

1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-28 — From Resurrection To Restoration

April 17, 2022

Jesus has risen! (He is risen indeed!) If you are new, it is great to have you. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. It is no secret that today we are going to talk about the resurrection of Jesus. Let's pray and we will get to work.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for Jesus. Thank you for sending your Son to save us from our sin. Jesus, thank you for humbling yourself to take on a human body. Thank you for dying for us and rising to new life for us. Today, help me as I teach about your resurrection. All of us want to know more about the resurrection and how it changes our lives. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Like most of us, I am sure you are following the news about the war between Russia and Ukraine. It was estimated that by the end of March Russia has lost between 7,000-15,000 troops. That is a lot of dead people. It is hard to comprehend. If you are like me, after hearing that number, you are thankful the war is on the other side of the world. Thankfully we don't have people dying like that in our country.

Unfortunately, that is not true. Every day in the United States approximately 6,400 people die. They don't die from war. They die from a variety of other causes such as cancer, heart disease, drowning, and even falling out of bed. This means in the month of March 198,400 Americans died.

While I grieve the war between Russia and Ukraine, and I don't mean to absolve the evil men who are carrying it out, the truth is that the Russia-Ukraine war is not increasing the ultimate death toll. Russians and Ukrainians not killed in the war would die later in history.

It doesn't matter if you live in a war zone like Ukraine or a peaceful place like Iowa. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor. It doesn't matter if you eat healthy food

or candy. We cannot escape the fact that one day each one of us will die. When that moment comes, we will find ourselves fully conscious in an eternity where the atmosphere cannot be changed. That is a scary thought.

That brings us to this morning's message where we will look at Jesus' resurrection and how Jesus conquered death for us. The book of Hebrews tells us how Jesus changes the way we look at death.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. Hebrews 2:14–15 (ESV)

The mission of Jesus was to free us from the fear of death! Jesus came to turn the most terrifying moment of our lives into the best moment of our lives. He turned the time of our judgment to the moment of our forgiveness. When Jesus rose from the dead, he freed all those who have trusted in him from their fear of death. This is what makes the resurrection so important.

The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If the resurrection of Jesus isn't true, we have no reason to gather. We have no hope for tomorrow. Everything about the church is a joke. The Bible is an evil book full of lies. The resurrection is the cog upon which the entire Christian faith turns. If the resurrection isn't true, the entire Christian faith is false. That is why it is important for us to have confidence in the resurrection of Jesus.

To do that, this morning we are going to answer two questions. The first question is, "How can we know Jesus rose from the dead?" That is, how do we know Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact, not historical fiction? The second

question we will answer is, “What difference does the resurrection make for my life and my future?”

When it comes to the resurrection, one of the best chapters in the Bible on the resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15. Let’s read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, which gives us evidence for the resurrection; then we will read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, which gives us the results of the resurrection.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 (ESV)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 (ESV)

Let’s begin by looking at the first eleven verses. We will look at six pieces of evidence for the resurrection.

What evidence do we have the resurrection is true?

The Evidence of the Church

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV)

The first piece of evidence Paul gave us for the resurrection is not explicitly stated in this verse. Instead, it is stated implicitly. The fact that the Corinthian Christians, and all Christians everywhere, heard the good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for their sin, and they were miraculously changed when they trusted in what Jesus did for them on the cross and in the empty tomb, is powerful evidence for the resurrection of Jesus being true.

The point Paul was making in the first two verses is the Corinthian believers themselves were strong living evidence that the resurrection of Jesus is true. When they trusted in the resurrection of Jesus to forgive their sin, Jesus changed their lives. The Corinthian Christians found their lives transformed when they trusted in Jesus. That is powerful evidence of the truth of the resurrection.

Look what Paul said the members of the Corinthian church were like before they heard of the resurrection of Jesus.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers (one who attacks another's reputation with their words), nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (ESV *emphasis mine)**

That is a pretty messed up group of people! Paul's point was that this was what the members of the church of Corinth used to be like. Now they were

different. They left that lifestyle behind. None of them left that lifestyle behind on their own strength. It was when they trusted in the death of Jesus on the cross for their sins and the resurrection of Jesus to new life that God supernaturally changed them, making them into new people. The good news of what Jesus had done for them didn't make them perfect people but it did make them changed people. Instead of living for themselves and the pleasure of sin, they now loved Jesus and lived to please Jesus. Trusting in what Jesus did for them on the cross and with the empty tomb broke the power of sin in their lives. Now they had new desires and a newfound ability in their hearts and lives to please Jesus. That all came to them supernaturally. This is evidence for the resurrection being true.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Paul said that just as Jesus created everything on this planet out of nothing in the book of Genesis, when we trust in Jesus' death on the cross to pay for our sins and his resurrection from the grave to new life, in that moment Jesus creates us into completely new people in our hearts.

You can try anything you want to make yourself into a new person and free yourself from the power of sin but it won't work. You can try Jenny Craig, herbal tea, and essential oils, but none of them can change your heart and life. It is only trusting in the death and resurrection of Jesus that breaks people free from the power of sin and transforms them into new people.

For the last 2,000 years, people have claimed the resurrection did not take place. They have considered the church a misguided group of people, but nobody has ever been able to explain why someone who trusts in the death and

resurrection of Jesus for his or her sin finds himself or herself radically altered into a completely new person. My friends, that is evidence the resurrection of Jesus is factual historical, not fictional history.

The Evidence Of The Bible

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures... 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (ESV)

Let's work our way through these two verses. When Paul said he delivered the message of Jesus to them, this means Paul brought them what was an authoritative teaching. The death and resurrection of Jesus and how trusting in Jesus changes our lives is not something Paul made up. He did not design it. He only delivered it. He only passed on what he received.

He also told us it is a message of first importance. That means what Jesus did for us in his death, burial, and resurrection is the most important thing we need to know.

Paul then described the gospel message that every faithful Bible-teaching church must teach and upon which they must stand. It is the truth that Jesus died on the cross in our place for our sins. Jesus was then buried. Three days later he rose to new life. That is the gospel message Paul received.

Here is where some historical context is helpful. 1 Corinthians is an early letter of Paul. It was written probably 20 years after Jesus rose from the dead. There is a small gap between the resurrection of Jesus and the teachings of the early church when we look at this letter.

Here is where it gets interesting. If you look at your text, you will see Paul was quoting something. What Paul said about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in these verses is an early church creed that Paul received. A creed is an agreed-upon statement of truth. Scholars who study this tell us the creed Paul was quoting about Jesus' death burial and resurrection dates back to within five years of the resurrection itself. This creed is a statement of what the earliest Christians believed about Jesus and what his death, burial, and resurrection did for us!

Sometimes we hear the Christian faith has drifted. They tell us we don't know what the earliest Christians believed. That simply is not true. This is what the earliest Christians only five years after the resurrection of Jesus believed about the significance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is the same thing we believe today. Nothing has changed!

In addition, twice Paul said the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were all talked about in Scripture and were predicted in Scripture long before they happened. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies telling us Jesus would come and die for our sins, be in the grave for three days, then rise to new life again. When we see Jesus dying and rising, this shouldn't be a surprise to us. The Old Testament speaking about this so frequently before it happened should be confirming evidence to us.

For example, when Jesus was talking to the disciples on the Emmaus road, look what he said.

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these

things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:25–27 (ESV)

That would have been a great Bible study. I wish I was there listening to Jesus explain all the ways the Old Testament forecasted his death, burial and resurrection for our sin long before it happened.

When unbelieving Jews asked Jesus for a sign that he was the Messiah, look what Jesus said.

But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just 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." Matthew 12:39–40 (ESV)

At Pentecost Peter quoted from Psalm 16. That Psalm was written by David. Peter pointed out that in this Psalm David was talking about more than himself. David was prophetically speaking about Jesus' death and resurrection before he came.

"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." Acts 2:29–31 (ESV)

Peter told us that when David talked about God not abandoning his soul to Hades --- which is the realm of the dead --- and God not letting the body of his Holy One see corruption --- that meant not letting the body rot in the grave --- David could not have been talking about himself. We know he died. We know where to find his tomb. His body rotted in his tomb. Jesus was a descendant of David that was different. Jesus did not stay dead in Hades. He rose from the

grave. Jesus' body did not rot in the tomb. He rose to new life. Peter tells us Psalm 16 was David prophetically speaking about the death and resurrection of Jesus hundreds of years before it happened.

Psalm 22 also talks about Jesus ahead of time, especially his crucifixion.

For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. Psalm 22:16–18 (ESV)

That is exactly what happened to Jesus when he died.

Isaiah 52 and 53 also give many details about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Isaiah was written hundreds of years before Jesus came. In these chapters Isaiah talks about the reason Jesus came.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5–6 (ESV)

Over and over again either directly or indirectly, both literally and in figures of speech, the Old Testament foretold Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for our sin. No Jew who knew the Old Testament should be surprised by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our sins because the Old Testament constantly talks about this. This is additional evidence for the resurrection being true.

The Evidence of the Eyewitnesses

...and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 1 Corinthians 15:5–7 (ESV)

Throughout history, the testimony of responsible and honest eyewitnesses has been considered one of the most reliable forms of evidence in a court of law. If a lawyer has three honest and responsible eyewitnesses to a crime, the conviction rate rises to 99 percent. That is the power of honest and responsible eyewitnesses. To show us that the resurrection is true, Paul brought forward reliable eyewitnesses, and there were far more than three!

Jesus appeared to Peter. The first apostle that Jesus revealed himself to was Peter. We are not told the exact time or location this happened. We only know it was sometime between Jesus' appearance to Mary on resurrection morning and his appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on the evening of the resurrection. We are not told why Jesus appeared to Peter first or why Jesus appeared to Peter separately. I have a theory. At this time Peter was filled with a huge amount of regret. Before the crucifixion, he denied even knowing the Jesus he loved three times! While Peter turned his back on Jesus three times, Jesus never turned his back on Peter. Jesus did not appear to Peter because Peter deserved to see the risen Jesus the most. I think the risen Jesus appeared to Peter because Peter needed to see him the most.

Jesus appeared to the disciples. Jesus also appeared to the disciples. The first time he appeared to his apostles was on the evening of the resurrection when Thomas was not present. Exactly a week later Jesus appeared to them again when Thomas was present. In that intervening week, even though all the rest of the apostles swore that Jesus rose from the dead and they met with him, Thomas refused to believe. After all, dead people don't come back to life. A week

later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples again and Thomas was present, he suddenly realized just how wrong he had been. He was convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus was indeed alive and risen from the dead. Jesus appeared to the disciples a number of times. If we count it up, in the Bible we find Jesus appearing to his apostles five times. The risen Jesus may have appeared to them more times that are not recorded in the Scriptures.

Remember the apostles did not just talk with Jesus, they touched Jesus and even fed him food and watched him eat it. One time the resurrected Jesus even cooked them breakfast and they ate it! That is crazy hard evidence!

The character of the apostles was impeccable. They were honest, truthful, and self-sacrificial men. It would be completely out of character to have them lying about the resurrection of Jesus.

If the apostles were lying about Jesus' resurrection, it would have been an easy lie to discredit. All the Roman authorities or Jewish authorities needed to do in order to squash the claim of a resurrected Jesus was to produce a dead body. They could drag a dead body through the street and tell people. "He is not resurrected to life. He looks pretty dead to me!" Even though the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers, there was no dead body. The body of Jesus was not stolen from people on the outside of the tomb. Jesus burst into new life on the inside of the tomb and made his way out on resurrection morning. The tomb was empty. Jesus' body was gone because Jesus rose to new life.

In addition, we should know people may die for their convictions, but they will not die for a concoction. People will die for what they hope to be true, but

they will not die for what they know to be false. Every single apostle, minus one, died a horrendous death swearing Jesus rose from the dead and they met him, talked with him, touched him, and ate with him. If Jesus's resurrection was a fabrication they made up, they would not have died a torturous death for a lie. While facing the horrors of an agonizing death, if the resurrection of Jesus wasn't true, they would have recanted.

Peter was crucified upside down swearing Jesus was alive. Andrew, Philip, Simon, Bartholomew, and James also died the horrific death of crucifixion swearing Jesus was alive. Matthew was put to death by the sword, and Thaddeus was killed with arrows. Thomas by a spear. John was boiled alive in oil in a human-sized Fry Daddy. He did not die so they exiled him to the island of Patmos.

Remember Jesus' apostles were not predisposed to believe Jesus was alive. They were predisposed to believe Jesus was dead. This is why Thomas had such a hard time believing in the resurrection even when all the other apostles swore they had met, touched, and talked with the resurrected Jesus. This is solid evidence for the resurrection.

Jesus appeared to the 500. While apostles represent the quality of the eyewitnesses, Paul next moved to the quantity of the eyewitnesses. Jesus appeared to more than 500 people at one time. That is a lot of people to have a group conversation with the resurrected Jesus! The resurrected Jesus could not have been a hallucination. Groups don't have the same hallucination. When you

have 500 eyewitnesses of an event, you have some solid evidence for the truth of the event, even when it doesn't seem possible.

Paul told the Corinthians that if they had doubts about the resurrection of Jesus, just to reach out to these people. Remember it has only been 20 years since the resurrection. Most of these people were still alive and would have been happy to talk with them about meeting the resurrected Jesus.

Jesus appeared to James. First, Paul gave us many quality eyewitnesses. Next, he gave us a huge quantity of eyewitnesses, more than 500 at one time. Now Paul moved into another category. That is reluctant eyewitnesses. Most scholars believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus who is the author of the book of James in our Bible and who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Jesus and James had Mary as the same mother, but Jesus had God as his father while James had Joseph as his father. For James, I am sure it was tough growing up with an older brother who was always perfect.

When Jesus left home and started his ministry, James was a skeptic. Imagine if your brother was running around calling himself God. Imagine if the brother that grew up in your house was healing the sick and raising the dead. I am sure you would think your brother was nuts. I am sure you would think your brother found a way to trick people, that he was an early version of David Copperfield. You would think your brother is crazy and try to put him in a facility for the crazy people.

What could possibly have made James change his mind? What could possibly have made James begin praying to and worshipping his own brother?

There is only one thing. James must have seen Jesus die. James must have seen Jesus buried. James must have seen the empty tomb and then met with, talked with, and touched Jesus his half-brother raised from the dead. That is the only thing that could have changed James from mocking Jesus to worshipping and praying to Jesus.

The Evidence of Paul, a Unique Eyewitness

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 1 Corinthians 15:8–10 (ESV)

The next piece of evidence for the resurrection is the apostle Paul. He was a unique eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus. Remember that Paul was not among the original apostles. The other apostles followed Jesus during his time on earth. Paul was also not among the 500 eyewitnesses. Instead, for years Paul was not just someone who did not believe in Jesus. He went out of his way to arrest, punish, and even assist in the death of Christians. Paul hated Jesus! Paul traveled around the countryside arresting and imprisoning Christians.

Amazingly, last of all he was privileged to meet the resurrected Jesus. It all happened in a unique way. After the resurrected Jesus returned to heaven Paul was busy with his favorite way to pass the time, arresting and killing Christians. Acts 9 tells us what happened. Paul was on the road to Damascus to wrangle up some more Christians and Jesus appeared to him on the road in blinding light. The presence of Jesus literally knocked Paul down. Then Jesus told Paul, "I am the one you are persecuting." Paul suddenly realized he had the entire Jesus

thing completely wrong. Paul went from killing people who believed in Jesus to telling everyone he possibly could the good news of Jesus. Paul did a 180 because he met the resurrected Jesus! That is the only explanation.¹

Paul described himself as an apostle that was untimely born. That literally means a miscarriage or an abortion. It is a way of saying that before Paul's conversion he was absolutely and completely spiritually dead when it came to Jesus. The only way Paul could possibly have believed in the resurrected Jesus was if God supernaturally created life in his cold, dead heart. Remember, Paul hated Jesus and killed Christians. If the resurrected Jesus had not supernaturally intervened in Paul's life so Paul met him, there was absolutely no way Paul would have believed in Jesus.

The Evidence of the Common Message

Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. 1 Corinthians 15:11 (ESV)

The last piece of evidence that the resurrection is true is the common message of the church. For the last 2,000 years, the unified message of the church has been that God's Son took on human flesh to die in our places. He was buried and rose to new life on the third day. If that was fictional truth made up by someone, in the last 2,000 years the church would have moved on to something new and different. The church's ability to stay anchored to the resurrection of Jesus as the most important truth we need to know is evidence that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is indeed the most important truth we need to know. It is still trusting in that truth that changes lives today.

¹ The Bible tells that while this was the first time Paul met the resurrected Jesus, it was not the last time (Acts 18:9-10, 23:11, 2 Cor 12:1-7).

If you are like me when I was younger, there would still be doubts in your mind. It is not that you disbelieve the evidence for the resurrection found in the Bible. That logic and evidence is good, solid, and true. You will find yourself saying, “If the resurrection is such a big deal, and it literally changes history, why do we only find it written about in the Bible? Why is it never recorded in secular history?”

The Evidence Of Secular History

James Warwick Montgomery answered this question.

We have thirty-nine documents that record history from the time of Jesus. Twenty-two of those documents discuss the death and resurrection of Jesus. Eleven of those twenty-two are non-Christian in origin.²

For example, Tacitus was an ancient Roman historian who wrote about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Josephus was an ancient Jewish historian who wrote about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Tacitus and Josephus were not Christians but wrote about the resurrection.

There is good and solid evidence to believe the resurrection is true. The resurrection is a historical fact, not a fictional piece of someone’s imagination. That brings us to our second question. How does the resurrection change our lives today?

How does Jesus’ resurrection change my future?

Jesus’ resurrection guarantees my resurrection.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:20–22 (ESV)

² John Warwick Montgomery, ed., Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), preface, p. 9.

Paul said there is good news. Jesus was just the firstfruits of the resurrection. That means Jesus' resurrection was the first resurrection but it will not be the last resurrection. Jesus was just the firstfruits of the resurrection. What does that mean?

Before Israelites harvested their crops they were to bring in a representative sample of the harvest to the priests called the firstfruits. They were to offer the firstfruits of the harvest to the Lord (Leviticus 23:10). The full harvest could not be taken from the field until the firstfruits of the harvest were offered. This is the point Paul was making. Jesus' resurrection was only the first resurrection. There will be a future resurrection of all those who believe in him.

There is a connection between the firstfruits of the harvest and the rest of the harvest. The fact that Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection means the rest of the resurrection harvest must follow. In other words, Jesus' resurrection could not happen in isolation from our resurrection. Jesus' resurrection requires our resurrection.

This is a resurrection, not a revivification. A revivification means to come back to life for a few more years and then die again. Lazarus was revivified. Jesus brought him back to life. He lived a few more years then died again. Jairus' daughter was revivified. Jesus brought her back to life, she lived a few more years and died again. A resurrection means coming back to life with a new quality of life so you can never die again. Resurrection life is a new quality of life where a resurrected person can never get sick, weak, or die. That is what we look forward to. Jesus resurrected from the dead in his resurrection body 2,000 years

ago. Right now he is at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus has just as much energy, strength, and vitality today as he did the day he was resurrected 2,000 years ago. That is the kind of body we will be given. Jesus' resurrection body was intended to be a prototype for our resurrection bodies.

Today, when Christians die, their spirits go home to be with Jesus in heaven. Their bodies go into the grave. As Paul said in Philippians 1, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, which is better by far. One day, Jesus will return. At that time, he will speak the word and raise our self-same decayed or cremated bodies back to life. Those bodies will be raised to life never to die again. Our resurrection bodies will be just like Jesus' resurrection body.

Paul said that all who are part of Adam's family line will die. That is everyone who has ever been born. But all those who have trusted in Jesus as their savior are now part of Jesus' family. Because they are part of Jesus' family tree they will one day rise from the dead just as Jesus rose from the dead. This is what we look forward to. The resurrection of Jesus doesn't just prove that Jesus is God. It guarantees that one day when Jesus returns our bodies will also rise from the dead. That is the resurrection guarantee.

Jesus' resurrection guarantees our resurrection.

But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:23 (ESV)

Paul said there is an order to the way the results of Jesus' resurrection will be applied to the world and to us. The results of Jesus' resurrection began with Jesus rising from the dead. Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection. He was

the first to rise from the dead. When Jesus returns, he will resurrect the bodies of Christians who believe in him.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV)

Some of you will say, “When will Jesus return? It has been 2,000 years. Has he forgotten about us?” No. The Bible tells us the reason Jesus has not yet returned is that God is patient. God is giving more people the opportunity to repent of their sins, trust in Jesus, and be saved. Aren’t you thankful God is patient with our sin-sick world? If Jesus returned a hundred years ago, none of us would have had the opportunity to be saved.

Some will say they know when Jesus will return. Anybody who claims to know when Jesus will return will always be proven dead wrong. The Bible tells us nobody knows the day or the hour of Jesus’ return.

Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. Matthew 24:42 (ESV)

So when Jesus returns, he will resurrect Christians. We will get our resurrection bodies. At that time, we will enter into what is known as the Millennial kingdom. During that time we will reign with Christ and under Christ on earth for a thousand years. At the end of Jesus’ thousand-year reign on earth there will be another resurrection of the rest of the dead who have not trusted in Jesus. The rest of the dead will also be given resurrection bodies. That will not be a good thing. At that time the rest of the dead will stand before Jesus in their resurrection bodies to be judged by Jesus and justly assigned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire by Jesus. The idea of two resurrections, a

resurrection to life and a separate resurrection to judgment is talked about many places in the Bible.

...and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:29 (ESV)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2 (ESV)

Jesus' resurrection guarantees the resurrection of creation.

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 (ESV)

After Jesus has raised our bodies and we rule and reign with Jesus in the Millennial kingdom there will come a time in the Bible known as the end. That is the end of history. It is at that time that Jesus will resurrect the rest of the dead for judgment and assignment to just punishment for their sin in the lake of fire.

It is also at that time when Jesus will deal finally and decisively with Satan and all the fallen demonic powers. It says at that time Jesus will destroy every rule, authority, and power. Those are Hebrew terms for different ranks and powers of the fallen angels in the demonic world. At that time Jesus' resurrection power will be used to defeat Satan and the demonic hordes once and for all. Their influence will be removed from the universe forever and decisively as they are consigned to the lake of fire forever. It is also at that time when Jesus will destroy death. Remember that death was never intended to be part of our world in the original creation. Death was introduced into the fabric of the world when sin

entered the world. Death did not just come to our lives, but the Bible tells us that all of God's creation is in bondage to sin and decay. At the end, when Jesus has bound Satan and all the demons in the lake of fire and has abolished death in the universe, at that time Jesus will resurrect creation itself, making it new forever.

Look how the book of Revelation describes this.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" ... Revelation 21:1-5 (ESV *emphasis mine)

If you came this morning and you doubted the truth of the resurrection, if the resurrection felt more like fantasy than history, my prayer for you is after looking at the biblical evidence, the logical evidence, and the evidence of secular history you have found yourself putting your faith and confidence in the resurrection of Jesus as unquestionable truth. This is the most important thing you need to know and the truth that you can believe in which God will use to change your life.

If this morning you came in the door believing in the resurrection but you were not sure how Jesus' resurrection changed your life, I hope you leave knowing that the resurrection of Jesus is the most important truth in your life and is the key to our future.

If you came in this morning and you have never asked Jesus to forgive your sin and make you into a new person, it is my prayer that before you leave

today you would cry out in your heart asking Jesus to forgive your sin while you trust in the death of Jesus to pay for your sin and the resurrection of Jesus to make you into a new person.

My friend, Jesus has risen! He is risen indeed! Nothing could be better!



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