

Easter Evidence

1 Corinthians 15:1 – 11

I. Intro

- A. **Question:** Can man know with complete, 100% assurance that there is life after death?
- B. **Question:** Where can the answer for that assurance be found? Science, research, human testimony?
- C. **Only answer in resurrection of Jesus – in believing or not believing; Paul simply answers the Corinthians questions on bodily resurrection by stating that it's Christ's resurrection that proves the resurrection of the human body**
- D. **John 11:25-26 (NIV)**
 - 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;
 - 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"
- E. **External influences, false teaching, on the Corinthian church; some doubting, some led so far as to deny any form of resurrection – including even the resurrection of Jesus**
- F. **Fact:** If Jesus did not come out of the grave, there is no hope after death
- G. **This is what Paul sets out to resolve for the Corinthian believers once and for all; gives 4 truths as evidence of not only Christ's resurrection but also the bodily resurrection of the believer in Christ**

II. **1 – Evidence of Gospel (READ 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2)**

- A. **The Gospel – Jesus, God incarnate - God became flesh came to earth; He was crucified on cross as once, final sacrifice for sin; He rose on third day victorious over penalty for sin – death, and in Him we also have victory of sin, death and have life by believing in Him**
 - i. **Not only life abundant in this life, but life for eternity**
- B. **Paul already preached gospel message to people in Corinth (v. 1) - ... I preached to you, ... which you received, ... on which you have taken your stand; they, as witnessed by Paul, received that message and believed**
- C. **Paul to Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)**
 - 9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders
 - 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
 - 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed (**regeneration – new birth**), you were sanctified (**ongoing, continuous nature of salvation**),

you were justified (**absolution of guilt because of sin**) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- i. Paul tells us here – we **HAVE** been saved, we **ARE BEING** saved, and ultimately we **WILL BE** saved completely
 - ii. No other way to be saved from debt of sin – washed, sanctified, justified – but in personal relationship and saving faith in Jesus Christ
- D. Comes down to believing or not, (v. 2) *By this gospel ... of Jesus' death AND resurrection ... you are saved*, it is solid evidence of the truth of the perfected, glorified bodily resurrection of all believers**

III. 2 – Evidence of God's Word; Scriptures (READ 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4)

A. Again, Paul proclaims the message of the Gospel in two verses, but it's the Gospel message ... *according to the Scriptures*; scriptures referred to by Paul are Pentateuch – God's word given and written down by Moses, and writings of Prophets; all which ultimately point to Jesus the Messiah, ultimately point to the Gospel

i. No New Testament at this time

ii. All scripture, OT and NT - 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

16 All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**,

B. What OT writings say about Christ's resurrection

i. Job 19:25-26 (NIV)

25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

ii. Psalm 16:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

iii. Psalm 49:15 (NIV)

15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. Selah

iv. Isaiah 25:7-8 (NIV)

7 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;

8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

v. Ezekiel 37:12-14 (NIV)

12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from

them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD."

C. Arguments against resurrection – this would deny the truth of God’s Word

i. **1** – Jesus’ body stolen

a) Chief Priests and religious leaders already thought this might happen when Jesus was buried and took steps to make sure it didn't happen (Matt. 27)

ii. **2** – hallucination: All 500+ people who claimed to visibly see resurrected Jesus were hallucinating

iii. **3** – Jesus never really died, just unconscious; tomb sealed tight, no air, body prepared because death, removal of huge boulder sealed tomb was guarantee of death – yet it was rolled away

D. Comes down to believing, or not, (v. 3, 4)... 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

IV. 3 – Evidence of eyewitnesses (READ 1 Corinthians 15:5 – 8)

A. Fact: Testimony of eyewitnesses - person can be convicted with only 2 eyewitnesses in court

B. In God’s Word given names of eyewitnesses to Christ’s resurrection:

i. (v. 5) Peter – denied knowing Jesus after His arrest; saw Jesus, forgiven by Jesus, had very personal, intimate conversation with Jesus after the resurrection (John 21); crucified upside-down because of truth of the Gospel

ii. (v. 5) the twelve (includes Judas’ replacement, Matthias), the disciples (John 20:19 – 23); especially Thomas who doubted Jesus had been raised (John 20:24 – 29)

iii. (v. 6) more than 500 of the brothers at same time; men who had come to believe in Christ

iv. (v. 7) James – His half-brother

v. (v. 7) All the apostles (excluding 12 disciples)

vi. (v. 8) Paul himself – on the road to Damascus

vii. Other eyewitnesses specifically mentioned in scripture:

a) Mary Magdelene

b) Two travelers going to Emmaus

c) Woman named Joanna

d) Mary, mother of James and John – wife of Zebedee

- e) Mary's (mother of Jesus) sister, Salome
- f) The Roman guards seeing the angel of Lord rolling away the stone sealed Jesus' tomb
- C. **Question:** Why would countless witnesses give their lives for a mythological, fairy tale? **Answer:** Because the resurrection of Jesus is not
- D. Comes down to believing, or not, the account of many, many eyewitnesses; many of them giving their life for the factual truth of Christ's resurrection

V. 4 - Evidence of Paul's personal testimony (READ 1 Corinthians 15:9 - 11)

- A. Personal testimonies of change in peoples lives through the power of the Gospel and resurrection of Jesus hasn't stopped after 2000+ years
- B. Alfred H. Ackley illustration: A young Jewish man once heard a pastor named Alfred H. Ackley speak; afterwards, went up to Rev. Ackley and asked him, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?". Ackley began to explain to this young man that Jesus was alive. "He Lives! I tell you; He is not dead, but lives here and now! Jesus Christ is more alive today than ever before. I can prove it by my own experience, as well as the testimony of countless thousands." adamantly said Pastor Ackley. As months went by, rising early on Easter Sunday preparing to give his message to his church he heard a liberal radio pastor make this statement: "You know, it really doesn't matter to me if Christ be risen or not. His body could have turned to dust long ago in some Palestinian tomb. But what's important is that His truth goes marching on!" After hearing this Ackley yelled out, "It's a lie!" He went on to preach that Easter Sunday morning and evening, then later that night he sat down, wrote down these words, and the music to go with them:

*I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him, he's always near
He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me, and talks with me, along life's narrow way
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart*

- C. Romans 1:16 (NIV)
16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ...
- D. Comes down to believing, or not, the personal testimony of millions, millions of people over 2 milleniums whose lives have been completely,

**totally changed by the power of Gospel of Christ and His resurrection,
and are still being changed today**

VI. Close

- A. Your choice today – to believe, or not**
- B. Your choice today – to allow the Spirit of Christ to come into your life and completely, totally change you**
- C. Your choice today – to know the truth; 100% knowledge and assurance that there is life eternal after death through the resurrection of Jesus**
- D. Your choice today – accept the fact that Jesus is the only answer to the question of life after death, the only way**
- E. Today doesn't have to be the just the day you celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, but to also celebrate your own resurrection in Christ**
- F. Paul's question: **READ v. 12****