

Message #66

I Corinthians 15:12-19

The doctrine of the resurrection is a critical part of the salvation Gospel and it is one that can be historically proven and documented; yet there are those, even in the church, who doubt it and deny it.

The problem that Paul faced in Corinth is a problem found in **verse 12**; some were denying the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul clearly calls people who deny the resurrection “fools” (15:36), but for the sake of discussion and for the sake of making a point, he decides to play along with these people for a few moments to show them the consequences of their line of reasoning.

The views and opinions of human philosophers were accepted and acknowledged more than the truth being proclaimed by men of God. When human philosophy is believed and accepted more than Biblical revelation, you are left with what God classifies as a belief system of fools. He specifically says that one who denies Him is a fool (Ps. 14:1) and he specifically says that one who denies the resurrection is a fool (I Cor. 15:36).

IF THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE RESURRECTION, CHRISTIANITY IS AN EMPTY BELIEF SYSTEM WHOSE FOLLOWERS SHOULD BE PITIED .

Now you will notice that beginning at **verse 13**, there are six “if” clauses (**15:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19**). These “if” clauses, in the original, are all first class conditions, meaning Paul assumes the reality of the argument. Paul is basically saying, “Okay, let us assume the reality of your argument that there is no resurrection, here would be the factual consequences of your belief.”

CONSEQUENCE #1 – If there is no resurrection, Christ is not risen . **15:13**

Another way to word this would be: Since you believe there is no resurrection, Jesus Christ is still dead.

The theological implications of Christ still being dead are profound:

- 1) If Christ is still dead, we have no evidence that He was God (Rom. 1:4).
- 2) If Christ is still dead, we have no evidence that we are justified (Rom. 4:25).
- 3) If Christ is still dead, we have no evidence of life after our death (I Cor. 15:21-23).

If Jesus Christ is still dead, we do not serve a risen Savior; we are serving a dead corpse.

CONSEQUENCE #2 – If there is no resurrection, preaching is vain . **15:14a**

The word “preach” is one that refers to God’s heralds who proclaim and preach God’s message.

There is an article before the word “preaching,” meaning Paul had specific preaching in mind, namely, the preaching of God’s Gospel which included the message of the resurrection.

If Jesus Christ is still dead, there is no purpose in preaching.

CONSEQUENCE #3 – If there is no resurrection, preaching is vain. **15:14b**

There are two times in this context when Paul says “faith” is something negative, in **14** and **17**. The word “faith” refers to what a person believes, what one places his trust and confidence in.

The word “vain” of **verse 14** refers to the quality or reality of the faith being empty, vain and purposeless. The word “worthless” of **verse 17** refers to the effect or result of the faith being useless or worthless.

If there is no resurrection, the entire faith system of Christianity, both present and future, is an absolute waste of time. There is no point in having faith and there will be no positive end result of faith.

CONSEQUENCE #4 – If there is no resurrection, witnesses are liars. **15:15-16**

Every person who testified that he saw Jesus Christ raised from the dead is a false witness of God if there is no resurrection. The idea of being a false witness “of God” is the idea of being a false witness who has been commissioned by God to be a false witness. Now of course, it is impossible for God to ordain false witnesses, because it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2). But if there is no resurrection, you are forced to admit that God sent out many false witnesses to testify of an event that never really occurred.

CONSEQUENCE #5 – If there is no resurrection, faith is worthless. **15:17-18**

Without His resurrection, our faith and future mean nothing. In fact, without Christ’s resurrection, our future is very dark and there are two very serious and very real negative results:

Result #1 - We are still in our sins. **15:17b**

What this means is that we have not been justified (Rom. 4:25) and we will die in our sins (John 8:21) and then face the condemnatory wrath of God (Rom. 5:9; 6:23).

Result #2 - We will die and go to hell. **15:18**

It is interesting here to see that Paul assumes that no person can make their own payment for their own sin. Without the resurrection, people who die in Christ “have perished.” That is they have all gone to hell.

CONSEQUENCE #6 – If there is no resurrection, Christians should be pitied. **15:19**

The word “pity” implies that without the resurrection, everything about Christianity is miserable. The belief system of a Christian is a pathetic, miserable joke without the resurrection of Christ.

However, Paul, in verse 20, will make it absolutely clear that “But now Christ has been raised from the dead.” Jesus Christ is alive, He is risen and our faith and our labor, our sacrifices, and our difficulties are not in vain.

In fact, there is ONLY one faith system worth living for and it is the one found in the Bible which includes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died for your sins and He arose three days later, which proves that when you believe on Jesus Christ, your sins are gone. Will you believe on Him today? The truth is you do believe something. You do have faith in something. Will you believe the facts of the Bible? If you will, you will have everlasting life; if you won't, you will be damned. Those are the facts based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.