

Hope motivates us to continue the journey.

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When our first parents sinned, death came into the universe and all creation was under its curse. From the beginning of time, eternity has been placed in the heart of humanity and every generation seeks the answers to the question of “What is beyond this life” and “How can I live forever?”

The Scriptures deal with the pertinent knowledge that gives people hope beyond the grave. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul addresses the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He starts his argument for Christ’s resurrection by stating the basic doctrine of the Christian faith. It is important to believe and accept the truth that Jesus died for our sins according to Scriptures; He was buried and He raised from the dead on the third day according to Scriptures and that He appeared to Peter, and then the Twelve, and after that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brethren at the same time; most of whom were still alive at the time of the writing of this letter by Paul. Some had died, but Jesus appeared to his brother James then to all the apostles and last of all he appeared to Paul. Paul looked at his situation as one who was born out of season. He had missed the earthly ministry, the teaching, the miracles and the great commission Christ gave to his disciples. Paul persecuted the church, yet through the grace of God, he was called and given the responsibility of taking the gospel to Jews and Gentiles though it meant he would suffer greatly doing the work God had called him to do.

There were people declaring that there was no resurrection and Paul disputed the argument by saying “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not raised. If Christ was not raised then our faith is in vain and we have no hope because without the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, there is no forgiveness of sins.

If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ did indeed die for our sins and was raised as a firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep. Since death came through the man, Adam, the resurrection of the dead comes through the man, Christ Jesus. In Adam all die, in Christ we live. The last enemy that will be destroyed by Jesus Christ is death. He will destroy all dominion, authority and power for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

In Isaiah 26:19 the prophet gave hope to God’s people. It reads like this: Your people have died but they will live again. Their bodies will rise from death. You who lie in the ground wake up and be happy. The dew covering you is like the dew of a new day. The ground will give birth to the dead.

Job believed that he would one day stand before God. In Job 19:21, he declared:

How I wish my words were written down, written on a scroll.

I wish they were carved with an iron pen into lead or carved into stone forever. I know my Redeemer lives and in the end he will stand upon the earth. Even after my skin has

been destroyed, in my flesh I will see God. I will see him myself; I will see him with my own eyes. How my heart wants this to happen.

1 Corinthians 1:18 tells us that the teaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are lost but to us who are saved, it is the power of God. Every person who has ever lived has been found unrighteous and unworthy. The cross is an invitation issued by God, our creator to return by way of Christ's sacrifice to fellowship with our heavenly Father to enjoy everlasting life. In 1 Timothy 5:6, it says that those who live in sinful pleasure are dead while they live.

When Jesus went to raise Lazarus from the dead, Martha went to meet him and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." See John chapter 11.

Martha added this comment, "But even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again." Martha replied that she knew that Lazarus would rise again in the last day. Jesus made a profound statement in verse 25. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Martha then said, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world."

Martha then called for her sister to come to meet Jesus and she too said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She fell at his feet weeping and sorrowing followed by Jews who had come with her to comfort and assist her. When Jesus saw this, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see Lord," they replied. The shortest verse in the Bible and also the most profound to reveal the humanity of Jesus is found in verse 38. It says simply, Jesus wept. Some of them said, "Behold how he loved him, yet others commented that he opened the eyes of the blind. Couldn't he have kept this man from dying?"

If you continue reading this chapter, you will learn that Jesus commanded them to roll away the stone. Martha said to Jesus that by now Lazarus would smell of body decay. Yet Jesus replied, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" Jesus then looked up towards heaven prayed thanking his Father for hearing him now and always hearing him. He said this for the benefit of people around him that they might believe that God sent Jesus to this earth. He then called out, "Lazarus come forth!" The dead man came out of the tomb with his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face. Jesus commanded the people to "Take off the grave clothes and let him go free."

When you come to Jesus Christ in faith believing that his promise of eternal life is for you, you become a new creature. The curse of death is broken, the bondages of sin are removed and you are set free from the hold that Satan has on your soul. In John 8:31, Jesus talks to the Jews about the fact that if they would follow his teaching, they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. Jesus brings freedom from sin!