

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XXXVI: Believing In Christ's Resurrection For Its Logical Necessity

(1 Corinthians 15:12-19)

I. Introduction

- A. When we Christians claim that Jesus bodily rose from the dead the third day after He died on the cross, we assert a great miracle occurred, and that makes some think we hold to an unbelievable "fairy-tale happy ending" that spoils "the matchless story of Jesus," Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 217.
- B. However, Christ's resurrection is **logically** necessary or the Christian faith catastrophically fails, so we view the **logical** argument Paul provided in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Believing In Christ's Resurrection For Its Logical Necessity, 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

- A. Paul asked his readers why some of them denied belief in the resurrection if Christ had been preached unto them that He had risen from the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:12.
- B. To reveal how logically errant is the denial of the resurrection of the dead, and especially the denial of Christ's resurrection, Paul revealed the catastrophic consequences of denying these key truths, 1 Corinthians 15:13-19:
 - 1. First, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then it logically follows that Christ is not risen, 1 Cor. 15:13.
 - 2. Second, if Christ was not risen, the apostles' preaching was vain (1 Cor. 15:14a) in several major ways:
 - a. Paul had established in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 that the Gospel that he and the other apostles preached involved Christ's death, burial and resurrection all in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet, if Christ was not raised, He had not fulfilled these Scriptures, and since Jesus had fulfilled Scripture of identifying Himself as the Messiah by his miracles (cf. Matt. 11:2-6 with Isa. 35:5; 61:1), then the Old Testament Scriptures themselves would be shown to be only partly accurate and hence not fully divinely inspired and authoritative, undermining the Old Testament's inspiration and authority!
 - b. Thus, the preaching of the apostles would also have been in vain as they would have preached a lie!
 - c. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 15:3a, Paul claimed the Gospel of Christ's death, burial and resurrection he himself had received, and from Galatians 1:11-12, we learn that Paul claimed this Gospel he personally received by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus and not from the other apostles! If Christ was not then resurrected, Paul thus received an errant Gospel and Jesus is unfit to be a Savior for men!
 - d. In addition, the numerous eyewitnesses to whom Paul appealed who claimed to have seen the risen Lord (1 Corinthians 15:5-9) were then totally misled by a colossal hoax in sheer wickedness, or they themselves were colossal liars, making the Christian faith not only false, but very wicked!
 - 3. Third, the faith Paul's Corinthian believers had expressed in Christ through the apostles' preaching of Christ's Gospel would likewise have been in vain, 1 Corinthians 15:14b.
 - 4. Fourth, if the apostles' presentation of the Gospel of salvation was in vain, they would be found to be false witnesses of God all based on the alleged falseness of the resurrection and Christ's resurrection, v. 15-17a.
 - 5. Fifth, if the faith the Corinthian Christians had put in Christ through the Gospel of His death, burial and resurrection had been in vain, then Paul's readers were still in their sins, doomed for hell, 1 Cor. 15:17b.
 - 6. Sixth, if the Corinthians were thus still lost, then those professing Christians of their midst who had died since having put their faith in Christ had hopelessly gone to hell, eternally doomed and having no hope of themselves ever being raised from the dead in glory, 1 Cor. 15:18.
 - 7. Seventh, if those of their number had hopelessly gone to hell regardless of having put their faith in Christ all due to the alleged falseness of belief in the resurrection and Christ's resurrection, then Christians had hope only in this earthly life, and "the pagans would be right" in that the "'foolishness of the Cross' (1:18) would be just that," foolishness indeed, 1 Corinthians 15:19a; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 543.
 - 8. Eighth, if Christians had hope in Christ only in this life minus hope of a resurrection, they stood to be the most pitied of all men on earth, even by pagan onlookers, 1 Corinthians 15:19b NIV.

Lesson: *Based on logic alone, a denial of the resurrection of the dead in general and of Christ's resurrection in particular carries catastrophic consequences for everything about the Christian faith, including the failure of its Scriptures to be divinely inspired and authoritative, the failure of its Savior to be true and hence effective as Savior and the failure of Christians ever to gain eternal life and hope beyond this life of a glorious eternal existence.*

Application: *(1) May we hold to belief in the resurrection and Christ's resurrection in particular as essential to our faith. (2) Since God led Paul to use logic to defend our faith, may our apologetics also be logically correct!*