

“OUR ONLY HOPE”
(1Corinthians 15:12-34; Revelation 21:1-7)
April 2, 2017

Hope is CRUCIAL to the human psyche.

“Take from a man whose wealth, and you hinder him; take from him his purpose, and you slow him down. The take from them his hope, and you stop him. He can go on without wealth, and even without purpose, for a while. But he will not go on without hope.” -C. Neil Strait

“We can live 40 days without food, 8 days without water, 4 min. without air, but only a few seconds without hope.”

I. The BAD news-

The Corinthians had been reared in Greek culture, with the idea that the body was a PRISON in which the soul was incarcerated and that in death the soul that is good is freed. The idea of any bodily resurrection would've been OFFENSIVE.

The popular Jewish idea that resurrection meant the present physical life would start all OVER again. Today, there is an even more persistent idea that our humanistic culture—that this life is ALL there is. No hope of a life HERE AFTER.

Conclusions that follow if there were no resurrection of the dead:

- 1. If there is no resurrection, then CHRIST has not been raised.**
- 2. All preaching is EMPTY and even false witnessing.**
- 3. There will be NO forgiveness of sin.**
- 4. We would all face death WITHOUT hope.**
- 5. Those we love have already died and perished FOREVER.**
- 6. If humanism is true, we are to be greatly PITIED.**

Thankfully, Paul does not stop with the “what if” paragraph.

II. The GOOD news-

Two analogies to describe the impact of the resurrection of Christ:

1) FIRST FRUITS of the harvest.

The Israelites knew that when the harvest was over, the first fruits of the harvest had to be offered to GOD:

You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. *Leviticus 23:14*

As Christians, we carry over this idea to our TITHES.

Paul describes the resurrection of Jesus as the firstfruits of those who have died. Jesus was the ONLY acceptable sacrifice to God for the sins of mankind, and in turn, the FIRST to be resurrected to new life by the Father.

But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. (23)

2) Contrast between ADAM & CHRIST.

The disobedience and sin of the first man, Adam, brought death to ALL humans who would be born after him. But, “in Christ”, all will be made alive. The only hope for new life after death is in Jesus!

The undeniable truth is that none of us will have new life after death EXCEPT through Jesus:

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” *John 14:6*

Jesus CONQUERED death through his resurrection.

III. The GREATEST news- (Revelation 21:1-7).

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21:4

That is our great hope, the future that awaits all of us who have put our FAITH in the great sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.