



Be **WISE** About The Resurrection

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1 CORINTHIANS 15: 1 – 6 (NKJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 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.



BE WISE ABOUT... THE RESURRECTION

- Corinth was a Greek city, and the Greeks did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. When Paul had preached at Athens and declared the fact of Christ's resurrection, some of his listeners laughed at him.

Acts 17:32 (NKJV)

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."

- Most Greek philosophers considered the human body a prison, and they welcomed death as deliverance from bondage.



This skeptical attitude had somehow invaded the church, and Paul had to face it head-on. The truth of the resurrection had doctrinal and practical implications for life that were too important to ignore.

Romans 14:9 (NKJV)

For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.



Paul dealt with the subject by answering four basic questions:

1. **ARE** the dead raised? (1 Corinthians 15:1 – 19)
2. **WHEN** are the dead raised? (1 Corinthians 15:20 – 28)
3. **WHY** are the dead raised? (1 Corinthians 15:29 – 34, 49 – 58)
4. **HOW** are the dead raised? (1 Corinthians 15:35 – 48)



1. “ARE” THE DEAD RAISED? *(1 Cor. 15:1 – 19)*

- It is important to note that the believers at Corinth did believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so Paul started his argument with that fundamental truth.
- He presented three proofs to assure his readers that Jesus Christ indeed had been raised from the dead.



PROOF #1: THEIR SALVATION *(vv. 1 – 2)*

Paul had come to Corinth and preached the Gospel's message, and their faith had transformed their lives.

The fundamental part of the Gospel message was the fact of Christ's resurrection. After all, a dead Savior cannot save anybody.

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NKJV)

and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.



PROOF #1: THEIR SALVATION *(vv. 1 – 2)*

The Corinthians had received the Word, trusted Christ, been saved, and were now standing on that Word as the assurance of their salvation.

Romans 5:1 – 2 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The fact that they were standing firm was proof that their faith was genuine and not empty.



PROOF #2: THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES *(vv. 3 – 4)*

- The Gospel is the most important message that the church ever proclaims.
- While it is good to be involved in social action and the betterment of humanity, there is no reason why these ministries should preempt the Gospel.
- "Christ died ... He was buried ... He rose again ... He was seen" are the basic historical *facts* on which the Gospel stands (1 Cor. 15:3 – 5).
- The Romans crucified many people, but only one "victim" ever died for the world's sins.



- When Paul wrote "**according to the Scriptures**" (1 Cor. 15:3), he was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures.
- Much of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament pointed to the sacrifice of Christ as our substitute and Savior.



THE ANNUAL DAY OF ATONEMENT

Leviticus 16:6 – 10 (NKJV)

6 “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.

7 He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.



8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.



But where does the Old Testament declare His Resurrection on the third day?

Jesus pointed to the experience of Jonah in Matthew 12:38 – 41.

Matthew 12:38 – 41 (NKJV)

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.



Paul also compared Christ's Resurrection to the "first fruits". The first fruits were presented to God on the day following the Sabbath after Passover.

Leviticus 23:9 – 12 (NKJV)

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

12 And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD.

1 Corinthians 15:23 (NKJV)

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.



- Since the Sabbath must always be the seventh day, the day after Sabbath must be the first day of the week, or Sunday, the day of our Lord's resurrection.
- This covers three days on the Jewish calendar. Apart from the Feast of Firstfruits, there were other prophecies of Messiah's resurrection in the Old Testament:
 - Psalm 16:8 – 11 (see Acts 2:25–28);
 - Psalm 22:22ff (see Hebrews 2:12);
 - Isaiah 53:10 – 12;
 - Psalm 2:7 (see Acts 13:32–33)



There are
prophecies of
Messiah's
resurrection in the
Old Testament:

Psalm 16:8 – 11 (NKJV)

8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- Quoted in Acts 2:25–28



There are prophecies of the Messiah's Resurrection in the Old Testament:

Psalm 22:22 (NKJV)

I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. *(Quoted Heb. 2:12)*

Psalm 2:7 (NKJV)

“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Acts 13:32 – 33 (NKJV)

32 And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers.

33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’



PROOF #3: CHRIST WAS SEEN BY WITNESSES ¹⁸

(vv. 5 – 11)

- On the cross, Jesus was exposed to the eyes of unbelievers, but after the Resurrection, He was seen by believers who could be witnesses of His resurrection.

Acts 1:22 (NKJV)

beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

Acts 2:32 (NKJV)

This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.



PROOF #3: CHRIST WAS SEEN BY WITNESSES ¹⁹

(vv. 5 – 11)

Acts 3:15 (NKJV)

and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Acts 5:32 (NKJV)

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”



PROOF #3: CHRIST WAS SEEN BY WITNESSES ²⁰

(vv. 5 – 11)

- Peter saw Him, and so did the disciples collectively. James was a half-brother of the Lord who became a believer after the Lord appeared to him.

John 7:5 (NKJV)

For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

- The 500 *plus* brethren all saw Him simultaneously (1 Cor. 15:6), so it could not have been a hallucination or deception.



One of the most significant witnesses of the Resurrection was Paul²¹ himself. For as an unbeliever, he was soundly convinced that Jesus was dead.

The **radical change** in his life—a change which brought him persecution and suffering—is certainly **evidence** that the Lord had indeed been raised from the dead.

Acts 9:4 – 5 (NKJV)

4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”



- At this point, Paul's readers would say, "Yes, we agree that *Jesus* was raised from the dead."
- Then Paul would reply, "If you believe that, then you must believe in the resurrection of *all* the dead!"
- Christ came as a man, truly human, and experienced all that we experienced, except that He never sinned. If there is no resurrection, then Christ was not raised.
- If He was not raised, there is no Gospel to preach. If there is no Gospel, then you have believed in vain, and you are still in your sins!



- If there is no resurrection, then believers who have died have no hope, and we shall never see them again!
- The conclusion is obvious: Why be a Christian if we have only suffered in this life and with no future glory to anticipate? (In 1 Cor. 15:29 – 34, Paul expanded this idea.)

The Resurrection is not just important; it is "of first importance" because all that we believe hinges on it.

