

Safety by the Resurrection - Part 1

Death is a sorrowful time for those left behind. However, in spite of the sorrow, for the believer, death and the grave have lost their sting and victory (1 Corinthians 15:55). This is because of the certainty of the Resurrection. However, what if Jesus had not risen from the grave?

I once read a Christian writer who explained that, even if he discovered Jesus did not rise from the dead, he would continue to be a Christian. After all, he reasoned, as he looked around at the field of religious gurus from human history, Jesus was by far the superior one.

Personally, I think that kind of thinking is daft! Indeed, in 1 Corinthians 15:12-21, Paul lets us know just how silly this kind of thinking is. In fact, he gives us several awful things that would be true if Christ has not risen from the grave.

The first of these is that, if Christ has not risen, preaching is an exercise in futility (verse 14). I know there are some folks who would readily endorse that sentiment at the best of times. However, notwithstanding their views on preaching, if there is no Resurrection, the minister is wasting his time being in the pulpit. If Christ is still in the grave there is no good news. We are not safe. If there is no resurrection the preacher really is a windbag!

Also, according to verse 14, if there is no resurrection, our faith is vain. At the end of the day, why would we put faith in a dead Messiah? Faith is only as good as its object. Faith itself saves no one. It is the living Jesus who saves ... a dead Jesus is useless in this matter of salvation. The ghastly truth is that, if Jesus is still in the grave, He can bring no one to heaven. A dead man can do nothing for us! If Jesus is dead, we are not safe.

Now here's another thing. If Jesus has not risen from the grave, then the disciples were awful liars (v15-16). These men went everywhere telling people they had seen the risen Christ. They claimed they had touched and handled Him (1John 1:1). But, if Christ was not raised from the dead then they were perjurers. Remember this, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then the apostles weren't just mistaken or deluded, they were malicious. They were part of a colossal conspiracy to cheat mankind!

So then, were the apostles liars? If they were, why did they lie? 'Oh' says someone, 'just like any of these modern preachers, they lied for gain.' But what gain did they have? It certainly was not financial. And, furthermore, consider how they died. They all (except for John) died as martyrs. They were tortured and brutally executed. There's no worldly gain in that.

By the way, liars and martyrs are not cut from the same cloth. Only deranged lunatics would embrace martyrdom to further a deliberate lie.

But, if Christ is still in the grave, then indeed, the apostles were liars, hypocrites and deceivers. That would follow then that we cannot read the New Testament since it was written by these same frauds. If Christ is not risen, we, therefore, have no New Testament!

But it gets worse; if Christ is yet in the grave, then we have no hope of forgiveness (verse

17). God cannot overlook sin, He must punish it! God is Holy and His holiness and justice demands the death of the sinner. Either our sin has been punished on Christ at the cross or we will be punished for it in the Lake of Fire. But, if Christ has not been raised from the grave it means that the Father has not accepted the sacrifice of Calvary. That means we are lost. It matters not how sincere and earnest we are. We are yet in our sins. We will perish!

But, here's the good news. Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for (*because of*) our Justification (Romans 4:25). He is alive. His blood has secured us, His sacrifice has been accepted and He is alive forevermore.

We are safe!