

What the Bible Teaches about the Resurrection

Church March 31, 2024

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,
2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.
3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;
7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;
8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

If we had stood on that Mountain on that Day and made our Way toward the Cross and seen the actual Sight of Jesus being crucified- we very well may have vomited; or screamed; or pulled out our hair; or thrown ourselves on the ground and pounded the dirt- while we ground our teeth and sobbed ourselves into Exhaustion.

Putting spikes through people's arms and legs; hanging them on a Cross with their full body weight tearing their flesh; watching the Brutality of the Soldiers smashing their legs; or driving a spear into their side are all *unbearable* to watch- let alone *endure*.

Yet the Holy Bible declares that Jesus *volunteered* for this. He *chose* it. The Cross was NOT *forced* on him by *anyone*. He said clearly in **John 10:17&18**:

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

The Plan of God from Eternity Past was that He alone would be glorified by God the Son being born of a Woman; living a perfectly sinless Life (thereby

earning His own personal Righteousness); and die by Crucifixion to secure the Salvation of the wicked Rebels God the Father chose to save.

And because Jesus loved His Father *perfectly*- He submitted Himself *fully* to obey God's Will. In the Garden the night before- Jesus asked God if there was another Way to accomplish His Will other than having Him impute (credit) all of the Sins of all the elected Sinners onto Him as He hung on the Cross. And many have taught that Jesus feared Death. I find that utterly ridiculous. Jesus was in Heaven with God before He was born as a fully human baby. He knew every Detail of what it was like to dwell continually with God. So, Jesus was NOT afraid to die.

What prompted His Prayer was the Reality that He fully understood- that the moment His Father placed all of the elect's Sins on Him- His Father would *withdraw* Himself from Jesus and depart from Him. And that had NEVER happened before- in all of Eternity! The Love and Union and Fellowship and Joy that is shared among the three Persons of the Trinity can only be imagined by us- because we have NOTHING in this Life to compare it with. Perfect Love; Perfect, unrestricted and continual Fellowship; Perfect Unity; Perfect Enjoyment- that is what the one single God had among all three Persons of His "tri-unity".

So, when Jesus screamed on the Cross,

ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? (My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?)

... He was NOT calling for Elijah as some thought.

But He wasn't quoting **Psalm 22**, either. No, **Psalm 22**- was prophesying what Jesus would say on the Cross- at least 1,000 years *before* He was born!

Jesus knew that His Father would have to *withdraw* His Spirit and Presence from Him as He "**became Sin for us**" (**2Corinthians 5:21**). And that Reality so disturbed Jesus that He asked,

My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me (Matthew 26:39)

... and when God the Father let God the Son know that there was NO other Way to fulfill His Plan- Jesus quickly reverted and said,

... yet not as I will, but as You will. (Matthew 26:39b)

... which is the greatest and most important Prayer that Jesus or any of us could ever pray.

So, Jesus *volunteered* to die by Crucifixion- because He loved His Father- *perfectly*. And so, He *submitted* Himself to the Will of God- *perfectly*! And the

Proof that He loved God and submitted to Him- *without Flaw*- is that Jesus obeyed His Father- *perfectly!* Jesus- in His full Humanity- died!

But Jesus was NOT trapped. He was NOT coerced. He was NOT forced. He was NOT “painted into a Corner”. Jesus *joyfully; humbly; and completely*- submitted Himself to the Will of God- to die a horrendous Death.

So, is it not Blasphemy to think that Herod; or Pilate; or the screaming Mobs; or the Soldiers; or satan; were in charge? God alone is Sovereign! All those were but “Players” in this Drama that God the Father wrote! And there’s a word for this. It’s called, “Love”.

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

So, here’s my Question:

The greatest Suffering; in the Service of the greatest Love; for the *least* Deserving- *how* do you do that? How did Jesus *endure* that?

... and here’s the Answer:

[Jesus] ... **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2b)**

The Humiliation of being stripped and ridiculed. The Lacerations of the Scourging. The *unbearable* searing Pain- streaking across His Brain from the spikes in His Hands and Feet. Hour after hour- hanging there- in *unthinkable* Agony- even though, at any moment, He could have *eviscerated* the people who were hurting Him; and while He could have called on His Father for Rescue! But instead, Jesus willingly *chose* the Pain! All of it... **“for the joy that was set before him.”**

So, the Resurrection is *specifically* tied in- with not only Jesus’ Death- but also His Life; and EVERYTHING Jesus said or did the *entire* Time He was in His earthly Advent. The Resurrection is God the Father’s *unmistakable* Proof that He was pleased with; enjoyed; and approved of EVERYTHING Jesus said and did during His 33-1/2 years on the earth. And it is the Resurrection as to *why* we are gathered here today. And it is the Resurrection that I want to speak to you about this morning. And this Sermon is deigned, on purpose, to help you believe and trust and hope in the Fact that Jesus literally and physically rose from the Dead!

Because when the Lord graciously saved me back in the Summer of 1971- the Arguments about the Resurrection of Jesus were more “*Up-front*” and “*Prominent*”; and they were much more *Intense* than they are today. Back in the early 1970’s- there was widespread Consensus among Believers and Non-believers alike- *especially* here in America- that the literal Resurrection of Jesus was the “*Line of Demarcation*”.

In other words, everybody saw the Need to take a Stand about this fantastic Truth. And so, people either eagerly *believed* in the Resurrection; or they categorically *rejected* it- just as eagerly. And if a person accepted the biblical Narrative about the physical Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead- they also *generally* believed the rest of the fantastic Truths that are found in the Bible. And those people wore the label of “Christian” very proudly. And those people, who rejected the Resurrection, as either “scientifically impossible” or as simply a “circus trick” of an ancient magician- then *generally* speaking- those people also relegated the rest of the Bible to be just Myth and utter Nonsense- and they were *intentionally* and *proudly* NOT a “Christian”.

But a strange thing has happened over the last 52 years. Today, that single Question- that one single Debate- that one Issue of- “*Did Jesus literally and physically rise from the Dead?*”- is not nearly as Prominent; and not nearly as Intense as it once was. Because, at one level, people feel that the Resurrection of a Man from the Dead 2,000 years ago- way across the ocean- really doesn’t have an impact on their own personal Lives. I mean, we have our technologically sophisticated cell- phones; and we went to school; and we have a brain; and we are relatively safe and secure in this Country- and so, the Debate about a Resurrection of a Man- 2,000 years ago- just seems to be a Discussion that has little or no Relevance to the average person in our Day. “*Because, after all*”, they say, “*Different people believe in different things, and maybe it happened; and maybe it didn’t. And if it did, and it helps some people to believe it- in order to get along in this Life- then fine. But it really doesn’t make much difference to me; it really doesn’t affect me and my Life all that much.*”

And so, many people today really think that they can call themselves a “*Christian*”; and they can join a Church; and they think they can be in “*Good Standing*” with God; and still be either *unsure* about the Resurrection of Jesus- or even outright *reject* it. And sadly, there is not much that many of the modern “*religious Organizations*” would ever do to challenge those people about that- even though the Bible *categorically* teaches that if you do not believe in the Resurrection- you *cannot* be saved; you are NOT a Christian; and you are NOT going to Heaven.

“*O, Brother Blair, there you go again. You’re making a mountain out of a molehill. This is simply not that big a Deal. Why do you say that a person, who*

doesn't believe in a literal Resurrection, is not saved?" Well, I got that Notion from the Bible itself that says this in **Romans 10:9&10:**

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

... so, if a person is *required* to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus in order to be saved- then that person is NOT saved- if he *rejects* this Truth.

So, my Authority for believing what I just said is NOT my own Opinion or the fact that I might be religious. The inspired; inerrant; and infallible Word of the living God teaches this.

So, the *better* Question would be, "*On what Authority do you base your Statement on that says, 'the Resurrection doesn't matter?'*" Because, in my Travels, NOT believing in the Resurrection is almost *universally* based on nothing more than the personal Opinion of people, who have never even had the wherewithal to investigate whether the Claim is true.

And that is because in our modern American Culture- where everything today is "*Relative*"- Objective, Propositional, and Absolute Divine Truth is no longer important to a growing Population. Our Culture has elevated "*Personal Opinion*" and how someone may "feel" about an Issue- to be as valuable as "*Truth*". And at the same time- we have *lowered* and *devalued* Divine Absolute Truth to be nothing more important than "*Personal Opinion.*" It is truly an odd swap.

So, it is common today to hear people say, "*Well, that's just your Opinion*" when presented with clear biblical Truth that they either don't like or don't want to hear. And it is also common today for people to honestly believe that what they "believe"; and what they "trust in"; and what they "accept" is "Truth"- as long as they are *sincere* about it; or agree with it- even if what they believe or trust in- isn't even true- or categorically *contradicts* the Absolute Truth of Scripture! So, a person, who categorically rejects the "Truth Claims" of Scripture- without ever even examining them- may also say that he genuinely believes that a Man can become a Woman and have babies! It is an interesting Time to be a Christian.

Many today take the Attitude that "*I may or may not call myself a 'Christian'. And if the Resurrection seems helpful to me, then I may believe in it. But if it doesn't- then I won't. But whether I do or I don't- it doesn't affect my Life; and I can still be happy and prosperous; and I can still find Love and Comfort in God without believing in it!*" Far too many people today- *sadly even in Church*- think that believing in the Resurrection is nothing but "fluff"- that it may

be nice- but it has no practical Importance in their Relationship with God; and it doesn't change where they are going to spend Eternity.

But is that true? Does it matter, as far as our Eternity is concerned, whether or not Jesus rose from the Dead? And the Answer to that Question is what I want to explore today.

Now behind those two different kinds of Unbelief- the kind from 52 years ago and the kind from today- is a completely *different* set of Assumptions. For example, back when I was first saved- the Assumption among Unbelievers then was that there was a Body of fixed, closed, "natural Laws" that make the World understandable and scientifically manageable. And those Laws simply *did not allow* the Truth claim that Someone had risen from the dead to be believed by intelligent and rational and thinking people.

And that was a commonly held Assumption back then- that the modern World with its scientific understanding of "*Natural Law*" does not allow for Resurrections. So, Unbelief back then was often rooted in a kind of smug, intellectual, Self- righteousness disguised as scientific Analysis- when in fact it was simply just blind, ignorant, Disbelief- that came from Arrogance.

But today- in 2024- that is *not* the most common working Assumption that we face. Today, the Assumption is *not* that there are "Natural Laws" *outside* of me- that *forbid* my Acceptance of the Resurrection of Jesus, but rather- the Assumption that we face today is that there is a "*Personal Law*" that is *inside* of me that says: "*I don't have to accept anything in my Life that I don't find personally Helpful or personally Relevant.*" Or you could state this modern Assumption another way by saying that many people today actually believe that: "*Truth for me is not Objective or Propositional- it isn't Divine or Absolute- but Truth is simply whatever I find personally Attractive and Helpful.*"

And with that new Assumption in place, and with that new subjective and suppositional "*Inner Law*" in place- it really doesn't matter whether Jesus rose from the Dead or not, because the thinking is that whether He did or didn't is totally *disconnected* to the Life of most people in the 21st Century and is therefore- completely Irrelevant. Their only Issue is: "*Do I care? Do I personally find that idea Helpful? Do I 'feel' that it helps me flourish as a human being?*"

And if it seems like the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead on the third day *doesn't*- then they will view the Resurrection the same way they view UFOs; and possible life in some distant galaxy; or some special effects in a movie- they really don't need to bother with it. And their false, pseudo- Humility will also say, "*But, of course, if this silly Superstition helps somebody else- then by all means- that's just peachy keen- but don't you dare try to impose that Nonsense on me*".

And that is *increasingly* becoming the Attitude of more and more people here in America- *especially* those younger than 53. In fact, some of you sitting here today may actually think that way- without even *knowing* that's the way you think. You have simply absorbed this carnal Logic from the general Culture- because that way of Thinking is now woven into most television Shows; most Advertising; and most Movies;- and is taught in most Curricula from the Public School System.

So, what I am attempting to do this morning is confront this Issue head on- and honestly examine how we as human beings sift through the “*New Indoctrination*” that is coming at us every Day from all these various Sources. And my Hope is that when I put the Resurrection of Jesus Christ before you today- *not* merely as a “*Religious Belief*”- but as an historical Fact- that you will see just how important it really is. And that the Resurrection is *not* something that “*might be helpful to some people*”- but something that is *required*- if *anyone* hopes to spend Eternity in Heaven. And if I, by God's Grace, am successful this morning - then you will not so easily buy into the Bombardment of *pagan* and *humanistic* and just flat out *wrong* Information concerning this Issue.

But even from the perspective of those in the Church- the Belief in the Resurrection is, many times, completely *circumvented* with Statements like, “*Well, even if there was no literal Resurrection- I haven't lost anything.*”- in order to placate those in the World.

But the Apostle Paul didn't agree with “crawfish Statements” like that, because in **1Corinthians 15:16-19**- Paul *infallibly* wrote this,

**16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;
17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.
18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.**

... so, for Paul and the other Apostles- it was ALL or NOTHING! Either Jesus *literally* and *physically* rose from the Dead- or there is no Value- AT ALL- in Christianity; or the Gospel; or in the Salvation the Gospel proclaims.

But one of the most curious things about the literal and physical Resurrection of Jesus is that the idea of bodily Resurrection is NOT something that takes the New Testament by surprise. In fact, if you study the Old Testament carefully, you will see all sorts of Symbols that all point to the defeat of Death by Jesus on the first Day of the Week- over 2,000 years ago.

So, I want us to consider the Resurrection this morning- both the Reality of the Resurrection of Jesus and then the Promise of our own Resurrection at some point in the Future- so that we can be in agreement as to what the Word means.

By using the word, “Resurrection”- I do NOT mean something like living forever in some “mystical spirit Existence” like a Vapor- but actually living again in a real Body that has been glorified after the physical body has died and been brought back to Life through Resurrection.

First of all, there are lots of Passages in the Bible that talk about real, cognitive Existence beyond Death. And in order to help people understand that this Existence is NOT merely mental or spiritual- but that it is also very physical- there are also Passages in the Bible that talk about physical and bodily Resurrection.

Now even though there are many more Passages in the New Testament- the Old Testament is hardly silent about this Issue. For example, in **Genesis 22**, which is not very far past the Account of Creation- there is the Account of Abraham almost sacrificing his son. And mercifully, God Himself provided a ram so that Abraham could spare his son. And that is all that is said. Nothing more is revealed about Abraham’s Motives.

But many hundreds of years later- God the Holy Spirit “moved” the unknown writer to give us the “Conclusion of the Matter” in **Hebrews 11:17-19** that says,

**17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;
18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."
19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.**

Now the only Way that Abraham could have believed that this Instruction came from God to kill his *own* son- his *firstborn* son- his ONLY son- the son in whom God Himself had promised that the Line would run, is that Abraham really believed that God had the Ability to raise his son Isaac from the dead.

And, by Definition, that had to be a *bodily* Existence! So, Abraham was NOT hoping in some mystical or ethereal or non-corporeal new Life for his son. It had to, literally, be Life raised from the Dead, because Isaac would then have to pass on his genes to the next Generation and the next Generation and so on, or the Promise of God would have been invalid.

In other words, there was already some sort of Concept of literal, bodily, and physical Resurrection and its Possibility under the mighty Hand of God that was grasped by Abraham- 430 years *before* Moses was even born and 1,450 years *before* Jesus was born!

Then we see a very famous Passage in the Book of Job. I know that there have been some Problems in translating it- but I think it speaks for itself. So, there was Job- right in the middle of his *unfathomable* Sufferings- who said this in **Job 19:25-27:**

25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

26 “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

Now this is amazing! Job said two things that would *always* be contradictory- unless you insert a Belief in a Resurrection. At first, Job said,

“Even after my skin is destroyed”- meaning Death

... and then he said,

Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another.

So, Job said that AFTER he dies- he will see God with his own eyes- in his Flesh! So, AFTER Job dies- he will still have a physical Body!

So, this overrules some “Spirit-to-spirit” Event. Job does NOT say anything about that. Job talks about his Flesh that he will have AFTER Death- in which he will see God! Which means that Job’s Flesh would have to come back to Life! And that is called, “Resurrection”!

Now there are certainly some Old Testament Passages that use resurrection Language- but which are NOT talking about a physical Resurrection- but a spiritual one. The most famous one of these is **Ezekiel 37:1-10** and the “Valley of Dry Bones”.

Now, in Context- the Prophet was talking about the Restoration of the people of God after they had been swept away into Bondage and Captivity. But, *spiritually* speaking- he was also talking about how Lost people are saved through the preaching of the Gospel.

So, in the Vision the bones are connected, but they are still not alive. The bones are connected; and flesh covers them; but they are still not alive until the Spirit of God comes upon them; and they stand up as a mighty Army in the valley of what was dried bones, but now is full of Life.

Now in the context of **Ezekiel 37**, this was an Imagery having to do with the Restoration of the people to the promised Land after they had been banished by God Himself. But the thing to observe is that, although it is talking about that Restoration, the Imagery is of a Resurrection. In other words, those that say that the Old Testament saints didn't know anything about Resurrection; and that you have to wait for Jesus before you get into that- overlook the fact that, even though **Ezekiel 37** is not explicitly talking about Resurrection per se, in the immediate Context, the Imagery that is used to talk about the Return from Exile is resurrection Imagery. And that shows that the Category had to already be there in Ezekiel's mind and in the minds of the people for the Prophet to use it.

And the same is also true of **Isaiah 24–27** and to some extent in chapter 56 as well. Isaiah chapters 24–27 are sometimes called, "*Isaiah's Apocalypse*" by theologians, because there is a lot of apocalyptic Imagery of one sort or the other there. And so, in that Context, in **Isaiah 26:18&19**, for example, the Prophet wrote,

18 We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were inhabitants of the world born.

19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Now even though the exact "Flow of Thought" in those Chapters is argued about- and even if you conclude that it is talking about a Return from Exile- it is still written with a decisive Concept of a Resurrection from the Dead in mind- with dead bodies rising from the Grave.

And then there are the Miracles in the Old Testament like the Resurrection from the Dead of the Shunamite widow's son in **1Kings 17**, which is a crystal-clear absolute Miracle.

Now when you come to the New Testament, Jesus Himself raised a small number, but certain specific individuals, from the Dead. For example, in **Luke 7:11-17**, Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the Dead as they were heading out to bury Him. And then there is the remarkable Event in **John 11**- where Jesus raised Lazarus from the Dead. And in that case, the man has been in the grave for four days, so that decay on his Body had already begun.

There is simply no Way you can confuse that Resurrection from the Dead with a Calling of somebody back to Life- who has simply gone into heart Fibrillation and is not literally Dead because Decay had already taken place. And that is the Context in which Jesus said,

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

... in other words, just before that Promise in **John 11**, Martha confessed her orthodox Faith.

"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."(John 11:24)

... yet, Jesus replied,

... "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. (John 11:25b&26a)

... in other words, Jesus was putting Himself into the very Center of everything!

So, it is NOT merely that there is Resurrection on the last Day, but that there is no Resurrection apart from Jesus on the last Day. He is the One- the ONLY One- Who makes Resurrection possible. And that is finally demonstrated in the spectacular Display of His own Resurrection.

Yet the Resurrection of Jesus is VERY Unique. Because if it were not Unique, then we could say that since Lazarus was resurrected *before* Jesus- that Lazarus is the “*ultimate Prototype*” of the Resurrection. Or the Shunamite widow’s son in the Old Testament was resurrected way *before* Jesus. So, he would be the Prototype before Jesus.

So, while it is true that all Resurrections in the Bible are Images of what will come in the Future- they are NOT the “Prototype” in the sense that because Jesus’ Resurrection is still utterly Unique in comparison to all Resurrections up to that point- because Jesus’ Body had already been transformed into a glorious Body when He rose.

But even at that- there is still a Connection between Jesus’ old Body, that is, His pre-Death Body, and His resurrection Body in that the Marks of the Wounds He sustained while on the Cross and before, are still there! And that is one of the main Points of **John 20**.

Now in addition to the normal identifying Marks that a person who had been crucified had- Jesus also had the highly *unusual* Mark of a spear thrust up under

His rib cage to pierce His Side. And so, the resurrected Body of Jesus that the Disciples see in Experience after Experience- all show a direct Connection with the pre-Death Body. And that means that the Jesus who appeared to the Disciples was the very SAME Jesus who died and who was laid in the Tomb!

Yet, at the same time, Jesus is now in resurrection Glory! He is in resurrection Life; and He does things now that He never did before. For example, Jesus suddenly appeared in a locked room- which is Him materializing or dematerializing. So, in some sense, Jesus existed, after His Resurrection- in another Sphere or another Dimension. And even though we don't know all the details about this- we know Jesus lived after He died!

Now where this is explained in the greatest Detail- is in **1Corinthians 15**- where Paul draws some Analogies. Yet the Analogies the Apostle draws- are meant to tell us more Truth.

For example, an acorn doesn't look like an oak tree, yet with the Death of the acorn as the shell rots away and the little Life that is bound up inside begins to grow, *ultimately* it produces a mighty tree. And that is only an Analogy, but it is a *descriptive* Analogy- that speaks absolute Truth.

And so, all through **1Corinthians 15**- Paul speaks of the different Glories of different Entities: of stars, of the moon, the sun, and so on. There are different "Orders of Being" and so also, he speaks of the resurrection Body as being of a different "Order".

And there are two or three other Passages that are really important for us to understand. Consider the passage in **John 20** that I briefly mentioned where there is a huge Emphasis on the visible Marks of the Wounds on Jesus. Those Marks are what convinced Thomas, who had great Doubts, about the Reality of the Resurrection. So, Thomas saw and spoke with the wounded, slaughtered Messiah- Who is now fully alive and reigning as Master and Lord! And so, because he saw the Marks- Thomas fell before Jesus and cried, "**My Lord and my God!**" (**John 20:28**). And then Jesus said,

... Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." (John 20:29b)

... which refers to you and me.

So, there is a lot of Emphasis on the Demonstration of just who Jesus really is: the promised One of God; the eternal Son of God; the One who is Lord of all- that is precisely rooted in the historical Witness of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And so, the *cumulative* Evidence that this New Testament of ours, which speaks so powerfully and frequently of the Resurrection of Christ, is NOT the Result of

Hallucination or some Conspiracy by early Christians. The cumulative Evidence is very, very strong and completely believable.

But think about this. Before the Resurrection- the Faith of Peter and the Group is very weak; and fragile; and wishy-washy. Yet, after the Resurrection- those same men were prepared to die for what they had seen. **“We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard,” (The Acts 4:20).** And they considered it a great Privilege to suffer for this Christ- Who suffered so much for them. And this was NOT due to them merely talking themselves into believing or psyching themselves up. All the Records show honestly how slow they were to initially believe that Jesus had risen from the Dead. So, their dramatic Change has to be explained. And the Bible says their Change was due to seeing and touching and listening to the resurrected Jesus!

And if Jesus rose from the Dead- as they came to see, as even Paul came to see, in his Vision of the resurrected Christ on the Damascus road- if Jesus really did rise from the Dead- then that is *unmistakable* Proof that all that He said; and all that He did; and even He Himself- was *approved* by God! So, the Resurrection *vindicated* Jesus. His Death was not to pay for His own Sin, or else He would still be Dead. And if Jesus was a Liar; or a Deceiver; or Beelzebul; or some ancient Magician- He would still be Dead. There is no way He would be vindicated by being raised by God from the Dead- unless He was everything He said He was.

The Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross was so acceptable in God’s own Plan that the Vindication and Approval of it can be seen in the Resurrection. And that established Him as the reigning Lord! So, now- ALL of God’s Sovereignty is mediated now through Christ Jesus, Who is the Mediator of God’s Authority in every Domain in this Age- until He has completely crushed His last Enemy and Death itself dies!

Another Passage that is really quite important is **2Corinthians 5:1-10** where Paul makes it very clear that his ultimate Hope is not to simply die and be with Jesus- as wonderful as that would be. That is something he looks forward to in **Philippians 1**. But his ultimate Hope is not to be, as he puts it in **2Corinthians 5**, unclothed, that is, to exist without a Body. His ultimate Hope goes beyond what Christians have sometimes called the *“Intermediate State.”*

So, Paul’s *ultimate* Hope is to be clothed again with a different Body- a resurrection Body- a Body just like Christ’s glorious Body, that will have the capacity to live and work and eat in this terrestrial, renewed earth, but also to be in the very Presence of God.

So, the *ultimate* Hope of the Bible-believing Christian is NOT to simply be with Jesus in some “immaterial ethereal Existence”, but to have resurrection Bodies in a renewed Heaven and a renewed Earth. The Apostle Peter said this in **1Peter 1:3-9:**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,
7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

In other words, we are *already* receiving the Salvation of our Souls. But this ultimately culminates in a “living Hope” through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead into an Inheritance that, for us too, can never perish, spoil, or fade- the Promise of a new Heaven and a new Earth, the Home of Righteousness, with resurrection Existence!

So, even though, in Scripture- there is both a “Resurrection to Life” (a new Heaven and a new Earth); and a “Resurrection to Death” (Hell itself)- yet for genuine Believers- the Confidence, the Joy, the Anticipation, and the Hope of their own Resurrection is *absolutely* tied to their Confidence that Jesus rose from the Dead after having offered Himself to pay for their Sins!

So, the Cross and the Resurrection tie together as the turning Point of the Ages on which all of History swings with the new Age already dawning now and ready to be brought to Consummation when the Master Himself returns in all of His glorified, resurrected Existence on the last Day!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.