

ISRAEL
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SERIES: Israel

TITLE: Program 12 – What If There Were No Resurrection?

TUESDAY

OPEN

There's so many that say, "You know, I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross, but I really don't believe that He was raised from the dead." And what if He was not raised from the dead? What if there is no resurrection? Does it make any difference? Beloved, it makes all the difference in the world. It's the difference between life and death. And if Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead, then you better eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow you die and that's the end of it all.

PART ONE

When the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian church, he had to deal with whether Jesus Christ was raised from the dead or not, because there were some that had come into that church and said you know, "Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead. There's no resurrection from the dead. We might as well eat, drink and be merry, because tomorrow we die." So

Paul had to deal with that issue. And if Paul had to deal with that issue then possibly maybe you're having to deal with that issue or you have friends that are having to deal with whether there is a resurrection from the dead and whether Jesus Christ was really raised from the dead or not or whether this was a story that was made up by the disciples of Jesus Christ and was really a hoax. If it was a hoax, Beloved, you and I are lost. Listen to what Paul says. Listen to his reasoning. He says, "Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection [from] the dead?" He says, "But if [there's] no resurrection [from] the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ..." listen carefully, "...has not been raised, then our preaching is [in] vain. [and] your faith...is [in] vain." (1 Corinthians 15:12-14) What is he saying? "Then what I'm all about what I'm doing, traveling from city to city, from country to country, is in vain. It's worthless. It's empty. It's a life of nothingness. And in what you have believed is absolutely vain. It's nothing." So he's saying, "...if [there's] no resurrection [from] the dead, [then] even [Jesus] Christ has [not] been raised [from the dead]." (15:13) And then he goes on to say this, "Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God..." Not only is my preaching in vain, but I am a false witness from God, "...because we [are witnesses] against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised." (15:15) are you following His reasoning? Really it would help if after this you read in the Word of God or you read along with me in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 16, right now. He says, "For if the dead are not raised..." He doesn't want you to miss this point. He says, "...not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." (15:16-17) what is he saying? What does he mean? The resurrection is the proof of Jesus full payment for your sins and my sins. The resurrection is the proof that you and I have total absolute, complete forgiveness of sins. The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin. And that's what the resurrection proves. He goes on to say, "[If this is true,] Then those...who have fallen asleep in Christ..." he says, "...have perished." (15:18) so what is he saying? He's saying,

[“Beloved, you believed that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and you believed that when your loved one died that your loved one went immediately, absent from the body to be present with the Lord. You believed that someday your loved one would get a brand new body. You believed that someday you would be with your loved one and you would spend eternity with that loved one.” And he says, “I want you to know, that if there’s no resurrection from the dead, then Christ hasn’t been raised from the dead and then those who fell asleep in Christ, believing in Christ, believing this message have perished. You’ll never see them again.”](PARAPHRASE 15:18) Do you follow his reasoning? Do you see the importance of understanding what the resurrection is all about? He says, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead...,” This is the fact, this is the truth. He says, “...[He] has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.” (15:20) Now when he uses the term “sleep”, he’s not talking about that we die and we go to sleep and we stay in the grave until Jesus Christ comes back and you and I are raised from the dead. He’s not talking about that. When he talks about falling asleep in Jesus, what he’s talking about is that the minute that you die, it’s not death where you go to Hades, which we’re going to look at. But it is simply like you fall asleep and you wake up immediately and you’re in the presence of God. Paul said, “For...me, to live is Christ...,” He said this in Philippians, chapter 1, “...and to die is gain.”(Philippians 1:21) Listen, if I fall asleep and I just lie in a grave for a thousand years or for a hundred years or even for ten years, what a waste. Who wants to look forward to that? Why is to die and be with Christ far better, if I’m going to sleep in my soul there? That’s not what he’s talking about. He’s simply saying that death is not an enemy. Death for the Christian is like going to sleep and waking up to that eternal morning in the presence of the everlasting Son of God. So he says, “...Christ has been raised from the dead...,” and the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead, “...[it’s] the first fruits of those [that] are [going to fall] asleep [in Christ].”(15:20) In other words, His resurrection, He was the first one ever to be raised from the dead, to die. You say, “What about Lazarus?” Well,

Lazarus wasn't dead that long. But Jesus is the one that was the first one to be raised from the dead, to die totally, to be raised from the dead, never to die again. Lazarus died again. If you don't know who I'm talking about with Lazarus, then you can read John, chapter 11 and that will explain to you about Lazarus, a man that Jesus raised from the dead to show you that He is the resurrection, to show you that He is the light, to show you that those that believe in Him, even though they were dead, yet shall they live. The first one ever to be raised from the dead was the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's like the first fruits. What's the first fruits? Have you ever planted tomatoes? And you see those little green balls come out and you watch them on the plant and some get ripe first. Oh you pick it, you taste it. You say, "this is so sweet." And you're looking forward to more fruit that is to come. So Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. He says, "For since by...man came death, by a man also came the resurrection [from] the dead." (15:21) Now who's the man that death came by? Well, it's by Adam. The Bible says, ["That when Adam sinned, because Adam was the father of all mankind and Eve was the mother of all the living, that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin."] (PARAPHRASE Romans 5:12) So it's because of Adam's sin and because Adam brought forth after his own likeness. Adam became a sinner. Adam and Eve produced little sinners. So by Adam came death. By one man came death. Also, by one man came the resurrection from the dead. And that one man's name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God in the flesh, who died on a cross for you and me, who was buried, who was raised again the third day and who was seen by many and who's coming again. He says, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all [shall] be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22) Now listen, if you are part of Adam, but you never believe in Jesus Christ, you never believe in Jesus Christ, then you're going to die. Then you're going to perish. But if you believe in Jesus Christ then because you're in Christ, then you're going to be raised from the dead. He says, "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits..." Now watch the time phrases and mark them with a little green clock. "[For] each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those

who are Christ's at His coming." (15:23) Now listen, the Bible tells us that when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, then what happened was, the tombs were opened in Jerusalem and then after His resurrection, many came out of the tombs and appeared to others in the city. Why? Showing that Jesus Christ is the first fruits. Then there are those who are His at His coming. Jesus left, He went, He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. But someday He's coming, first to take His own off of this earth, and then to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Now when that happens, watch what it says. It says, in verse 23, "...Christ the first fruits, after that those [that] are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end...." (15:23b-24a) The end of the nations, ruling this world. Because Christ is going to rule as King of Kings. And then watch what it says. "...then comes the end, when He [delivers up] the kingdom to... God and [His] Father...." (15:24a-b) and so what's going to happen is Jesus Christ is going to come down. He's going to establish His kingdom. That kingdom is going to last for a thousand years. How do I know that? Revelation, chapter 20, verses 1 through 11. Read those verses. Mark a thousand years and you will see that it's mentioned six times in those verses. And then it says, and this is so important and it's so interesting. And when we study prophesy, we study this. But it says, "...then comes the end, when He [delivers up] the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and... authority and power. For He, [Jesus,] must reign...." And this is talking about those thousand years. "...until...." and you want to mark that as a time phrase again. "...until He has put all [of] His enemies under His feet...." Now listen. "The last enemy that will be abolished is death." (15:24-26) In other words, listen, Precious One, Jesus Christ is coming again. And when He comes, there's going to be a resurrection, a resurrection for you, a resurrection for me, if we've died and if we haven't died, then those who are alive and remain are going to be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. This is good news and we'll talk about it more when I come back.

PART TWO

If Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, then Beloved, all that awaits you after death is the lake of fire, the lake of fire that God prepared for the devil and his angels. If you would go with me very quickly to Revelation, chapter 20. But in Revelation, chapter 20 and verse 14, it says, “[And] death and Hades....” Hades is the holding place of all people before they’re cast into the lake of fire, all the people that have never received Jesus Christ. “[And] death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:14) But you know what? You and I will never be there. We’ll never be there because of an empty tomb. An empty tomb that they believe possibly was where Jesus Christ was buried and where He was raised from the dead. In this garden, not too far from Golgotha, in this rich mans tomb that had never been used by another. All right, now watch what he says. “[That God] has put all things in subjection under [the] feet [of Jesus]. But when He says, ‘All things are...in subjection,’ [it’s] evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection [under] Him.” (1 Corinthians 15:27) In other words, Jesus Christ is going to subject every single thing on the face of this earth to Him, except God, because it’s God that gave Jesus the power to subject all things to Him. You know how He gave Him the power? He gave Him the power when He raised Him from the dead, when Jesus conquered sin and death. Now let’s go on because this is good. And it says, “For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. [And] when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him...that God may be all in all.” (15:27-28) You know what? Even the Son of God, God in the flesh, points us to God the Father. You know a good cross-reference for all of this is Acts 2:34 and 35. Let me take you there. In Acts 2, verse 34, referring again to the Psalm that I read to you in an earlier program in Psalm 16. It says, “...it was not David who ascended into heaven, but He himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand until I make [Thine]

enemies a footstool for Your feet.””(Acts 2:34-35) In other words, Jesus, right now is at the right hand of God. And everything is in process. And you know what, with all the events that are happening in our world, I believe that God is saying, [“Wake up. Wake up. Look up. Look up. Your redemption draws nigh. I’m about to bring it all to pass.” And so He says, “Stay there, sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Your feet.”] (PARAPHRASE Acts 2:34-35) Now let’s go back to 1 Corinthians 15. And this is what it says. “[Now] when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him...” And I just want to repeat this to you, this verse. This is why I’m reading it again. “...that God may be all in all.”(1 Corinthians 15:28) Do you know what? God wants to be all in all in your life right now. And He can if you will simply listen to Him, if you will simply believe what He says. You know. You’re going to believe someone. You’re either going to believe man who is temporal or you’re going to believe God who is eternal. You’re either going to believe man who is limited in his knowledge, or you’re going to believe God who is omniscient, who is all knowing. You’re either going to believe man, who lives under the power of the evil one, who is under the dominion of the prince of this world or you’re going to believe God who is all in all. Paul chose to believe God. Listen to what he says. He says, “Why are we...in danger every hour?” verse 30. He says, “I [protest], brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in...Jesus [Christ] our Lord, I die daily.”(15:30-31) He says, [“My work is not in vain.” He says, “Look at your lives. Look at the change in your lives.” He says, “You are my testimony. This is the reason that I constantly die daily. This is the reason that God is my all in all. This is the reason that I face.”](PARPAHRASE 15:30-31) Watch what he says. He says, “If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised...”(15:32a)In other words, listen. [“I’m putting my life on the line all the time. I’m fighting with these wild beasts at Ephesus that are coming against me that want to put me to death.” And he says, “Why would I do this if Christ isn’t raised from the dead? Why would I put my life on the line?

Why would I shorten it?”] (PARAPHRASE 15:32) He says, “...If the dead are not raised, [then] let us eat...drink [and be merry, because] tomorrow we die.”(15:32b) Tomorrow, we perish. In other words, if there is no resurrection from the dead, if all that awaits us is the lake of fire then you and I might as well, party, party, party, party. Why? Because tomorrow, we die and that’s the end. O Precious One, listen to me carefully. Today is the day of your salvation. Today is the day to believe on Jesus Christ. And if you have not believed on Jesus Christ, then today you can pass from death to life. Today, you can receive Jesus Christ. What do you have to do? You have to acknowledge that you’re a sinner. You have to acknowledge that you’re a sinner and you have to receive Him as your Savior, as the One who died on the cross on your behalf. And if you don’t do that, if you don’t do that, then when you die, you’re going to step into hell. You’re going to step into a Christless eternity. You’re going to go to a place called the lake of fire, “...where [the] worm [dies not], and the fire is not quenched.”(Mark 9:44) You see, you and I are eternal. We’re going to live forever, one place or another, you and I are going to live forever. But if you will receive the gift of salvation, if you will receive the gift of eternal life... Where does it come from? It comes in the person of Jesus Christ. But you’ve got to know this, that when you receive Him, it’s given unto you, not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His name sake, also. Because you see, there are going to be many who are not going to believe on Jesus. There are going to be many that are going to hate you because you have chosen to become a follower of Jesus Christ. And when you do that you are denying yourself. You’re willing to take up your cross and say, “Death to my old way of life.” And you are willing to follow Jesus Christ for the rest of your life. I want you to understand that. And all you have to do is come to Jesus and say I thirst for eternal life. I thirst for You. And I receive You now as my Lord and my God. And you’ll step into eternity with Him.