

The Resurrection: Questions of Faith

1 Corinthians 15

MPS The resurrection of Jesus Christ unlocks the mystery of the gospel to reveal the glory of God in eternal redemption!
OBJ Every person should trust in Jesus through the gospel because of three eternal truths and one glorious proclamation.

INTRO **Do you ever question your faith? How do you deal with the questions about your faith?** Questions can be one of the most beneficial aspects of our faith. Questions are a great learning tool for growth and maturity in one's faith. The Apostle Paul uses questions of the faith to outline his most extensive teaching on the Resurrection.

Paul begins 1 Corinthians 15 with a reminder of the gospel and its truth for all Christians.

READ 1 Corinthians 15:1-5

*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. **1 Corinthians 15:1-5***

Paul validates the historical record of the Lord's resurrection by his appearances to eye-witnesses. The gospel is the good news of God sending His only begotten Son to die, be buried and raised to life, so that sin, death, and hell might be defeated once for all for all who trust in Jesus. When Jesus was raised, he appeared to Peter and the disciples, to more than 500 people, to James and the apostles, and then to Paul, on the road to Damascus. The resurrection is not merely an individual event, but the apex of the Christian faith because it is the divine exclamation point on the work of God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. This is why Paul begins with the gospel, through which we preach the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all three of which are critical aspects of our faith. God did not merely do something for us in the crucifixion, but He completed it among us in the burial grave, and then revealed it to us by the resurrection. The Friday we call "good" is the day the man who showed Himself to be God died. The burial grave held his earthly body in such a way so man could not interfere, and for such a time that proved his death. THEN, when the physical evidence of this world was completed for empirical proof, God spoke and manifested His divine wisdom to resurrect Jesus Christ from the grave to demonstrate His eternal power as Lord over all, most specifically death and life. **The gospel is God's revelation of His love to redeem and reconcile people unto Himself, of which we finally understand because of the resurrection.**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ unlocks the mystery of the gospel to reveal the glory of God in eternal redemption!

TRANS Once declared, Paul moves to address questions raised against the resurrection.

OBJ **Three Eternal Truths and one glorious proclamation of the resurrection that commend every person to put their faith in Jesus for eternal life.**

READ 1 Corinthians 15:12

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:12

#1 The Q? of Validity: What if the resurrection is not true? 1 Cor 15:12-28

Some were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. This position was mostly propagated by the influence of the Sadducees. Paul responds that if there is no resurrection, then Christ was not raised, an obvious historical event that has already taken place, then our preaching and every person's faith is in vain, then faith is futile and every person is still in their sin, and those who have died have simply perished, no longer to exist, and then we who believe are most to be pitied. In other words, Paul says, our whole belief in Jesus Christ is founded on the truth of the resurrection. **IF the resurrection is not true, then the gospel is a hoax of greatest proportion and deception, and all of this is a waste!**

Paul addresses this first question with an adamant affirmative, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead".



Paul begins verse 20 with a powerful change in direction that commands our attention. His answer obliterates the question with everything that IS true because of the resurrection. Theologian William Milligan stated that the resurrection is the one event that harmonizes all other facts of Jesus' history. I love how Apologist Josh McDowell states it, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the *most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men*, OR it is the most fantastic fact in history."¹ The conclusion Paul reaches by his affirmation of the resurrection is that at the right time when all things are subjected to Christ, God will be revealed as all in all. **The resurrection is an historical fact that unlocks the most glorious of all divine, eternal reality; Jesus was raised, and with Him shall all who trust in Him be raised for eternal glory.**

Eternal Truth #1: The Resurrection is the glorious culmination of the gospel that validates the whole message and unveils its full meaning for those who trust in Jesus Christ; sin is atoned, righteousness is bestowed, and reconciliation to God is implored for the glory of God.

TRANS The next two questions build on his declaration that the resurrection is true, and how we live in light of this truth.

READ 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

*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. **1 Corinthians 15:29-34***

Paul addresses some common practices of the First Century, essentially arguing, "**why do these things you do matter if the resurrection is not true?**" He retorts strongly, "**why would I risk my life every day for what was not true?**" He goes on to build his argument from a perspective of a secular mantra that exploits the vanity of worldly morals, aka immorality, like, "*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*", all the while ignoring others that reflect a good morality, like, "*Bad company ruins good morals.*" And to all of this he rebukes them, warning them to cease their damnable moralizing when its convenient, and dismissing eternal realities when they don't want to face them. He culminates his rebuke with, "But we know God! And it is to your shame when you choose to govern your morals by worldly values and not by God's truth!"

#2 The Q? of Relevance: knowing the resurrection is true, why live like it's not completely, or only partially, true?

For those who know the resurrection is true, it makes a difference in the way we live our lives now! Eternal life doesn't begin when the physical life ends. Eternity is placed in our heart when we confess, "Jesus is Lord", so that we live now for a glory that is altogether beyond this world, and to invite others to believe! The life of a Christ-follower is an eternal declaration by God that this life matters MORE than ever imagined, more meaning and purpose, more peace, joy, and satisfaction. We live and breath and walk in God's divine will by the glorious light of the eternal, Almighty One! And THAT matters for people all around us who are convinced their life doesn't matter, and for those who think their life matters only because of what they've done in this world.

Eternal Truth 2: Since we know God and that the resurrection is true, it makes one's whole life now matter for eternal glory.

READ 1 Corinthians 15:35

*But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" **1 Corinthians 15:35***

Finally, once the arguments of purpose and meaning are addressed, Paul moves to the issues of reality, where people ask how this could be true with the reality of these bodies we have in this world. Paul turns their attention to while now we have our natural bodies that are suited for this world, that are perishable, weak and wasting away, then we will be given our spiritual bodies that are imperishable, and raised in glory and power. As we bear the image of the natural now, the man of dust, then we shall bear the image of man of heaven. **The glory of heaven is nothing like the glory of earth but is far greater**

¹ Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p203.



glory in every way.

ILLUS If you've ever been around someone who is dying, it does not take much to realize that even though the body wastes away unto death, the will to live only grows stronger in the other direction. I will never forget my grandfather, who at the age of 93 lived with constant, chronic pain all over from a failing body, with congestive heart failure, causing major organs to struggle in function and fail, and who had followed the Lord for decades, said to me, speaking of the human will to live, "Lane, you're never ready to die." The wasting away of a weak body versus the human will to live is surely a personification of sin, where our image of God is for life, but our curse of sin is death. **This body in which we now live is such a burden, but one day it will be no more, and God will embody us for eternity!**

Q? #3 The Q? of glory: believing the resurrection, why live as if our hope is only for this world?

When our eyes are set upon this world so that our hope is found in this world, it causes us to live as if we have no hope beyond this world. We get overwhelmed by what is when we fail to focus on what shall be! The last time they saw Jesus in His earthly body, when he came down from the cross and was laid in the tomb, he was barely recognizable because his body had been so disfigured by the beatings and crucifixion. But when He revealed Himself after the resurrection, His resurrected body was perfect glory! **We can trust God's provision in this world and for eternity, because we know He will perfectly outfit us with the most glorious body suited for eternity!**

Eternal Truth 3: When we set our hope on eternity with God through the gospel, it puts all aspects of our life here and now in eternal perspective so that we can persevere now for His glory!

TRANS Paul concludes the chapter, exhorting all to believe in Jesus, because of this one, final, glorious proclamation.
READ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 57

*Behold! 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. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 57***

The resurrection proves and promises for us; Jesus will return will for people. All our lives on earth will not be the same. But because of the resurrection, all who live by faith in Christ will be changed for eternity!

One glorious proclamation. The mystery is revealed: We shall all be changed! The trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will be raised imperishable, and we will be dressed for eternal victory!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ unlocks the mystery of the gospel to reveal the glory of God in eternal redemption!

