

Resurrection 101: It's PREEMINENCE!

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

NKJV - "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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 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. For 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! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 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. 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. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."

- **PRIORITY:** Resurrection Matters!
- **PROGRESS:** Resurrection Unfolds!

- **PAGANS:** *Resurrection is Copied!*
- **PERSECUTION:** *Resurrection Helps!*
- **PURIFICATION:** *Resurrection Restrains!*

I. PRIORITY: Resurrection Matters!

*"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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then **our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.** 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. For 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! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, **we are of all men the most pitiable.**"*

- **The consequences of denying the Doctrine of the Resurrection are **DISASTROUS!**** Though some Christians today say that "*doctrine is not important*" and that only love should be the focus, Paul the Apostle would strongly disagree. It is our **BELIEFS** that shape our *behaviors*, our **CREEDS** that mold our *conduct*, and our **DOCTRINE** that determines our *deeds!* This is why in all of his letters, Paul always discusses proper **LEARNING** before he mentions proper *living.*

*"Christianity if false, is of **NO** importance, and if true, is of **INFINITE** importance. The only thing it cannot be is **moderately important.**" - **CS Lewis***

- **If the Resurrection of Jesus **DIDN'T** actually happen, it would mean that:**

1. *The Preaching of the Apostles was in vain.*
2. *The Christian's Faith is an empty belief.*
3. *The Apostles were all devious liars.*
4. *The Christian's personal faith is futile and useless.*
5. *Every believer is still guilty of their sins before God.*
6. *The Christians who've died are lost spiritually.*
7. *Christians worldwide are pathetic, pitiful people.*

II. PROGRESS: Resurrection Unfolds!

*"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. 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. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."*

- **First, Paul contrasts how Jesus and Adam affected the human race:**

The first Adam was made from the earth, but Jesus the "Last Adam" came from Heaven. The first Adam disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world, but the "Last Adam" obeyed the Father and brought righteousness and life. Through His own glorious Resurrection, Jesus has made it possible for all humanity to be saved, and physically raised to eternal life in God's Kingdom.

- **Next, Paul lays out the **ORDER** of future prophetic events,**

starting with the Resurrection of Jesus. The word "order" in 1Cor 15:23 originally referred to military rank. God has an order, a sequence, in the future Resurrection of believers and prophetic events. The order of events laid out by Paul is the following:

*Christ is the "**Firstfruits**" of Resurrection. (Rev 1:17,18)*

*Christians will resurrect in the **Rapture**. (1Thess 4:13-18)*

*Jesus returns and rules the **Millennial Kingdom** for 1,000 years. (Rev 19,20)*

*Jesus will then consummate His rule, making all things **NEW**, and handing over all rule and power to God the Father for all **ETERNITY**. (Rev 21,22)*

III. PAGANS: Resurrection is Copied!

"Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?"

This is surely one of the most twisted verses in all of the Bible. What does Paul mean by referencing people who "**baptize for the dead**"? Here are some possible options:

- **Possibility #1** - When Paul uses the word "**for the dead**", the better translation is thought by many to be "because of the dead". In other words, because of the Christian martyrs and those who have died

giving their lives for Christ, it allowed other to hear the Gospel and even inspired them to surrender themselves to Jesus as Lord.

- **Possibility #2** - When Paul mentions those who "**baptize for the dead**" he is simply referring to the Marcionites, follower of the pagan Marcion, who was a 1st century heretic and false teacher. Marcion's followers taught that people could be baptized in the place of their dead loved ones, and thereby save them. This cultic and unbiblical teaching is still practiced by groups today such as the Mormon church. According to Mormon doctrine, no one can be born again apart from baptism at the hands of a Mormon priest. This creates a problem for those living before the advent of Mormonism. The solution is to baptize the dead by proxy. Paul is here simply saying "**Even the pagans believe in the Resurrection, so why don't you?!**"
- **Biblically, no one can EVER be saved through water baptism.** Though some groups still engage in the unbiblical practice of infant baptism (*Roman Catholic and some Calvinists churches*), or "**baptismal regeneration**" with adults, the Word of God never teaches this. Such practices can give a false assurance of salvation, and be very dangerous.
- **Man can NEVER be saved through any "good work" such as baptism**, as adult or infant. Faith is the only means by which people acquire salvation. Salvation by grace through faith comes as God's gift, not by any religious works or actions that we do. (*Eph 2:8,9; 2Tim 1:9; Rom 4:4,5;11:6; Heb 10:1-4*)
- **All false gospels add religious works to Grace.** Mormons, for example, state, "*For we know that it is by grace that we have been saved, after all we do*" (*2 Nephi 25:23*) Paul addresses such false groups and false gospels very strongly in **Galatians 1:7-9** where he says: "*...there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*"

IV. PERSECUTION: Resurrection Helps!

"And why do we **stand in jeopardy every hour**? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**. If, in the manner of men, **I have fought with beasts at Ephesus**, what advantage is it to me?"

- One of the reasons that Paul was willing to endure extreme persecution (2Cor 11) was because he had a tremendous hope and passion for Heaven, that was anchored in the Resurrection he would experience in the Kingdom Age.
- **Rev 2:10** - *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*
- *"Heaven will solve our problems.. There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." - CS Lewis*
- *"Outside of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I know of no other hope for mankind." - Conrad Adenauer*

V. PURIFICATION: Resurrection Restrains!

"If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."

- Paul teaches that a real understanding of our future Resurrection in the Kingdom of Heaven, will lead a person to an increased level of personal holiness and purity. Truly believing that Heaven is close and the Kingdom is coming, should affect our daily separation for Christ:
 - **1Jn 3:2-3** - *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*
 - **1Jn 2:28** - *"And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."*