

The Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ

1 Corinthians 15

INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther:

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.”

This morning, we celebrate the Christian “Superbowl.” Easter is the Sunday of celebration where we all can say, “He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!” The grave of Jesus is empty because Christ has overcome the great foe of death. Just like in the scene in *The Wizard of Oz* where they celebrated after the Wicked Witch had died. We, too, should be celebrating with great joy that death is not the final say, and also that the second death, eternal separation from God, is not our future because as Jesus said, “If I live, you also shall live (John 14:19). As the women were the first to see our Lord in His resurrection, we will have our ladies read what is often called the Resurrection Chapter within Scripture.

15 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is

futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

The Resurrection Body

³⁵But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Mystery and Victory

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this

perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.
⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power 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 brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

I. The Evidence of Christ's Resurrection (1-19)

Tim Keller

“If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead.”

- A. Christ bodily was raised from the dead that first Easter.
- B. It was not a spiritual resurrection as the Jehovah's Witnesses say, but one of physical reality where his body was once dead but now is alive again.
- C. He showed Himself alive to his immediate followers such as Peter.
- D. Then to over 500 hundred at one time. There is no such thing as mass hallucination, yet they all saw this miracle of God together at the same time.
- E. He showed Himself to His which was his skeptical brother, James, who was converted and became one of the major leaders of the new movement in Jerusalem.
- F. Paul basically implies that if the recipients of the Corinthian letter didn't believe him to go ask those who are still alive who are witnesses.
- G. Paul, himself, a Christian killer was converted to write most of the New Testament.

- H. Women were the first to see Christ alive and all the Gospels record this fact. The recording of this fact would have been counter-cultural in that day and time, but the recording of this fact is enormous evidence.
- I. All of the disciples except for Judas and John died of martyrdom separately for their belief that they had seen the risen Christ.

Peter Kreeft

“Why would the apostles lie? Liars always lie for selfish reasons. If they lied, what was their motive, what did they get out of it? What they got out of it was misunderstanding, rejection, persecution, torture, and martyrdom. Hardly a list of perks!”

Billy Graham:

“There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three.”

II. The Entrance Way to the New Creation through Resurrection (12-54)

N.T. Wright

“Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present.”

- A. What happened in and through Christ’s resurrection opened the door for it to happen to us on the last day.
- B. Many of us have been taught wrong what the Bible says about the last days and the ultimate storyline of what God seeks to accomplish by the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- C. We’ve been taught that the end goal is Heaven and the world, Earth, is destroyed and we will live in Heaven in the Sweet By and By. Many of our songs reflect this way of thinking.
- D. Most of us have been taught a Platonic view (the philosopher Plato) of the end-time purposes of Scripture which happens to be paganistic and not Biblical with no logical place for the ideology of resurrection, not to speak of a real resurrection.

Everett Ferguson

The Christian hope for the afterlife is often expressed as the “immortality of the soul”—a phrase that never occurs in the New Testament. Actually, the biblical doctrine is of a resurrection of the body. The “immortality of the soul” is more a result of the philosophical (Platonic) tradition and its combination with the idea of resurrection in the church fathers.¹

- E. Plato’s view of the world was that the material world is bad, and the spirit world is good. The idea of coming back into the material world (by definition of what a resurrection is) would have been unthinkable to him.
- F. Many Christians today believe exactly this same way of thinking, and they have no place for a future resurrection of the Saints in their theology.
- G. This is why you hear people say silly things when someone passes, “Well, I’m so glad they have a new body now.” They don’t! The resurrection of the dead hasn’t taken place.
- H. Humans are dualistic, meaning body and spirit. When a believer dies their spirit goes to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8), but their body goes into the ground. The body dies because it is under the curse of sin, and there is a need for a new body, out of incorruptible “stuff” is necessary to live for eternity.
- I. The Bible teaches that the purpose of God’s redemption is not only to restore us back to good standing with our Creator but to redeem the Earth and make it like it once was in the beginning.

John 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- J. When Christ returns there will be a purification by fire where all the impurities of sin will be destroyed, and a new order of things will be put in place. So, in a way, the Earth will go through a resurrection of its own.

¹ Ferguson, E. (2003). [*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*](#) (Third Edition, p. 555). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

2 Peter 3:9-10

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

K. At this point, Christ will usher in the ways of Heaven on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Revelation 21:1 ESV

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

L. Christ will bring with Him all those who have died and whose spirit lives within Heaven presently back to earth to be placed into new bodies prepared to live in the New World.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Romans 8:11 ESV

¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

III. The Eviction of Death because of the Resurrection (24-28, 55-58)

N.T. Wright

“We live, therefore, between Easter and the consummation, following Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and commissioned to be for the world what he was for Israel, bringing God's redemptive reshaping to our world.

Christians have always found it difficult to understand and articulate this, and have regularly distorted the picture in one direction or the other.

- A. The last enemy to be removed is death.
- B. Notice the Bible calls death an enemy.
- C. Notice that resurrection is the overthrowing of death.
- D. God, who is life, is on the opposite side of death. Why do we often pit God and death on the same side of each other?
- E. The Bible teaches that God will throw away death and the place of the dead (Hades) into everlasting destruction never to revisit His good creation.

Revelation 20:14-15

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- F. When death is removed, and everything that accompanies death, all will be right in the world again. Then the saying will come true...

Revelation 21:3-5

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.

C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*

“Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.”

CONCLUSION

St Augustine:

“And he departed from our sight and we might return to our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and behold, He is here.”

Josh McDowell:

“Few people seem to realize that the resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone to a worldview that provides the perspective to all of life.”