

## Stacy's Studies

### Why Lent?

As a Protestant church, many people wonder why we would observe 40 days of Lent leading up to Easter. They think only the Catholics or other denominations do that, not the Independent Christian Churches. And they are right because Lent is usually only celebrated by other denominations and Catholics. But it is a great time to focus our busy lifestyles on the greatest event in the history of man: the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord!

Prior to a Roman Catholic Church, there was just a catholic (one church) that existed and these Christians met for the weeks prior to Passover to teach new believers more about faith in Christ Jesus, the true Passover Lamb. This continued as Christians were forced to separate from the Passover celebration and celebrate the risen Christ, which we later called Easter.

The opportunity for instruction became important after the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. The many weeks of self-examination, prayer, and devotion leading up to Easter helped lead less-than-fully committed believers more deeply into the Christian community. State ran churches were dying spiritually and needed a deeper understanding of the commitment to Christ, not the Empire.

Around 330 AD, Lent was standardized at 6 weeks. Because every Sunday is a "little Easter" for Christians, and thus a "feasting day", Sunday was never included in the 40 days of fasting of Lent. Gradually four more days were added to the original 36, and the first day of Lent became known as Ash Wednesday.

Today, churches around the world set aside 40 days to help their members prepare for Easter. Today, I believe we need to become deeper in our faith, deeper in our relationship with Christ since the

time of Constantine. We need something to draw us deeper into self-examination and preparation for Easter so it becomes more meaningful for us and Lent can do that if we choose. Since it is not Biblical, we are free to design whatever we want in order to enhance our understanding of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

Why 40 days? The number 40 appears often in the Bible. For example: 40 days of flooding rains at the time of Noah (Gen 6-8), the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai receiving the 10 commandments (Ex 24:18), the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert while He was tempted by the devil at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:1-13), and the 40 days of surprise visits Jesus made to His followers after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

Whether we observe the 40 days or not, Lent is a great time of thought and devotion to reading the Scriptures that explain all that Christ did for us through His death, burial and resurrection. It is a great time to pray for revival in our own hearts and in the hearts of the church today and in our country and in the world (Acts 1:11). It's a perfect time to deepen our own appreciation of Jesus' love for you. He lived a perfect life in your place. He suffered, was crucified, and buried- FOR YOU. He rose- FOR YOU. He will come again- FOR YOU. One day, He will take YOU to live with Him in eternity. That's something worth thinking about more than one weekend a year, isn't it? That's why Lent it a good thing for all believers!!

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## Hope Counseling-

### His Resurrection – Our Christian Hope

Dear Friends,

As we consider 1 Corinthians 15 as a whole we gain a unique understanding of our Christian hope.

- **THE CHRISTIAN HOPE** is a fundamental of the gospel (vv. 1–2).
- **THE RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ is the starting-point for understanding Christian hope (vv. 3–11).
- **JESUS' RESURRECTION** and that of his people go hand in hand on account of their union with him (vv. 12–19).
- **HE ROSE** as the first-fruits (vv. 20–28).
- **THE ASSURANCE OF RESURRECTION LIFE** makes worthwhile the battle Christian service inevitably involves (vv. 29–34).
- **OUR RESURRECTION BODIES** will be related to our physical bodies but different from them (vv. 35–50). They will be bodies suitable for the eternal kingdom of God (v. 51).
- **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD** will take place at the Lord's coming (vv. 51–54).
- **OUR CHRISTIAN HOPE** cannot help but have beneficial effects upon us as we appreciate it (vv. 55–58). It will encourage us to stand firm (v. 58) and to hold firmly to God's Word (v. 2). It will remind us that nothing done in the name of our Lord Jesus will be or can be in vain. We will live with an eternal perspective.

Our Christian life and service will then be marked by stability, perseverance, commitment and hard work (v. 58).

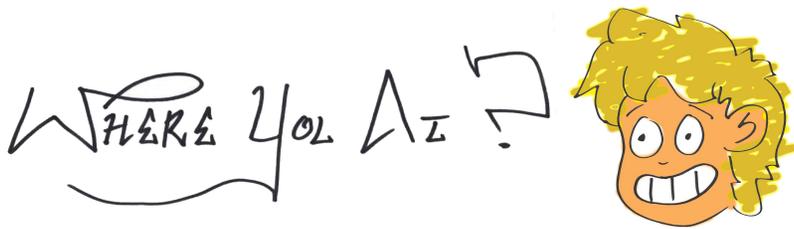
Embracing this hope! Have a Blessed Easter Celebration...

Together in Christ,

*Brenda*

Prime, D. (2005). Opening up 1 Corinthians. Opening Up Commentary (139–140). Leominster: Day One Publications.

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Wwdtag - pt. 4

## The Happiest place orbiting Earth

In the on again off again relationship the praiseworthy animated series Futurama, had with Television, we meet a 20th Century guy, Phillip J. Fry (Fry), who had been cryogenically frozen (on accident) for 1,000 years. He is unfrozen on December 31st, in the year 2999 and to his dismay EVERYTHING has changed. "My family, my co-workers, my girlfriend... I'll never see any of them again..." Fry brings everything from the 90's with him into the 31st century where his fantastic ideas of what the 'future' has in store, clash with the humdrum daily life activities of everyone in the "future".

Early in his adventures in the 31st century Fry travels to the moon which used to be this far away amazing thing that held awe and mystery. As soon as he learns of his trip he becomes ecstatic with anticipation and is eager to get going, yet no one else shares his enthusiasm for this dusty rock that just happens to be orbiting earth. When they arrive, Fry is overwhelmed with the reality that he is on the moon, yet is shocked to discover it has been turned into an amusement park. He's quickly loses interest in the shiny 'attractions' and wants to leave the park, get out in the open and on the surface of the moon to experience the 'real deal'. After a series of unfortunate events he finds himself trapped in the original moon lander, with his co-worker (Leela) who has been continually mocking his excitement and finally scolds him about it "I still don't get what the big attraction is."

"The moon was like this awesome, romantic, mysterious thing, hanging up there in the sky where you could never reach it, no matter how much you wanted to. But you're right. Once you're actually here, it's just a big, dull rock. I guess I just wanted you to see it through my eyes, the way I used to." - Philip J. Fry.

These are the two primary views of God.

In a lot of ways God has become this big dusty rock orbiting earth and is boring and irrelevant in a world that substitutes an array of "sciences" for a "mythical being" (although not mutually exclusive). But then again there are some who still hold onto this fantastic understanding of who God is (whether or not we can even fully understand Him). There's something about Him that is enticing, exciting, and still incredibly interesting and relevant. When we are surrounded by an attitude that the notion of God is outdated and ancient, it's so easy to begin to accept and embrace that attitude. What is it that dulls the fantastic nature of God in our eyes? It's probably just what happens when we turn Him into an amusement park. He is no longer this uncontainable, awesome, indescribable wonder, but just another run of the mill ride you wait in line for. When God becomes a cliché, or just another 'attraction' dressed up to bring in a crowd and sell them cheesy souvenirs, that's when He loses His grandeur and intensity.

What has caused the conversation of God to move from being one of incredible uncertainty and excitement to one of redundant catch phrases where "Jesus loves you" and "Jesus saves" are just the choruses of "believers"? The reality is that the moon is not just an amusement park with nothing to offer that you can't get somewhere else. The moon is still great and exciting and has so much to experience, if you are willing to just break away from the 'show'. God is not a light production, an upbeat song with a catchy chorus, or a witty catch phrase. God is a living, active, moving, interactive, interesting, new every day God, with limitless nuances for us to discover and encounter and experience.

Finally when Leela is stuck in the lunar lander with Fry and can no longer see or hear or feel the pettiness of the flashy amusement park and can only see the horizon of the moon with the Earth ascending into view is she able to come to a whole new reality where the moon is once again amazing and new and interesting.

"Fry, look. [*Fry and Leela gaze at a stunning Earthrise*]. It really *is* beautiful. I don't know why I never noticed before." - Turanga Leela

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## Prayer Requests-

- All our Missionaries
- Our country and lawmakers
- S.C.C. Leadership Team

## Long Term Illness-

- Marilyn T.
- Marilyn H.
- Chuck B.
- Rick M.
- Janice H.
- Kyla Z.
- Cynthia M.
- Bonnie H.
- Lou P.

***Registration for LGCA this summer opens  
March 18! Get ready for Work Days to  
prepare the camp for the summer!***

## **Easter Service Schedule:**

**April 19: Good Friday Service at 6:30 pm**

**April 20: SonRise Service at 7:00 am**

**Breakfast at 7:30 am**

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## ***Special Events-***

April 1: Area Men's Meeting at Lane Christian Church

April 5, 12, 19, 27: Guitar Lessons with Jonathan at 10 am

April 26: WCS Mother and Daughter Brunch, 9-11

April 30: Christian Women's Conference at LCU

**Check out our website:  
[saybrookchristianchurch.org](http://saybrookchristianchurch.org)**

**Check out our Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/saybrookchristianchurch](http://www.facebook.com/saybrookchristianchurch)**