

The Death of Death

I Corinthians 15:3-6, 20-26, 51-58

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In **I Corinthians 15**, the Apostle Paul answers a number of basic questions about the resurrection of Jesus.

I. Did the Resurrection Really Happen?

If the resurrection is going to make a difference in your life, you have to decide whether or not it actually happened.

In **v. 3**, Paul chose to use technical Greek verbs that conveyed research, getting information, talking to eyewitnesses, and then passing it on to you. He says he talked to 500 Christians who were still alive when he wrote this.

I Cor. 15:3 “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received...”

Paul’s writing this letter only 20 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, so he’s making a very public claim because this letter would be circulated around the Roman Empire and he’s telling people they can talk to these witnesses.

The start of Christianity is radically different than every other religion, because there were hundreds of eyewitnesses.

Paul, as an academic scholar trained at the feet of Gamaliel, and is throwing down the gauntlet and saying the resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact.

I Cor. 15:20 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead...”

In **Acts 26**, when Paul was in chains and stood before Festus and King Agrippa to explain his Christian faith, he didn’t back away from talking about the resurrection even when King Festus said his learning had driven him mad.

Acts 26:25-26 But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.”

The four Gospels give a record that women were the first to find the empty tomb and to go and tell others, which would have been a huge mistake for anyone that wanted to create a hoax because in that culture the testimony of a woman was not even admissible in the court of law.

The New Testament never intended to perpetrate a hoax. Its intent, from the very beginning, was to record the historical facts about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

II. What Difference Should the Resurrection Make in My Life?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was never meant to start a new doctrine or create a new religion. It was designed to accomplish something that will change your life forever!

A. Your Sins and Your Flaws No Longer Condemn or Define You

The death and resurrection of Jesus takes care of your biggest problem - the sin problem that separates us from a holy God and would land us in an eternal hell.

But Christ's death made the payment for our sins in full and His resurrection proves He is who He says He is.

I Cor. 15:17 "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."

If Christ is alive and your faith is in Him, then God looks at you and is satisfied and accepts you because your sins have been paid in full so that you can be forgiven and free.

That freedom means you have a new identity as a child of God so that your sins, flaws, and your mess no longer define you. The old things have passed away and all things have become new.

B. The Fear of Death Can No Longer Rob You of Hope or Keep You from Loving God and Loving Others

The climax of this whole chapter is found in Paul's two rhetorical questions in **v. 55**.

I Cor. 15:55-57 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

If you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then you do have much to be afraid of and you'd be a fool to not be afraid, because a world without the resurrection is a world where your sin still hangs over you and confusion about why you're here and what you should live for haunts you at every season of life.

But, if Jesus rose from the dead then you can have Him in your life today. You can have a personal relationship with the living Jesus Christ, because He's no longer in the tomb and can now live inside of you!