



GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#177)
What if there is no resurrection?

1

A summary of the "Gospel" (the "Good News").

... that Christ **died** for our sins according to the Scriptures,
that he was **buried**,
that he was **raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures,
and that he **appeared** [to many people – v. 5-8].

1 Corinthians 15:3b-5a (CSB)

- ↳ 1. Christ **DIED**, just like the Bible* said he would.
 - a. He was **BURIED**
 - testifying to the fact of his death.
- ↳ 2. Christ was **RAISED**, just like the Bible* said he would.
 - b. He **APPEARED** to people
 - testifying to the fact of his resurrection.

This summary encapsulates all the basics of the Good News.
It's the starting point for learning the rest of what it means to follow Jesus.

*(This refers to the Old Testament prophets.)

2

"But what if there is no resurrection?"

- 1. Christ **DIED**, just like the Bible said he would.
 - a. He was **BURIED**
 - testifying to the fact of his death.
- 2. Christ was ~~**RAISED**~~, just like the Bible said he would.
 - b. He ~~**APPEARED**~~ to people
 - testifying to the fact of his resurrection.

(Though this question is more general in nature, we will see that it is directly related to Christ's resurrection. In the end, it would require us to ignore all the witnesses and prophecy related to Christ's resurrection.)

There are 2 ways to ask this question:

1. As a **moral fool**. This would actually be an attempt to attack, deny or mock the resurrection, since this person has no interest in the truth.
2. As a **misled person**. This person may want the truth, but has questions because of a *misunderstanding*, or the influence of *false teaching*.

3

WHEN THE MORAL FOOL ASKS THIS QUESTION.

→ PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO PSALM 14:1.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

Psalms 14:1a (ESV)

- ✓ In the Bible, the word "fool" does *not* mean "stupid person." It is a moral issue, not an *intellectual* issue.
- ✓ This verse applies to those who claim to be atheists. But it also applies to those who live as though there were no God – *even if they give lip service to him*. (This would include church-going fakes.)

... in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Psalms 10:4b (NIV)

Some of the people in this group will question, attack, and deny the resurrection. Others just won't live according to its truth.

4

Moral fools are not "neutral" in their views.
They may *pretend* to take a "neutral" stance, but **they have already rejected the truth they know.**

Even without Scripture, God has revealed truth, which the moral fool suppresses and denies. *This is not being "neutral"!!*

Moral fools suppress and ignore truth they know – truth that surrounds them, as well as truth that exists within them.

1. They know about God (through creation), but suppress what they know. Romans 1:18-21; Psalm 19:1.
2. They do things that they know deserve judgment and death, and they often encourage others to do them. Romans 1:28-32; 2:14-15.
3. They deliberately ignore the historically verified facts of creation and flood. This is a willful forgetfulness. 2 Peter 3:3-7.
4. They ignore the prophetic testimony and eyewitness accounts of the resurrection.

5

When a moral fool asks this question...

"What if there is no resurrection?"

... it is **NOT** out of a desire to learn the truth.

- You can spend days, months and years carefully explaining Scripture... and it just won't accomplish anything.
- They may ask for "evidence," but until they repent of their sin of willfully suppressing the truth they already have, they will not be interested in accepting what God says about the resurrection, or about their future judgment for their wickedness.

People in this group rarely repent (though occasionally it happens). But there are others who have a *different* heart... and they will be *more* inclined to listen.

6

WHEN THIS ISSUE IS RAISED BY PEOPLE WHO MAY WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH, BUT HAVE BEEN DECEIVED OR MISLED.

(Many in this group will be willing to accept the truth.)

A person who is a follower of God will be willing to change his views, when necessary.

There are many ways that false teachers can attack the resurrection. They can, for instance...

- ✓ Claim it has already happened. 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:18. (In 2 Thessalonians, Paul explains what events must happen first, before the resurrection can occur.)
- ✓ Claim that it will not happen. 1 Corinthians 15:12. (This is our focus.)

7

Some considerations when we answer this question:

- We do not have to cater to the atheist's demands that we ignore factual data, or pretend that the Bible is not true. After all, the atheist pretension is still a pretension.
(In the past, we may have been like them. But the difference that now exists is summarized by the word "repentance.")
- We can examine the theoretical (and false) idea of "No resurrection"; but we can also simply affirm the factual (and historically verified) information that a resurrection has indeed taken place.
(Paul does both when he answers this question.)
But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, ...
1 Corinthians 15:20a (CSB)
- Remember this: Though Jesus is also God, all this has to do with Jesus as a human. As a human, he was raised from the dead – the same way we will be raised from the dead.

8

IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, WHAT WOULD THAT MEAN?

PAUL STARTS BY AFFIRMING THE NATURE OF THE GOOD NEWS:

- It does include the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3-5a). He then affirms that this is what they proclaimed:

Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.
1 Corinthians 15:11 (CSB)

- The question isn't "Does the Good News mention a resurrection?" (since it does). Instead, it's "Is the resurrection a true fact?"

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, [then] how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"?
1 Corinthians 15:12 (CSB)

NOTE: Paul will be using a lot of "IF-THEN" logical statements. We will highlight these terms, adding them when they are implied, but not stated.

9

There are some HORRIBLE CONSEQUENCES that would occur if there is no resurrection.

(Beliefs are not "neutral." There are consequences to what a person believes.)

THE FIRST CONSEQUENCE OF THIS CLAIM:

IF there is no resurrection, THEN Christ is not raised from the dead.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ...
1 Corinthians 15:13 (CSB)

THIS CONSEQUENCE LEADS TO OTHER CONSEQUENCES:

IF Christ is not raised from the dead, THEN it effects the Good News and those who believe it.

and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith.
1 Corinthians 15:14 (CSB)

10

THERE ARE ALSO SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR PEOPLE WHO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS:

IF Christ is not raised, THEN those who proclaim the Good News have lied about God!

Moreover, [then] we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, [then] not even Christ has been raised.
1 Corinthians 15:15-16 (CSB)

- If there is no resurrection, those who lie about God (claiming that he did raise Jesus) are just making it worse for themselves at the day of judgment.
- Remember that Paul isn't adopting the view of the atheistic moral fool. If there wasn't a resurrection, there would still be a final judgment and the lake of fire.

11

THERE ARE ALSO SERIOUS ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL:

IF Christ has not been raised, THEN we are still unsaved, and once we die, we will perish at the judgment.

And if Christ has not been raised, [then] your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished.
1 Corinthians 15:17-18 (CSB)

Ultimately, WE MIGHT AS WELL NOT FOLLOW JESUS!

IF Christ has not been raised, THEN our whole lives are a delusion!

If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, [then] we should be pitied more than anyone.
1 Corinthians 15:19 (CSB)

Why spend a lifetime living for something, if it doesn't exist?

Why endure all the consequences of "following Jesus" – the suffering and trials, avoiding sin, etc., if there is no resurrection? We would be living our lives for nothing – and then we would still have to face the final judgment.

12

SUCH A VIEW IS A "DEAD END" WAY!
(And senseless, since it rejects historically verified facts.)

IT WOULD BE SENSELESS TO HAVE ANY REGARD FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED.

Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?
 1 Corinthians 15:29 (CSB)

- The text does not tell us what this means, or even who is doing it (if it is being done). We looked at this issue in the past, when studying "baptism," and will not do so now.
- Suffice it to say that, whatever it is, it's a meaningless activity, if people will remain dead!

13

IT WOULD BE SENSELESS TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST IN THIS PRESENT LIFE.

Why are we in danger every hour? I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, [then, if the dead are not raised,] what good did that do me?
 1 Corinthians 15:30-32a (CSB)

"Wild beasts" is probably figurative for the vicious opposition he faced. If the Good News is false (because it affirms the resurrection), then the "fighting" is just the activity of a "mere man." It *wouldn't* be something that was approved by God!

★ **We might as well just live for pleasure, and avoid the persecution!** ★

If the dead are not raised, [then] Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.
 1 Corinthians 15:32b (CSB)

14

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Response to the denial of the resurrection.

This view is a deception; and we need to avoid the influence of those who promote it! (Promoting – or even tolerating – such a lie is both sin and ignorance!)

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."
 Come to your senses and stop sinning; for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame.
 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 (CSB)

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW...

YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT, AND YOU DIDN'T TAKE IT.

★ **YES, ignorance and deception are SIN** – at least when the truth is available to be known!
 ☞ We have a moral obligation to learn what the Bible says and to avoid these sins.

15

Response to the affirmation of the resurrection.

WE HAVE A HOPE TO LOOK FORWARD TO!
 It's very much the opposite of the dead-end way that the lie brings.

OUR RESURRECTION IS GUARANTEED, BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. Here, Paul shows the connection.

But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ* all will be made alive.
 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 (CSB)

NOTE THAT THE FOCUS IS ON JESUS AS A HUMAN.

* (The "all" in this second part of the verse applies to "all" who are "in Christ," just like the "all" in the first part of the verse applies to all who are "in Adam.")

16

THERE IS A WHOLE CHAIN OF EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

This is so opposite of what a denial of the resurrection offers us!

But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.
 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet.* The last enemy to be abolished is death.
 1 Corinthians 15:23-26 (CSB)

Later verses in this chapter describe some of the changes that will take place *in us*.
 (Other details about eternity can be found in other passages.)

* (It *must* happen, because prophetic Scripture says it must: Psalm 8:6; 110:1)

17

Why the word "firstfruits"?

... Christ ... the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. ...
 Christ, the **firstfruits**; ...
 1 Corinthians 15:20b, 23b (CSB)

⇒ Because Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who belong to him.

This "firstfruits" concept is taken from Old Testament terminology, indicating the first sample of the harvest (such as in Exodus 23:16, 19), which was intended to represent and guarantee the nature of the rest of the harvest that would be coming.

Jesus is God; but the focus of the resurrection is on Jesus as a human. HIS resurrection, as a human, is the guarantee of OUR resurrection, as humans. We will be redeemed, saved humans, instead of humans who are under the influence and curse of sin.

18

What will happen *after* the resurrection?

This is not our focus. But 1 Corinthians 15:23-26 (on a previous slide) and other Scriptures show us that there will be much happening.
This is something we look forward to!

Other passages show us that there is much we *don't* know. God reveals to us what we need, when we need it.

He gives us all we need, to enable us to live as followers of Jesus!

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has *not yet been made known*. But *we know* that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

1 John 3:2-3 (NIV)

**HE'S GIVEN US ALL
THAT WE NEED FOR
DOING THIS!**

19

This leaves us with **our mission:**

Pursue "sound teaching" in *all* areas of life!

We've seen how false teaching can result in horrible consequences.

What you heard from me [= Paul], keep as the pattern of *sound teaching*, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:13 (NIV)

Be grateful for the significance of Jesus' resurrection, and the fact that it *did* occur!

Our future – and our eternity – are bound up in that event!

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6:4-5 (NIV)

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