

20260607 1 Corinthians 15 – His Resurrection – Our Coming Resurrection!

****All scripture is from NKJV unless otherwise noted.*

I want to start today by making one of the Church's most ancient declarations.

Christ is Risen.

Christ is risen indeed!

The Risen Christ, Faith's Reality

15 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. (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

The Gospel is not something that we just hear. It is something RECEIVED. We don't just hear it. We receive it, and it becomes part of us. Scott and I used to pass out Gideon Bibles, and in the back of each Bible we gave out, it had a place in the back to say that it had been read and received. It doesn't matter that we know WHEN we received the Gospel. You and I just need to know that we did RECEIVE it!

Gospel means the "Good News." It is the good news by which we are saved. Paul says to the Corinthians, now hold fast to it, so that I'll know that I did not preach it in vain. I want to make sure that everyone reading this or hearing it spoken will understand exactly what the Gospel is. It can be summarized as this: JESUS CHRIST DIED TO SAVE SINNERS. Paul now presents it clearly in detail. These days saying that will get you jailed in Canada or the United Kingdom. This is real and it is happening. We need to be prepared to say that we stand for the Gospel. Paul is reminding them of the Gospel in which they stand.

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. (1 Corinthians 15:3-7).

Isn't it incredible to think that at the time Paul wrote this there were still many people alive who had actually seen Christ. I find that riveting to think about. Over the last 10 years, I've presented evidence of Jesus' resurrection multiple times. In review, here are probably some of the most compelling proofs of the resurrection. In the statement above, Paul underscores the resurrection as absolutely central to the Christian faith.

Here are 10 of the strongest historical, textual, and philosophical arguments supporting the divinity of Jesus as well as His resurrection as a real event:

1. Jesus died by crucifixion (near-universal scholarly consensus).

Roman execution was efficient and public. Non-Christian sources (Tacitus, Josephus, the Talmud) and all early Christian accounts confirm it. Medical analyses of crucifixion (asphyxiation, blood loss, spear wound) make survival implausible. This establishes the fact that Jesus didn't just swoon. He died.

2. The tomb was found empty by women.

Women were the first to discover the empty tomb. Remember that a woman's testimony wasn't readily accepted in that culture, so the fact that it is mentioned lends great credibility to the account. Early writers could've written it out of the story, but they didn't.

3. There were multiple, varied eyewitness appearances of the risen Jesus.

Paul's statement probably was written no more than 25 years after the event. He lists appearances to Peter, the Twelve, over 500 people at once, James, and Paul himself. Hallucinations don't explain group experiences or conversions of skeptics. Scholars widely agree the disciples *believed* they saw the risen Jesus.

4. There was a radical transformation of the disciples.

As I explained last week, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the apostles shifted from fearful, hiding, and denying Jesus (during his arrest) to boldly proclaiming his resurrection, facing persecution and martyrdom. People don't die for known lies; their sincere conviction points to a genuine experience.

5. James and Paul - noted skeptics – were converted.

James (Jesus' brother) was initially skeptical/unbelieving but became a church leader after an appearance (1 Corinthians 15; Galatians 1–2). Paul actively persecuted Christians before his dramatic Damascus Road experience. These hostile witnesses turning into proponents are difficult to explain without a real event. It is the ultimate statement against an interest as we call it in law.

6. There was the existence of extremely early testimony and creeds.

The resurrection proclamation began *immediately* in Jerusalem, not decades later. Creeds in Paul's letters and Acts sermons date to months or a few years after the crucifixion. This leaves no time for legend to develop. Enemies couldn't debunk it on-site.

7. Christianity experienced a meteoric ascent.

A small group of Jews proclaimed a crucified Messiah (a scandal in Judaism) as Lord, despite persecution. They transformed the Roman world. There is no other explanation for the explosive growth without some catalyzing event like the resurrection. Old Testament prophecies (e.g., suffering servant in Isaiah 53) find fulfillment in this unexpected way. The phenomenon of the resurrection was unparalleled in human history. The results show this.

8. Alternative explanations failed.

It is totally unlikely that the disciples stole the body. How could they have done it? They had left the scene in fear. There is no such thing as a group hallucination. That cannot explain an empty tomb with multiple sightings. No one in history has come up with another credible alternative.

10. Jesus' own claims to Divinity are validated by the resurrection.

Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins (Mark 2), referred to himself as "Son of Man" with divine prerogatives (Daniel 7 allusion in Mark 14:61–62), accepted worship, and predicted his resurrection (e.g., Matthew 12:38–40). His miracles as chronicled in the Gospel accounts validate and vindicate His claims.

Collectively, these ten form a compelling case. The resurrection explains the empty tomb, appearances, transformed lives, and origin of Christianity better than any naturalistic alternative. Historians like N.T. Wright and William Lane Craig argue it aligns with Jewish expectations while shattering them in a way only a divine act could. During prior years, I have presented Orthodox Rabbi Pinchas Lapide's arguments that without a doubt Jesus rose from the dead. Lapide doesn't go so far as to accept Jesus' divinity, but He believes that God indeed raised Him from the dead.

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.

The Risen Christ, Our Hope

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. (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

Obviously, some in the congregation had begun to believe, teach, and persuade others that the resurrection was a myth or something. Paul states that without a resurrection, there can be no belief in Christ or Christianity itself. Without a resurrection, there is no future hope for us as

well. From a human perspective, the resurrection gives us hope that what we experience here on earth is not all that there is. I shared a personal story last week about seeing an angel. That gave me a knowledge and not just a faith based belief that this is not all that there is. The Lord has things stored up for us that we can't even imagine. Paul in some way visited the other side. He tells us, ²⁹ *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (1 Corinthians 2:9, KJV). If there was no resurrection, we are all to be pitied and we should all be without hope.

Effects of Denying the Resurrection

²⁹ Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? ³⁰ And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? ³¹ I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" ³³ Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." ³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. (1 Corinthians 15:29-34).

This verse can be an example of how way off we can get when we don't look at a verse in context. Our Mormon friends interpret this to mean that people who have already died can be baptized by proxy; by baptizing someone else in their place. Paul is simply saying, "Why would anybody be baptized for someone who died and didn't rise from the dead?" He's using this as an argument to say, "Jesus really did rise from the dead and that's why believers are baptized in His name." Jesus' resurrection itself gives hope to us of our own upcoming resurrection from the dead. We will be made alive again in Him! Hallelujah!

A Glorious Body

³⁵ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" ³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38).

Paul is saying that physically dying is needed for the process of resurrection in our own lives to take place.

³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. ⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. (1 Corinthians 15:39-41).

Paul is explaining that God has an order of all things in the universe which are all part of His design. In the same way that all of creation has its own glory and splendors, these bodies we have will some day have a glory of their own.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:42-45).

Our poor old earthly bodies are worn and corrupted. They are broken. They get sick. They die. But there is coming a day, when these bodies will be transformed. What was once sick will be made well. What was weak will one day be strong. I am now growing older. My body is weak. It gets sick easily, but oh my brothers and sisters, there is coming a day when this corruptible will be replaced with the incorruptible. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead can give me an assurance that the same glorified, resurrected body is my and your final destination.

⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (1 Corinthians 15:46-49).

We, like Adam, were once made from dirt. We were made from the earth. That is where our earthly bodies came from. But there is coming a day, when our spiritual man, which comes from Jesus Himself, will be made into the image of Him. We too will have bodies that are incorruptible.

Our Final Victory

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

I was thinking on this the other day, and I see now that there is a certain benefit in passing through life and then death while we're here on earth. "Flesh and blood" can't go to heaven. As we are, we are corrupted and broken and cannot go to heaven in this condition. Of course, if Jesus comes before our physical death we will be the generation that escape physical death. Paul then gives a dialogue about those who die in Christ. He says that we shall not all sleep,

meaning some will still be alive when Jesus comes. Some will be dead in the ground and others will be alive, but in an instant, both those in the ground and those then living will be CHANGED. Paul says when this happens, it will all be as fast as the twinkling of an eye. And, there will be a great trumpet blast. And in that moment, as that trumpet blasts, those who have died will be transformed into an incorruptible form and those who are still living likewise will be transformed into an incorruptible form. And in that moment, death as we know it will be no more. For this reason the Prophet Hosea foresaw this and said,

***⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"***

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:55-58).

Brothers and sisters: Paul tells us DON'T DESPAIR! NEVER GIVE UP! NEVER SURRENDER! DEATH WILL BE CONQUERED AND WE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD WILL BE PRESERVED AND FOREVER WE WILL BE WITH HIM – FOREVER AND EVER AND EVER. If Jesus tarries, God will give each of us grace at the moment of our earthly passing. We can trust Him for that as we have trusted Him for all else.

Amen!

Let us pray.

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