

**The Importance of the Resurrection of Christ**  
**Dr. Michael A. Cox**  
**Original: 2-8-87; Revised: 12-22-13**

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

**1 Corinthians:** [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

**UBS 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Paragraph Topic:** The Resurrection of the Dead

**Central Idea of Message:** The importance of the resurrection of Christ and the ensuing consequences which follow a denial of his resurrection.

**Introduction:** Some of the Corinthians were apparently affirming the resurrection of Jesus but denying the resurrection of anyone else. Others, it seems, were seriously questioning the historicity of his resurrection, which is why the first eleven verses of this chapter dealt with the indisputable facts pertaining to the resurrection of Jesus.

Our text today focuses on the importance of the resurrection of Christ and the ensuing consequences which follow a denial of his resurrection.

- I. Ideas on the Resurrection (vv. 12-14)
  - A. How do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead (v. 12)?
    - 1. Gentiles
      - a) Some religions vaguely affirm belief in immortality in one form or another, but not even one hints that its founder had, in point of time on this earth, come forth from a tomb in a resurrection body
      - b) Greeks thought of the body as a hindrance to true life and they looked to the time when the human soul would be freed from the shackles of confinement in the physical body
        - (1) They conceived of life after death in terms of the immortality of the soul
        - (2) They firmly rejected all notions of a resurrected body
        - (3) Some Greeks even embraced the idea of reincarnation, for which there is no evidence as there is for the resurrection of Jesus

## 2. Jews

a) The Old Testament spoke of the resurrection of the body-soul, that is the totality of the human being, although the concept of bodily resurrection is not prominent in the there (Job 19:25-27; Pss. 16:10; 17:15; 73:23-24; Isa. 26:19)

(1) The earthly actions of people were seen as having lasting consequences

(2) Hebrew writers sometimes expressed seminal thoughts of resurrection in phrases such as "to sleep with the fathers," since sleep implies an awakening (Gen. 47:29; Deut. 31:16)

(3) Ezekiel wrote that bones can live again, using a resurrection analogy to prophesy the restoration of the nation of Israel (Ezek. 37:1-14)

(4) Daniel clearly teaches a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (Dan. 12:2)

(5) The Sadducees, liberal Jews, denied any resurrection (Acts 23:8)

(6) However, most Jews, like the Pharisees, accepted the idea of a resurrection, but they usually thought that these same bodies would simply be brought back to life just as they were

b) Some Corinthians were perhaps insisting that the only resurrection promised was a spiritual resurrection, or regeneration, which would take place at the time of conversion, but denied a future bodily resurrection (2 Tim. 2:17-18)

B. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen either (v. 13)

1. This states a rule to which there is no exception

2. One cannot believe in the resurrection of Jesus only and deny the resurrection of believers

C. If Christ is not risen (v. 14)

1. Preaching is in vain, empty

2. Faith is in vain

a) No resurrection - no gospel

b) No resurrection - be anything but a Christian

c) No resurrection - Christianity is nothing more than mythology

- II. Consequences of Denying the Resurrection (vv. 15-19)
- A. Paul and the other apostles are false witnesses against God, since they had been testifying that God had raised Jesus from the dead (v. 15)
    - 1. Paul and the other apostles were liars promoting an awful lie
    - 2. Paul and the other apostles were misrepresenting God
    - 3. Jesus said he would be raised, so he lied too
  - B. Shocking truth (v. 16)
    - 1. If the dead do not rise, then neither did Jesus
    - 2. Either there is a break in the dike or there is not
    - 3. The repetition emphasizes the indisputable force of Paul's argument (Faussett)
  - C. If Christ has not been raised (vv. 17-19)
    - 1. Faith in him is worthless
    - 2. We are still in our sins
      - a) We are still drunks!
      - b) We are still druggies!
      - c) We are still liars!
      - d) We are still cheaters!
      - e) We are still adulterers!
      - f) We are still thieves!
      - g) There has been no change in any of us!
      - h) It was all a lie!
    - 3. Hatred triumphed over love (cf. Barclay 174)
      - a) He was crucified by those who hated him
      - b) Can such malice actually prevail forever?
    - 4. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not waking up, for they have perished (v. 18)
      - a) The idea of a heaven is a big lie
        - (1) We must stop kidding ourselves; sleep implies safety, serenity, and confident faith (Patterson 281)
        - (2) But they are then dead, ice cold, stiff, and rigid from rigor mortis, and decaying, and so is Jesus
        - (3) They will never see again, speak again, or walk again
        - (4) They are gone, perished, delivered up to eternal misery in the unseen world and the same fate awaits the rest of us: please notice what Paul believed to be the future of all people were it not for Christ's resurrection!

- b) The death of Christ has no atoning value without the resurrection!
- 5. Christians are the most pitiful of all people for having placed faith in a dead savior (v. 19)
  - a) Pitied for being gullible enough to embrace the ultimate falsehood only to be disappointed
  - b) Pitied for being delusional
  - c) Pitied for having struggled against sinful impulses when we could have been living it up
  - d) Pitied for having given our lives in labor and sacrifice for a lie
  - e) Pitied for believing in one all-powerful God whom we thought had supremacy even over death, only to discover him to be impotent, if even real at all
  - f) "A dead Christ is no deliverer!" (MacGorman 145)

**Conclusion:** Such sad and shocking news as this should make us sit up and pay attention. Why? Because this sort of presentation is a two-way street, for we know the evidences for Christ's resurrection have weathered the tests of time and doubt!

Lies have short legs; they can achieve only short-term results. Delusions are soon exploded by the atomic force of truth and reality (Short 224-5).

New lives help prove that Christ is risen! He is risen! And since he is risen, preaching is not in vain. God has not lied, Jesus has not deceived, Paul and others were not false witnesses, and our faith is valuable rather than worthless! It is our faith in his redeeming blood that promises us that we are changed. We are no longer in our sins! And those whose bodies have gone to sleep are with him now! Christians to be pitied? Not hardly!