

1 Cor 15:12-19

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up – if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

John Lennon - Imagine Lyrics, world of peace and hope, void of faith.

Some in the Corinthian church didn't believe in the resurrection.

So Paul begins to take them down imagination lane of no resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:13-22.

Verse 12 Paul asks,

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

All of Christianity rests of the resurrection.

- That's the foundation of our faith.

If someone were to say today that they would rise from the grave, they'd be considered crazy.

Houdini made the claim he would rise from the grave on the 50th anniversary of his death.

In this section alone Paul uses the term "IF" 7 times.

Verse 13, ~~But~~ if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

If there is no resurrection then we have no hope.

It would mean that we lived a short life, it was but a season.

There were many theories going around back then.

- One was that Jesus didn't actually die.
- He was not human but divine.

Romans 1 Paul cites the humanity and diety of Jesus.

Rom 1:1-4

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, (speaks of His humanity) 4 and declared to be the Son of God (deity) with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

This passage speaks of the incarnation of Jesus.

Jesus confirms His death and resurrection:

Rev 1:17-18

"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

1 Cor 15:14

14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

Our preaching would be empty if there was no resurrection.

Peasant and bookseller - No nut in the shells

There would be no reason for ministry.

If Christ didn't rise, all would be for not and our faith would be empty.

The history of the word "faith" meant to "to unite" and "to bind."

Jesus used the Greek word "Pistis" meaning "reliance" or "trust."

1 Cor 15:15-17

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up – if in fact the dead do not rise.

16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

All would be liars if Christ wasn't raised from the dead.

But even worse than that,

- Jesus would have been the greatest liar in all of history.

1 Cor 15:17-19

17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

This would also mean for the OT believers

- that the high priest entering into the holy of holies
- on the Day of Atonement to offer atonement for
- the sins of the nation was all for nothing.

The future of mankind rests on the resurrection of Jesus.

18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Christians would be the most pitiable of all:

Jn 3:16, 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, (would mean nothing)

Pitiable or miserable is used only twice in the NT,

- the second time is in Rev 3:17
- when Jesus is addressing the Lukewarm church of the Laodiceans

They couldn't decide whether to serve the Lord or the world. Jesus called them

- wretched, miserable, poor,
- blind and naked.

Did John Lennon believe there is a heaven or a hell? I don't know!

But Paul believed in heaven and in the afterlife.

- He believed in the resurrection.

Paul goes from the 7 "IF" statements

- to what is known by way of physical evidence
- as well as eyewitness accounts.

1 Cor 15:20-29

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

Paul in a sense is telling the Corinthians, come on guys, let's start with what is true.

But so often people don't want the truth.

Peanuts cartoon:

- Lucy is contending that snow comes from the ground
- rather than from the sky.

After Charlie Brown questions her she angrily replies, "Did anyone ever tell you that you have a funny face."

She couldn't refute what he was saying

- so she ridiculed him as a person.
- Paul was not immune to criticism in his day.

Twenty eight years after John Lennon's "Imagine," Another song was written by a man named Bart Millard when he asked the question "what will heaven be like" as he thought about his Dad arriving in heaven after he died. The song Mr. Millard wrote is "I can only imagine."

Paul speaks about Jesus becoming the firstfruits of those that have fallen asleep:

Lev 23 describes the firstfruit offerings.

Deut 26 gives more detail on the procedure of what took place on the day of firstfruits.

This was their way of thanking the Lord for

- what He had provided,
- but it was also in anticipation of
- a harvest that was to come.

In the NT "firstfruits" is mentioned 7 times, all symbolically.

- The firstfruits offering found its fulfillment in Jesus.

Interestingly,

- Jesus became that installment for us.
- He was the firstfruit because there is more to come.

We are already bearing firstfruits. In Romans 8:23 Paul tells us that we have the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Christians are the first to receive the Holy Spirit.

Paul said later in 2nd Corinthians:

2 Cor 4:14

14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

Paul is referring to the resurrection that began with Christ

- and will conclude
- when the martyred
- during the tribulation period will be resurrected.

Then there is the second resurrection is when all unbelievers will stand before the Great White Throne.

The first resurrection is the resurrection unto life

- because it will be made up of believers only.
- The second is for the unbelievers in Rev 20.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

In the third century B.C., King Antiochus was asked by the Roman ambassador whether he was for peace or war, he said that he needed time to consider.

Some think they can go through life without taking a stand for or against Christ.

We are in a war, don't kid yourself into thinking otherwise. We're in Spiritual warfare.

Tombstones with no names:

You and I know this morning that there is no middle ground in this world or the next in regard to man's salvation. Verse 22 makes this very plain.

"For as in Adam all die," it says, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Because of Adam and his representation of the human race,

- we will all die one day should the Lord tarry.

Adam sinned in the garden of Eden thus bringing death upon men,

Jesus was victorious in the Garden of Gethsemane, thus bringing life to all who repent.

Adam decided to disobey God,

Jesus said,

- not my will but thy will be done.

In Adam all die,

- but Jesus said He came to give life
- and to give it more abundantly.

If we had to sum up the whole Bible in five seconds,

- "We could say it is the story of two men and their effect on mankind.

- The first man wrecked everything;
- the second man is fixing it.”

verse 23,

- “each one in his own order”
- Paul is speaking of all of mankind.

In verse 22 he said in Adam all die,

- and in Christ all shall be made alive.
- He’s referring to all of mankind.

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

This is the only time in scripture that speaks of Christ delivering the kingdom to God the Father. Right now Jesus is our mediator. (1 Tim 2:5)

But soon He will no longer be our Mediator as another era will be ushered in after the resurrection of the dead. Then He will no longer reign as Mediator, but as God. (Isa 9:7, Dan 2:44, Luke 1:33)

The Kingdom to come will not be a kingdom of flesh and blood according to verse 50.

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

Muhammad Ali fighting off of the ropes:

Don’t think for a moment that Christ is not in control today, that Satan has the upper hand.

It’s only by divine tolerance and permission that he’s reeking havoc, but that’s coming to an end.

Luke 19:27

27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.”

Phil 3:18-19

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: