

How Jesus' Resurrection Conquered All Doubts About His Limitless Power

Please allow me to briefly review the introductory factors I mentioned last time about the biblical belief in the immortality of the soul and the body—in a glorified, resurrected form.

It is this unique doctrine of the Resurrection that Christians reaffirm every Easter, and which I would like to pursue with you in this short series about Resurrection realities from the 15th chapter of the New Testament's book of 1 Corinthians.

As I suggested last time, you might like to use a modern translation or paraphrase to review these basic premises Paul presents and which we will consider in these four studies:

- The importance of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-11).
- The necessity of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19).
- The assurance of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-28).
- The nature of the resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:35-58).

Resurrection Realities No. 2: The Necessity of the Resurrection

As we read last time in verses 12-19 of 1 Corinthians 15, we learned that some in the local Corinthian congregation were either denying the resurrection of Christ or doubting whether they and other Christians would actually be resurrected also (v. 12). Apparently, this was being argued by some, without realizing the implications this had on their own faith and future.

Perhaps some had been infected with doubt by Jewish critics, who had long theorized that Jesus did not really die, but that He had merely fainted or swooned on the cross and was naturally revived when placed in the cool tomb. Others said that the disciples had hallucinated or had a vision. Some thought Jesus' spirit may have returned to encourage His disciples, but not in a resurrected body. The empty tomb was explained away by others as a giant hoax, with the body stolen by the Jews, the Romans, the disciples or maybe Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42).

The best option of all for this supreme event of history is that the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact (John 20:1-18)! He was raised from the dead, historically and bodily, by the supernatural power of God, just as the apostle Paul relates in 1 Corinthians 15:3-11!

Challenging Our Doubts

In faithfully confronting this matter in Corinth, Paul assumed the *false premise* that there is no resurrection and bluntly pointed out four negative and hypothetical "ifs," which they and we must face.

First, *if* there is no resurrection from the dead, then Jesus, who he called Christ (meaning the Anointed One), had not risen and everything Paul had taught them and everything they believed is "empty," without value or truthfulness. How could they trust anything else Paul had taught?

Secondly, *if* there is no resurrection from the dead, then Paul and his fellow ministers are "false witnesses" about God being able to forgive our sins and raise Jesus and us from the dead to eternal life. All we have is the here and now. Personal pleasure might as well be our creed and practice.

Thirdly, *if* Jesus did not conquer death, hell and the grave, then Jesus' death did not gain our salvation and "we are all still in our sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). We and "those who have

fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (v. 18). If this were true, then sin killed Jesus and it will kill us and all who have believed in vain.

Fourth, and finally, *if* after living for God and trusting in His promises of eternal life, and there is, in fact, no resurrection from the dead, then any benefits or blessings we have received are for this life only and we are left as miserable souls, deserving of scornful pity (v. 19).

Are You a Doubter?

Before we move on to study the good news and assurances of the resurrection, we need to conquer any similarities we may have with the negative thinking of some Corinthian saints, producing critical fractures in their faith—and ours.

So, may I ask if you are a doubter? Maybe not a doubter in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but about God's love or His willingness to forgive you—yet again?

Or what about God's willingness or ability to heal your body? Or to defend us from the consequences of this Wuhan COVID-19 virus? Or to change your marriage? Or improve your finances and provide your material needs?

Let me confidently remind you that our God is willing and able to meet you with truth and power, to give you victory in your circumstances. Hear these truths for discouraged and doubting exiles needing hope and help:

"For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ... You shall seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:11-13).

Talk with Him, right now, about the issues of life and death with which you may be struggling. He says in verse 12, "... Then you shall call upon Me, and you shall come and pray to Me, and

I will listen to you.” Receive His love, compassion and gracious touch for your point of prayer!

Join with me again next time, when we continue this “Resurrection Realities” series with the assurance of the resurrection. {eoa}

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