1 Corinthians chapter 15

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What is the first fruits that Paul calls the first fruits?

"Firstfruits" is an important theological term used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 to describe the resurrection of Christ. The term is derived from the agricultural and religious contexts of the Old Testament and has rich symbolic meanings. In the Old Testament, the first fruits were the part of the earliest ripening or harvest of crops or livestock that were offered to God as an offering of thanksgiving and worship. This offering represents the "first part" of the entire harvest, symbolizing God's sovereignty and blessing of the entire harvest, and foreshadowing God's provision for the rest of the harvest. The Feast of Firstfruits, one of the three major Jewish feasts (associated with Passover and Pentecost), is held after the first Sabbath after Passover and is celebrated with the offering of the first grains.

Paul borrows this Old Testament concept to compare the resurrection of Christ to the "firstfruits," meaning that Christ was the first to rise from the dead, foreshadowing the future resurrection of all believers. Paul said, "But Christ has risen from the dead as the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." The resurrection of Christ is emphasized here as the beginning and guarantee of the resurrection of mankind. Christ was the first to rise in a glorious, incorruptible body, and His resurrection marked the beginning of a new creation, breaking the power of death. Like the firstfruits offered to God, Christ's resurrection is a perfect sacrifice to God, proving that God accepted His sacrifice for sin atonement (Romans 4:25).

Paul emphasizes that the resurrection is orderly: Christ is the firstfruits, followed by the believer's resurrection at His return (15:23). It represents the beginning of a new era, from the death brought by Adam to the life brought by Christ. Paul uses the first fruits in 1 Corinthians 15 as the foundation for the resurrection of believers. Remind believers that the resurrection is not only about the eternal existence of the soul, but also about the change and renewal of the body.

Revelation 14:4 mentions 144,000 people offering "firstfruits" to God, symbolizing the redeemed community. Believers are encouraged to hold on to hope in the face of death and trials.

1 Corinthians 15 is the chapter that discusses the core doctrine of the resurrection. Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians of his gospel: Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again on the third day, and appeared to many (including Peter, the Twelve Apostles, many believers, and Paul himself), according to the Bible. He emphasized that this gospel is the foundation of salvation and that believers should hold on to this truth. Paul responds to some denial of the resurrection of the dead by pointing out that if there is no resurrection and Christ is not resurrected, then faith is empty, believers are still alive in sin, and there is no hope for the dead. He emphasized that the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of faith. Paul explains that Christ is the "first fruit" of the resurrection, foreshadowing the future resurrection of all believers. Christ's resurrection triumphs over sin and death, and eventually He gives all authority to God for His ultimate sovereignty over all. Paul refers to the practice of baptizing the dead at that time (the exact meaning is unknown) and points out that such an act is meaningless without the resurrection. He also mentioned that he took daily risks for the sake of the gospel, calling on believers to live godly lives without being influenced by false teachings. Paul replied, "How do the dead rise again?" In what body did you resurrect?" question. He used the seed as a metaphor: the present body is like a seed, and the resurrected body in the future is glorious, incorruptible, and spiritual. It shows that after the resurrection, believers will have a heavenly image. Paul reveals a mystery: in the last days, believers will be instantly changed, the decayed body will become incorruptible, and death will be swallowed up by victory. He quoted Old Testament passages (Isaiah 25:8, Hosea 13:14) to declare that the sting of death had been removed by the resurrection of Christ. Finally, he encouraged believers to be steadfast and dependent on the Lord's labor, for the hope of the resurrection makes all labor not in vain. This chapter emphasizes that the resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and that the resurrection of Christ not only proves His victory but also guarantees believers' future resurrection and eternal life. Paul encourages believers to be steadfast in their faith and to live a life of hope.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank You for giving Jesus Christ the first fruits, who rose from the dead and opened the hope of eternal life for us. Lord, because of His resurrection, we no longer fear death, because we know that those who trust in You will rise with Christ to eternal glory.

Lord, please help us to be strengthened every day by the hope of resurrection, to hold on to our faith in the midst of difficulties, and to look to Your promises in the midst of disappointment. May our lives be like spiritual firstfruits, offered before You, accepted by You, and become witnesses of Your glory.

Lord, please also inspire us to preach the gospel of the resurrection so that more people may know Jesus Christ and receive this incorruptible, incorruptible, and everlasting life. May we live in this hope, not only waiting for the glory to come, but also living with holiness and faith today.

In the name of the resurrection and victory of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

1 Corinthians 15

Amplified Bible

The Fact of Christ's Resurrection

15 Now brothers and sisters, let me remind you [once again] of the good news [of salvation] which I preached to you, which you welcomed *and* accepted and on which you stand [by faith]. **2** By this *faith* you are saved [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose], if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain [just superficially and without complete commitment].

3 For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], **4** and that He was buried, and that He was [bodily] raised on the third day according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], **5** and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the [a]Twelve. **6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, but some have fallen asleep [in death]. **7** Then He was seen by James, then by all the apostles, **8** and last of all, as to one [b]untimely (prematurely, traumatically) born, He appeared to me also. **9** For I am the least [worthy] of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I [at one time] fiercely oppressed *and* violently persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the [remarkable] grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not without effect. In fact, I worked harder than all of the apostles, though it was not I, but the grace of God [His unmerited favor and blessing which was] with me. **11** So whether it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed *and* trusted in *and* relied on with confidence.

12 Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that [c]some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; **14** and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain [useless, amounting to nothing], and your faith is also vain [imaginary, unfounded, devoid of value and benefit—not based on truth]. **15** We are even discovered to be false witnesses [misrepresenting] God, because we testified concerning Him that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised, either; **17** and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless *and* powerless [mere delusion]; you are still in your sins [and under the control and penalty of sin]. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19** If we who are [abiding] in Christ have hoped only in this life [and this is all there is], then we are of all people most miserable *and* to be pitied.

The Order of Resurrection

20 But now [as things really are] Christ has *in fact* been raised from the dead, [and He became] the first fruits [that is, the first to be resurrected with an incorruptible, immortal body, foreshadowing the resurrection] of those who have fallen asleep [in death]. **21** For since [it was] by a man that death *came* [into the world], it is also by a Man that the resurrection of the dead *has come*. **22** For just as [d]in Adam all die, so also [e]in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then those who are Christ's [own will be resurrected with incorruptible, immortal bodies] at His coming. **24** After that comes the end (completion), when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after He has made inoperative *and* abolished every ruler and every authority and power. **25** For Christ must reign [as King] until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy to be abolished *and* put to an end is death. **27** For He (the Father) has put all things in subjection under His (Christ's) feet. But when He says, "All things have been put in subjection [under Christ]," it is clear that He (the Father) who put all things in subjection to Him (Christ) is excepted [since the Father is not in subjection to His own Son]. **28** However, when all things are subjected to Him (Christ), then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One (the Father) who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all [manifesting His glory without any opposition, the supreme indwelling and controlling factor of life].

29 Otherwise, what will those do who are being [f]baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people even baptized for them? **30** [For that matter] why are we [running such risks and putting ourselves] [g]in danger [nearly] every hour [if there is no resurrection]? **31** I assure you, believers, by the pride which I have in you in [your union with] Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily [I face death and die to self]. **32** What good has it done me if, [merely] from a human point of view, I [h]fought with wild animals at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised [at all], let us eat and drink [enjoying ourselves now], for tomorrow we die. **33** Do not be deceived: [i]"Bad company corrupts good morals." **34** Be sober-minded [be sensible, wake up from your spiritual stupor] as you ought, and stop sinning; for some [of you] have no knowledge of God [you are disgracefully ignorant of Him, and ignore His truths]. I say this to your shame.

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body will they come?" **36** You fool! Every time you plant *seed* you sow something that does not come to life [germinating, springing up and growing] unless it *first* dies. **37** The seed you sow is not the body (the plant) which it is going to become, but it is a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or some other grain. **38** But God gives it a body just as He planned, and to each kind of seed a body of its own [is given]. **39** All flesh is not the same. There is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. **40** There are also heavenly bodies [sun, moon and stars] and earthly bodies [humans, animals, and plants], but the glory *and* beauty of the heavenly is one kind, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. **41** There is a glory *and* beauty of the sun, another glory of the moon, and yet another [distinctive] glory of the stars; and one star differs from another in glory *and* brilliance.

42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. The [human] body that is sown is perishable *and* mortal, it is raised imperishable *and* immortal. **43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in strength; **44** it is sown a natural body [mortal, suited

to earth], it is raised a spiritual body [immortal, suited to heaven]. As surely as there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual *body*. **45** So it is written [in Scripture], "The first man, Adam, became a living soul (an individual);" the last Adam (Christ) *became* a life-giving spirit [restoring the dead to life]. **46** However, the spiritual [the immortal life] is not first, but the physical [the mortal life]; then the spiritual. **47** The first man [Adam] is from the earth, earthy [made of dust]; the second Man [Christ, the Lord] is from heaven. **48** As is the earthly man [the man of dust], so are those who are of earth; and as is the heavenly [Man], so are those who are of heaven. **49** Just as we have borne the image of the earthly [the man of dust], [j]we will also bear the image of the heavenly [the Man of heaven].

The Mystery of Resurrection

50 Now I say this, believers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *nor* be part of the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable (mortal) inherit the imperishable (immortal). **51** Listen very carefully, I tell you a mystery [a secret truth decreed by God and previously hidden, but now revealed]; we will not all sleep [in death], but we will all be [completely] changed [wondrously transformed], **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at [the sound of] the last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [who believed in Christ] will be raised imperishable, and we will be [completely] changed [wondrously transformed]. **53** For this perishable [part of us] must put on the imperishable [nature], and this mortal [part of us that is capable of dying] must put on immortality [which is freedom from death]. **54** And when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then the Scripture will be fulfilled that says, "Death is swallowed up in victory (vanquished forever). **55** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin [by which it brings death] is the law; **57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory [as conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord [always doing your best and doing more than is needed], being *continually* aware that your labor [even to the point of exhaustion] in the Lord is not futile *nor* wasted [it is never without purpose].

detailed explanation of 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 and its **theological significance** in English:

📖 I. Chapter Overview and Explanation

1. The Core of the Gospel (15:1–11)

- Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel he preached: *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again on the third day."*
- He lists many witnesses to the resurrection: Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, more than 500 brothers, James, and finally himself.
- **Key point**: The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of Christian faith, backed by eyewitnesses.

2. If There Is No Resurrection, Faith Is Useless (15:12–19)

- Some in the Corinthian church denied the resurrection of the dead.
- Paul argues that if there's no resurrection:
  - Christ hasn't been raised.
  - Preaching is useless.
  - Faith is in vain.
  - We are still in our sins.
  - The dead in Christ are lost.
- **Key point**: Resurrection is central—without it, Christianity collapses.

3. Christ the Firstfruits (15:20–28)

- Paul declares Christ *has* been raised—the "firstfruits" of those who have died.
- Just as death came through Adam, resurrection comes through Christ.
- In the end, Christ will defeat all powers and hand the kingdom to God the Father.

4. Baptism for the Dead and Daily Risk (15:29–34)

- Paul mentions a mysterious practice: "baptism for the dead" (likely a symbolic act showing hope in resurrection).
- He speaks of daily suffering for the gospel—useless if there's no resurrection.
- He warns believers not to be misled and to stop sinning.

5. Nature of the Resurrected Body (15:35–49)

- Some question: *How are the dead raised? With what kind of body?*
- Paul compares it to a seed: what is sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable.
- The resurrected body will be:
  - Incorruptible
  - Glorious
  - Powerful
  - Spiritual (not meaning "non-physical," but transformed)
- Believers will bear the image of the heavenly man (Christ), not just the earthly man (Adam).

6. Final Victory and Exhortation (15:50–58)

- Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom.
- Paul reveals a "mystery": not all will die, but all will be changed in a moment, at the last trumpet.
- Death will be defeated: *"Death, where is your sting?"*
- The chapter ends with a strong encouragement: *"Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord… your labor is not in vain."*

✝️ II. Theological Significance

1. The Resurrection as the Core of Christian Faith

- Without Jesus' resurrection, the gospel has no power.
- His resurrection confirms His divine identity and guarantees the future resurrection of believers.

2. Resurrected Body = Glorified Body

- The transformation of the body shows God's power to redeem not only the soul but the entire human being.
- This is not resuscitation (like Lazarus) but transformation into an incorruptible, heavenly body.

3. Adam and Christ: Two Representatives

- Adam brought death to all; Christ brings life to all who are in Him.
- This supports the theological idea of *federal headship* (representative humanity).

4. Eschatological Hope

- The "last enemy"—death—will be destroyed.
- Believers live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet," awaiting the full realization of God's kingdom.

5. Practical Encouragement

- Doctrine leads to action: Paul ends not with theory, but with application.
- Because of the resurrection, Christians can live courageously, knowing their service is eternally valuable.

🙏 III. Summary

1 Corinthians 15 is **one of the most important chapters in the Bible**. It teaches that:

- Christ's resurrection is historically verified and theologically essential.
- Our future resurrection is guaranteed through Christ.
- The resurrected body is glorious, imperishable, and spiritual.
- Death will be ultimately defeated.
- Our present efforts in Christ are not in vain.

This chapter gives **profound hope**, **clear doctrine**, and **practical motivation** for every Christian.