

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION

PRECEPT

1 CORINTHIANS 15:14-19

¹ Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

PROMISE

At the centre of the Christian faith is the resurrection. In fact, in Paul's letter, we see that he is hanging everything on this one single historical event. In 1 Corinthians 15, He wrote verses 1-8 to address several issues, but one of those issues was that in the church in Corinth, at the time, there were people who were denying the resurrection of the dead. In verses 13-14, Paul said, *"¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."* When historians approach the New Testament, what they see are 27 letters and ancient biographies and documents that have been handed down to us. Some historical data includes: Jesus died by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate in 30/33 CE; He was buried by a member of the Jewish Council, Joseph of Arimathea; on the following Sunday, a group of Jesus' women followers found the tomb empty; the disciples saw what they believed to be the post-mortem (after-death) appearances of Jesus; the disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, even though they had every reason not to. There are several hypotheses to account for all of these data. The earliest one is the conspiracy theory, the idea that the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus out of the tomb and then claim that Jesus came back from the dead. Another is hallucination, that the disciples grieve the loss of their leader they loved so much that they started seeing things and mistakenly thought that He came back from the dead. Another one is the swoon theory, that Jesus did not really die on the cross and just fainted, then in the coolness of the tomb, He was revived and escaped from it. Lastly, the lost twin theory, that Mary had another child who later came along and pretended to be Jesus, so people thought Jesus came back from the dead. In summary, this is how these theories check out:

| | Death | Burial | Empty Tomb | Seen | Belief | James | Paul | Day of Worship | Central Preaching | Church in Jerusalem |
|---------------|-------|--------|------------|------|--------|-------|------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Conspiracy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Hallucination | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Swoon | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Lost Twin | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Resurrection | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The death and resurrection of Christ comes in the context of all the things He said, all the claims that He made about Himself, and proved that He is who He said He is. It also means that God is at work in restoring His world that we broke with sin, that He is restoring the most powerful weapon of the enemy. Death has been defeated and the victory is ours through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

PRACTICE

1. Christ's Resurrection. Why do you think the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important? What does it imply to you personally?

2. Power of the Resurrection. How is the power of the resurrection at work in you today? How does it affect your day-to-day life?

PRAYER

I. Church

- May our church continue to be a blessing not only to our members but also to our community.

II. Family

- Pray for families to be intentional in prioritising & putting Christ in the centre of our lives.

III. Unity

- May unity be evident among all of us God's believers, united in love to Him and His people.

IV. Gospel

- Pray for opportunities for all of us to share the Gospel everywhere we go.

V. Faith

- Pray that Jesus will be our firm foundation whatever challenges we all go through.

VI. Peace

- May peace always reign in the hearts of God's children.

VII. Leaders

- Pray for more leaders to guide and help people step up in their faith and service to God.