

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Introduction



1. Easter is an annual holiday celebrated by millions of people. Some view Easter as a religious celebration that commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. Others simply celebrate Easter as a purely secular holiday.
2. Christians in the first century did not have an annual observance of this event...
 - a. The word “Easter” is found once in the KJV Bible: “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” (Acts 12:4 KJV). In one translation it has “festival” (CEV¹). In the majority of translations, though, they have the word “Passover” (ACV, AMP, ASV, ERV, ESV, ISV, MKJV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, NLT, WEBB, YLT, FLS²).
 - b. The word “Easter” (KJV) is from the Greek word *pascha*, “the Passover³” (Thayer). One wonders why the KJV translators inserted the word *Easter*? Barnes comments, “There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply *after the Passover* (μετὰ τὸ πάσχα meta to pascha). The word “Easter” now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honor of the resurrection of the Saviour. But the original has no reference to that, nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written. The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the time of the apostles.”
 - c. The annual observance of Easter is a human tradition, introduced in the second and third centuries.
3. A question of authority:
 - a. Regarding the celebration of religious holidays (like Christmas and Easter), it boils down to a question of authority. Paul makes it clear that “whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of [i.e., by the authority of] the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17). Is there any command (authority) to celebrate the birth of Christ once a year? Is there any command to celebrate the resurrection once a year?
 - b. Christians today that respect the authority of Christ do not celebrate unauthorized celebrations (like Christmas and Easter) and are content to abide in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42; cp. 2 John 1:9).
 - c. We should also pay attention to Paul’s teaching regarding religious holidays (Galatians 4:9-11) and heed Jesus’ warning regarding the traditions of men (Matthew 15:9).
4. This does not in any way demean the importance of the resurrection of Christ. Indeed, Christ’s resurrection has great significance to Christians and is something we should think about often (certainly more than once a year).

I. IF CHRIST WAS NOT RAISED

The significance of Christ’s resurrection is seen by looking at it from this negative viewpoint.

- A. It would mean that the preaching of the gospel (good news) was in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14), empty, and meaningless because they proclaimed nothing more than a story of fiction.

“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty...” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

- B. It would mean that every Christian’s faith is held in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). Our belief in Christ would also be empty and meaningless because our faith would be built on a lie; a story of fiction.

“And if Christ is not risen, then... your faith is also empty” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

¹ Contemporary English Version.

² French Louis Segond. This is a French translation. It has “la Pâque”, which is “the Passover”.

³ Passover (*Pesach* in Hebrew) is a Jewish festival celebrating the exodus from Egypt and the Israelites’ freedom from slavery to the Egyptians. The Feast of Passover, along with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was the first of the festivals to be commanded by God for Israel to observe (see Exodus 12).

C. It would mean that the apostles were false witnesses; liars and deceivers (**1 Corinthians 15:15**). They swore that God raised Jesus from the dead (**Acts 2:32**). They also claimed to have spent forty days with Him after the resurrection; eating and drinking with Him (**Acts 10:39-41**).

“Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise” (**1 Corinthians 15:15**).

D. It would mean that every believer still bears his sins (**1 Corinthians 15:17**). If Christ was not raised, then who was it that died on the cross, a liar (for Jesus Himself had said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” - Luke 9:22) or a lunatic? No such person could provide a sacrifice that was holy and without blemish.

“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (**1 Corinthians 15:17**).

E. It would mean that all believers have perished at death (**1 Corinthians 15:18**). Their faith would have been in a false Messiah; they would have had no atonement for their sins; dying in their sins, there would be no hope for them.

“Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (**1 Corinthians 15:18**).

F. It would mean that all of us that are Christians are to be pitied (**1 Corinthians 15:19**) because we believe in a false Messiah and we suffer ridicule and persecution for nothing!

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable” (**1 Corinthians 15:19**).

The resurrection of Christ is foundational to the Christian faith. If Jesus is not raised, then we should not be Christians!

II. IF CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED

The significance of Christ's resurrection is seen by looking at it from this positive viewpoint.

A. It verifies our justification (**Romans 4:23-25**).

1. Jesus claimed His blood would be adequate (**Matthew 26:28**).
2. By raising Jesus from the dead, God demonstrated His acceptance of Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins! (**Romans 8:33-34**).
3. After noting that Abraham believed God and that it was accounted to him for righteousness, Paul says...

“Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (**Romans 4:23-25**).

B. It demonstrates the power available to the Christian (**Ephesians 1:18-20**).

1. Power available at our conversion (**Colossians 2:11-12**; **1 Peter 3:21**).
2. Power available to live the Christian life (**Romans 8:11-13**; **Philippians 2:12-13**; **4:13**; **Ephesians 3:20**; **6:10**).
3. Paul's prayer for Christians is that...

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (**Ephesians 1:18-20**).

C. It gives us hope concerning our own resurrection (**1 Peter 1:3-4**).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (**1 Peter 1:3-4**).

1. His resurrection gives us a living hope! (1 Peter 1:21).
2. Especially concerning the resurrection of believers! (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).
3. The Christian's hope is to be raised up on the last day.

“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:19-22).

D. It demands our complete loyalty (Romans 14:9).

1. He was raised and then exalted to become our Lord (Acts 2:32-36; Ephesians 1:20-23).

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

2. Thus our lives and service belong to Him (Romans 14:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:15).
3. If Jesus really is your Lord, then it will be witnessed by your life of obedience:

“But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Conclusion

1. The impact of the resurrection of Jesus should not go unfelt in our lives. As a historical event it has everlasting implications for both the believer and the unbeliever.
2. The believer must never lose sight of the significance of the resurrection. Do our lives demonstrate that we serve a risen Lord and Savior? Do we possess the hope, peace, and strength that the reality and power of His resurrection gives to the Christian?
3. The unbeliever also needs to examine the significance of the resurrection carefully. It verifies the deity of Jesus, that He has all authority (Romans 1:4; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:36). It verifies the truthfulness of what He taught, such as...
 - a. No one can come to the Father but through Him (John 14:6).
 - b. His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).
 - c. He came to offer abundant life (John 10:10).
 - d. He went to prepare a place for us (John 14:2).
 - e. He shall come again (John 14:3).
 - f. There will be a resurrection of the dead and ensuing judgment (John 5:28-29; 12:48).
4. If Jesus rose from the dead, then one must believe in Him! (cp. John 8:24).

May we never forget “The Significance Of The Resurrection of Christ” in our lives!