

QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

20 What Difference Does the Resurrection of Christ Make?

Scripture: Matthew 26:32; John 11:17-26; Hebrews 13:1-8, 20-21

Christians are people who believe that it makes all the difference in the world that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. It makes a difference in their being equipped and prepared to face Christ, to face life and to face death.

I. THE RESURRECTION PREPARES US TO FACE CHRIST BELIEVINGLY:

Insofar as our lives are concerned, Jesus emerges as an unavoidable personality. Most of us have heard of him at an early age and with the passing of the years our attention will be drawn to Him in one way or another time and time again. Attitudes toward Him and conclusions regarding Him are certain to be drawn. His resurrection brings the realization that Christianity is objectively true and we are able to face Christ believingly. The following thoughts are the substance of this belief.

1. The Resurrection Was a Verification of His Claims:

First, there were the claims of others. In I Corinthians 15:4 Paul uses the expression, *"according to the Scriptures."* These Scriptures were such Old Testament texts as Job 19:25; Psalm 16:10; Jonah 2:17. The resurrection truth was buried deep in the Old Testament and remained only to be fulfilled through Christ. Secondly, it is important to realize that Jesus did what he said he was going to do. Matthew 26:32, 12:38-40, 16:21 and 17:22-23 are examples of this truth.

2. The Resurrection Was an Indication of His Innocence:

In Acts 2:24-27 the Apostle Peter puts his finger on the truth that if Christ had sinned he would have been subject to the destructive effects of sin and his body would have corrupted in the grave as do the bodies of all people who have sinned.

3. The Resurrection Was a Declaration of Approval:

In I Corinthians 15:17 the Apostle Paul states that *"...if Christ has not been raised your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."* Why are we still in our sins? The answer is that the cross work of Christ was not accredited

or accepted by God. It may have been meritorious in Christ's eyes and even in our eyes, but if it the Father did not accept it, our sins have not yet been removed from us. The Hebrew writer (13:21) makes it clear that it was the Father who powerfully brought His son again to life. The same truth is taught in Romans 4:25.

4. The Resurrection Was a Proclamation of the Foregoing Truths:

There is a signal flag up and waving today across the nations of the world. It is in the form of an empty tomb. In Romans 1:4 the Apostle Paul describes it in another way. He writes, *"Who was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."* The resurrection declares that Christ spoke the truth, that He was innocent, and that he is God approved. In other words, he is declared to be God's son.

True Christianity has been insisting for centuries that Christ is God, and offered his resurrection as tangible enough proof of this claim. It is surely expected that people will respond and take their stand in believing. This is a very important resurrection result. The unavoidable Jesus must make some people very uncomfortable at Easter time. This incredible story about Jesus must be reckoned with. But there is evidence enough to believe.

II. THE RESURRECTION PREPARES US TO FACE LIFE MEANINGFULLY:

It has been said that one of the great questions of life has to do with what a person does that has real meaning. Many people lose interest in living because of a crises of meaning. Tomorrow or today has no importance for them. Hebrews 13:20-21 is a passage which combines the resurrection of Christ with some of the ways our lives can take on meaning. The power which brought Christ from the dead is the same power which will enable us to do God's will and that which is pleasing in His sight. Verses 1-8 mention several practical ways.

1. Brotherly Love and Hospitality:

Love was more than an emotional feeling. It was an act and obligation. For some reason these believers were failing to use their resources for the keeping and entertaining of others. (vv. 1-2) Abraham's experience is recalled. (Genesis 18:1-8; 19:1-3)

2. Relief for the Suffering:

(v. 3) Two categories are mentioned: Those who are in prison and those who are mistreated. It was not easy to be a Christian. (10:32-34). The word “remember” would include prayer and encouragement. The principle seems to be identification with others needs.

3. Marriage Should Be Honored:

(v. 4) Resurrection strength extends even to the heart of the family unit. When this letter was written Christians were those who were setting a new moral standard. Today they face the evil which would destroy that standard. Sexual fidelity is God's plan and there is strength evidenced by Christ's resurrection, to enable one to honor that plan.

4. Contentment With What We Have:

God is strong enough to change our attitude toward and outlook on money. (v. 5) The Christian faith offers an alternative to money worries which enslave and kill our joy. That alternative is contentment because God cares and will never forsake us.

5. Remembrance of Leaders:

(v. 7, 17) They were to obey, greet and remember. Lives of their spiritual leaders were to be considered and even imitated. They were not to embrace other doctrines, and to pray for them.

6. Focus Their Lives on Christ:

(v. 8) No believer should feel cheated by history. Christ never changes. Through him the offer of praise to God is to be made continually. Knowledge of the resurrection helps prepare us to face one of the great problems of life. There are things we can do.

III. THE RESURRECTION PREPARES US TO FACE DEATH BOLDLY:

John 11:17-26 contains one of the great I AM statements of Christ. You may remember there were seven of them. (6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 14:4, 15:5) The language here permits the subject “I” and the predicate “am” to be used interchangeably. We could read, *“The resurrection and the life which is Christ...”* With him removed there is nothing which remains but death. The first clause, ***“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,”*** speaks of believers who have fallen asleep but who were very much alive. The second

clause, *“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,”* speaks of living believers who have assurance of never dying.

Here we have what is known as an hendiadys. (Greek: One through two) A hendiadys is a grammatical expression where two words are connected by the conjunction “and.” We may refer to **cups** and **gold**, rather than a noun and an adjective, golden cups. Whoever liveth and believeth was akin to say, whoever is possessed of believing life shall never die. The believer has a foretaste of the afterlife while yet in this life. Of course, the nature of divine teaching is to challenge the heart. Hence the word to Martha, *“Do you believe this?”* That is a good question. When we do we are prepared to face death.

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