

Resurrection: Truth for the Present and Future

In my last article, I began to set in place the foundational truth that the Bible presents of the historical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ in the 1st century. The importance of this truth for Christianity cannot be overstated. As recorded by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17: “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins.” If Jesus’ resurrection is not true, then Christianity collapses under the weight of its own false claims. Along with the foundational truth of Jesus’ resurrection in the past, I would like to look next at what the resurrection means for our future as Christians.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, “If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” (vs. 19). What future promises, evident in this passage, are ours because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Below I have listed these promises along with the verses referenced from 1 Corinthians 15:

- Full and final salvation—which vindicates our faith in Jesus—is intimately connected to Christ’s resurrection. Since Christ is raised our faith is not in vain (vss. 12-20). This connects directly to the promise that those who are truly saved in Jesus cannot lose their salvation.
- Future, bodily resurrection: Christ is the firstfruits (see Leviticus 23) of a wonderful future harvest. Since Christ has been raised we have the promise of our own future, bodily resurrection which is inclusive of no more death. (vss. 20-22, 26)
- Eternal life in heaven to those who have trusted Jesus by faith (vss. 22-23).
- Final destruction of ‘every rule and authority and power’ that sets itself against Jesus (24-28).
- Glorified bodies fit for eternity (vss. 42-44).

Although it is wonderful to ponder our future with God and with our Christian brothers and sisters forever (and strengthens our faith) let’s take a brief look at how the resurrection of Jesus Christ should impact our lives in the present. What should our Christian lives look like as we await the certain return of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master?

The apostle Paul closes his lengthy passage on the resurrection with some solid, practical application: “Therefore, 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” (vs. 58). The word translated, ‘Therefore’ is a word that Paul uses to say in effect, ‘Since all that I have said about the resurrection is true, this is how it should impact your life.’ The ‘labor’ that Paul references is simply living lives of obedience and sacrifice guided by the Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit as we await the second coming of Jesus (see Matthew 25:14-30; Ephesians 2:10). I would like to suggest that the Bible gives one of the clearest proofs of the resurrection by the fact that there are Christians who are actively seeking to live lives of service and sacrifice in this world! No matter how much we may try to convince ourselves that we’re pretty good people, the Bible is clear that there is nothing inherent in us that would make us ever choose Jesus Christ or genuinely love others (Romans 3:10-11). Had it not been for the work of the Holy

Spirit changing our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26ff), we would never have genuine desires for Jesus and for the gospel. Despite our best efforts we will not, we cannot, live sustained lives of honoring Christ or loving others apart from this work of God in our hearts. This can only happen because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which is the only reason that we can be Christians at all.

Because of Jesus Christ, we are lacking nothing that we need to be 'abounding in the work of the Lord...' May we always seek to be faithful to live in light of the resurrection of Jesus, longing for the day when we will hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Matthew 25:23).

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