



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 232”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **1Corinthians 15:49**:

49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

Paul makes a seminal statement in **1Corinthians 15:19**:

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

It is of the utmost importance to realize that the life that we live is not really what life is all about. Yes, we have careers and families, we have pensions and possessions, we have churches and evangelism, but this life, the life that we are living right now, in which all these things are prominent is not really what life is all about.

Living in this life is life being the pitcher in the bullpen. We may be throwing the ball at 90 or 100 miles per hour, but we are really just warming up. We are just preparing our arms so that we can get on the actual field and throw the ball with a batter in the batter's box.

Success in this life is wonderful. I pray to the Lord every day that my son's business plans might come to fruition. I thank the Lord every time my son calls home to tell Marie and me of another mountain he has climbed in the world of business. And I particularly rejoice when his wife video calls us to show us how their children are developing.

However, I am aware, from personal experience, that all the success in this world is just that. It is just success in this world. One may be as successful as one can, but the truth is that no one has ever seen a Brinks truck following a hearse.



I once talked to an undertaker at a graveside in which the body of the person being buried was bedecked with the jewelry that they regularly wore in life for the viewing at the funeral home and at the church. The undertaker informed me that one of the reasons that they do not put the lid on the vault and bury the body while the family is still graveside is that they never bury anything worth money.

Whatever we do in this life, we are going to leave in this life. And the period of our lives is circumscribed by the Lord. **Psalm 90:10** tells us:
10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Oh, this life is temporary. And Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:19**:
19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

The historian, John A. T. Robinson, to whose theories I subscribe, tells us that the entire New Testament was written and recorded before 70 AD, when the Jewish nation fell at the Siege of Masada. That would make it over 2030 years since the writings that we are discussing were actually written. And the reason that we have to speculate as to when these things were done is that none of the people involved are alive so that we can ask them directly. Oh, this life is temporary. And it appears that when we pass off the scene, life goes on without us.

But fear not, noble Christian. The Apostle Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:20–26**:
20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.
22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.
23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.
24 Then comes the end, when [Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.
25 For [Christ] must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.
26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

While the Apostle Paul denotes that death is our enemy, he also tells us that that enemy, death, will be overcome. Paul uses earthly examples to explain. He asks us, in **1Corinthians 15:35–38**:
35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"
36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.



37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

Oh, thanks be to God, the harvest is different than the seed. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead with a different body than that which Joseph of Arimathea buried in his new tomb to show us that there is a difference between that which is sown and that which grows from that which is sown. Paul continues, in **1Corinthians 15:39–41**:

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

That which grows from that which is sown is glorious. The seed of the rose plant sits in the hand as a negligible object, but throw it in the ground, and we cherish the glorious rose flower that comes from that same seed that we would never put in a vase or put on our table. And that same cycle of life exists for us, as the Apostle Paul informs us in **1Corinthians 15:42–43**:

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

We die from weakness, from disease and in pain and suffering. The bodies that we bury can no longer function as they did in their prime, have lost their function, required medicine to keep them going and finally reached the point in which the most extensive measures that man could take are insufficient to keep pain from overwhelming them and consciousness within them. I recently read a sermon in which the preacher's thesis was that our attachment to our mortal bodies is so strong that the Lord allows us to have pain to reduce our attachment to this life so that we will actually be ready to leave this life to go to the next one. But be that as it may be, the fact is that we have to go. This is a temporary situation, and until the Lord chooses to come back, we must be sown in order to be raised.

However, just as difficult as we find it to be sown, we will find it glorious to be raised. Paul informs us, in **1Corinthians 15:44–45**:

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Oh, Adam. Why, oh why did you eat from the tree of which God commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it? Your disobedience is the



source of our separation anxiety. Had you just left the fruit alone, we would not have the necessity to go through this change in our lives.

But thanks be to God, the Lord Jesus Christ came as the last Adam. The Lord Jesus Christ came to reverse the curse of sin and disobedience that Adam brought to the world. And the Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect and sinless life. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised the complete power of the Holy Spirit to rectify in sinfulness of man in ways that we will only know once we go through the transformation. The Apostle John tells us, in **John 21:25**:

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

Yes, we believe in the New Testament, but according to John, who both saw the events, read and wrote some of the chronicles of the New Testament, the half of that which the Lord Jesus Christ did in His earthly ministry has not been told.

The Lord Jesus Christ walked the earth with the power of the Holy Spirit that the Lord God intended man to have from the beginning. And although the Lord Jesus Christ exercised that Holy Spirit power, the Lord Jesus Christ did not come to exercise that power indefinitely. The Lord Jesus Christ was born from the womb of Mary, meaning, that He had a body even as we have. And His mortal body, like all mortal bodies, had to be sown to be raised. Paul informs us, in **1 Corinthians 15:46**:

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

Oh, there are no shortcuts, not even for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord God makes it absolutely clear, in **Ezekiel 18:4**:

4 “Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.

The wages of sin is death. But, wait a minute, preacher. I though you said that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect and sinless life. How is it that death impacts Him if He has no sin?

Well, my friend, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not the wages of His sin, but His death was the wages of your sin and the wages of my sin.

You don't understand? By way of explanation, let us review an Old Testament ceremony, from **Leviticus 16:3–5, 6–10, 15–16**:

3 “Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering.

4 He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore, he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.



5 And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

6 “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.

7 He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

15 “Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.

16 So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Aaron the priest and that long line of Jewish priests that came after Him released the scapegoat into the wilderness and offered the goat upon which the Lord’s lot fell as the sacrifice for the sins of the people.

The problem with this particular ceremony was rather than treating the ceremony with reverence, the ceremony became routine. And when the scapegoat ceremony became routine, sin became routine. I can see the Jewish nation sinning at will, because they checked their inventory and had plenty of bulls and goats to sacrifice.

And I am not the only one that can see it. The Lord God saw it in reality, and said, through the prophet Isaiah, in **Isaiah 1:11–20**:

11 “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.

12 “When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts?

13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.

14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.



15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

20 But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

But even the threat of the sword did not reform the Israelites. The Israelites clung, stubbornly, to both their sin and their sacrifices. There was no reasoning with the Israelites, even when the Lord God sent His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to provide an ocular and tactile demonstration of that which Israel could be if they would only turn from their wicked ways and follow Him.

But no. There was no turning. There was only rejecting.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to Bethany as the sisters of one of His beloved friend Lazarus were in bereavement. Lazarus died, and they surrounded his body with flowers, which they called spices, so that the mourners could come to the tomb and weep for Him. But Lazarus had been dead for so long that the scent of the flowers had faded, and the mourners were meeting at the sister's house.

Unlike the rest of the mourners, Jesus wanted to go to the tomb. But Martha, Lazarus' more practical sister, told Jesus that He was too late. **John 11:39** informs us:

39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

No, Jesus. Lazarus is dead. Not only is Lazarus dead, Lazarus is good and dead. This was not the situation of Jairus' daughter, who had so recently died that they had not even begun preparing her for burial. This was not the situation of the widows of Nain's son, who had just died and was on the way to the tomb. Lazarus was so dead that there was no coming back from this one. The undertaker has buried the body and put the lid on the crypt. It's over. There is no point in opening the tomb. The only thing we are going to get is a bad smell.

Oh, but the One that said **“Take away the stone.”** was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the One who can take a crooked stick and hit a straight lick. Only He can stand flatfooted and tiptoe at the same time. So, the



Lord prevailed upon them, and they moved the stone. **John 11:41–44** informs us:

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”

43 Now when [Jesus] had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”

44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

John 3:16–17 informs us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave them all reason to believe in Him. How could you not, after such a display as this? But listen to that which the Bible tells us, in **John 11:46–50, 53**:

46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man [Jesus] works many signs.

48 If we let [Jesus] alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,

50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.”

53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put [Jesus] to death.

What? Put Jesus to death? Let me repeat the words of Pontius Pilate before he condemned Jesus, “Why? What evil has He done?”

Well, brothers and sisters, it was not that Jesus did evil, it was that the Jews had the scapegoat to atone for their sins. They did not think that they needed a Savior, but they were absolutely sure that they needed to maintain their positions as the leaders of the Jewish nation. From their perspective, although the wages of sin is death, the death was that of a goat. So, they were willing, nay even desirous to put the Lord Jesus Christ to death; not for sin, but because He was threatening their positions as goat killers.

Thanks be to God; our perspective is a little different. Paul informs us, in **1Corinthians 15:46–49**:



46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

The Lord Jesus Christ bore the image of the man of dust for His death for sin. The trials, Jewish and Roman, the scourging, the trip up the Via Dolorosa and the nails were not that which made the Lord Jesus Christ take this journey as the man of dust. But it was the period, from the sixth through the ninth hour, in which the Lord Jesus Christ bore the encapsulated wrath of the Lord God, like the scapegoat released to die in the wilderness, and then that final period, after which the Lord Jesus Christ said, "It is finished", like the scapegoat sacrificed on the altar, that the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty that we owe for the sins the we have committed.

They buried Jesus, the man of dust, in Joseph's new tomb. But the Lord Jesus Christ rose on that first Easter Sunday morning, as He had become the Man from heaven.

Luke informs us, in **Acts 1:6–11**:

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked [Jesus], saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And [Jesus] said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

9 Now when [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

No bulls. No goats. And most importantly, we are charged to be the Lord Jesus Christ's witnesses. Oh, to be the Lord Jesus Christ's witnesses, we cannot live the same old way. We have to emulate His sinless example, and however unsuccessful we might be, we must continue to do so. Yes, the devil is constantly trying to discourage us because of our failures, but we must be changed by the Holy Spirit, follow the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ and utilize the power of the Holy Spirit in all that we endeavor to do.



The ceremonies are over. There is no scapegoat to release into the wilderness or sacrifice on the altar. Being the Lord Jesus Christ's witness does not just mean talking the talk, but walking the walk as well. And the Lord Jesus Christ has a reward for those who are His. **1Corinthians 15:50–58** informs us: **50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.**

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Our labor is not to put on the ephod, kill a goat and pour its blood out on the altar. Our labor is to actually change ourselves and endeavor to convince others to change so that we reverence the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and utilize the power of the Holy Spirit to emulate His example in our lives.

Even doing so, we should be aware that this corruptible must put on incorruption, even as the Lord Jesus Christ did. This mortal, which stops at the grave, must put on immortality. For it is God's will that we do so, as Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:20**:

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and it is the Lord's will that His many followers rise from the dead as well. The Apostle Paul informs us, in **Colossians 1:18–23**:

18 And [the Lord Jesus Christ] is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,



20 and by [the Lord Jesus Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself, by [the Lord Jesus Christ], whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now [the Lord Jesus Christ] has reconciled

22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head. We are the body. We are not the assembled observers of a ceremony performed periodically to atone for our sins, after which we relapse into sin mode with impunity until the next ceremony. No, we as Christians are part of the body and need to endeavor to function as such on an everyday basis. The difference is that of being a spectator of the game and being a player in the game.

Right now, we are playing in the minor leagues. We are in the “G” league. But one day, we are going to be called up to the franchise to sit next to the captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, and play with Him. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head, we are the body. But as long as we are flesh and blood, oh we await our promotion to the franchise, to the big team. The Apostle Paul informs us, in **Philippians 1:21–26:**

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,

26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

So, we wait. And as we wait, we continue to work. Not working to be saved, but working because we are saved, and desire to bring more and more people in to build up the body of Christ.

As our emulation of the Lord Jesus Christ improves, we attract those in our concentric circle of contact who, by the curiosity, want to find out how they can be like us. And then we have the opportunity to preach the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And as we do so, we join the Lord Jesus Christ as we defeat the last enemy, which is death. For there is no death for those who are in Christ. But



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there is another land, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. And where it is always “Howdy, Howdy”, and never good bye.

I will see my mother over there. Oh, I will see my father over there. But most of all, I will finally get to lay eyes on the One that died for me. So, as I close this sermon, I ask the Lord, for you and for me,

Jesus, keep me near the Cross. There's a precious fountain, free to all; a healing stream flows from Calvary's mountain.

Near the Cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever, till I reach that golden strand just beyond the river.

In the Cross, in the Cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

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