

THE DEFINING FACTOR

QUOTE: "Only a LIVING Savior can save a DYING world."

Many different religions have made the printed pages of our history books. Many different gods have been worshiped in many different ways. There has been Buddha, Mohammed, and John Smith. All of these men lived on the Earth and made history. They each formed their own religious sect or organization. However, one defining factor separates Jesus Christ from these other men: Jesus is alive! Jesus, like these other three men, walked the Earth and died, but Jesus did not stay in the grave. After three days, Jesus came out alive, victorious over death. No other religion can make that proclamation about their Savior.

All of these other men made claims about an everlasting future, but still they died. Our Savior not only made claims about everlasting life, but was resurrected from the dead giving us evidence of this future resurrection. His resurrection gives us the hope of our future with Him. His resurrection separates Christianity from all other religions. As Christians, we can rejoice in the fact that our Savior is alive and well. He is living today and seated at the right hand of the Father. Our God is a God of accessibility and we can approach Him with boldness and confidence. Isn't it great to know that the God we depend upon is not dead in a grave somewhere, but is alive and well?

NO RESURRECTION, NO FUTURE

Our faith is based on the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. If He died but was not raised, then He is no different than any other religious leader. In this passage of Scripture, Paul is arguing against the false teaching being spoken concerning the resurrection. As Paul said in verse 14, if Christ did not come out of the ground, then all of their preaching and our faith are without foundation. Without Christ's resurrection, we do not have any hope for the future. All of our beliefs and all of our truths are worth nothing. Paul continues on to say that if Christ did not arise then our faith is worthless, but worse than that, our sins are not forgiven. Without Christ's resurrection, we are still living deep in our sins and we are without hope for the future. Not only are our sins not forgiven, but those who have died before us are lost. We need the assurance of a risen Savior to give us the hope to face tomorrow. In verse 19 Paul says that if we are believing in this life only, then we are to be pitied more than any other people. If Christ did not come out of the grave alive then our commitment and work for Him is worth nothing and we are making God to be a liar. If there was no resurrection morning for Jesus Christ, then we are without hope as we do not have assurance of an after-life. Why should we serve a dead Savior?

KNOW RESURRECTION, KNOW FUTURE

The one thing we do know and can have hope in is the assurance that Christ did come out of the grave alive and we can trust in that fact for our future. Since Adam brought death into the world for all men, and thus, after Adam, all people were in common in that all would sin and all would die. However, through Christ we have received life. Following Paul's argument against the false teaching, he went into the truth about the end times. Here, Paul says that he is telling us a mystery. This is not something that cannot be found out, but it is information that was revealed to Paul through divine revelation from Christ. The next verses give us in-depth information about what will happen during the end times. The day and time of Christ's return is not specifically mentioned and thus we all must be anticipating His return. He will come back in the "twinkling of an eye." No one will know exactly when He will come, but once He does, all will be aware. Paul says that both the dead and the living will be changed at the last trumpet. None of us can fully understand how all of this will take place, but we must accept in faith the reality of this future event. During these days, we will understand greater than ever before that Christ conquered death when He sacrificed Himself on the cross. With these thoughts in mind, we must challenge ourselves to remain constant in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We can continue in our Christian walk as we know that our laboring is not in vain.

As Christians, we can have the hope of a future with Christ, where all other religions do not have that assurance. We should continue with our commitment and continue winning others for Christ as the time is drawing near. As we have read, Jesus will return in the blinking of an eye and so we must be ready for His return. Are you ready?

"Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf of springtime."—Martin Luther

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