

April 1, 2018
HOPE RISING - Part 1
"Hope Rising"

In Jesus' time, many didn't believe in any kind of real afterlife.

1 Corinthians 15:32 (ESV): "...If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'"

But, if Jesus rose from the grave and there is eternal life, this has the potential to change our whole outlook on life and give us hope.

1 Corinthians 15:1-3a (ESV): "¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,..."

The Gospel the Apostle Paul "preached" and "received":

1 Corinthians 15:3b-4 (ESV): "³...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures"

As Paul notes, this all happened "in accordance with Scriptures" - it was all part of God's eternal plan of redemption for the human race.

Luke 24:25-27 (NLT): "²⁵Then Jesus said to them, 'You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?' ²⁷Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

On Good Friday, Satan thought he had won, but he discovered on Sunday that the joke was on him - in fact, it was the ultimate April Fool's joke.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that there were witnesses to the resurrected Jesus - lots of witnesses.

1 Corinthians 15:5-9 (ESV): "⁵...[Christ] appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

It would have taken only one person to say, under persecution or for a bribe, that the resurrection didn't happen, and every Jewish and Roman leader would have been proclaiming that to everyone who would listen.

1 Corinthians 15:12 (ESV): "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

If there's not a future resurrection of dead believers in Jesus Christ, there can't be a resurrection of Jesus either -*both* were proclaimed by Jesus and Scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:13-16 (ESV): "¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised."

1 Corinthians 15:17-18 (ESV): "¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."

Paul says the whole Christian faith rises or falls on whether or not Christ has been raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV): "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."

"The essence of hope is that it looks forward to the future, and the ultimate future that believers anticipate is a new heaven and a new earth, and glorified bodies like Christ's glorified body." - Verlyn D. Verbrugge

Hebrews 10:23 (NLT): "Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise."

Revelation 21:1-5 (ESV): "¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.' ⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'..."

2 Peter 3:13 (NLT): “But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.”

Paul reminds his readers that all the hypothetical consequences in vss. 13-19 are false.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV): “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 (ESV): “⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’”

We have hope because the resurrection taunts death; in fact, it destroys it!

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 (ESV): “⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

When we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, he gives us eternal “victory”!

Join us for our new series, “Hope Rising,” as we look at what hope in Jesus Christ can mean for you!