

THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

jcroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org

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1 Corinthians 15:1-20

1. We find that only a few years after the death of Christ His resurrection was a source of dispute.

a. The Jews declared that the whole thing was a conspiracy, and that Jesus' disciples had somehow managed to steal His body away while the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb were asleep. Matthew 28:11-15

Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." 15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

b. The Gnostics, a group that claimed to possess a higher form of knowledge, taught that the resurrection was spiritual and not a literal physical resurrection.

c. Some of the Corinthian Christians were confused about the resurrection because they failed to fully comprehend what they had been taught.

- It appears that they may have accepted the fact that Christ rose from the dead but questioned the bodily resurrection of believers.
- Paul's point was that you can't have one without the other.

2. Here Paul confronts the situation and clarifies the whole issue.

3. One thing is clear in the New Testament, and that is that Paul and the other apostles were fully convinced that Jesus bodily rose from the dead.

4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the sending of His Spirit into the world, transformed them and their ministries.

5. A good question for us to ask ourselves is, "What difference is the living Lord Jesus making in my life?"

NOTE: The resurrection must be transformational and not just theoretical. To intellectually accept the fact that the Resurrection happened has no value unless our conviction is based on our personal relationship with our Resurrected Lord.

6. Notice three things Paul proclaimed in this passage.

I. The resurrection is an established fact.

A. Paul was writing to the Corinthian Church some thirty years after the fact-not a long time.

B. He proclaimed that the central truth of the gospel revolved around the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 3-4

C. Everything that happened was "according to the Scriptures."

D. Jesus was careful to establish the fact that He had been bodily raised from the dead. Luke 24:36-43

While they (Cleopas and his friend) were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And He said to them,

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate it before them.

E. The Lord also made it clear that all that took place had been prophesized.

Luke 24:44-49

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

NOTE: Whatever is written is a divine necessity.

F. The message of the early church was simple and straight forward.

1. Christ died for (because of) our sins.

NOTE: When Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me," the answer was so that God could show mercy to you and me. Matthew 27:46

2. Christ's dead body was buried.

3. Christ was bodily raised from the dead by the power of God.

4. Christ ascended to the Father.

5. Christ was invested with glory, power, and authority and made both a prince (ruler) and a savior. Acts 5:29-32

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31 **He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

G. Paul stated that the witnesses to the resurrection were numerous.

1. There was the witness of Scripture. 3-4

2. There was the witness of James, the Lord's half-brother. 7

3. There was the witness of the Apostles. 5, 7

4. There was the witness of over 500 brethren at one time; most of whom were still alive. 6

5. There was Paul's personal encounter with Christ. 8

II. The resurrection is an important fact.

A. If there is no resurrection from the dead than life has no ultimate meaning. 12-19

B. If there is no resurrection we might as well adopt the attitude of the world.

NOTE: The truth is all of life, and all of life's accomplishments, become irrelevant if this life is all there is. We see the results of this hopeless philosophy all around us. **See verse 32.**

C. Is the resurrected Christ a living reality to you, and does your life declare to others that He is?

NOTE: From a human perspective we could say that there are two Christs; one is an irrelevant invention of men, and the other is totally relevant and life-changing. Many say they believe in Jesus Christ but it makes no difference in their lives, while others say they believe in Jesus Christ and it has made, and is making, all the difference in their lives.

1. I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. 4 **For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.** 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

2. "We need to be reminded of the presentation of Jesus in the New Testament, for the being pictured for us nowadays would not perturb anyone; but He aroused His whole nation to rage." Oswald Chambers

III. The resurrection is a life-changing fact. 1-2

A. In order for the gospel to change lives it must be:

1. Made known.
2. Preached.
3. Received or responded to.
4. Stood upon.
5. Held on to. (It is possible to believe in vain or without effect.)

B. Can you say with conviction, "Jesus has changed my life through the life-changing gospel?"

C. Is 2 Corinthians 5:17 an observable reality in your life?

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

APPLICATION

1. Paul told the Philippian Christians that they were to prove themselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they appeared as lights (luminaries) in the world.

Philippians 2:15

2. There should be a distinct difference between a Christian and those he or she rubs elbows with.

3. Our lives as well as our lips should say, "Jesus Christ rose from the dead and He is living the life that He now lives in and through me." Romans 6:10

"For the death that He (Jesus) died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God."

4. Like Mary Magdalene we should learn to linger in our quiet place just like she lingered before the empty tomb until Jesus made His presence known to her. Then we should go, like she did, and announce, "I have seen the Lord, and this is what He said to me."

John 21:18