

WHAT IF CHRIST HAD NOT BEEN RESURRECTED?

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Introduction: In our Scripture reading Paul mentions 7 things which we have to give up if there is no such thing as the resurrection of the body, i.e., actual, physical resurrection. They are:

- 1) Christ is not risen.
- 2) Our preaching is vain.
- 3) Faith is vain.
- 4) The apostles were false witnesses.
- 5) We are yet in our sins.
- 6) Believers who have died are really gone.
- 7) We are of all people in the earth the most to be pitied.

Read all of 1 Cor. 15 and you will see that Paul leaves no question but that there is such a reality as physical resurrection, AND that this is really the foundational truth for all that we believe as Christians. IF Christ were not raised from the dead, we have nothing! There is no reason for any church to be meeting. BUT IF there is such a thing as bodily resurrection, then no one can possibly place any limits on the blessings that are available -- especially when we refer to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the foundational truth of Scripture. It confirms and ratifies all other doctrines.

This morning, to emphasize how important this truth is, I want to look at the subject negatively, i.e., to see what we would have to give up if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead -- not all of the truths (because we do not have time in one service), but five of the most important ones!

The Scriptures have been printed out for those of you who do not have a Bible with you, or who may not know the arrangement of the books of the Bible so as to be able to find them quickly.

I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS THE WORD OF GOD WOULD HAVE TO BE REJECTED.

Once we begin to find errors in the Bible, this throws a shadow of doubt over all of it -- especially in a truth so important as the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Cf. Acts 2:22-27, 31 -- especially the transition from v. 24 to v. 25, and the reason given in v. 25 for the statement in v. 24: "For . . ." It is at this point that Peter in his message begins to quote from Psalm 16, verses 8-11.

David is not just speaking his own word; he is speaking the Word of God. This is the claim that is made by Peter in

his second epistle when he says of the Scriptures that "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

So this means that, if David is wrong, then what he wrote in Psalm 16 cannot be the Word of God -- because the Word of God must be infallible! And, if this part is wrong, then how do we know but that all of the OT might be wrong.

Thus, you cannot deny this truth and still maintain the truth of the Old Testament.

What a terrible loss that would be!

II. WE COULD NOT REALLY BELIEVE IN THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Cf. Rom. 1:1, 3, 4 -- at the very beginning of this great Epistle which explains for us the Gospel of the grace of God.

There are many proofs of the Deity of Christ:

- 1) His miracles.
- 2) His teaching.
- 3) The life He lived.

But there is none greater than His resurrection!

In fact, His resurrection was included as a part of His teaching. In John 10:18m you will find these words spoken by Christ of His death and His resurrection: (speaking of His life)

"I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

What was so unique about the resurrection of Christ? Others had been raised from the dead before He was?

It was this, as expressed by Paul in Rom. 6:9,
 "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead,
 dieth no more;
 death hath no more dominion over him."

This is the outstanding evidence of the Deity of our Lord. Without it, all other evidence is brought into question, and we are robbed of all present and future blessings that have been promised to us because we have a living, glorified Saviour.

— But notice a third loss:

III. THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED AS TO THE POWER OF GOD. IS HE ACTUALLY ALL-POWERFUL?

Abraham placed all of his hopes for the future on the line

because he believed so firmly in the fact that God could raise the dead. See Heb. 11:17-19.

If God could do this for Isaac, could He not do it for Christ?

But then look at Eph. 1:19-23 -- which is a part of Paul's prayer in that chapter for the Ephesian church.

What is especially important about it?

It is this: Paul is referring to the greatest display of the power of God that has ever been seen.

In what ways has God displayed His power?

- 1) At creation.
- 2) By His miracles -- OT and NT.
- 3) By His providential supervision of history.
- 4) In the fulfillment of prophecy.

BUT NONE WAS GREATER THAN THIS!

The greatest proof we have that God can act according to Eph. 3:20, 21 is to be seen in the resurrection of Christ! If God did not do this, then He could not, and if He could not, then He is not omnipotent -- and there are other things that He cannot do!

All of this is bad enough. But let me take you to a fourth point which is even worse.

IV. THERE WOULD BE NO SUCH THING AS SALVATION FROM SIN.

Notice vv. 13, 14, 17 in our Scripture reading.

In 1 Cor. 15:3, 4 Paul makes the resurrection of Christ a vital part of the Gospel. And so we have no Gospel IF Christ has not been raised from the dead!

Why is this so important?

There are many reasons, but Paul brings out one pre-eminently important point in Rom. 4:25,

"Who (speaking of Christ) was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification."

And this is not just to provide justification for us (as a part of His redemptive work), but to give us proof that God was pleased with His Son's work and has accepted it in our behalf.

If Christ has not been raised, we do not have that assurance!

Finally:

V. THERE WOULD BE NO HOPE FOR ANYONE -- NOE ANY COMFORT IN DEATH.

See our Scripture reading: v. 18.

But look at 1 Thess. 4:13-18. (Read vv. 14-18 negating the statements. And then show from v. 13 that if Christ has not been raised, we have no comfort in our sorrow because we are left without any hope.)

Concl: I have[^] touched upon the major points, but there are more that I could mention. To find that Christ had not been raised, would be the greatest of all losses. Nothing else could possibly compensate for it!

But, where do we stand? Is there any doubt?

No -- a thousand no's! See 1 Cor. 15:20-23.

The Bible is true.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God -- always has been and always will be.

He is omnipotent. There is nothing too hard for Him.

We do have a message of salvation -- of a work with ~~which~~ the Father has indicated His complete approval.

And we do have hope; there is comfort in death.

Is He your Saviour? Are you saved?

(Repeat Rom. 10:9, 10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus . . .")

Sing: How Great Thou Art! "And when I think that God . . .

"When Christ shall come . . .