

“The Importance Of The Resurrection”

1 Corinthians 15:1-20

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Teaching Aim: To examine the three components of the gospel message and see how each component is essential to the Christian’s salvation. To understand, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then our faith is worthless and Christianity is no different than any other false religion in the world - fake. To demonstrate evidence that Jesus really did rise from the dead and to see that His resurrection is the *“firstfruits”* of many more resurrections to come!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The three major components of the gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

1. What is the meaning of the word *“gospel”* (**vs. 1**)? (See Dictionary) What can we learn from **verse 1** about Paul’s spiritual relationship to the Corinthians? What makes the gospel message critical to our salvation (**vs. 2**)? (See **1 Cor. 15:3,4; John 3:16**) What did Paul mean by the statement, *“unless you believed in vain”*? (See Commentaries) What would cause our faith to be in vain?

2. What three components of the gospel message are *“of first importance”* according to Paul (**vv. 3-4**)? What makes each component important? When Paul refers to the Scriptures, is he referring to the Old or the New Testaments (**vs. 3**)? (See Commentaries) What Old Testament prophecies predict to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? (See **Psalms 16:9-11; 22:1-22; Isaiah 53:1-11**) What truth do we learn about the death of Christ on the cross from **verse 3**? Why is this important to you? (See **Rom. 3:23; Jam. 2:10**)

3. Many of the Corinthians as Greeks held to a *“dualistic view,”* the view that the physical body is evil while the soul is ultimately good. As a result, the Greeks longed for death to deliver their souls from the prison of their bodies. From this belief came the false teaching in Corinth that people rise from the dead *“spiritually”* only and not *“physically.”* What truth do we learn about the physical body of Jesus Christ in **verse 4**? Will our future resurrection as Christians be a physical resurrection or a spiritual one only?

Part II: Eyewitnesses to the resurrection and an abnormally born Apostle (1 Cor. 15:5-11)

1. What six examples did Paul use in **verses 5-7** as witnesses of the “*bodily resurrection*” of Jesus Christ? Why do you think Paul listed these individuals as eyewitnesses? Why do you think Paul referred to the apostles as “*the twelve*” when Judas Iscariot was already dead leaving only eleven (**vs. 5**)? (See Commentaries)
2. Was there any significance in Paul’s reference of more than 500 eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ; most still living (**vs. 6**)? What was Paul’s purpose in presenting these witnesses? What did Paul mean when he said, “*some have fallen asleep*” in **verse 6**? (See **Dan. 12:2; John 11:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:29-31; 15:51**) What makes “*sleep*” a helpful illustration of the death and future resurrection of the Christian?
3. Which “*James*” of the Bible do you think Paul was referring to in **verse 7**? (See Commentaries) What relationship did James have to Jesus? What makes James inclusion in this list so remarkable? (See **Matt. 13:55; John 7:1-5; Acts 1:14; 15:13-21**) In what sense was Paul “*born out of due time*” as an apostle of Jesus Christ (**vs. 8**)? (See **Matt. 10:2-4**) What is the meaning of the word “*apostle*”?
4. Why did Paul consider himself to be “*the least of the apostles*” and “*not worthy to be called an apostle*” (**vs. 9**)? How extensive was Paul’s persecution of the church? (See **Acts 7:57-8:1; 9:1-8; 22:4-5**) Have you done things in your past that you are not proud of? If God can change murderers like Moses, King David and even Paul, can He change you and use you for His glory?
5. According to Paul, what attribute of God changed his life (**vs. 10**)? What are some of the ways that the grace of God has affected you? (See **Eph. 2:1-10**) Define the meaning of the word “*grace*.” (See Dictionary) What made Paul different than any other apostle (**vs. 10**)? Why do you think he worked so hard in ministry?

6. Who do you think is being referred to as “they” in **verse 11**? (See **1 Cor. 15:9**) According to Paul, does it matter who gets the credit when someone is lead to Christ? What is important? Have you ever had the privilege of leading some to Christ? How did it impact you?

Part III: Following the Corinthian’s false teaching to its logical conclusion (1 Cor. 15:12-20)

1. According to **verse 12**, what false teaching was being spread in the Corinthian church? What logical, yet devastating conclusion must the Corinthians come to if Jesus did not rise from the dead (**vs. 13-14**)?

2. Can the resurrection of Jesus Christ be validated historically? Why or why not? (Also see **1 Cor. 15:5-8; Matt. 28:1-6; Acts 1:9-11**) Did the prophet Daniel affirm or deny a future bodily resurrection from the dead? (See **Dan. 12:2-3**) For whom? Did Jesus affirm or deny a future bodily resurrection of the dead? (See **John 5:26-29; 11:25-26**) According to the Bible, when will this bodily resurrection take place for believers? (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 20:11-15**)

3. What uncomfortable position do pastors and teachers find themselves in if Christ did not rise from the dead (**vs. 15**)? Would being a false witness be worse than not saying anything at all? Why should Christian teachers be careful of what they say? (See **Jam. 3:1**)

4. If the Corinthians agreed with those who teach that the dead do not rise, what conclusion must they come to in regard to Jesus Christ (**vs. 16**)? If Christ is not risen from the dead, what does that mean for you today (**vs. 17**)?

5. Who is Paul referring to when he says, “those who have fallen asleep in Christ” (**vs. 18**)? What did Paul mean by the word “perish?” (See Dictionary) What devastating conclusion did Paul bring the Corinthians to if they believed this false doctrine? How would this horrible news affect you if you came to the conclusion that there was no hope for your departed loved ones?

6. According to **verse 19**, what conclusion did Paul come to if Christ had not risen from the dead? Why? What are some ways that believers suffered differently in biblical days than American Christians today? Have you ever suffered for your faith in Christ? If so, how?
7. What “*good news*” did Paul bring to the Corinthians in **verse 20a**? In what way is Christ the “*firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*?” Why does the resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantee our future resurrection as believers? (See **Rom. 6:5-11**)
8. How can we know that Christ’s redeeming work on the cross for our sin was accepted by God? (See **Acts 2:31; 5:30-32; Eph. 1:16-23**) Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Do you consider this a doctrine important enough to fight for in this day of denial? What are some ways that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has affected you personally?

MINER’S CORNER - *Manna to live by!*

- The three essential components of the gospel message are: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 2) He was buried, and 3) He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures!
- The strongest army in the world (that of the Roman Empire) could not keep Jesus in the grave!
- The resurrected Christ was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses over a period of 40 days!
- Paul felt he was the least of the apostles because he had hated Jesus and persecuted members of the church, even to the point of death!
- Christ did rise from the dead and in so doing, became the “*firstfruits*” of those Christians who be resurrected bodily from the dead on the future “*resurrection day!*” (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:52-53**)