

NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD

April 1, 2018

I Corinthians 15:12-22

**“But now is Christ risen from the dead,
and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”**

I Corinthians 15:20

In verses preceding this text, the Apostle Paul listed benefits of which we are deprived if Christ did not rise from the dead. But he concludes that list with the bold, contrasting statement, “But now is Christ risen from the dead.” Thereby he affirms that rather than being deprived, they are secured for us, and we are assured of them by the resurrection of Christ. What are these benefits?

1. Preaching is not an empty, fruitless effort. (14, 15).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (I Corinthians 15:18, 21-24).

2. Faith is no mere whim or fantasy. It is the means by which the soul is saved. (14, 17).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. . . . And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:1, 2, 39 & 40).

3. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are no longer in their sins (17).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). “We believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:24b, 25). “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

4. Those who’ve died in the faith have not perished (18).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:53, 54).

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5. We have hope in this life and in the next, and will not be disappointed (19).

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Timothy 1:11, 12).

6. Christ is the firstfruits of those who died and rose again (21).

Others were raised from death in the Old Testament, and by Christ, but they all died again. Death reclaimed them, but it could not keep Christ. He destroyed it by His resurrection, and was the first to rise unto everlasting life. Therein He is “the firstfruits of them that slept,” ensuring that more will follow Him in a resurrection that triumphs over death forever.

7. All who are in Christ will be resurrected unto everlasting life and glory (22ff).

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:22).

9. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord (58).

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:54-58).