

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

What if Christians Are Not Raised from the Dead?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

If there is no future bodily resurrection for all believers, then...

- 1. Christ Jesus Would Not _____ (vs.13, 16)**
The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an irreducible part of God's plan of salvation. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ Himself would not have been raised because He was a man like we are (John 1:14; Heb. 2:18) and He truly died (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-4a). If Christ had not been raised from the dead, it would show that God had not accepted the sacrifice which He offered because it was tainted with sin (cf. Ex. 28:43).
- 2. Preaching the Gospel Would Be _____ (vs.14)**
The focus of all faithful preaching has been on God and His grace and mercy for men (cf. Jonah 4:2; Matt. 12:41), and now it is on Christ and His mercy and sacrifice (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23). If Christ has not been raised, then preaching that He had been raised is untrue and the height of foolishness (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). The focus of Christian preaching is Christ, and He, not simply the *act of preaching*, would be empty of all power to save (v.14) if the dead are not raised.
- 3. Believing the Gospel Would Be _____ (vs.14, 17)**
The gospel message is that Christ Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice required to atone for the sins of men (cf. Matt. 26:28). If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christians would still have our sin debt before God. Our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins would be an empty (v.14) and worthless (v.17) faith. Fervent belief in what is untrue avails of nothing.
- 4. Every Christian Would Be _____ (v.15)**
Bearing false witness is a grievous sin (Ex. 20:16; Prov. 6:19). False witnesses were to be treated severely and punished as if they were guilty of the very thing about which they lied (Deut 19:15-21). Speaking lies about God is a wicked sin that has greater consequences the more it is repeated and believed (Matt. 23:15; cf. Gal. 1:6ff).
- 5. Christians who Die Would Be _____ (v.18)**
The final ramification that Paul addresses is the absolute condemnation of all people who die having trusted in Christ "in this life only" (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Thess. 2:10). The gospel of Christ is what delivers men from the hell and the second death (John 3:16; Luke 13:3, 5; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8).