

The Importance Of The Resurrection

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There is absolutely nothing in Christianity as important as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. That's because it is the crux of our faith and our hope. Consider the following points that Paul made in 1 Corinthians 15.

If Christ was not raised from the dead:

- The apostles' preaching was in vain (vs. 14).
- The Corinthians' faith was in vain (vs. 14).
- The apostles were false witnesses (vs. 15).
- The Corinthians (as well as all Christians) were still in their sins (vs. 17).
- Christians who have died have perished forever - they have no hope (vs. 18).
- Christians are the most pitiable since their hope rests only in this life (vs. 19).

The main point of what Paul is affirming to the Corinthians is that without the resurrection, Christianity is worthless. There is no point. There is no hope. There is no reason to preach. There is no reason to suffer persecution on behalf of Christ (vs. 30-32). It's all a big waste of time and effort. We might as well *"eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"* (1 Cor. 15:32)

Paul mentioned that if Jesus had not been raised, then the apostles were liars. The same is true with Jesus. If Jesus was not raised, then he was a big, fat liar. Notice the following claims he made about his resurrection before he was crucified.

In John 2:19, he said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* John explains in vs. 21 that *"he was speaking of the temple of His body."*

In John 10:17-18, he said, *"I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."*

While talking with his disciples just hours before his arrest, he told them, *"A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."* John explains that at the time, they didn't understand what Jesus meant, but looking at it from this side of history, we understand Jesus was talking about his coming death and resurrection.

Not only did he claim that he would rise again, but he claimed that all the righteous would rise again as well. *"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:39-40).

The amazing miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was performed specifically to make this very point. Jesus told Martha, *"Your brother will rise again.'* Martha said to Him, *'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'* Jesus said to her, *'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.'*" (John 11:23-26).

Jesus made the claim multiple times that he would die and rise again. If that didn't happen, he was a liar. Either that, or he didn't have the power he said he had.

But the fact is that Jesus did rise from the dead. And that is a guarantee of our future resurrection. It serves as a promise that God has the power to raise us from the dead at the last day, just as he had the power to raise Christ from the dead. *"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"* (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

Therein lies the hope of Christians. Therein lies the reason why we are Christians. There is more to this life than just eating and drinking. We're more than just another animal that evolution produced. No, we are the wonderful creation of a loving God who wanted to share an eternity with us.

Our creation was an expression of his love. Because God is love, he desired to share that love with others. He wants us to love him in return, but he wants it to be a voluntary expression on our part. That's why he gave us the freedom to choose. And there's not much more beautiful than when man chooses to return the love that God has shown. Of course, the ultimate expression of God's love was sending Jesus to die for sinful man (John 3:16). The resurrection is an expression of that love, also, for in it, he promises us that we can live with him for an eternity.

There is a resurrection yet to come - our own. But we have to choose to what kind of life we want to be resurrected. A life with him, or a life of punishment? *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation"* (John 5:28-29).