

“THE RISEN CHRIST; OUR ONLY HOPE”

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

April 9, 2023

El Paso

Intro: *IT IS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL OF SUBJECTS REGARDING THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST...NO ONE DENIES THAT HE LIVED...AND WAS A GREAT INFLUENCER...THE ISSUE, MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE...DID HE RISE FROM THE DEAD? WAS THERE A RESURRECTION?...IF THERE WASN'T, THEN HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN THE GOOD TEACHER THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY HE WAS...NO BETTER THAN OTHER GREAT MEN...BUT, IF THERE WAS A RESURRECTION...THAT THEN **IS THE GAME CHANGER!***

- *“Attorney and journalist Lee Strobel says he was too intellectual to accept the resurrection of Jesus as established fact. “I used to consider the Resurrection to be a laughable fairy tale. After all, Yale Law School had trained me to be coldly rational, and my years of sniffing for news at the Chicago Tribune had only toughened my naturally cynical personality. But intrigued by changes in my wife after she became a Christian, I spent nearly two years systematically using my journalistic and legal experience to study the evidence for the Resurrection and the credibility of Jesus’ claims to being God. I emerged totally convinced and gave my life to Christ.” Strobel documented his findings in his book, “The Case for Christ.”*

[1 Corinthians 15:12-20] 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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is EMPTY and your faith is also EMPTY. 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. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

I. THE DECLARATION

A. This is the only and central issue.

1. LITERALLY, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS

a. IF it didn't happen...as the TEXT says: ‘...we are of all men most pitiable...’

- *Lit. To be pitied/ miserable.*

- **AND...Vs. 13-15: “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 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.”**

- *Reverse Rational: AP knew of a certainty that CHRIST HAD DIED AND RISEN FROM THE DEAD...IF He hadn't then 'empty', 'false witnesses'...Of no purpose/ devoid of truth/ empty handed.*
- Nothing of substance.

2. BUT...OF COURSE HE DID RISE

a. **Cloaked in certainty...to those there, left no doubt.**

- From Jesus stating it before the fact/ empty tomb/ seen after the resurrection by 500 people, seen ascending into heaven.
 - *Ex. In fact as much reliable evidence that Jesus lived/ died, rose from the dead as there is that Julius Ceasar is a historical figure who lived just before Jesus Christ.*
- He was written about by contemporaries that were there, with Jesus and by those who took first hand accounts.

B. I want to examine this from an apologetic position (Presenting facts that substantiate what we believe)

1. STATEMENTS JESUS MADE RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS

a. **Reliable accounts written by 4 individuals...who were either there, or who wrote a first hand account.**

- All four are in agreement/ don't contradict each other.
 - Such accounts are relied up with historical accuracy to determine the facts of history.
- Differences with consistency of the central theme...Father/ Son/ Friend/ Co-Worker.

b. **The statements Jesus made.**

- *WASN'T LANDING WITH THEM...AS IT DOESN'T LAND WITH MANY TODAY.*
 - It would come to them later...after the fact, all came together and became the most influential and powerful event in their lives...*AS IT SHOULD BE WITH US...AND, MAY NOT BE...YET!*
- **[Mark 9:30-32] "Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him."**
- *Many religions/ philosophers and people in general say that Jesus was as 'prophet', 'good teacher' etc.*
 - *IF He is at the very least that...then how or why would he propagate something so preposterous as '...After He is killed, He will rise the third day...'*

- *He IS either God in the flesh and rose from the dead or He isn't...and IF He isn't then he's a fraud and nothing He says should be taken seriously...He should be forgotten in the ash heap of history.*

c. Confusing, met with disbelief by Jesus' Disciples and still many today.

- *[Matthew 16:21-22] "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*

2. THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

a. No one disputes that Jesus was a real person who lived...and died.

- As a way of disputing the Resurrection some say, coma...never really died, when He was taken down from the cross, placed in a cool tomb...He revived.
- No question about His death by crucifixion.
 - *Ex. Roman soldiers, trained killers/ executioners....It was their duty...were held liable at the cost of their own lives.*
 - *Spear...Mixture of blood and water...evidence of death by heart failure.*
- The people who witnessed the events tell the story...Not something patched together hundreds of years later as some have speculated.
- The tomb was owned by a rich man...It was located in a prominent place...If they wanted to make up a story about an empty tomb, they would have chosen a more obscure location.
 - ***THE TOMB WAS EMPTY...NO ONE AT THE TIME DISPROVED IT...STATED OTHER WISE...OR EVEN ACCUSED THEM OF LYING.***
- One of the more convincing arguments: *Romans and High ranking Jewish officials and leaders accused Jesus' followers of stealing the body... Confirming: THE TOMB **WAS** OCCUPIED BY JESUS...AND THEN **WAS NOT.***

b. People saw Him alive.

- First witness, women....then The Disciples...then: ***[1 Corinthians 15:3-7] "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 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. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles."***
 - More than enough of a validation to prove that it was true...***JESUS CHRIST HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD.***

c. Our entire faith depends on the resurrection being true.

- The whole Gospel record only works if the resurrection happened.

II. THE IMPACT

A. The resurrection affirms everything Jesus said and did is true.

1. VALIDATION

a. The miracles which He did...Validated His divinity.

- *[John 10:37-38] "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that YOU MAY KNOW and BELIEVE that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."*

b. The resurrection was the ultimate validation.

- *[Acts 1:3] "...to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many INFALLIBLE PROOFS , being seen by them during forty days and speaking the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."*

2. HISTORICAL IMPACT

a. Anyone can study history, look at the evidence...and come to conclusions.

- *Ex. Frank Morison: 'Who Moved The Stone'...Set out to prove once and for all that the Resurrection from the dead by Jesus Christ was a myth...not to be taken seriously.*

B. Personal meaning and impact for every individual.

1. THE GREATEST PROBLEM IN THE HUMAN RACE

a. Sin...separates us from God...holds us in captivity for which there is no escaped.

- At least not one that we can manufacture.
 - ***[Jeremiah 13:23] "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil?"***
 - *Cannot change our nature...which is sinful.*
 - *[Romans 3:23] "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."*
 - ***[Ephesians 2:12-13] "...that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."***
- With sin in place destined for eternal separation from God.

2. THE RESURRECTION MEANS THAT OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN.

a. **The curse of our sin broken.**

- [Isaiah 59:2] *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”*
- **[Romans 6:23] “The wages of sin is death...”**
- GOD LOVES HIS CREATION...DESPITE THE FACT FALLEN AWAY.
- Took our place...Did what we could not do for ourselves...**[2 Corinthians 5:21] “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

b. **How do we know that has occurred?**

- *The resurrection proves it!*
- **[Romans 1:4] “...and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”**
- *If Jesus did not have power over sin...He could not have risen*
- **THE RESURRECTION IS PROOF THAT SIN/ DEATH CAN BE OVERCOME... AND THE POWER FOR THAT IS IN JESUS CHRIST.**

3. **THE RESURRECTION DEMONSTRATES SUPERNATURAL POWER THAT IS NOW AVAILABLE TO US.**

a. **Beginning with your salvation.**

- [2 Corinthians 5:17] *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*
- GOD HAS MIRACLE POWER TO CHANGE THINGS...CHANGE/ TRANSFORM!
- **[Romans 8:11] “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead DWELLS IN YOU, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through HIS SPIRIT WHO DWELLS IN YOU.”**
- **THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD IS AT WORK IN US.**
- **[Ephesians 3:20] “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to THE POWER THAT WORKS IN US...”**
- AMP: *‘Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us...’*

a. **Seeing as He has risen from the dead...overcome death...cannot He then not meet you at your point of greatest need?**

- *Make provision...work in any situation to bring about good...heal/ deliver/ set free.*
- *What miracle do you need right now, what is your point of need that resurrection power cannot address?*

- **[Acts 3:15-16] “You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact! “Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus’ name has healed him before your very eyes.”**

III. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US TODAY

A. AP’s ?...How would it change things IF Jesus had not risen.

1. POINT: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AFFECTS (should) EVERYONE OF OUR LIVES TODAY!

a. **More than theology/ religion.**

- Vs. 19: *“If our hope in Christ is for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone else in the world.”* KJV we are most miserable

B. You have a story to tell...message to proclaim, testimony to deliver.

1. GO AND TELL

a. **As soon as Jesus rose from the dead his followers were given a mission: Go tell someone!**

- *[Matthew 28:7] “And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”*
- This is the Gospel message: **[Mark 16:15] And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature...”**
- Anyone who doesn’t know Jesus needs to know the power of resurrection.

2. THE RESURRECTION GIVES US HOPE.

a. **His life gives us confidence/ assurance/ hope...vs...dead religion/ vain philosophy.**

- *[1 John 5:13-14] “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”*
- Hope gives stability in the storms of life

b. **The resurrection gives us victory...We have His Life in us...hope for the future.**

- *Christians are people who can’t lose!*
- If we are experiencing trouble – we have hope of God’s intervention
- Wicked men thought they defeated Jesus - The Devil thought he defeated Jesus
- But God gets the last word!

- TEXT: **Vs. 18-19: “Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”**
 - *People who die/ pass away from this life...If Jesus hadn't risen, lost...You would have no hope of seeing them again.*
- In this life, don't always get justice/ rewarded...sometimes suffer.
 - OT: **Vs. 20: “But Christ has truly been raised from the dead—the first one and proof that those who sleep in death will also be raised.”**
 - **RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING!**
- If your loved ones die – we don't lose them; *We will see them again!*
 - If we are dying: *We don't lose.*
- **[2 Corinthians 5:8] “We are confident...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**
 - *PGM's sister Karen Heimberg had a double lung transplant. She lived 1 year, then her whole body started shutting down. They disconnected her oxygen and she began to die – but she was conscious. She wrote a note while she was dying:*
 - (Pic) **“Tell them I win in the end!”**