

*“And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still in condemnation for your sins. . . . And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world” (I Corinthians 15:17, 19 NLT).*

## **WHY IS THE RESURRECTION IMPORTANT?**

The disruption and decay of this earth and the inevitability of death are a living reality. Pain and loss are felt every minute of every day somewhere in the world. Something inside us says, “This makes no sense,” and we hope that life will be better tomorrow. But even if tomorrow is better, it won’t mean much eventually because some day, all that we have and hold will fade from our grasp, and we will die.

But at one point in history, there was a band of believers who trusted in someone to change all that. A handful of devout Jewish people thought a man named Jesus was the Messiah who would transform their troubled times into a godly kingdom on earth. Yet one day their Messiah hung on a cross, dying, and their hopes seemed dashed.

But far more than the fate of the disciples hung on the cross that day. The fate of the entire human race and their hope of a bright tomorrow and of life after death hung there with him. The human race seemed doomed to endure pain and anguish in this life and then to die, eternally separated from God.

However, as Son of the sovereign God, Jesus broke the power of death by rising from the grave on the third day and pierced the kingdom of darkness with a penetrating light. Christ’s resurrection victory over death and despair not only broke the power of death for all of us who trust in Christ as Savior but also provided the means for us to receive a whole new perspective of life. Though we may endure pain, grief, and suffering here on earth, because Christ’s death was followed by his resurrection, we can know that such things are temporary—and that much greater things await us.

Because of the Resurrection, we are destined to live forever in new bodies on a new earth, an existence that will be so enjoyable that anything “we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory [God] will give us later.” For we “wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us” (Romans 8:18, 23).

We have the answer to where we are going in life, and in death. **For we are destined to have our struggles, suffering, and death transformed into blessings, joy, and eternal life.** With a belief in the Resurrection, we can face life’s difficulties with the conviction that no matter what, “if God is for us, who can ever be against us?” (Romans 8:31). We can be assured that God has not lost control and will not abandon us (see Romans 8:32). We can be confident that he is not punishing us or condemning us (see Romans 8:34). And we can know that he still very much loves us (see Romans 8:38).

But our destiny can become a reality only if the resurrection of Christ literally took place. Because if Christ did not actually rise from the dead, it would be a strong indication that the sacrifice of sin was unacceptable to God and that Christ had not broken the power of death. For if Jesus didn't break the power of death over his own body, how could he cancel our death sentence?

"But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead," as Paul said (I Corinthians 15:20). It is a matter of historical record that Jesus literally died and that his lifeless body was placed in a tomb, but it is equally true that three days later that lifeless body was transformed into a living spiritual body.

Paul also points out that, "there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised" (I Corinthians 15:23). He further states, "Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die. Our bodies now disappoint us, but when they are raised, they will be full of glory. They are weak now, but when they are raised, they will be full of power. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies" (I Corinthians 15:42-44).

However, all these great and precious promises are nothing but a fantasy, a dream, unless Christ truly rose from the dead. Christ's resurrection is a historic necessity if our destiny means anything at all.

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