

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

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Introduction: Having finished his discussion of issues affecting the Church in Corinth, in this chapter, he turns to the great truths which make Christians different from those who practice other religions.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Verses 12-14

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

- In verse 20, Paul proclaims “Christ has been raised from the dead.” This passage begins with the word, “BUT.” Apparently, some in the congregation at Corinth were saying that the resurrection was not historical fact, or that, while Jesus was raised, his followers would not be.
- Paul contends that if there is no resurrection of believers as the Scripture promises, then there can be no evidence of Christ’s resurrection either. If resurrection is unbelievable in one case, it is also unbelievable in the other.
- If Jesus was not raised from the dead, the Gospel is a lie. It is powerless and useless. It cannot bring salvation.

Verses 15-16

¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

- If Christ is not raised, then the Apostles and those who have followed them have preached lies. They and their message should be rejected in its entirety if it is not to be trusted in this part.

Verses 17-19

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- If the resurrection of Jesus falls, everything else falls with it. If the resurrection of believers falls, all that follows falls, too. Nothing can be trusted if these foundational doctrines tumble. All is lost!
- It is true that following the teaching of Jesus, with or without the resurrection, improves the quality of a person's life. But if that is all there is to following Jesus, we are most to be pitied, for our hope in Jesus related to salvation and life are in vain.

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