

1 CORINTHIANS

15:12-28



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Introduction - What if? What if Rod Walker hadn't caused the fumble on the goal line or what if Roosevelt Williams was a little bit faster and the Bears scored another touchdown? Would the Bears have won the game? What if Dante Culpepper's touchdown hadn't been called back? Would the Vikings have won or would they have found another way to lose? What if there had been different judges for the Olympic figure skating? What if the marathon runner had trained just a little harder? What if the gymnast hadn't gotten sick on the day of competition? Things could have been different. There could be different people in possession of a gold medal. Athletic history could be different.

What if things were different in your life? What if you had gone through that intersection just a little sooner? Would the car that ran the red light have hit you? What if you had decided to go to a different school? Would you be in a different career? What if you hadn't met that person who became your wife? Would you be married now? What if things had been different when you received your last call? Would you be serving somewhere else at this time? There can be a lot of "what ifs." Our personal history would be very different if we had taken a different path. Our past would change our present.

What if there is no resurrection of the dead? That "what if" makes the other "what ifs" mentioned above pale in comparison. That "what if" not only changes our past and our present, but also our future. That "what if" not only changes this life, but also the life to come. What if this life is all that there is? What if the grave will be our final resting place? What if our soul lives, but our body simply becomes an earthworm buffet? What if we are reincarnated after death, then what will we come back as?

What if Jesus is still in the tomb? What if the disciples stole Jesus body and made up the Easter story? What if Jesus was just unconscious before he came out of the grave? What if Christ's resurrection is only a spiritual one? What if the historical critics are right about the Bible? Our life would be extremely different. Our future would be in doubt. Our questions would remain unanswered.

Join me as we turn to the Word of God today and have our doubts stilled. We don't place our faith in "what ifs" or "could bes" but on the sure foundation of Christ's resurrection and in his faithful Word. The text before us is truly a text for all seasons; the three pericopes use these verses during the Epiphany season, on Easter Sunday and the Last Sunday of Pentecost.

1 Corinthians 15:12-14

12 Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν
τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; 13 εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν,
οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 14 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ
κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,

Words and Grammar

κηρύσσεται Pre. Pass. Ind. - This is a continued action.

- 1) to be a herald, to officiate as a herald 1a) to proclaim after the manner of a herald
- 1b) always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be

	listened to and obeyed
	2) to publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done
	3) used of the public proclamation of the gospel and matters pertaining to it, made by John the Baptist, by Jesus, by the apostles and other Christian teachers
ἐγήγερται	Perf. Pass. Ind. - The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.
	1) to arouse, cause to rise 1a) to arouse from sleep, to awake 1b) to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life 1c) to cause to rise from a seat or bed etc. 1d) to raise up, produce, cause to appear 1d1) to cause to appear, bring before the public 1d2) to raise up, stir up, against one 1d3) to raise up i.e. cause to be born 1d4) of buildings, to raise up, construct, erect
λέγουσιν	Pre. Act. Ind. - The present shows that they were continuing to spread this message that there is no resurrection. This wasn't a slip of the tongue but a persistent false teaching.
	1) to say, to speak 1a) affirm over, maintain 1b) to teach 1c) to exhort, advise, to command, direct 1d) to point out with words, intend, mean, mean to say 1e) to call by name, to call, name 1f) to speak out, speak of, mention
νεκρῶν	1) properly 1a) one that has breathed his last, lifeless 1b) deceased, departed, one whose soul is in Hades 1c) destitute of life, without life, inanimate
	2) Metaphor for 2a) spiritually dead 2a1) destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, because given up to trespasses and sins 2a2) inactive as respects doing right 2b) destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative
ἀνάστασις	1) a raising up, rising (e.g. from a seat)
	2) a rising from the dead 2a) that of Christ 2b) that of all men at the end of this present age 2c) the resurrection of certain ones history who were restored to life (Heb. 11:35)
κενόν - κενή	1) empty, vain, devoid of truth 1a) of places, vessels, etc. which contain nothing 1b) of men 1b1) empty handed 1b2) without a gift 1c) metaphor for destitute of spiritual wealth, of one who boasts of his faith as a transcendent possession, yet is without the fruits of faith 1d) metaphor of endeavors, labors, acts, which result in nothing, vain, fruitless, without effect 1d1) vain of no purpose
πίστις	1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it 1a) relating to God 1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ 1b) relating to Christ 1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God 1c) the religious beliefs of Christians 1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same
	2) fidelity, faithfulness 2a) the character of one who can be relied on

Translation - 1 Corinthians 15:12-14 But if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead. But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, then both our preaching is empty and our faith is empty.

Commentary - This section outlines the dangers of the "what if." First take a look at the verbs. The message proclaimed by Paul and the other apostles was that there is a resurrection from the dead, and that Christ "had been raised" ἐγήγερται. Notice how Paul uses the perfect passive indicative when speaking about Christ's resurrection. "The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated."¹ For him Christ's resurrection was an undeniable fact. It was a done deal.

When presenting this message, Paul uses the word "preach" κηρύσσεται. "Preach" means to announce or make known. A messenger (herald) would preach (announce) what was given to him. He wouldn't make up some story. He wouldn't proclaim his own thoughts and ideas. He announced what was given to him from someone else. Imagine how you would feel if you sent a singing telegram to someone, and the messenger changed the message. Imagine how you would feel if the postal worker opened your mail and changed your letter. I don't think that you would use that messenger again because he wasn't trustworthy. This verb is a present passive indicative to indicate that this preaching wasn't something that they just did in the past, but was a message that they were continuing to proclaim. They were still preaching this message even though they were facing opposition. The resurrection was a message that was being preached, continued to be preached, and needed to be preached in the future. The passive focuses our attention on the message and not the messenger.

The message of their opponents was that there is no resurrection. When presenting their message, Paul doesn't use the word for "preach" or for "bearing witness." It simply says that they "said it" λέγουσιν. They weren't delivering a message from someone else, as a herald would do. They weren't giving testimony, as a witness would do. They were simply speaking. A person can say anything that he wants. It is easy to spread rumors and lies. It is simple to make up a story and spread urban legends. That is exactly what they were doing. They didn't have any backing for their message. It was not based on any truth or on any facts. They were simply speaking words that came from their own sinful mind and imagination. They were sort of like the modern day Internet. There you can say anything that you want without any backing or proof. How many times haven't you received an e-mail that you later discovered was a total hoax? This verb is a present indicative. The message that was spoken by Paul's opponents wasn't a slip of the tongue nor was it a one-time occurrence in the past. This was something that was continuing on their part. They were persistent errorists.

This message was spoken only by "some of them" ἐν ὑμῖν τινες. This message wasn't accepted or spread by all the Christians at Corinth. In this deeply divided congregation there were still some who believed and proclaimed the truth. That is why Paul still referred to them as brothers and saints in the introduction of his letter, but there were "some of them" who rejected the resurrection. They were following the common Greek views of that day. Some Greeks believed in the afterlife, but they only saw that applying to the soul. They didn't believe in a bodily resurrection. The body was only for this life, and not for the hereafter. The body would simply decay and return to dust. "Philosophers such as

Plato taught a dualistic view of nature which insisted that everything spiritual is intrinsically good and everything physical is intrinsically evil. Such a viewpoint considered the concept of a resurrected body to be repugnant, since it regarded the afterlife as an opportunity for the spirit to escape from one's prison-like body. Seneca expressed this dualistic view about death when he said: "When the day shall come which shall part this mixture of divine and human here where I found it, I will leave my body, and myself I will give back to the gods." The Greek dramatist, Aeschylus, related the typical pagan attitude toward bodily resurrection when he said "the dust has drunk the blood of man, and he's once dead, there's no uprising."ⁱⁱ D. Philipp Bachmann suggests, "The doubters in Corinth declared the resurrection to be impossible for this reason, that it is contrary to nature, and they considered the resurrection of Christ an isolated occurrence with which they could connect no consequences for anyone else."ⁱⁱⁱ

What if "some of them" were right? What if there is no resurrection from the dead? Paul answers the question in the next two εἰ δὲ clauses. Notice how he repeats the exact phrase from the preceding sentence to show what life would be like if there is no resurrection from the dead. If there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised. He is dead. He is still in the grave. He was just a prophet who came to an untimely end. He isn't any different than Muhammad or Gandhi. He was not the Messiah. He was not true God.

What if "some of them" were right? Then Paul's preaching κήρυγμα ἡμῶν and our preaching would be "empty" κενόν. More will be mentioned about κενόν in a later verse. Without the resurrection, our preaching simply becomes a history lesson. We can tell people about a man named Jesus. He lived on earth. He taught some good things. He helped other people. He died. Without the resurrection, our preaching simply becomes a moral lesson. We can use Jesus only as an example to follow, and not as a Savior to lead us. We can tell people to be nice, to help people, to forgive others, but why? Without the resurrection why would I want to live a good life? Without the resurrection our preaching is empty. It contains nothing of value.

What if "some of them" were right? Then our "faith" πίστις is just as empty as our preaching. We are placing our faith in a bold faced liar. He told his disciples that he would die and rise again. If "some of them" were right, Jesus only got it half right. He died, but that was the end. Jesus is a total failure. He didn't accomplish anything in his life. If there is no resurrection, then death is victorious, the curse of sin still haunts us, and the devil has defeated us. If this life is all that there is, then we better eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we may die. Doesn't that reflect the attitude of our world today? If we are just highly evolved animals, then we don't have a soul. If we don't have a soul, then this life is all that there is. If this life is all that there is, we better enjoy it while we can. That is what it would be like if there is no resurrection from the dead. If "some of them" were right, the Bible is just a book full of lies that might as well only be used to dress up our coffee table, press and dry colorful leaves, and hold the family tree. It is just another book, nothing else. It is empty.

Notice in this whole section Paul never uses the name of Jesus. He refers to the second person of the Trinity as Christ. In this chapter Christ is used 15 times, and Jesus only twice. Also in this section the Greek word νεκρός is used. This word means being in the state of lifelessness. The root means corpse. The term θάνατος carries with it the sense of death as a punishment for sin. It includes all the misery that afflicts the world as a result of rebellion against God. It is used in the next verses.

Other Translations - Amplified Bible (AMP) - 14 And if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain [it amounts to nothing] and your faith is devoid of truth and is fruitless (without effect, empty, imaginary, and unfounded).

New Living Translation (NLT) 12 **But tell me this**--since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead?

Worldwide English (New Testament) (WE) - 12 **You have been told** that Christ was raised from death. How can some of you say that dead people do not rise again?

Pastoral Uses - Formula of Concord on page 848 of the Triglotta quotes this section to show some of the errors that were refuted by the apostles. It is a reminder to us that there will always be persistent errorists. It was true in the apostle's day. It was true in Luther's day. It is true in our day. It will continue until the last day. It is also a reminder to us as pastors not to be afraid of refuting error. Will our message be eagerly accepted? Maybe not, but it is our responsibility to continue to speak the truth in love. Hymn 544 put it well.

Preach you the Word and plant it home
To those who like or like it not,
The Word that shall endure and stand
When flow'rs and mortals are forgot.

1 Corinthians 15:15-19

15 εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν εἰπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. 16 εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 17 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν. 18 ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. 19 εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἔλκεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν.

Words and Grammar

εὐρισκόμεθα

Pre. Pass. Ind.

1) to come upon, hit upon, to meet with 1a) after searching, to find a thing sought 1b) without previous search, to find (by chance), to fall in with 1c) those who come or return to a place

2) to find by enquiry, thought, examination, scrutiny, observation, to find out by practice and experience 2a) to see, learn, discover, understand 2b) to be found i.e. to be seen, be present 2c) to be discovered, recognized, detected, to show one's self out, of one's character or state as found out by others (men, God, or both) 2d) to get knowledge of, come to know, God

3) to find out for one's self, to acquire, get, obtain, procure

ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν

Aor. Act. Ind.

1) to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation

	or inspiration 1a) to give (not to keep back) testimony 1b) to utter honorable testimony, give a good report 1c) conjure, implore
ἤγειρεν	Aor. Act. Ind. - Take notice of the active. "God raised Christ."
ἐγείρονται	Pre. Act. Ind. - Paul speaks about this as a simple fact.
ἐγήγερται	Perf. Pass. Ind. - See note above.
ἀπώλοντο	2 nd Aor. Mid. Ind. 1) to destroy 1a) to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin 1b) render useless 1c) to kill 1d) to declare that one must be put to death 1e) metaphor to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell 1f) to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed 2) to destroy 2a) to lose
κοιμηθέντες	Aor. Pass. Part. 1) to cause to sleep, put to sleep 2) Metaphor for 2a) to still, calm, quiet 2b) to fall asleep, to sleep 2c) to die
ἠλπικότες	Perf. Act. Part. 1) to hope 1a) in a religious sense, to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence 2) hopefully to trust in
ψευδομάρτυρες	1) a false witness
ματαία	1) devoid of force, truth, success, result 2) useless, of no purpose
ἁμαρτίαις	Compare to other words for sin 1) equivalent to 264 1a) to be without a share in 1b) to miss the mark 1c) to err, be mistaken 1d) to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong 1e) to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin 2) that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act 3) collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many
ζωῆ	Compare to other words for life 1) life 1a) the state of one who is possessed of vitality or is animate 1b) every living soul 2) life 2a) of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God, and through him both to the hypostatic "logos" and to Christ in whom the "logos" put on human nature 2b) life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, in the portion even in this world of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be consummated by new accessions (among them a more perfect body), and to last for ever.
	Zoa - existence, having death as its antithesis bios - the period, means, manner, of existence. Hence the former is more naturally used of animal, the later of men; zoology, biography. NT usage exalts 2222 and tends to debase 979.
ἐλεεινότεροι	1) to be pitied, miserable

Translation - 1 Corinthians 15:15-19 - And we also are found by inquiry as false witnesses of God because we testified about God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. But if Christ has not been raised our faith is aimless. You are still in your sins and then those fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are the most miserable of all people.

Commentary - This section continues to outline the dangers of the "what if." It shows how this affects us all. If there is no resurrection, everything changes. Notice the aorist active indicative verbs in this section. You see another example of repetition in these verses. Also notice the aorist passive participle and perfect active participles that are used here. These were events that all happened in the past.

If "some of them" were right, that there is no resurrection, then the conclusion that we must draw is that the apostles were false witnesses $\psi\epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\mu\acute{\omicron}\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\epsilon\varsigma$. If you "carefully investigate" $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\sigma\kappa\acute{\omicron}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$ their message, you will see that what they preached and what their opponents said were opposing messages. They were total opposites. You can't believe both of them. If they are right, then Paul and the apostles are liars. If Paul and the apostles are right, then their opponents are liars. This verb gives us the picture of the judge listening to witnesses brought by the defense and by the prosecution. The testimony that he hears is totally opposite. He knows that one side is lying. The judge must carefully investigate so that he can determine who is telling the truth and who is lying.

The apostles were "testifying" $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$ to what they knew was true. They were called into this imaginary court to bring their testimony. They were not just preaching a message from someone else, but were witnesses of these events. They were proclaiming without any reasonable or even unreasonable doubt that there is a resurrection and that Christ had been raised. They were witnesses of these things, and like a good witness should, they were speaking the truth. They spoke the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They didn't make this up. They didn't give their own ideas. They testified that God raised Christ from the dead $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota \acute{\eta}\gamma\epsilon\iota\rho\epsilon\nu \tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$. (Notice how in this instance Christ is the object of the resurrection. Compare this to John 2:19 where Jesus claims to raise himself from the dead: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." Here we see that Jesus is the subject of the resurrection. As true God, Jesus is both the subject and the object of the resurrection.) They also testified that there is a resurrection for all people. There is no question about what testimony they proclaimed to the world.

What if the testimony of "some of them" was right? Then there is no resurrection and Christ has not been raised. You can't have one without the other. You have a repetition of some of the thoughts that were expressed in the previous verses. If the dead are not raised, then Christ is not raised. If Christ is not raised, then the dead are not raised either. Christ's resurrection and our resurrection are so closely knit together that if you pull out the one thread then the whole garment comes apart at the seams. The same thing is true about the Bible. If you pull this one tread out of the Bible, it doesn't take long for the whole Bible to unravel. That is what we are seeing happen in the liberal Christian churches of our day, many of them even denying the bodily resurrection of Christ.

What if "some of them" were right? Then our faith is aimless. He uses the word ματαία in this instance. In the previous verse he used the word κενόν. ματαία means devoid of force or truth. It is useless. It has no purpose. It has no direction. The book "Synonyms of New Testament" makes this distinction, "But if κενος thus expresses the emptiness of all which is not filled with God, ματαίος, as observed already, will express the aimlessness, the leading to no object or end, the vanity, of all which has not Him, who is the only true object and end of any intelligent creature, for its scope."^{iv} Without the assurance of a risen Savior and without the hope of our resurrection, our faith is aimless. We travel aimlessly though this life without any destination. We run the race without a finish line. We are helplessly lost.

What if "some of them" were right? Then our sins aren't paid for. You are still in your sins ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν. The catechism uses this verse under question 201 to assure us that Jesus is our redeemer and to assure us that our sins are forgiven. If there is no resurrection, then there is no assurance that our sins are paid. Compare this to a cash register receipt. Without a cash register receipt we can't prove that we have purchased an item in a store. Without a cash register receipt, we can be accused of shoplifting and end up in jail. Without Christ's resurrection we have no proof that our sins are paid. Without Christ's resurrection, we can be accused of being sinners and end up in hell. Martin Luther stresses the connection between our forgiveness and Christ's resurrection: "There can be neither forgiveness of sin nor any salvation if one does not believe the article of the resurrection of Christ; for in it lies all the power of faith and eternal life."^v

What if "some of them" were right? Then those who "sleep" κοιμηθέντες are "destroyed" ἀπώλοντο. The word for "destroy" means to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin. Instead of death being a temporary sleep, it is an everlasting end. Instead of death being the road to eternal life, it is a dead end street. Without the assurance of our resurrection we can no longer view death as a comforting sleep, but only as the grim reaper looking for someone to destroy. We can no longer view the grave as a temporary resting place, but as our final home. How would you like to deliver that message at the next funeral you have for that faithful child of God? Without Christ's resurrection our funeral services would be a time merely to reminisce without any hope. It would be a time to look back without ever looking ahead. It would be a time to celebrate this life, rather than celebrate life in heaven.

What if "some of them" were right and our hope in Christ is only for "this life" ζωῆ. If this life is all that there is, then we have no hope at all. This word not only refers to physical life but real life, that is, a living relationship with God. If our hope is only now, then we of all people are most "miserable" ἐλλεινότεροι. I like the way Dr. George Stoeckhardt pointed out how miserable and foolish we would be. "If our Christian hope extends no farther than the life on earth, then we Christians are in a bad plight, in fact, worse off than every other man on earth. For Christians for Christ's sake deny themselves, invite the enmity of the world, will not enjoy the pleasures of sin in this world, make themselves martyrs for Christ. If there are no benefits to hope for beyond this present life, then Christians surely commit a moral mistake by refusing the pleasures of this life. Then the heathen who indulge in the pleasures of the world are far better off, and they outsmart the Christians by far."^{vi} If "some of them" would be right, we better go to our homes, quit our calling as pastor and enjoy what the world has to offer. We had better pack our bags, take a trip to Vegas, and enjoy this life before it comes to an end. Sad to say, that is how many people view life in this world. You can see that we have plenty of work to do before Jesus returns.

Other Translations - AMP - 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is mere delusion [futile, fruitless], and you are still in your sins [under the control and penalty of sin]; 18 And further, those who have died in [spiritual fellowship and union with] Christ have perished (are lost)!

Pastoral Uses - The catechism quotes this section in question 201. It uses this verse to assure us that Christ is our redeemer; our sins are paid for in full. This is one of the three assurances that Christ's resurrection gives us. I think that the other two assurances can also be developed from this section of Corinthians that Jesus is true God and that we too will be raised. The early church viewed Christ's resurrection with such great importance that they celebrated Easter for the whole church year. Without Christ's resurrection and without the hope of our resurrection all is truly lost. Verses 12, 16-20 are used in the pericopes under the Sixth Sunday of Epiphany.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20 Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. 21 Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν· 22 ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. 23 ἕκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ·

Words and Grammar

ἐγήγερται	Perf. Pass. Ind. - See note above.
κεκοιμημένων	Perf. Pass. Part. - Those who have fallen asleep in the past still do have hope.
ἀποθνήσκουσιν	Pre. Act. Ind. - Present speaks of death as a simple fact. There are only two things that we can be certain of - death and taxes. 1) to die 1a) of the natural death of man 1b) of the violent death of man or animals 1c) to perish by means of something 1d) of trees which dry up, of seeds which rot when planted 1e) of eternal death, to be subject to eternal misery in hell
ζωοποιηθήσονται	Fut. Pass. Ind. - The future verb reminds us that we have a bright future. 1) to produce alive, beget or bear living young 2) to cause to live, make alive, give life 2a) by spiritual power to arouse and invigorate 2b) to restore to life 2c) to give increase of life: thus of physical life 2d) of the spirit, quickening as respects the spirit, endued with new and greater powers of life 3) Metaphor of seeds quickened into life, i.e. germinating, springing up, growing
ἀπαρχή	1) to offer firstlings or firstfruits 2) to take away the firstfruits of the productions of the earth which was offered to God. The first portion of the dough, from which sacred loaves were to be prepared. Hence term used of persons consecrated to God for all time. 3) persons superior in excellence to others of the same class

θάνατος

νεκρῶν

1) the death of the body 1a) that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul and the body by which the life on earth is ended 1b) with the implied idea of future misery in hell 1c) since the nether world, the abode of the dead, was conceived as being very dark, it is equivalent to the region of thickest darkness i.e. figuratively, a region enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and sin

2) metaphor for the loss of that life which alone is worthy of the name, 2a) the misery of the soul arising from sin, which begins on earth but lasts and increases after the death of the body in hell

3) the miserable state of the wicked dead in hell

4) in the widest sense, death comprising all the miseries arising from sin, as well physical death as the loss of a life consecrated to God and blessed in him on earth, to be followed by wretchedness in hell

τάγματι

1) that which has been arranged, thing placed in order

2) a body of soldiers, a corps

3) band, troop, class

παρουσία

1) presence

2) the coming, arrival, advent 2a) the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God

Translation - 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 - But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death is through a man so also the resurrection of dead is through a man. Therefore as in Adam all die, thus also in Christ all will be made alive. Each in his own order - first Christ, then those who are Christ's in his coming...

Commentary - So much for the "what if." This section shows us that the "what if" is not true.

"But now" **Νυνὶ δὲ** - isn't that little phrase wonderful. There aren't any more "what ifs." "Some of them" aren't right. There aren't any more doubts. Paul uses those two little words to simply proclaim the truth. Christ has been raised from the dead **ἐγήγερται**. The perfect tense reminds us that this is completed in the past, once and for all. It does not need to be repeated. It is finished. Jesus' work is done. Our sins are paid for. Jesus lives.

He is the "first fruits" **ἀπαρχῆ**. In the Old Testament the "first-born of man and cattle were sacred to the Lord, so also the first production of a vineyard (Lev. 19:23-25) and the first of the annual production of grain, wine, olive oil, sheared wool (Ex. 23; 16, 34:22, Deut. 18:4), and the first of coarse meal (Num. 15:20-21), of honey and of all the produce of the land (2 Chron. 31:5; cf. Prov. 3:9) were the Lord's."^{vii} The first fruits not only were sacred to the Lord, but they were also a reminder that the rest of the harvest was still to come. More fruits were coming. Jesus is the first from the grave, but more are to come. Lenski points out, "Its connotation is that of certainty: as certainly as Christ was raised, so certainly shall we be raised. For as the first sheaf cannot be harvested and offered unless the entire harvest is ripe and ready, so Christ cannot be raised unless all of us believers are ready to be raised also. God sees us as being thus ready. The interval of time does not count with him."^{viii}

Christ is the first fruits of them that "sleep" ΚΕΚΟΙΜΗΜΕΝΩΝ. He slept, but he woke up again. Believers have gone to sleep in the past, but they too will wake up again. If the world is around long enough, we also will sleep, but we will wake up again. "Sleep is what Israel called death (Gn 47:30; Dt 31:16), What the Savior called it (Mt 9:24; Jn 11:13), what Luke (Ac 7:60), John (Ac 13:36), Peter (2 Pe 3:4) and Paul many other times (1 Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 51) term it. So we, too, may refer to a Christian's death as a 'sleep.'"^{ix} Sleep isn't a bad thing. Many times we even look forward to it. I hope that you don't feel that way now. There are times when you look ahead to that Sunday afternoon nap. You had a long morning. You had a nice meal. A little nap feels good. You know that later you will wake up refreshed. You will be ready to go again. Because Christ has been raised and because we have the promise of our resurrection, we too can view death as a little nap. The hymn writer expressed it well.

Asleep in Jesus! Blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep,
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus! Peaceful rest,
Whose waking is supremely blest;
No fear, no woe, shall dim that hour
That manifests the Savior's pow'r.

Asleep in Jesus! Oh, how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet,
With holy confidence to sing
That death has lost his venom'd sting!

Asleep in Jesus! Oh, for me
May such a blissful refuge be!
Securely shall my ashes lie
And wait the summons from on high.

Paul bases this testimony upon fact. The first fact is that death came into the world through man γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος. God created a perfect world. He gave Adam and Eve life. He planted the tree of life in the middle of the Garden. Adam and Eve ruined everything. Adam sinned, and hot on its heels came death. In this verse he uses θάνατος for death. This term has more of the picture of separation. As I mentioned earlier, this term carries with it the sense of death as a punishment for sin. It includes all the misery that afflicts the world as a result of rebellion against God. That is what Adam's sin brought into God's sinless world.

Adam shared this with everyone else ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες. We don't have to look too hard to see sin around us. We read about it when we read about wars and rumors of wars. We read about it when we read about the crimes and acts of terrorism that are happening all over the world. We also don't have to look too hard to see death ἀποθνήσκουσιν. We see death as a fact. Death is a present verb in this verse. It is something that we all do. "Sin doesn't just lead to a distant future punishment. Our inherited sinful nature puts on all the corruption that flows from it, puts us into a constant state of dying."^x They say that the only thing that you can be sure of is death and taxes. Well, I have known a few people who have escaped taxes, but I have never met anyone who has escaped death. It doesn't make any difference if you are rich or poor. It doesn't make any difference if you are young or old. Death is a fact. Cemeteries are getting fuller. Obituaries are always in the paper. We all sin and we all die. The key word is "all."

The second fact is that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν. Yes, it is a fact. The Old Testament predicted it. In Psalm 16:9-10 we are told, "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay." Jesus promised it. He told his disciples that he would suffer and die, but that he would also rise again. He told his enemies that he would give

them the sign of Jonah that he would destroy the temple and raise it up again. Jesus gave the promise. Jesus fulfilled the promise.

It is a fact. Paul and the apostles were eyewitnesses. He appeared to his disciples during the 40 days following his resurrection. He appeared to them individually and in groups as large as 500 at once. Just look at the list of witnesses that are mentioned earlier in this same chapter. He wanted to assure them that his body wasn't stolen. He wasn't simply unconscious. He wasn't some ghost. His dead body once again lives.

Therefore, it is also a fact that we too will rise ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες. In these verses he is speaking specifically about Christians. He talks about "those who are in Christ." In this verse he also uses the term "made alive" ζωοποιηθήσονται. This word always has a positive connotation. Unbelievers will have a resurrection also, but their resurrection will result in eternal separation from God. Only the believers will truly rise to live.

He will raise them "each in his own turn" ἕκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι. This word shows that God has a certain order. The military can't operate with a whole army of privates, nor can it operate with a whole army of generals. There is a certain order that must be followed. That is reflected in this word. He has raised Christ already. He is the first fruits of many to come. In our turn ἔπειτα, we too will be raised. Again you can see who receives this promise. It is "those who are Christ's at his coming" οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ. It is a reminder that this comfort and assurance isn't given to all. The Bible doesn't teach any form of universalism. This hope and comfort comes to those who are Christ's. It is those who have placed their faith in Jesus as their Savior. The living Savior will return to gather his living children.

Other Translations - AMP - 22 For just as [because of their union of nature] in Adam all people die, so also [by virtue of their union of nature] shall all in Christ be made alive.

NLT - 20 But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become **the first of a great harvest** of those who will be raised to life again. 22 Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But **all who are related to Christ**, the other man, will be given new life.

Pastoral Uses - The catechism also uses this section under question 201 to assure us that he will raise us from the dead. This is a second thing that Christ's resurrection assures us. This makes death merely a sleep from which we too will wake. The most obvious use of this section is at a funeral or when someone is facing death.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 25 δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῆ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. 26 ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος· 27 πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. 28 ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ᾗ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

Words and Grammar

παραδιδῶ

2nd Aor. Act. Subj. - Notice the use of the subjunctives in these verses. The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility and potentiality. The action described may or may not occur, depending upon circumstances. Conditional sentences of the third class ("εἰ" + the subjunctive) are all of this type, as well as many commands following conditional purpose clauses, such as those beginning with "ἵνα."

- 1) to give into the hands (of another)
- 2) to give over into (one's) power or use 2a) to deliver to one something to keep, use, take care of, manage 2b) to deliver up one to custody, to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death 2c) to deliver up treacherously 2c1) by betrayal to cause one to be taken 2c2) to deliver one to be taught, molded
- 3) to commit, to commend
- 4) to deliver verbally 4a) commands, rites 4b) to deliver by narrating, to report
- 5) to permit allow 5a) when the fruit will allow that is when its ripeness permits 5b) gives itself up, presents itself

καταργήσῃ

Aor. Act. Subj.

- 1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative 1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency 1b) to deprive of force, influence, power
- 2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish 2a) to cease, to pass away, be done away 2b) to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one 2c) to terminate all intercourse with one

θῆ

2nd Aor. Act. Subj.

- 1) to set, put, place 1a) to place or lay 1b) to put down, lay down 1b1) to bend down 1b2) to lay off or aside, to wear or carry no longer 1b3) to lay by, lay aside money 1c) to set on (serve) something to eat or drink 1d) to set forth, something to be explained by discourse
- 2) to make 2a) to make (or set) for one's self or for one's use
- 3) to set, fix establish 3a) to set forth 3b) to establish, ordain

εἴπῃ

2nd Aor. Act. Subj.

βασιλείαν

Pre. Act. Inf.

- 1) to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign 1a) of the governor of a province 1b) of the rule of the Messiah 1c) of the reign of Christians in the millennium
- 2) Metaphor to exercise the highest influence, to control

καταργεῖται

Pre. Act. Ind. - See note above.

ὑπέταξεν	Aor. Act. Ind. - Notice the different forms of the same verb used in these verses. Aorist shows the one time action. 1) to arrange under, to subordinate 2) to subject, put in subjection 3) to subject one's self, obey 4) to submit to one's control 5) to yield to one's admonition or advice 6) to obey, be subject A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".
ὑποτέτακται	Perf. Pass. Ind. - The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.
ὑποτάξαντος	Aor. Act. Part. - Notice who the singular participle is used here. It is referring to God or Jesus.
ὑποταγή	2 nd Aor. Pass. Subj.
ὑποταγήσεται	2 nd Fut. Pass. Ind. - In the future Jesus too will be subject to God.
ὑποτάξαντι	Aor. Act. Part. - The plural is used here. Is it referring to everything else expect God.
<hr/>	
τέλος	1) end 1a) termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be (always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time) 1b) the end 1b1) the last in any succession or series 1b2) eternal 1c) that by which a thing is finished, its close, issue 1d) the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose 2) toll, custom (i.e. indirect tax on goods)
βασιλείαν	1) royal power, kingship, dominion, rule 1a) not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom 1b) of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah 1c) of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom 2) a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king 3) used in the N.T. to refer to the reign of the Messiah
πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν	See Ephesians 1:16-23 1) beginning, origin 2) the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader 3) that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause 4) the extremity of a thing 4a) of the corners of a sail 5) the first place, principality, rule, magistracy 5a) of angels and demons
πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν	1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases 1a) leave or permission 2) physical and mental power 2a) the ability or strength with which one is endowed, which he either possesses or exercises 3) the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege) 4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed) 4a) universally 4a1) authority over mankind 4b) specifically 4b1) the power of judicial decisions 4b2) of authority to manage domestic affairs 4c) metonymically 4c1) a thing subject to authority or rule 4c1a) jurisdiction 4c2) one who possesses authority 4c2a) a ruler, a

- human magistrate 4c2b) the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates 4d) a sign of the husband's authority over his wife 4d1) the veil with which propriety required a women to cover herself 4e) the sign of regal authority, a crown
- δύναμιν 1) strength power, ability 1a) inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth 1b) power for performing miracles 1c) moral power and excellence of soul 1d) the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth 1e) power and resources arising from numbers 1f) power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, hosts
- ἐχθροὺς 1) hated, odious, hateful
2) hostile, hating, and opposing another 2a) used of men as at enmity with God by their sin 2a1) opposing (God) in the mind 2a2) a man that is hostile 2a3) a certain enemy 2a4) the hostile one 2a5) the devil who is the most bitter enemy of the divine government
- πόδας αὐτοῦ 1) a foot, both of men or beast 1a) often in the orient, one put his foot on vanquished 1b) of disciples listening to their teacher's instruction are said to be at his feet
- δῆλον 1) clear, evident, manifest

Translation - 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

...then the end: when he would hand over the kingdom to God and to the Father, when he would abolish all rule and all authority and power. Therefore it is necessary that he reign until all enemies have been placed under his feet, the last enemy destroyed is death. For all things have placed under his feet, but when he said that all has been placed under him, it is clear that except the one who put all under him. When he placed all under him then he the son shall be placed under the one placing all things under him in order that God is all in all.

Commentary - The fact of Christ's resurrection and the fact of our resurrection bring us to the final victory. The final chapter will take place after the resurrection has taken place. After the resurrection, the end will come, the end of this age, the end of the last times, the end of Christ's reign. Εἶτα τὸ τέλος All things will be brought to a completion. This won't take place after a 1,000-year reign on earth. It will be an immediate result of Christ's return and our resurrection.

When the end comes, he "will hand over the kingdom" παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν. In a certain sense Christ's reign will then come to an end on the last day. When the end comes, there is no need for our King to continue to protect his people. They will be safely tucked away in our Father's house. The seventh petition will reach its fulfillment. Our righteous King will have delivered his people from every evil of body and soul. There is no need for him to continue to be our Mediator. Jesus, the one and only Mediator between God and man, will have completed his work. We will be one with our heavenly Father. There will be no need for him to continue to carry out his work as our Prophet. The Gospel will have brought the last member of God's elect into God's kingdom.

When the end comes, he will hand over all under his control καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. It will include all authorities. These authorities include all the forces in the spiritual world - the devil and his angels will be totally under his control ἀρχὴν. It will

include all rulers of earth. Those powerful men and women of this earth are totally under his control ἐξουσίαν. It will include all power in heaven and earth. The most powerful storm and the most powerful bomb are under his control δύναιεν. These three terms are also included in Ephesians 1:21-23 when speaking about his ascension. They are under his control now. He controls all of these things until he returns on judgment day, then all these things will be handed over to his Father in heaven.

Before the end comes, it is necessary for him to rule. δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν. He rules by protecting his people. He goes into battle for us. Right now the battle is still waging. The devil has been crushed but is still roaring. Sin has been paid for but is still bringing pain and misery into our lives and the lives of all people. Death has been defeated but it is still bearing its ugly teeth. He reigns as our Mediator. He continues to plead our cause until he returns. He is the one God and one Mediator between God and man. He doesn't need the help of his mother Mary and the other saints. He continues his work as our Prophet by sending out his people to proclaim the truth of his resurrection. There are still sheep who must be brought into the fold.

The last enemy to be defeated is death ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος. I like the way George Stoeckhardt described it, "At His suffering and death Christ has already broken the power of death. Still death rages on in the world as a mortally wounded wild beast, destroying men, even Christians, right and left. But already the end is in sight for the reign of terror. At the end of the world, on the Great Day, death will be utterly destroyed. Christ will then undo the work of death as concerning His own. He will raise up their dead bodies unto everlasting life."^{xi} Death is not the natural progression of our life. It is our enemy, the curse of sin. His victory over death will be evident to all when he carries out the resurrection on the last day.

In the end all will be placed under his feet. Ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ Notice the picture of the king placing his feet on the neck of his enemies. When a king was defeated in battle, the victorious king would place his feet on his neck as a sign of his victory. Notice how the Psalmist describes it in Psalm 110:1-2: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies." The unholy three - sin, death and the devil are under his feet. The powerful angels, the powerful rulers, the powerful weapons are all under his feet. The war has been won. The celebration will come.

All things are placed under his feet except God, of course. δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. Christ, the God-man, will reign over all things in heaven and earth. The only exception is God. "By pointing to the one exception, he makes more emphatic the rule. At the same time Paul wants to teach us more about the person of Christ and the person of God the Father. In two places in Article VIII of the Thorough Declaration of the Formula of Concord (paragraphs 55 and 70) and also in that confessions Catalog of Testimonies (section I) this passage is cited with reference to the true scriptural and Lutheran teaching on the person of Christ and the communication of attributes."^{xii} God is the one who placed him in this position of authority. God is the one who is over all things. The God-man is equal, but never above God. Jesus is equal to the Father, "I and the Father are one" (John 14:28), and he is also less than the Father, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα Once again we are reminded of the mystery and the miracle of Christ's being.

After the victory, he will hand them over to the Father. He will hand over all rule, authority and power. "When the last chapter of human history has been written, he will offer to his heavenly Father the trophies of his victory and the spoils of his triumph. Every enemy, even that last great enemy, death, will have been overcome and put under his feet. With his mission accomplished, his victory won, the Son will turn over his kingdom to his Father and will reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit eternally."^{xiii} He will hand over the rulers of angels and demons. He will hand over the rulers of earth, all those great and mighty rulers in every country from every time will be handed over to his Father. He will hand over the physical and spiritual powers of all time.

God will be complete. He is all in all. ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν παῖσιν God and his people will be one. Again we have one of those miraculous mysteries of our God. In the end all will belong to our God. There will be no more evil. There will be no more sin. There will be no more suffering. The old order of things will have passed away. We will return to the perfect creation that God has made in the beginning. He will once again be able to look out upon his creation, and say that it is very good. Martin Luther makes this comment on these verses, "However, when Christ will have delivered the Kingdom to God the Father and all governments will have been abolished and God will be All in all, then faith and hope will cease, and love will be perfect and eternal."^{xiv}

"What Paul says is plain: after all things are at last subjected to Christ, and he himself subjects himself to God, then God shall be supreme, 'all in all,' in one perfect harmony with not a hand or a voice in the whole universe raised against him. Christ has disposed of the wicked and the devils...the new heavens and the new earth shall know them not."^{xv}

Other Translations - AMP - 24 After that comes the end (the completion), when He delivers over the kingdom to God the Father after **rendering inoperative and abolishing every** [other] rule and every authority and power. 28 However, when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also subject Himself to [the Father] Who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all [**be everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life**].

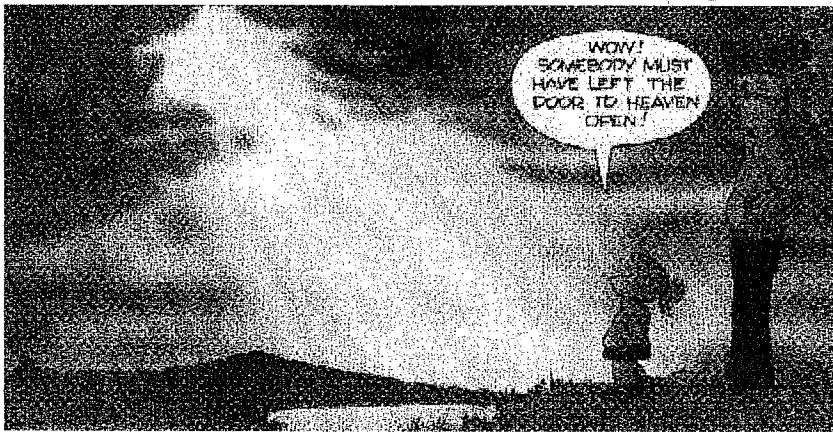
NLT - 24 After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having put down **all enemies of every kind**. 28 Then, when he has conquered all things, the Son will present himself to God, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, **will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere**.

WE - 24 After that the end will come. Christ **will hand over the ruling power to God the Father. Christ will stop all other rulers, and everyone who has any rights and power**. 25 Christ must rule until God has all power over all his enemies. 27 The holy writings say, 'God has put all things under Christ.' But it does not mean that God is under Christ. God is the one who put all things under him.

Pastoral Uses - The catechism uses this section under question 204 to show Jesus' office of King. As our King he now is protecting us from all our enemies in order to bring us safely to his heavenly kingdom. This section is also quoted in the Triglot (pages 1032, 1040, 1112). It speaks about the person of Christ. It shows that God's glory has been communicated to the man Christ. It shows the personal union between God and man. It also shows the majesty of his human nature. Perhaps this can also be used as proof of the third proof of Christ's resurrection - that he is true God. Verses 20-28 are used in the pericopes - series A Last Sunday after Pentecost.

Conclusion - For us Christians there aren't any "what ifs." I don't know if God is a Viking fan or a Packer fan, but he is a fan of his saints. He has given us the final victory. I don't know if God cares which athletes win a gold medal. I do know that a victory wreath awaits his people in heaven. It wasn't an accident that you married your spouse or reminded single. It wasn't an accident that you were called into the ministry or that you are serving in your present position. It was all part of his plan.

There are certainly no "what ifs" when he comes to the resurrection. Jesus does live. We will live too. The Bible speaks the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to convince us of the improbable, of the impossible. There is a resurrection. Jesus lives and so will we. The victory is won. We too will be raised - no doubt about it. Jesus' tomb is empty and our tomb will be too. We have eternal life now and not just in the future.



Yes, Jesus has opened the door to heaven. Notice how the hymn writer reminds us of our victory now and eternally.

Jesus lives! I know full well
Nothing me from him shall sever,
Life nor death nor pow'rs of hell
Part me now from Christ forever.
God will be a sure defense;
This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And now is death
But the gate to life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath
When I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
"Jesus is my confidence!"

Endnotes

- ⁱ Logos Software Grammar
- ⁱⁱ Richard Balge, "Sermon to the Epistles, Series B" (NPH 1993) 88
- ⁱⁱⁱ E.H. Wendland, "Sermon to the Epistles, Series A" (NPH 1986) 380
- ^{iv} Richard Trench, "Synonyms of New Testament" (Eerdmann Publishing 1978) 181
- ^v Ewald Pless, "What Luther Says" (Concordia 1959) Volume 1 181
- ^{vi} George Stoeckhardt, "Exegetical Lectures on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians" (Concordia 1969) 96
- ^{vii} Merrill Tenney, "The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible" (Zondervan) 541
- ^{viii} Richard Lenski, "Commentary on First Corinthians" (Augsburg 1963) 662
- ^{ix} Wendland 381
- ^x Balge 136
- ^{xi} Stoeckhardt 99
- ^{xii} Wendland 383
- ^{xiii} Carlton Toppe, "People's Bible" (NPH 1987) 148
- ^{xiv} Pless Volume 3 712
- ^{xv} Lenski 685

