

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Living in the Bible Belt somewhat shelters us from the world around us. We assume that when we leave the nest, everyone we encounter believes in Jesus Christ, goes to church at least three times a week, and reads their Bible daily. Unfortunately, that is simply a fairy tale story that we could only hope was true. America is full of different religions and different gods. As we leave the comfort of our area, we find some people believing in Buddha, some in Muhammad, some in John Smith, and others in nothing at all. All of these people are very devoted to the religion to which they belong. Many of them are more devoted to their religion and belief than Christians are to God. They each read their beloved scriptures as we do the Bible. They each go to worship and lift up their god as we do ours on Sundays and Wednesdays. They each have certain things that they do in order to honor their god. So what makes Christianity so different? Why should we believe in Jesus Christ and none of these other men?

One word separates Christianity from all other religions and beliefs: resurrection. Buddha, Muhammad, John Smith, and Jesus Christ, were all great men. All of them set themselves apart. Each of them died, but only one of them came out of the grave alive, Jesus Christ. Jesus gave His body for sinners as He laid His life down on the cross. He was scourged, beaten, and then nailed to an old rugged cross. After He had died, He was placed in a borrowed tomb, only to rise again three days later. Jesus appeared to many people after He arose from the dead. His resurrection is what gives us the hope in eternal life and the assurance of our salvation. We are not serving a dead savior, but a Savior who is alive and well. He has conquered death for us and is waiting at the Father's right hand to lead us home.

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

RESURRECTION IS TRUE (1-8)

Many people try to deny the truth about Jesus' resurrection. They want to think that Christ died and then remained in the grave. The Bible gives us specific factual information concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was buried in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. When the women came to adorn Jesus' body with spices, Jesus was nowhere to be found. Even today we can take a trip to see Joseph's tomb and the body will not be there. Jesus appeared to numerous people after He had risen from the grave. First, He appeared to the women who came to the tomb. As 1 Corinthians continues on to tell us, He then appeared to Cephas, then the Twelve, then to over 500 brothers at one time, then to James, then to all the apostles, and then to Paul. Today, science tells us to base our decision on evidence. We are to use multiple accounts of different individuals and combine them in order to gain our decision. If Jesus appeared to all of these people, over five hundred at one time in particular, how can we not believe in the truth of the resurrection?

RESURRECTION SAVES (9-11)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the determining factor of our Christian faith. If Christ had only come, lived a sinless life, and died, then we would not have been able to receive salvation. Only through blood and sacrifice could we receive eternal salvation from God the Father. Christ gave His life and laid it down on the cross so that we could receive salvation. Laying His life down was not the end of it as He arose on the third day, defeating death itself. We can now believe in a living Savior. We are not worshipping a god who is dead and cannot be with us anymore. Our Savior is alive and well and able to help us through any situation that we are going through in our lives. This resurrection is what makes our devotion different than that of others. We are able to serve a God who is our friend, who continues to help us, everyday. Yes, He came to this earth and lived a sinless life, but the best part is that He is still here for us today.

RESURRECTION GIVES HOPE (12-28)

The resurrection of Jesus gives us the hope to keep believing and to keep following. We are serving a Savior who defeated the powers of death itself. First Corinthians 15:17 says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." If Christ was not raised from the dead, then we never were able to receive the salvation from God. We would still be in our sins. We can have hope knowing that Christ died, He got up from the grave on that third day, and that our sins were forgiven. Christ broke the sin barrier for us. In Jesus' resurrection we are able to earn a new life, just like His. By raising Christ from the dead, we see that God approved Christ's work on the cross and that Jesus' work was officially completed. Paul says it even more clearly in Romans 4:25, "He (Jesus) was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification." We can live with hope and assurance knowing that Christ not only came and died for our sins, but that He also got up from the grave for our salvation. We can live our life with hope as we serve a living Savior.

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