



The Apostle's Creed

Part 10 – Resurrection and the Life to Come

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

For the Apostle Paul the whole complex of Christian doctrine, preaching, and faith is all airy nonsense apart from the truth of Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of all who trust in Him.

Follow Paul's logic. If Christ has not been raised:

- 1) Our preaching is in vain (vs. 14) and we are false witnesses about God (vs. 15).
- 2) Your faith is in vain (vs. 14) and futile (vs. 17) and you are still in your sins (vs. 17).
- 3) Those who have died in Christ are lost (vs. 18).

Apart from the resurrection the gospel has no power to save. All hope of reconciliation with God and final liberty from death is torn asunder if Christ and His people are not raised. In fact, Paul calls Christians the most pitiable of all humanity if there is no resurrection (vs. 19).

1. The wages of sin.

- The "resurrection of the body" is necessary because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Death is the most unnatural thing in the universe. God did not create us to live, decay, and die. But because of sin there is nothing more inevitable in life than death.
- Genesis 2:15-17 – Moses described the warning God gave our first parents. If they hardened their hearts and rebelled against God by sinning they would surely die. When they sinned death entered the human family. Every conceivable kind of decay and destruction has been visited upon the world because of sin. And since God has chosen to work through representative headship, Adam's sin became our own. That is, we are all born with the corruption of original sin.
- Vs. 19 – "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."
- In other words, if the truth that I am preaching does not deal with the reality of death, don't look upon me as a noble prophet of morality; pity me as the most miserable of men. If Christianity cannot deal with the issue of death; if Christianity has no hope on the other side of death; if there is no victory over death in the gospel that he preaches; then those who trust in Christ for some sort of this worldly benefit alone are pitiable fools. Paul concludes that Christianity is of no value whatsoever if Jesus has not secured for his people an eternal hope.

2. The Christian Hope

- Christians are unapologetically hope-full people. We believe God's promises regarding the future. We believe that just as we died in Christ to our sins so too we will be raised to life by his own resurrection power to life everlasting.

a) Personal Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 – “We will not all sleep but we will all be changed...”

- Paul’s argument in verses 45-49 is quite heavy. So beginning in verse 50 he goes back and summarizes where he’s taken his hearers so far – “What I am trying to tell you is that what is corrupt and perishable cannot inherit that which is incorruptible and imperishable.” Next, Paul anticipates a possible question or objection – “That’s fine for all of us Paul but what about those who are already dead? What’s to become of their bodies?”
- Paul’s solution to the dilemma is the promise of a personal resurrection for all those who have died in Christ. He calls it a mystery – a piece of knowledge hidden in ages past now made known through Christ whose own resurrected body is the proto-type for those which will belong to his people.

b) Embodied Glory

1 Corinthians 15:35-41; 48-49

- It is not wise to try to gain full comprehension of the process of resurrection. For instance, it will profit nothing to quibble over the future of those Christians who were burned at the stake or eaten by wild animals in the Roman arena. Paul is revealing mysteries. And the point is not to imagine how ashes scattered long ago can be reanimated but to understand that all who have died in Christ will be given glorified bodies free of the decay of the fall. In the age to come God’s people will be physical beings fitted for a new earth.
- Job 19:25-27 – Job’s confidence was that because God was his Redeemer he would one day see him as a fully restored man.
- Daniel 12:2-3 – One of the few Old Testament passages which refer explicitly to the resurrected state of humanity; believer and unbeliever alike.

c) Eternal Life

1 Corinthians 15:19

1 John 5:11-13

- If not for the promise of resurrection and eternity in the age to come the sort of sacrifices that Christ calls for from his people make no sense. Paul understood that apart from the Christian hope then Christian ethics are nonsense.
- Genesis 2:9 / Revelation 22:1-5 – Notice the return of the tree of life in the Revelation passage. In Genesis 3 the man and woman and all their progeny were banned from access to the tree of life. But now in John’s heavenly vision we see that in the age to come the tree of life once again has a place among God’s people. Notice also however that in the age to come there is no place for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man’s probationary period will be over. Sin will be vanquished once and for all.