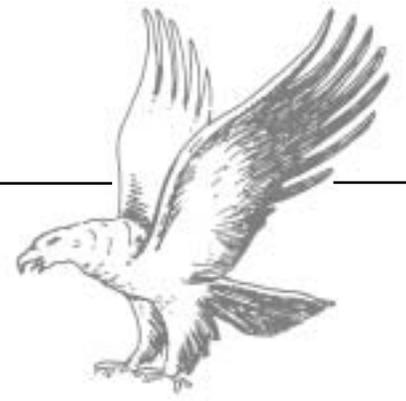


# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



April 24, 2011

## Why the Resurrection Matters

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundational truth of Christianity. Without it, Christianity would be just another false religion. With it, Christianity stands alone as a message from God.

“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 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. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen, and if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (1 Cor. 15:13-17).

For a Jew, Paul was a fairly open-minded man. He tolerated a wide diversity of opinion among his Jewish and Gentile brethren, arguing that the issues that historically divided these cultures should not prevent them from uniting upon a common faith in Christ.

There was one issue, however, concerning which Paul would brook no dissent: the resurrection from the dead, in particular, the raising of Jesus. For Paul, this was the foundational truth of his religion and could not be compromised. So when he heard that some in the church in Corinth were denying the resurrection, he came down hard on them.

Paul’s defense of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 is still relevant today, for much the same reason. There are many today, even among professed believers, who deny that Jesus arose from the dead. Whatever the source of their skepticism, their denial of the resurrection strips Christianity of its redeeming power. This is not a matter that can be left to personal opinion.

For Paul, there are two reasons why the resurrection of Jesus matters.

First, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead validates His authority. During His ministry, Jesus made a number of outlandish claims concerning Himself: He was the Son of God; He was “the way, the truth, the life,” the only path to God; He even claimed that He would come back from the dead. If anyone else said this sort of thing, he would be considered delusional. But Jesus’ outrageous claims can’t be dismissed, because of what happened three days following His death. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). We must either accept His resurrection as an his-

torical fact, or we must reject Him as an imposter and His religion as a fraud.

The second reason why the resurrection matters is because it confirms our own hope for a resurrection. Of all the enemies that mankind faces, death is the ultimate. Whatever experiences might separate us in this life, the one experience we all share in common is death, the complete and total end of our life on earth. When people die, they are gone forever. They do not return. But the resurrection of Jesus changes that perspective radically. His resurrection demonstrates conclusively that death is *not* the final end of human life. There is a life after death, and we *will* return in glorified bodies. “Now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). Armed with that hope, people are motivated to live their lives — even sacrifice their lives — for more noble purposes.

The resurrection of Christ is not a dusty relic of theological speculation. It is a real event that gives Christianity the power to change our lives.

– David King