

INTRODUCTION

The very basis of our belief in Jesus Christ and in who He says He is; is the death and resurrection of His body. Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he died again. Jairus daughter was raised from the dead, but she died again. If the woman who touched the hem of His garment hadn't been healed, we would have never heard about her and her life would have had no impact on our belief on the deity of Jesus. If blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, had not sat by the road begging and wasn't healed, we'd have never heard of Bartimaeus and this event would have had no impact on our reason to believe Jesus. However, if Jesus was crucified and died and had not been raised from the dead, why in the world would we have reason to believe in Him? If Jesus had died and was raised from the dead and then died again, He'd be no different than Lazarus or Jairus' daughter. What distinguishes His resurrection from any other is he stayed alive! He's alive today, now, and forever more!

1 Corinthians 15:1-22 (NKJV)

- ¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
- ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.
- ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,
- ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.
- ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.
- ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.
- ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.
- ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
- ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.
- ¹¹ Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.
- 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.
- ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.
- ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

¹ Moreover, brethren, **I declare** to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Vs. 1-8 Paul wants to declare or make it plain to the readers of this epistle that nothing has changed concerning his and their salvation earned by the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, from the time it was first declared to him, to the time it was declared to them, up to this very moment. The death and resurrection of Jesus happened just as the scriptures foretold it and there are many witnesses, credible witnesses, witnesses who some knew and had respect for, who are more than willing to testify to those facts. Then finally Paul declares that He saw the risen Savior way after the others, but the encounter was no less valid.

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.

Vs. 12-14 How can someone come a long and say Christ had not risen from the dead without proof? Their basis for teaching this false doctrine was their inability to believe a dead body could be brought back to life. Some believed the soul was the only part of the three part man that could possibly be brought back from death. How empty would our faith be if Christ had not risen? The fact that Jesus gave up His life as He foretold it and rose from the dead as He foretold is the real reason we all believe. Without the physical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our faith is empty. Thomas wasn't going to believe until he put his finger in the holes in Jesus feet and thrust his hand into Jesus side (John 20:25). Jesus let them know that those that believe and have not seen are blessed! (John 20:29) Jesus is letting us know the same thing. By confessing the Lord Jesus and believing in our heart that God raised Him from the dead will bring salvation. By believing and not seeing is an added blessing! To preach any other Gospel is not the Gospel at all and there are consequences for doing so. **Galatians 1:6-8** says:

⁶ *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,* ⁷ *which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.* ⁸ *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.*

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.

Vs. 15-17 If Christ had not been raised from the dead by God the Father, not only is our faith empty, but we who preach this are to preaching facts and are in fact liars! If the physical body can't be brought back to life, then the body of Jesus could not have been brought back to life. If Jesus isn't alive, then not only is our faith empty it is useless and pointless to anyone who believes this and not only that death would no longer be swallowed up in victory. Death would still sting and the grave will still have victory over us! Anyone who died believing in the resurrection would have died in vain. Their bodies are in the grave and will turn to dust and that is the end. We know that this is not so. ¹ ***Thessalonians 4:16-18*** says:¹⁶ ***For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.***

¹⁷ ***Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.***

¹⁸ ***Therefore comfort one another with these words.***

¹⁹ ***If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.***

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

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

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

If Christ's resurrection was a lie, then of all men, we should be pitied the most. We've based our entire existence in the flesh now and in the future over a fable; a myth. We've learned to love our neighbor as ourselves. We've turned the other cheek when struck. We've forgiven those who've trespassed against us. We even learned to love our enemies! Why would we live like that if there was no resurrection? But Jesus did rise from the dead and is the first fruits of the people who have gone to the grave before Him. Lazarus can't be considered first fruit because he died again. Jairus' daughter can't be considered first fruit because she did the same. Jesus is the first fruit of all who have died because He was raised and remains alive. By Adam death entered the world. By Christ life was regained!

Because He lives

I can face tomorrow

Because He lives

All fear is gone

Because I know He holds the future

And life is worth the living

Just because He lives!

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