

“...strengthen thy brethren”



Luke 22:32

CHURCH OF CHRIST

of Genesee County

November 24, 2013

5284 Fenton Road, Flint Michigan 48507

Welcome All:

We are thankful to have you with us today. The Lord's church here is dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity, respecting both the authority and the silence of the Scriptures.

Again, thank you for worshipping God today.

Schedule of Services

Worship...	Sunday	11:00 a.m.
	Sunday	6:00 p.m.
Bible Study...	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
	Wednesday	6:00 p.m.

www.coc-gc.org

Preacher: Michael Golwitzer (810) 771-4627

Prayer List

Drake Barringer-he is a child that has been in and out of the hospital with a serious eye infection and prayers were requested for him.

Barbara Johnson

Judy Wilkes - completed chemotherapy.

Elsie Jaques

Emma Bateman

Molly and Scott Bateman

Stan Bozich - a friend of Chuck.

Edith Taylor - Bill's mother.

Scott and Jeff Stevens

Leann Carter—hospital-uncle to Cindy.

Austin, Tracey and Grace Clark

Helen Summers

Lauren Weidner-send cards—address is on the bulletin board.

Dale Gregory

Norm Crain-back surgery.

Ried and Janet Davis

Sermons

AM—“The Son”

PM—God's Will For You

Lord willing: Tracy Dugger from Shady Valley TN will be preaching for our Gospel Meeting this summer. Date has not been determined yet. We reached out to Harrison Morgan, Robert Hatfield, and Ted Thrasher.

"Christ—the Firstfruits"

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul wrote at length concerning the resurrection of the dead, because some of the Christians in Corinth taught “that there is no resurrection of the dead” (vs. 12). As one of his proofs for the Christian’s eventual resurrection, Paul pointed to the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and showed that the two stand or fall together, saying, “if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (vss. 16-17)! After hypothetically arguing from the absurd in an attempt to get the Corinthian Christians to see that their stance on the final resurrection completely undermined Christianity, Paul proceeded to demonstrate that Christ **had** risen, and thus made the resurrection of the dead inevitable. It is in this section of scripture that some find a difficulty. Beginning with verse 20, Paul wrote: “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become **the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But **each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, emp. added).

In view of the fact that Jesus was not the first person ever to arise from the dead (cf. 2 Kings 13:21; Luke 7:14-15; Matthew 10:8; 11:5), some have questioned why the apostle Paul twice described Jesus as “the firstfruits” from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15. Did Paul err? Was he ignorant of the widow’s son whom God revived at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:22)? Did he not know that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44)? How could Paul legitimately speak of Christ as “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”?

One solution to this alleged discrepancy can be found in the fact that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead—**never to die again**. All who have ever arisen from the dead, including the sons of both the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite (2 Kings 4:8-37), the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-43), Lazarus, et al., died in

later years. Jesus, however, accurately could be called “the firstfruits” of the dead because “Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him” (Romans 6:9). All others who previously were raised at one time, died again, and are among those who “sleep” and continue to wait for the bodily resurrection; only Jesus has truly conquered death. In this sense, Christ is “the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; cf. Acts 26:23).

Another (and likely better) explanation of the difficulty surrounding 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 and Paul’s use of the word “firstfruits” (Greek *aparche*) is to understand the metaphor Paul employed. Under the old law, the firstfruits were the earliest gathered grains, fruits, and vegetables that the people dedicated to God in recognition of His faithfulness for providing the necessities of life. The Israelites were to offer to God a sheaf of the first grain that was harvested on the day after the Sabbath following the Passover feast (Leviticus 23:9-14). Paul used the term “firstfruits” in this letter to the Corinthian church to reinforce the certainty of the resurrection. Just as the term “firstfruits” indicates that “the first sheaf of the forthcoming grain harvest will be followed by the rest of the sheaves, Christ, the firstfruits raised from the dead, is the guarantee for all those who belong to him that they also will share in his resurrection” (Kistemaker, 1993, p. 548). Jesus is God’s “firstfruits” of the resurrection. And, like the Israelites, God will gather the rest of the harvest at the final resurrection. Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand (by way of metaphor) that Christ’s resurrection is a pledge of our resurrection. It is inevitable—guaranteed by God Himself. by [Eric Lyons, M.Min.](#)

REFERENCES

Kistemaker, Simon J. (1993), *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).
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