

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)  
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**SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)**

**TITLE: Program 54 – The Essential Resurrection**

**THURSDAY**

**OPEN**

We love signs. We love wonders. We love miracles. But I want to ask you a question. How many signs does it take to convince you of truth? How many wonders do you have to see? How many miracles do you have to become acquainted with before you're going to believe? Could you just take the Word of God, read it, take it at face value and say, "God, Your Word is enough. I've read what You said and I believe?" Sometimes we want an excuse not to believe, don't we? We'll talk about it today as we look at God's precepts for life.

**PART ONE**

Once again, Precious One, I'm at the Garden Tomb in the city of Jerusalem. And as we bring the gospel of Matthew to a close, God is emphasizing in this gospel the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why? ["Because, if there's no resurrection then your faith is in vain."] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians

15:14) Do you remember when the people said to Jesus, [“Give us a sign that You’re the Messiah?”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 12:38) And Jesus said, “...**No sign will be given** [you except] **the sign of the prophet Jonah...; for ... as Jonah was** [in the belly of a great fish] **three days and three nights..., so [shall] the Son of Man be** [in the heart of the earth] **three days and three nights.”** (Matthew 12:40) The only sign that He was going to give them was the sign of the resurrection that is testified to us in the Word of God. Now among those people asking for a sign were the priests and were the scribes and were the Pharisees. Remember after the death of Jesus Christ, according to Matthew chapter 27, they were afraid that someone would come and steal the body. And if they stole the body out of the tomb then they would say, “See, He said He’d rise in three days and the body is gone.” (See Matthew 27:63-64) But what’s the proof of a resurrection? It’s not a missing body. But it’s the body itself, alive and well and moving. And Jesus is about to give them that sign, even as Jonah went into the depths of the sea in the belly of that great fish. Three days later that fish vomited him out on shore. (See Jonah 1:17 & 2:10) He was alive. He was well. He may have stunk from being in the belly of that great fish, but at least you could see him. You could touch him. You could feel him. So God wants us to understand that Jesus Christ was not only a body that was missing, but He was a body that was seen. And so in Matthew chapter 28 it says, “**And they left the tomb quickly....**” (Matthew 28:8) The angel has said, “**Go... and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He’s going ahead of you into Galilee, [and] there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.**” (Matthew 28:7) And it says, “**...They left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.**” (Matthew 28:8-9) He was there. He was alive. They could feel Him. They could see His feet. And they could hear His voice. “[And] **Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid;**

**...and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.’ Now while they were on the way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.”**

**(Matthew 28:10-11)** Now what are they reporting? They’re reporting that there was an earthquake when they were sitting there and guarding the tomb. And the tomb that was sealed all of a sudden the stone was rolled away. The seal was broken and there was an angel sitting on top and the tomb was empty. (See Matthew 28:2) He was not there. He was risen. And they’re telling them that they saw it, that they experienced it. And it says, **“...And [they] reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and [they] said, ‘You’re to say, “His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.””**

**(Matthew 28:11-13)** Now who is saying this? Well it is the scribes. It is the Pharisees. It is the priests. And they’re saying this. Now who are those people? They are the guardians of the law. And the law tells us [“that we are not to bear false witness.”] (PARAPHRASE, Exodus 20:16) And here they are taking money, mammon, the love of money and they are giving it to these men and they are saying, “Bear false witness.” They are breaking the law when they are to be keepers of the law. Why? Because God has given them the one and ultimate sign of raising Him from the dead. And they do not want to believe it. You see, you can have all the evidence in the world and still say, “I’m not going to believe that. I am not going to believe that.” And when you say that what you’re saying is, “I don’t want truth. I want a lie. I don’t want God’s way. I want my way.” And I want you to know, Precious One, that a lie leads to death. It says, [“No liar has any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 5:5-6) It says **“... [that Satan is] the father of lies.” (John 8:44) “...He [is] a murderer from the beginning....” (John 8:44)** And he is the one that brings the lie to us and we choose the lie because we want to be our own

god. We want to be as God, knowing good and evil and making our own decisions. And so it says, **“And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.” (Matthew 28:14)** “Now don’t worry about the governor. If the governor hears about this, don’t worry. We’ve got influence with the governor.” **“...We’ll win him over... [we’ll] keep you out of trouble.” (Matthew 28:14)** What is this all about? It is all about deception, deception, deception. And one of the things you know if you know the Word of God, Satan is the deceiver. (See Revelation 12:9 ) He deceives us. He deceived us from the beginning. And so these men, although they’re religious, although they’re cloaked in holy garments, although they provoke the law, although they serve in the temple, these are hypocrites. They wear a mask. They pretend to be religious. They pretend to be holy when inside they’re like a white sepulcher and **“...inside they’re full of dead men’s bones....” (Matthew 23:27)** And it says, **“And they took the money and did as they had been instructed....” (Matthew 28:15)** So, not only did these men, these religious leaders sin, these chief priests sin, but they caused others to sin. **“...They took the money....”** And it goes on to say, **“...And did as they [were] instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.” (Matthew 28:15)** They just stole His body away. But God has another story. And that story is related to us in the epistle to the Corinthians. And I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It is the classic description in the Word of God of the Good News. What is the good news of our salvation all about and what does it have to do with the resurrection from the dead? Now listen. The resurrection is the only sign that would be given to those Jews, the sign of Jonah, [“as Jonah was in the belly of a great fish three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 12:40) But He is not here. That tomb is empty. He is risen. And we know that He is risen because there were many testimonies to the fact that He was risen. Remember when Jesus Christ was

crucified, when “...**He said, ‘It is finished...!’**” (John 19:30) Tetelestai, and He gave up His spirit, it says the tombs were opened and after His resurrection—we read it in Matthew chapter 27—and after His resurrection many of the bodies of the dead came out and appeared to others. (See verses 52 & 53) God has born witness to the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. It’s written in the Book, Precious One. It’s written in the Book. And the question is: are you going to believe what was written in the Book? Are you going to take it first hand? I want to take you in just a minute to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, where you and I are going to look at the resurrection and what it means to us. But before I do, before I do, what I want to ask you is: Are you willing to open the Book? Are you willing to read the Book? Are you willing to say, “God, this is Your Book and I am willing to believe.” You say, “I will take You at Your word. I will take you at Your word.” Are you willing to do that? If you are, then you have a teachable spirit. What you have to know is the chief priests and those that were plotting to put Jesus to death, and in a sense succeeded, because it was the will of God, they were not willing to believe. So where do you see yourself? 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 1: “**Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand.**” (1 Corinthians 15:1) Now you’re going to find in your study guide 1 Corinthians 15, not the whole chapter, but the first portion of the chapter. And this is what I want you to do, if you don’t want to mark in your Bible, I want you to draw a small megaphone, a small megaphone and I draw it in red and I color it green, because the “gospel” is the Word, the message that we are to broadcast to others. And where would you put it? Well, we’re looking at the subject, what is this chapter about? This chapter says, “**Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you...,**” so you would put a megaphone over “gospel”. You would put a megaphone over “which” because it is what I preach to you, “...**which also you received...,**” and you would put a megaphone over “which” again, “...**also**

you receive, in which also you stand...,” (1 Corinthians 15:1) and I put a megaphone over that. So what is he saying? The gospel has been preached to you. The gospel has been received by you. The gospel is what you stand in. It is what holds you firm. **“By which [the gospel] you also are saved....”** It is the gospel that saves you so you put another megaphone there. And then he tells you this. **“...If you hold fast the word....”** What word? The gospel, **“...which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:2)** One of the things I want you to see is it is not something you just believe temporarily, but it is something that you cling to. It is something that you hold on to. It is something that you hold fast to. Because if you don’t hold fast to it then you never really truly believed it. We’ll talk about it more in just a minute.

## **PART TWO**

What a privilege it is to read 1 Corinthians 15 to you on the gospel, which includes the resurrection of Jesus Christ right here in Jerusalem in front of the garden tomb. Well 1 Corinthians chapter 15, we’re talking about the “gospel” and we’re marking every reference to it. In 1 Corinthians 15:3 he says, **“For I delivered to you....,”** now he’s going to describe the “gospel.” **“...As of first importance what I also received....” (1 Corinthians 15:3)** One of the things that you need to realize is when you study the life of Paul, Paul was personally taught by Jesus Christ. No man taught him, but it was Jesus Christ Himself, after He had risen from the dead that took Paul aside and taught him. (See Acts 9:3-5, 18-22 & Galatians 1:13-2:1) It says, **“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins....,”** now watch, **“...according to the Scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:3)** He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. It was written. What is faith? [“Faith is the evidence of things hoped for. It is the confidence. It is things that you haven’t seen and yet you are convinced of because God has said it.”] (PARAPHRASED, Hebrews 11:1) And what he’s

saying is Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. What Scriptures? He's talking about the Old Testament. And so he's saying all through the Old Testament, as Jesus explained to the men on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, He opened their understanding to understand all things concerning Him that was written in the Scriptures. (See Luke 24:12-32) And so what we have is from Genesis 3:15 we have the gospel. We have the good news of Jesus Christ becoming the substitute for our sins, that there is a Messiah coming. Well in the New Testament Jesus has come. And so it says "... [and] **that [He] died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried....**" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) You only bury dead men. And as I told you before, on the cross they knew He was dead. They didn't break His legs. They stuck a spear in His side. Water and blood came out. He died of a ruptured heart. Joseph of Arimathea took Him and laid Him in the tomb, wrapped Him in clothes. He knew that He was dead. They all knew that He was dead. And the soldiers seeing His death knew that truly He was the Son of God. (See Matthew 27:54) So He was buried and that He was raised on the third day, according to the Scripture. Well Jesus Himself is the One that pointed back to the Scripture and the picture of Jonah and He said, ["This is the only sign that will be given to you, the sign of Jonah."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 12:39) So this is the gospel. But now watch. There's got to be a testimony to the fact that He was raised from the dead. What is a testimony? It is an eyewitness. And it says, **"And that He appeared to Cephas...,**" that's Peter, **"...then to the twelve. [And] after that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time...."** (1 Corinthians 15:5-6) In other words there were 500 people there that at one moment saw the resurrected, the risen Jesus Christ from the dead. They heard Him. They saw Him. They touched Him. They knew that He had risen from the dead. So you have a witness of one. You have a witness of twelve. You have a witness of 500, which means that 500 people were not hallucinating about what happened. And of course there are far more

witnesses and you see those when you read all four accounts of the gospels.

It says, “[And] **after that He appeared to more than five hundred... at one time, most of whom remain until now....**” (1 Corinthians 15:6)

They’re still alive. Go talk to them. “**...But some have fallen asleep; [and] He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as ... one untimely born, He appeared to me also....**” (1 Corinthians 15:6-8) “I’ve seen Him with my own eyes. I did not know Him while He was alive, but I have seen Him after He died, was buried and was resurrected,”

**“...According to the Scriptures.”** (1 Corinthians 15:3) He says, “**For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain....**” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10)

I was a murderer. I was the chief of sinners, Paul says in 1 Timothy. (See 1 Timothy 1:13-15) I’ve become an example to everyone. “And yet, I want you to know that His grace was poured out on me and it was not poured out on me in vain.” It was not for nothing. “**...But I labored ... more than**

**[them] all, [more than all the apostles], yet not I, but the grace of God [in] me.**” (1 Corinthians 15:10) I love that verse. “**...By the grace of God...,**”

you say, “**...I am what I am....**” (1 Corinthians 15:10) And then he goes on to explain the gospel. “**Whether then it was I or they...,**” as witnesses, “**...so we preach and ... you believed.**” (1 Corinthians 15:11) Not

because of any other signs, not because of any other miracles, not because of any other wonders, but because of our testimony, because we tell you that Jesus died for your sins, that He was buried, He was raised again from the dead. We saw Him with our eyes. “**Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say ... there’s no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead...,**”

then listen, “**...not even Christ has been raised.**” (1 Corinthians 15:12-13) Now what does God want us to know? Why did the tombs come open, as Matthew 27 says? (See Matthew 27:52) Why, after His resurrection, did



they come out and appear? Because they're showing there is a resurrection from the dead, not of Jesus Christ, but of all those who believe. He says, **"And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is [in] vain...."** (1 Corinthians 15:14) It's empty. It's useless. **"...And your faith also is [in] vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised [Jesus], whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised."** (1 Corinthians 15:14-15) But listen, you go back to to Daniel and God says in that very last verse in the book of Daniel, ["Go and enter into your rest and you will be raised at the allotted time. You will be raised and receive your reward at the allotted time."] (PARAPHRASE, Daniel 12:13) He says earlier in the chapter that all are going to sleep. Some will be raised to a resurrection into eternal life. Others will be raised to damnation. (See Daniel 12:1-2) There is a resurrection of the dead. And he goes on to say, **"[Then] if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; [and] you are still in your sins."** (1 Corinthians 15:16) Now did you get that? **"...If Christ hasn't been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."** (1 Corinthians 15:17) Why? Because Jesus Christ died, but He was not raised, so what? So He died like every other human being. So you're still in your sins. And then he goes on to say, **"Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ...perished."** (1 Corinthians 15:18) All those that have believed in Jesus Christ, as believers and have died have perished. **"If we have hope in Christ in this life only..."**, if He's just a good example, if He's just a wonderful man to follow, if He's just a hero to be admired because of what He did, because of the lifestyle He lived, or just because of His miracles then **"...we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."** (1 Corinthians 15:19-20) And who are the first fruits of those that were asleep? Those are the ones whose tombs were opened at His death and who came out of the tombs after His resurrection. (See Matthew 27:52-53) He had to be the firstborn from the

dead. And the first fruits were those that appeared to many and said, “See there is a resurrection.” And it says, **“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.” (1 Corinthians 15:21)**

Through belief in Jesus Christ there is resurrection to eternal life. If you reject that, if you have to have another sign and another miracle and another way in saying prove it, prove it, prove it, prove it, let me walk on water, do this, then you know what? You’re going to be raised, but you’re going to be raised to stand at the great white throne judgment and be cast into the lake of fire. Well, Beloved, if you don’t believe that Christ is raised from the dead then whatever you believe is in vain. Christ has been raised. Believe Him. He is not here. He has risen.