hearts.

So, when Jesus changes us (1 Corinthians 15:54), He gives us beautiful new bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51–53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17). “When that happens, what is written in the Bible will be true: ‘God has won against death. He has destroyed it completely!’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:54, EASY). Then God’s people will sing this song: “ ‘Death, you can no longer win! Death, you no longer have any power to hurt us!’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:55, EASY). These things happen at the Second Coming (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). How long will it take Jesus to change our bodies? Paul tells us: “In a very short time, no longer than it takes for the eye to close and open, the Christians who have died will be raised [resurrected; made alive]. It [the change] will happen when the last horn sounds. The dead will be raised [will wake up] never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52, NLV).

Life is so short. How does this idea help us to learn to be patient while we wait for Jesus to come back?



“The dead will be raised [will wake up] never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52, NLV).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “God’s People Delivered,” pages 635–652, in *The Great Controversy*.

“The earth shook as the Son of God spoke to His people who were asleep in their graves. Jesus commanded them to wake up! Right away, the dead woke up. They came out of the graves with beautiful bodies that were everlasting. They said, ‘We won! We won the fight against death and the grave! Death, you can no longer win! Death, you no longer have any power to hurt us!’ (See 1 Corinthians 15:55.) Then the living saints and the saints who woke up from the dead shouted together with joy. When many of God’s people died, their bodies were sick with disease. Now they wake up with bodies that are filled with everlasting health and strength. The living saints change in a second. The change happens as fast as the eye can open and close. Then the living saints will be lifted into the air with the saints who woke up from the dead. Together, they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, this meeting will be so beautiful! Death separated friends. Now these friends unite again. Nothing will separate them again.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, pages 411, 412, adapted.



“Death separated friends.
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again.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about the people who saw Jesus after His resurrection. The Resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead (Acts 1:22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:33; Acts 5:30–32). Jesus woke up from the dead around two thousand years ago. How can we be His witnesses for the Resurrection today?
- ② Jesus’ resurrection is an important part of the Good News (1 Corinthians 15:1–4). Without the resurrection, our preaching about the Good News wouldn’t matter (1 Corinthians 15:14). Why? What does your answer tell you about why Jesus’ resurrection is so important?
- ③ In class, let’s talk about what happens after we die. What does the Bible teach us? Why does 1 Corinthians 15 do us no good if God’s people go to heaven right away when they die?

MEETING PEOPLE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HELP

(To protect the people in the story, we are not sharing their names, the name of the writer, or where the story happens.)

My wife and I prayed for God to help us start a home church in the country where we served as Bible workers. In this country, our lives are in danger because we are Christians. We knew only that people from other countries would come to the church in the beginning. But we had faith that God would send us local people whose hearts He was working on. We waited a long time, but God answered our prayers!

I met Salman when I needed a taxi driver. Salman drove me where I needed to go. We started a conversation during the trip. Soon we started to talk about religious topics. Salman said that he became a Christian two years ago after he searched online for answers to his spiritual questions.

Salman and I slowly became friends. I asked him if he was part of a community of Christians or had any Christian friends. I was surprised when he said he never met a Christian before! My wife and I invited him to our home worship meetings. Salman came. Then he started to come every week. We were happy when he got married and brought his wife. She also fell in love with Jesus.

Not long after, Salman decided to tell his brother Faisal about his love for Jesus. To Salman's surprise, Faisal told him he already was a Christian! Faisal explained that he also tried to find answers online to spiritual questions. In his search for answers, Faisal gave his heart to Jesus.

Salman told Faisal about our home church. Faisal joined our group. He believed with all his heart that God brought us together. Not long ago, Faisal visited a church because he wanted Christian fellowship. But the church leader told him not to come back because people from his country were a different religion. The law did not allow Faisal to be there. We praised God for helping us give Faisal a place of fellowship.

After two years of praying, Salman and Faisal decided to tell their family about their faith in Jesus. With God's help, their parents accepted their decision. But other family members rejected them.

Please pray that Faisal and Salman and his wife will continue to grow in their relationships with Jesus. Please also pray that the Holy Spirit will help my wife and me to meet more of God's children in this country.

At Global Mission, we protect the names of our Bible workers who live and work in countries where their faith in Jesus puts their lives in danger. To learn more about Global Mission's church-planting work, visit bit.ly/GMPioneers.

INSIDE Story



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