

8. The Power of Christ's Resurrection (3Q 2026 1 and 2 Corinthians)

Biblical material: 1 Corinthians 15; Luke 24:44–47; Rev. 20:5, 6; Col. 2:12; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Thess. 4:13–17.

Quotes

- Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. *Martin Luther*
- If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead. *Timothy Keller*
- Jesus claimed He had the power to raise himself from the dead and His followers would be raised from the dead. That's a unique claim in the literature of religion. *Josh McDowell*
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth. *Henry Morris*
- Bless God that there is *in* us resurrection life, and that there *awaits* us a resurrection morn! *J.J. Bonar*
- The resurrection completes the inauguration of God's kingdom. . . . It is the decisive event demonstrating that God's kingdom really has been launched on earth as it is in heaven. *N.T. Wright*

Questions

Without the resurrection, what would the death of Jesus mean? What are the problems in “splitting up” the experience of Jesus into life, death, resurrection, ascension, return? Why is the resurrection so important—not just for us, but for the whole of the Universe? What were the angels thinking between Jesus' death and resurrection?

Bible summary

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul addresses the assertion that “there's no resurrection of the dead.” He points to Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection. He states that death will finally be destroyed. Those in Christ will rise never to die again. Jesus tells his disciples he will rise again on the third day (see Luke 24:44–47). Revelation 20:5, 6 talks of the two resurrections. We are buried and raised with Christ (see Colossians 2:12). Paul speaks of his confidence in Christ Jesus (see 2 Timothy 1:12). “We don't want you to be confused about what happens when people die, brothers and sisters, so that you won't grieve like others who don't have any hope.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Comment

Human beings need conviction. Conviction that our existence has meaning, that life has importance, that there is a future. The hope that God gives is the assurance of all that—and more! As sure as God himself, hope in Jesus is as solid as the ground underneath our feet.

Many religions and philosophies attempt to answer these same questions of existence and to provide some kind of hope. Without being arrogant, the Christian hope presented in the Bible outclasses them all. We have a “better hope” according to Hebrews 7:19.

Why? Because it is based on the promise of God Himself, it assures us of a future together with him, it gives motivation and purpose to the present, it is far more meaningful than the materialistic hopes of this age, it is guaranteed through the resurrection of Jesus...

For if there is no future together with God, then the present loses its value and as Paul commented, without the hope of resurrection then all is in vain. In 1 Corinthians 15:19–28 the present life (where we do our hoping) is contrasted with the resurrection to everlasting life (where

hope will be realized). As Paul says, if this life was all, what would happen to hope? That is why the resurrection is vital—it the way in which hope is fulfilled. Death is destroyed—the ultimate enemy, so that our hope and future with God may be achieved.

“The human being is only to be defined in terms of his whither, not of his whence,” wrote theologian Helmut Thielicke. In other words, it’s where we’re going that is important, not where we came from. What God sees in us in potential is what He wants to make reality in His Kingdom of the future—which is why He waits for us to respond to His glorious offer of salvation.

In the resurrection of Jesus there is no triumphalistic revenge, no settling of scores with those who killed him. Rather the glorious establishment of the eternal kingdom, guaranteed by God through his giving of Himself to save the dying from their self-destruction. The appearances of Jesus to his followers confirm the establishment of this radical kingdom, so different from those of this world.

Those who stress the legal aspects of the crucifixion as payment of penalty and a transaction to propitiate God, the resurrection can often seem of lesser importance. In such a view the contractual aspects are met by the sacrifice, and our legal standing is consequently adjusted. For this the appeasement/payment/satisfaction aspects are the essential elements. However, this misses the importance of resurrection as preached by the early apostles. If legal payment was all, then why does Acts and the letters of the New Testament place such stress on resurrection? Without the resurrection, as Paul makes clear, our faith would be in vain. It is the resurrection that is the guarantee, the proof, the demonstration of the intent of our trustworthy God to ensure we are forever with him. The cross without resurrection is indeed a dim prospect.

We live in the time between. The time between crucifixion and resurrection. Christ has come. He has revealed God to us, he has made salvation possible, he has been lifted up from the earth to draw all to him. And soon he will come again to complete the reality of that salvation, to take us to be with him where he is, to lift us up to heaven and draw us to himself, the time of our resurrection.

But for the moment we live in that in-between-time, between the “now already” and the “not yet.” Between the achievement of God’s plan to save, and the consummation of that plan. Between promise and fulfillment. Between “I have come” and “I will come again.”

Through his life and death and resurrection Jesus demonstrates the truth about God as he truly is, and completely defeats the Enemy and his accusations. His victory is not based on power and might, but through his totality of love and forgiveness and healing.

Ellen White Comments

Christ’s resurrection proves that he has power over death and the grave. He is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. {RH, August 13, 1889}

In the gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, life and immortality are brought to light, and the kingdom of Heaven is thrown open to all believers. {3SP 74}

Had He not by His death and resurrection opened for us the door of hope, we should have known nothing but the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair. In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. {5T 316}

They [the disciples] reasoned from scripture, as Jesus had done with them, showing how every specification of prophecy relating to the first advent of Christ had been fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. {3SP 234}

Let the mind be educated to look to Jesus... He burst the fetters of the tomb, and proclaimed in triumph over the rent sepulcher, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Thus Christ became a present Saviour, a divine presence, in every place... He who contemplates God’s glory and infinite love, will have humble views of himself; but by beholding the character of God, he will be changed into his divine image. {RH February 25, 1896}