

Easter Sunday 2021

1 Cor.15:1-11

Skepticism

I. Skepticism about the resurrection has always been a challenge to the knowledge of the gospel...

A. Skepticism plagued the first disciples. Lk.24:10-11; John 20:24-28

1. All the disciples were skeptical of the resurrection at first.
 - a) They called their sisters crazy.
 - b) But Thomas was the most angry and skeptical...**John 20:24-28**
2. Note the shape of saving faith/gospel according to Jesus. Rom.10:9-10
 - a) Deity of Christ: *My Lord and My God...*
 - b) Resurrection of Christ: *Touch Me and see...*
3. Note the path to saving knowledge of God: *Verbal witness of reliable people.*
 - a) Blessed are those who do not see, but
4. *Thomas, you should have believed based on the testimony of your brothers and sisters.*

B. Skepticism plagued subsequent disciples, too. 1 Cor. 15:1-11.

1. Some 20 years later, (53-54) Paul spends an entire chapter correcting and reminding the Corinthians of the importance of Christ's resurrection.
2. The gospel is the announcement of the atonement on the cross, followed by the burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Messiah.

II. *Skepticism is understandable* because the resurrection is an astounding and astonishing one-time event, unprecedented and un-repeatable by us. *But skepticism is not necessary.* Consider the personal testimonies. 1 Cor.15:1-11. (*skepticism regarding the gospel, the person and work of Christ, is not based on the absence of historical evidence. It is based on a-priori atheism.*)

A. What transformed frightened deserter into a fearless, miracle-working preacher? Peter. (Lk.22:54-62/Acts 1-3)

1. According to Peter—*Jesus's physical resurrection.*
2. **Peter's proclamation to Cornelius. Acts 10:39-43;** (Acts 2:22-23; 3:15)
 - a) **2 Pet.1:16.** We did not make this up!
3. ***And Peter sealed his testimony with his own martyrdom. 64-68 AD***

B. What transformed a violent, angry, anti-Christian Pharisee into the Apostle to the Gentiles? Paul. Acts 9; 22; 26:12-18

1. According to Paul—*Jesus's physical resurrection. Gal.1:11-24; 1 Cor.15:3-9*
 - a) Paul was converted by the resurrected Lord 1 ½ to 2 years after the resurrection.
2. **Paul's preaching Acts 13:29-33;** Paul's first recorded sermon.
3. ***And Paul sealed his testimony with his blood. Beheaded in Rome. 64-68AD***

C. What transformed an unbelieving younger brother into the leader of the church in Jerusalem? James. (Jn.7:5)

1. Transforming him into one of the most courageous proclaimers of Christ, and the leader of the Church in Jerusalem?
2. According to James—*Jesus's physical resurrection. 1 Cor.15:7; (Gal.1:19)*
3. ***And James sealed his testimony with his own martyrdom. 62 AD. Jerusalem.***

D. What transformed a frightened group of skeptical disciples into a dynamic force that eventually took over the Roman empire?

1. According to them—*Jesus's physical resurrection.*
2. **John speaks for all of them. 1 Jn.1:1-4.**
3. ***And these also sealed their testimony with their own blood.***
4. The existence and proclamation of the early church, plus its growth into a transforming force in the Roman empire. *They all claim it is because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Apostle's and Nicene Creeds).*

III. What did the fact of Christ's resurrection mean to these people? *The same thing it means to us.*

A. The Future of God is happening, and we can be a part of it. Jn.11:25-26

1. The Resurrection was supposed to happen at the end of time, but Christ's resurrection means that resurrection life is in play right now.
2. His plan is to judge and resurrect the entire universe—we are called to be a part of that new creation. Rev.20-22.

B. The Knowledge of God is available, and we can trust it.

1. Belief/Faith is knowledge that you bank on. (Jesus to Martha, John 11)
 - a) Faith is not the opposite of knowledge—it is the presence of trust based on reason and sufficient credibility.

C. The Grace of God is beckoning, and we must respond to it. John 3:16

1. Jesus said to trust Him personally. Jn.14:6
2. His death, burial, and resurrection is proof of eternal life, but we must repent and believe.

IV. If you have turned around and come to Christ, be baptized.