

## Witnesses

We are transitioning from behavior of people in a church, then the gifts and their purposes, to an understanding of what being a Christian really means. Now and for eternity!

Some people believe that when we die, the lights simply go out. Others think that we become a part of a larger force, or they think that they come back as someone else, or a bug or cow or something!

Jesus has made it possible for us to be resurrected and alive with Him in His Kingdom. (All of the behaviors and gifts that we live out should point to who we really are. Not just now, but for eternity.)

Why? For one thing, the other eternities that I mentioned are false.

Jesus says, “He is the way, the truth, and life. That no one can go to heaven but through Him.” (JN 14:6)

We are also told that death is not the **lights going out**, or becoming a **force**, another **creature**, or a **god of your own planet** even. It is an existence apart from God and in a place of torment that is experienced for eternity.

We learn that as a Christian, that **we have power now**, and **therefore assurance given by the Holy Spirit of relevance of our status**, plus we can **affect our eternity by changing our world now** with the **power of the gospel for others and our very lives!**

What does the resurrection of Jesus really mean to every person? (Frankly, it changes everything!)

**Look at Romans 4:16-5:1 with me.**

1. There is no gospel without resurrection- (The gospel is about who Jesus is, and facts about Jesus.)

1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (ESV)

**15** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,<sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

- a.) We stand on the gospel. (The basis for our Christian life.)

- b.) It transformed us. (We became different people.)
- c.) If you really trusted. Put your faith in Jesus Christ, and His Resurrection, knowing that He has power over death, He is a righteous payment, forgiver of sin, and is Our Alive King.
  - After all, could a **dead savior make us alive eternally**? Could an **unrighteous payment be made to make us righteous**?
  - If He was not reliable, our faith would be in an unreliable source.
- d.) This is the primary message of the Bible. (We can help others, feed them, pick up trash with our Christian t-shirts on and people would still go to hell without the gospel.)

Acts 4:10–12 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup>let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup>This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup>And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

- Notice that Paul said, “according to scriptures”. (What scriptures?) From the Old Testament. (Yes, the gospel was in the Old Testament through sacrifices and other mentions.) **Job certainly understood that there is a Redeemer.** Isaiah, Jonah, Daniel, Abraham and his son Isaac, and many other illustrations.

*“The gospel does not tell us something that we must do. The gospel tells us what Jesus Christ has already done for us.” J V McGee*

- that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,
  - That is the gospel in a very pure form!
  - He **died on a cross, which is in history.** He was **buried, His body was “really dead”**, and **He is alive and on His Righteous throne** because three days later was resurrected.
  - **Does He have power over death?** Yes, if He can create life. **Is He righteous?** Yes, if He is God! **Can He save us and give eternal life?** Of course, because He has risen. **Do you believe?** That is what the gospel is, for us to put faith in Him, letting Him give us eternal life, and have power to resurrect us, and instilling His Righteousness in us so we can dwell with Him.
  - God even gives us the Holy Spirit to verify our salvation. (Things you can question, but for the one who trusts in Him, there is no question.)
  - Why did Paul talk about their behaviors, then the purpose of their gifts? Here is why, to add faith to the already true gospel message. (We are to be shining lights.)
2. There were also witnesses to this gospel- (How many witnesses would it take in a court case for verification?)

1 Corinthians 15:4–11 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 72.

<sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

- a.) So, history has records of his death, and then we have witness of His resurrection. (Pesky!)
- b.) Peter and the disciples of course, Emmaus story crowd.
- c.) Over 500 at one gathering, which most were still alive to attest.
- d.) Why specifically James? He was his half-brother. (It is significant that he was willing to die for the gospel, as many of these other witnesses.
- e.) Then there is Paul himself. (This is a guy that before He trusted Christ, was persecuting and having Christians put to death.) Pretty radical change.
  - So then the obvious question is, **“If this occurred, what purpose did it serve for Jesus to do this”**. (After all, people have died for others sake.)
  - **But have they?** (You can save one’s life and they still will die one day.)
  - **Jesus did this for us, having resurrection power and He is righteous to pay for our unrighteousness before a Holy God.** (A sinless payment by God Himself, to pay for sinful people. That should move everyone to repentance!)

The Corinthian Christians believed this according to verse 11. Therefore....

John 1:11–14 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- So, you’ve heard it, but did you trust in it? (Confess Jesus as Lord, repent of your wicked ways, and believe He is alive and mighty to save.)

Romans 10:9–13 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

AND-

Romans 10:14–17 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” <sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel.

For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- Put your faith in Him. (He is alive and mighty to save.)
- We have the gospel that saves all who will believe.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

- We have been saved; we too are witness of Jesus’ resurrection power.
- Paul challenged the Corinthians to shape up and proclaim the gospel verbally and as a proper operating church.