

IS BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION NECESSARY?
1ST CORINTHIANS 15:12-19



Is Belief In The Resurrection Necessary?

- We live in a time where Biblical faith is attempting to be replaced with logical human reason, science, biology, physics, feelings...
 - Objective reasoning - the process of making logical and unbiased judgments or decisions based on factual information, evidence, and logical analysis
 - It involves setting aside personal biases, emotions, and subjective opinions in order to arrive at an impartial and rational conclusion
 - Believe only what can be proven scientifically or with reasonable assumptions

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- This has led to the questioning of miracles testified in Scripture
 - Was Job a real person?
 - Was Jesus really virgin born, and does it matter?
 - Did God really provide manna during the 40 years to Israel in the wilderness?
 - Did Jesus really do all the miracles spoken of in Scripture?
 - Did Jesus really resurrect from the dead?

Is Belief In The Resurrection Necessary?

- Do all these events really matter to my salvation?
 - I believe in God
 - I believe in Jesus
 - I believe Jesus died on the cross
 - I believe I can be forgiven by God for my sinfulness
 - I believe in heaven and believe I will go there after death in some form because of my belief

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- Nicolas Kristof asks Tim Keller, “I deeply admire Jesus and his message, but am also skeptical of themes that have been integral to Christianity — the virgin birth, the Resurrection, the miracles and so on. Since this is the Christmas season, let’s start with the virgin birth. Is that an essential belief, or can I mix and match?”

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- Tim Keller, “If something is truly integral to a body of thought, you can’t remove it without destabilizing the whole thing. A religion can’t be whatever we desire it to be.
 - If I’m a member of the board of Greenpeace and I come out and say climate change is a hoax, they will ask me to resign. I could call them narrow-minded, but they would rightly say that there have to be some boundaries for dissent, or you couldn’t have a cohesive, integrated organization. And they’d be right. It’s the same with any religious faith.”
 - Tim Keller would say yes, it is vital to your Christian belief system, not because of what he thinks, but because it was vital to the Apostle Paul’s

Scripture

- **1st Corinthians 15:12-19 NIV**, “12 But if (*since*) it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
 - 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.
 - 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

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- The Apostle Paul carefully laid out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in vs. 1-11
 - **Vs. 3-8 NIV**, 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas (*Peter*), and then to the Twelve.
 - 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

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- N.T. Wright has argued in *“The Resurrection of the Son of God”*, “that it is difficult to come up with any historically plausible alternate explanation for the birth of the Christian movement. It is hard to account for thousands of Jews virtually overnight worshiping a human being as divine when everything about their religion and culture conditioned them to believe that was not only impossible, but deeply heretical. The best explanation for the change was that many hundreds of them had actually seen Jesus with their own eyes.”

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- The Corinthian Church believed all of this
 - **Vs. 11 NIV**, “11 Whether then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.”
 - The Corinthian Christians did not deny Jesus’ resurrection; they denied their own resurrection
 - They were influenced either by Greek philosophy (which considered the resurrection undesirable, thinking the state of “pure spirit” superior),
 - or by the thinking of the Sadducees (which thought the world beyond to be just wishful thinking)

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- The bottom line is that the Corinthian Christians believed in existence after death, but not in resurrected bodies
 - Remember that resurrection is not merely life after death; it is the continuation of life after death in glorified bodies, which are our present bodies in a glorified state

Vs. 13 NIV, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

- If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Jesus is proven to be a false teacher
 - **John 6:39-40 NIV,** “39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up (*resurrect them*) at the last day.”
 - **John 11:25-26 NIV,** 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Vs. 13 NIV, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

- If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Scripture is proven to be false
 - **Job 19:25-27 NIV, 25** I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
 - **Hebrews 11:10 NIV**, For he (*Abraham*) was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 - **Hebrews 12:22** calls this the “New Jerusalem”

Vs. 13 NIV, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

- **Matthew 3:13-15 NCV,** 3 At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River and wanted John to baptize him. 14 But John tried to stop him, saying, “Why do you come to me to be baptized? I need to be baptized by you!” 15 Jesus answered, “Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are God’s will (*what God is requiring*).” So John agreed to baptize Jesus.
 - Jesus fully identified with those repenting of their sin and being baptized by John the Baptist
 - Satan did not raise an objection

Vs. 13 NIV, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

- The religious leaders saw Jesus as sinful
 - **Luke 7:34 NCV, 34** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine, and he is a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’
- Jesus was cursed by God the Father, forsaken by God the Father, killed by God the Father because He was fully human, fully identified with sinful me
- Paul summarizes, “If I am not resurrected from the dead, then neither was Jesus being fully human.”

Vs. 14 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

- So, if Jesus was not raised then our faith in Him is eternally useless
 - Jesus is no different than all the other religious leaders throughout history
 - Their teachings might provide some good teachings on how to live in this life and maybe even make this world better

Vs. 14 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

- Buddha thoughts
 - "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world."
 - "Radiate boundless love towards the entire world."
 - "Be where you are; otherwise, you will miss your life."
- They have no sure answers to after death that we can fully trust
 - Buddha, "Even death is not to be feared by one who has lived wisely."

Vs. 14 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

- **Vs. 19 NIV, “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”**
 - All your sufferings would be useless, without meaning and purpose
 - All your hopes come crashing down at death
 - There is no reason or purpose for this life
 - The hope of salvation eternally lost if Christ has not been raised

Vs 17 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- If Christ has not been raised, then we have been deceived
 - Sickness and Death has not been conquered
 - Your sin debt has not been covered by Jesus' death
 - There is no place, person, act to find help with your sin debt
 - You are not and will never be acceptable to a righteous just God the Father
 - You will hear, "Depart from me, I never knew you."
 - "You are still in your sins and destined for hell"
 - All your loved ones who have died before are still lost and waiting God's wrath to fall upon them

Vs 17 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- We would be truly hopeless
 - See how important the truth of the resurrection is
 - This is not some side doctrine, to be believed if one likes it
 - If you do not believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead in a resurrection body the way the Bible says He did, then you have no right to call yourself a Christian

Vs 17 NIV, And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- This is one of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith
 - The divinity of Jesus rests on the resurrection of Jesus (*Romans 1:4*)
 - The sovereignty of Jesus rests on the resurrection of Jesus (*Romans 14:9*)
 - Our justification rests on the resurrection of Jesus (*Romans 4:25*)
 - Our regeneration rests on the resurrection of Jesus (*1st Peter 1:3*)
 - Our ultimate resurrection rests on the resurrection of Jesus (*Romans 8:11*)
 - Spurgeon, “The fact is, that the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the blessings, from regeneration onward to our eternal glory, and binds them together.”

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- **1st Corinthians 15:20-21 NIV**, 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man (*Adam*), the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man (*Jesus*).
 - Firstfruit – dedicated to God with the promise of more following
 - We are the more following

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- **Romans 10:9-11 NIV**, If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be (*eternally*) saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”
- **John 6:40 NIV**, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”
- Either Scripture is all true, or you cannot really trust any of it

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