

## The Importance of the Resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Resurrection Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016

John 20:1-18 (NIV) — 1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. 11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- On Sunday mornings we have been studying through the book of First Corinthians, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse.
- Last week we finished chapter fourteen, which will bring us to chapter fifteen. We're actually almost at the end of the book.
- The reason I mention this is because chapter fifteen is all about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is why it is today's text.

- Lest you think that I timed it this way, let me hasten to say, I'm not that clever. Truth be known, this was clearly God's timing.
- Verses 1-11 are about the importance of Christ's resurrection; verses 12-34 are about the relevance of Christ's resurrection.
- Then, in verses 35-58, the Apostle Paul turns a corner and talks about our resurrection vis-à-vis the rapture of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (NIV) — 1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 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, 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. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

- If you're anything like me, and I suspect that you are, you're getting to know this Corinthian church from our study of this book.
- One of the things we're discovering about these Corinthian Christians is that there were serious problems within their church.
- Now, here in chapter fifteen, we're introduced to yet another problem, and this was arguably the most serious problem of all.

- It seems there were those in the Corinthian church that did not believe in a literal resurrection, let alone Christ's resurrection.
- It's for this reason the Apostle Paul devotes a large portion of his epistle in this chapter, in order to address this very issue.
- I suppose at first, one might think this has no real application to us today, however, I would submit that it most certainly does.

According to a recent Barna Research Group survey, it was discovered that 30% of professing Christians do not believe in the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, they don't believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. The question I would ask is why do they even bother with Christianity if they don't believe in the resurrection. The reason being is if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then we are fools to be pitied.

A number of years ago, a Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University, Dr. Greenleaf, believed the Resurrection was a hoax and was determined to expose the "myth." After thoroughly examining the evidence he came to the exact opposite conclusion and wrote a book entitled, *The Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence*. He concluded that according to the jurisdiction of legal evidence the resurrection was the best supported event in all of history and in the process committed his life to Jesus Christ!"

Charles Spurgeon echoed this saying, "... beyond a doubt it can be shown that there is as much evidence for the resurrection of Christ as for any fact in history. There is, probably, no fact in history which is so fully proven and corroborated as the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, who was nailed to the cross, and died, and was buried, did rise again."

Peter W. Stoner, a well-known professor of Mathematics and Astronomy of the last century wrote that, "...Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world."

The evidence goes back further to the year 1842 when a man by the name of Otto Thenius proposed that the actual location known as the "place of the skull" was the Calvary (Golgotha) where the crucifixion of Jesus occurred. Then in 1878 Captain Conder, stated his conviction that the real site of Calvary was to be found on a rocky knoll outside the northern wall and close to the cave known as "Jeremiah's Grotto." Many years later in 1894 a British General named Gordon visited this spot and had a very strong sense about it being the place, so much so that he couldn't not research it further. Later he would come to believe with a certainty that this was the site where Jesus was buried and rose from the dead. He began raising money and established the Garden Tomb Association in London, which purchased the land and still manages the site and maintains the grounds to this day. Soil samples were taken from the floor of the tomb and given to expert chemists to determine if there had been any trace of decomposition. The analysis was completed, and it was concluded that absolutely no trace whatsoever of any decay or decomposition was found. Today, Sunday Services are held at this site, and visitors come from all over the world to see this tomb which had belonged to one Joseph of Arimathea, who was used of God to fulfill the prophecies related to the burial and subsequent resurrection of the Messiah.

- Yet, even with all of this evidence there are still those who deny the resurrection offering their theories as to what happened.

THEORY	EVIDENCE	REFERENCE
Jesus was unconscious and later revived	A Roman soldier told Pilate that Jesus was dead	Mark 15:44-45
They thought he was dead but He wasn't	They didn't break His legs and instead pierced His side	John 19:32-34
Unknown thieves stole His body	The tomb was sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers	Matthew 27:65-66
They went to the wrong tomb	They said the disciples stole his body from that tomb	Matthew 28:13
The disciples stole His body	Then why would they die for a lie and in such a brutal way	Acts 12:2

### **THE DEATH THE DISCIPLES SUFFERED**

- John died of extreme old age in Ephesus.
- Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, hung himself.
- Peter was crucified head downward, during Nero's persecution.
- Andrew died on a cross at Patrae, in Achaia, a Grecian Colony.
- James, Jesus' younger brother, was thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple, then beaten to death with a club.
- Bartholomew was flayed alive in Albanapolis, Armenia.
- James, the elder son of Zebedee, was beheaded at Jerusalem.
- Thomas, the doubter, was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel, in the east Indies.
- Philip was hung against a pillar at Heropolis (Abyssinia).
- Thaddeus was shot to death with arrows.
- Simon died on a cross in Persia (now Iran).

- Here's the bottom line, Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected on the third day, and will return as He promised one day.

John 14:25–15:1 (NIV) — 25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. 28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

John 16:28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.

- Every year at this time, I'm reminded of the similarities between the first coming of Jesus Christ and His return for His bride.
- It's this much-needed reminder of Jesus Christ coming back for us that brings us that peace that only Jesus can give to us.
- When you know that you have this to look forward to, it makes whatever you're going through, so much easier to get through.

- The fact of the matter is Jesus rose again from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, until the rapture.
- When He comes, He won't be a baby born in a manger and He won't be the Savior dying on a cross, He will be King of kings.
- The first time Jesus came, He was born at night, but when He comes at the rapture He takes His bride as a thief in the night.

- The first time He was born to die however, this time when He comes He takes those who are born again, and they'll never die.
- It's for this reason at this season we celebrate the resurrected Lord and in so doing we also celebrate His victory over death.
- Were it not for His death and resurrection, His work here, to bring peace and good will toward men would've been incomplete.

- The first time He came it was through a virgin's womb and in death He left through an empty tomb so we could be born again.
- As one aptly quipped, Jesus entered our world through a door marked No Entrance, and left it through a door marked No Exit.
- The question for all mankind becomes will we allow Him entrance into the door of our life for eternal life when we exit this life?

- The Savior of the world was born to die, so that we can be born again to live. His birth points to His death for our eternal life.
- The way He entered this world would be similar to how He left this world in that His death is woven into the fabric of his birth.
- His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone manger at His birth and His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone tomb at His death!

- Just as His entering the world was similar to leaving the world so too will it be similar to when He takes us out of this world.
- If you were to ask me what I thought the world would be like before the rapture of the church my answer would be like this.
- In other words, what the world was like when Jesus came the first time is looking eerily similar to what the world is like today.

- That's the bad news, but the bad news is the catalyst for the good news of Salvation found only in the person of Jesus Christ.

#### **THE BAD NEWS:**

- Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;
- Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-
- Romans 6:23a For the wages of sin is death,

#### **THE GOOD NEWS:**

- Romans 6:23b ...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 10:9-10 ...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.
- Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."