

Christ has indeed risen from the dead

In 1922, Howard Carter made what is probably the greatest archaeological discovery in history. He found the ancient tomb of the Pharaoh, known as Tutankhamun or King Tut. This was significant because, unlike other tombs that had been emptied by grave robbers, this tomb was full of priceless artifacts, as well as the body of King Tut himself.

It took eight years to remove and document the contents of the tomb. The mummified remains and his treasures were sent all over the world. Millions upon millions of people stood in line for hours just to catch a glimpse of a dead king. The whole world celebrated because that tomb was NOT empty.

As Christians, we celebrate because of the tomb that WAS empty! When the tomb of Jesus was discovered by women two thousand years ago, they expected to find his body. But instead, an angel said, "He is not here. He is risen!" (Matthew 28:6).

The empty tomb of Jesus Christ is filled with more reason to celebrate than the full tomb of King Tut!

1 Corinthians 15:12-22 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1) The futility of life without the resurrection

- Many people deny the resurrection of the dead in general, like the Sadducees, and many others deny the resurrection of Jesus
 - Denying the resurrection puts us into a state of hopelessness and makes our life meaningless
 - Ecclesiastes 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."
 - Psalms 90:10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.
- Paul outlines a number of aspects of a futile life if there is no resurrection:
 - Not even Christ has been raised (13)
 - Our preaching and faith are useless (14)
 - We are the false witnesses if we testify that He's been raised, if, in fact, He hasn't been (15)
 - Our faith is futile and we're still in our sins (17)
 - The all who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost (19)
 - We are to be pitied of all people (19)

2) Absolute hope comes through the resurrection

- 1 Corinthians 15:20-21 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.
- The surest fact of life is that we're all going to die some day
 - Without the resurrection this is probably also the fact that we fear the most
- However, because Jesus has indeed risen from the dead and overcome death, not only for Himself, but for all who believe in Him.
 - Death was defeated at the resurrection
- When He hung at the cross and committed His spirit into the hands of the Father it was for His eternal safekeeping and care.
 - When we die it will be merely the temporal tent in which we temporarily reside that passes away, but our spirits are entrusted to the Father for our eternal wellbeing
- It is in this hope that we live, that He has risen from the dead and we too will rise from the dead to be with Him forever
 - Death no longer has any hold on us, and, along with it, we are freed from the fear of death
 - Hebrews 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.
- A main cause of the fear of death is the finality of it and the unknown
 - In breaking the power of death and giving us the assurance of what lies beyond the grave, Jesus removed the main causes of the fear of death.
 - Having had our sins forgiven and judgment passed over us onto Christ is an even bigger reason not to fear death
- We can face whatever lies ahead with the peace and assurance that He gives
 - Having this hope within us we live life with a confidence that those without hope don't have
 - A person who lives life without hope – without a reason to live – lives with their head down; lives in despair; lives for this world only as they have nothing else to live for
 - We live for something that can never fade and never be taken from us

3) Death in the old but life in the new

- 1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.
- Along with the hope of the resurrection comes the power of the resurrection to live a transformed life
- We no longer live as those without hope who gratify their sinful natures thinking that this world is all there is so eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die
- We now live as forgiven people who have been justified by Christ's resurrection
 - Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
 - Without the cross there is no forgiveness of sins, and without the resurrection there is no justification. How would a dead man declare us not guilty before God
- He has indeed risen from the dead giving us new life, new hope, a new relationship with God, new relationships with others, and an eternity of love, peace, and joy to look forward to