

March 17, 2021

The Resurrection and the Gospel

Once every year the church sets aside a day to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This day has become known as Easter Sunday. Many believers choose to refer to it as Resurrection Sunday as the world associates Easter with the Easter bunny and egg hunts, but Easter is mentioned in the Bible. In Acts 12:4 Herod had arrested and executed James and had arrested Peter with the intention of executing him as well. The scripture says, “And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” While it is good and right to set aside a special day to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, the truth is, as believers, the resurrection should be forefront in our thoughts every day.

In 1932, Alfred Ackley met and witnessed to a Jewish man. The man resisted Alfred’s witness for Christ saying, “Why should I worship a dead Jew?” That Easter Sunday, as Alfred rose early to prepare for the day, he heard a famous liberal preacher on the radio say, “...it doesn’t really matter to me if Christ is risen or not.” Alfred became very upset and preached that morning and evening with great vigor on the reality of Christ’s resurrection. Later that night, still in an agitated state, his wife suggested he write a hymn about it. Thus, came into being, the great Easter hymn, “He Lives!”

The question before us today is, “Is Christ’s resurrection important?” Does it really matter? Turn and read **I Corinthians 15:12-20**. In verse 12, Paul begins with a statement clearly indicating that he preached the resurrection of Christ. Paul was a preacher of the gospel and the resurrection is part of the gospel. In **I Corinthians 15:1-5**, Paul outlines the gospel by which men are saved. In verses 3-5 Paul lists 4 truths of the gospel. First, Christ died for our sins. Second, Christ was buried. Third, Christ rose from the dead. Fourth, Christ was seen of many witnesses. Many people, when talking about the gospel, remember how Christ died for their sins on Calvary’s cross. Certainly, this is the main thrust of the gospel, but the fact that he was buried, rose again, and was seen of witnesses, is as much a part of the gospel as Christ’s death. Without a burial, there can be no resurrection and without the resurrection, there can be no victory over the grave. Therefore, the resurrection is essential to the gospel. Without the resurrection, the gospel is powerless to save. While Christ’s death paid for our sins, it is the resurrection that gives us hope of eternal life.

Read **Acts 2:29-31**. In the context of this passage, who is preaching and what is the occasion? Which patriarch prophesied of the resurrection of Christ? The prophecy mentioned in verse 31 is a quotation from **Psalms 16:9-11**. In Psalm 16, David is speaking of himself, testifying of his faith in God regarding himself. But the Holy Spirit, in Acts 2, makes it clear that it also has a prophetic message, speaking of Christ. Many Old Testament prophecies had both a present and future application. Where did David say he would spend eternity? This could only be possible if there was a resurrection. What does Christ’s resurrection mean to you today and what hope does it give you for tomorrow?