

DOES THE RESURRECTION MATTER?

I Corinthians 15:17-19

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INTRODUCTION

- A. **Billy Graham** once said in “TIME” magazine, **“If I were an enemy of Christianity, I would aim right at the Resurrection because that is the heart of Christianity”**.
- B. Critics over the years have done just that.
 1. The founder of the “Jesus Seminar”, **Dr. Robert Funk** is an example. The “Jesus Seminar” is an ultra liberal organization that denies all of the miracles of Jesus and most of his teachings. Dr. Funk, writing about the resurrection said:
“The tales of entombment and resurrection were latter-day wishful thinking. Instead, Jesus’ corpse went the way of all abandoned criminal’s bodies: it was probably barely covered with dirt, vulnerable to the wild dogs that roamed the wasteland of the execution grounds”.
 2. **Thomas Jefferson** is another example. Jefferson wrote his own version of the life of Christ. He removed all mention of the supernatural, including the miracles of Christ, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection. This is how the “Jefferson Bible” ends:
“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.”
That’s it. The end. He died and they buried him. No mention of the Resurrection.
 3. Even today, some professing Christians say it doesn’t matter whether Jesus really rose from the dead or not.
- C. How about you? Do you think it matters?
 1. The writer’s of the Apostle’s Creed thought it mattered. That’s why they included the phrase, “The third day he rose from the dead.” in their statement of faith.
 2. Let’s consider this statement tonight because it matters.

I. FIRST, WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION MEAN?

- A. It means....
 1. Jesus rose personally-it really was Jesus.
 2. Jesus rose bodily-it was his crucified body.
 3. Jesus rose physically-it wasn’t a ghost.
 4. Jesus rose permanently-never to die again as others he had raised, i.e. Lazarus.
- B. Why does the resurrection matter?
 1. Because this is what the Bible teaches. If it didn’t happen then the Bible isn’t reliable.
 2. Because this is what the early church and every Christian church teaches.

II. SECOND, WHAT IF THE RESURRECTION DIDN’T HAPPEN?

- A. Paul addresses this possibility hypothetically in our text. What would it mean if the resurrection didn’t happen according to Paul.
 1. Then our faith is futile (useless)—17a.
 2. Then our sins are not forgiven—17b. Forgiveness is possible not only because of Jesus’ death, but also because of his resurrection.
 3. Then we will never see or family again.-18.
 4. Then we should be pitied for believing a lie-19.
- B. Paul concludes, however, triumphantly that all these things are true because the resurrection is true—20.

III. THIRD, IS IT POSSIBLE TO DOUBT THE RESURRECTION?

- A. Faith requires the possibility of doubt in order to be faith.
 - 1.. I don't know how a person could be a Christian and not have doubts from time to time.
 - 2. If you ever arrive at a place where all your doubts are gone, guess what, you're in heaven"
- B. The Apostle Paul acknowledged that faith is not always knowing without any possibility of doubt...

1 Corinthians 13:12

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

2 Corinthians 5:7

We live by faith, not by sight.

Galatians 3:11

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

CONCLUSION

- A. The word "Creed" means "I believe".
- B. One of the bedrock beliefs of the Apostle's Creed is the resurrection.
- C. Do you believe it? It really does make a difference!