

1 Cor. 15:12-19 "Were He Not Raised"

For the Children: In competitions, one player is often chosen to represent the whole team. If he succeeds, the whole team wins. The Lord Jesus was chosen to represent us. He had to beat Satan, sin and death. If death had beaten Him, so that His body died and stayed dead, then the rest of His "team" would lose to death as well. If Jesus didn't completely deal with Satan, sin and death, then how would we even know that our sins are forgiven? It is very important to believe that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead in His human body! **Questions:** How would you try to convince someone that Jesus really did rise from the dead? What is the best proof that He really did rise from the dead? What would it mean for us if Jesus had not been raised from the dead?

Introduction:

First Point: The Argument from Christ's Resurrection

- 1) Greek Influence: Probably under the influence of Greek philosophy, some of the Corinthians were arguing that believers have already been raised spiritually with Christ (Col. 3:1); but there is no physical resurrection to come.
- 2) The Resurrection of Christ's Body: However, the fact that Jesus rose *bodily* demands the bodily resurrection of believers – for He died as our Representative.

Second Point: The Argument from the Apostles' Preaching

- 1) The Apostolic Claim: The apostles were preaching that Jesus had risen bodily from the dead. They claimed to have seen Him and even touched Him after He rose. If Jesus had not risen in the flesh, either their sanity or integrity would be in doubt.
- 2) The Whole Gospel Is Involved; If Christ were not raised from the dead, the whole Gospel being preached by the apostles would be in doubt. For God raised His Son in part to prove that He had accepted Jesus' offering of Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. The apostles would then be worthless and false witnesses.

Third Point: The Argument from Those Who Have Died in the Faith

- 1) Fallen Asleep: To "fall asleep" in Jesus is a gentle way of referring to death. It does not mean "soul sleep," but rather that when we die, we are asleep to this world, while being awakened to the next. It implies that death is only temporary.
- 2) Dead without Sins Forgiven: However, if Jesus did not rise – body and soul - from the dead, then there is no guarantee that those who have died in Christ have had their sins forgiven. They could, in that case, be in hell!

Fourth Point: The Argument from Those Who Are Living in the Faith

- 1) Faith Made Vain: If Jesus did not rise physically from the dead, and there is no guarantee our sins are forgiven, this also means that our present life is pointless. Why endure persecution, why strive against sin, if there is no hope of our own resurrection?
- 2) Most to Be Pitied: If our hope is only in this life, and based on a hoax or misunderstanding, we are most to be pitied – for all the pointless sacrifices. But of course, believers are not to be pitied, because the Lord rose from the dead in His human body and soul. Our hope for the next life is certain. It legitimately drives our life of sacrifice in this life. Our living now for our Risen Lord is entirely justified.

Conclusion:

