

## WHEN PAUL SAID THAT IF JESUS DIDN'T RISE THEN THE RELIGION IS BASED ON LIES

In 1 Corinthians, Paul has to deal with believers who turned against the doctrine that the dead will rise to eternal life. That such a serious controversy started so soon after Jesus supposedly lived is hugely significant.

In it, Paul defends the reality of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead to save us. The idea is that Jesus died for sins and rose to be our life, to be part of us and to be with us to look after our souls. Though Jesus rose before the human race in general, in theology the idea is that we all rise together. The resurrection of Jesus then is not just about Jesus. Paul asks them how Jesus could rise if the dead don't rise as they say. That is what he is getting at.

It may be that the heretics Paul was battling against with 1 Corinthians 15 thought the resurrection of Jesus was an illusion and not real. Just as you use parables to make points so God might use visionary parables like resurrections to try and get a point across for the human mind can't understand what he is trying to say. They explain that it is so easy to make a mistake and end up with the wrong interpretation.

That could explain why Paul as wily as he was responded in desperation. Paul tries to force the heretics to believe in the resurrection. He says that if Christ HAS NOT BEEN raised then the gospel and faith are useless.

If you are living in his day, does it really matter if you think Jesus has not risen yet? No. If the resurrection is about Jesus and his brothers and sisters in religion then time or place does not really matter. So why is Paul so defensive?

The "history" as given by the apostles is being questioned. The gospel is useless and even dangerous for lies are necessarily useless and dangerous. This is about the ego of the Church leaders and not about Jesus.

Reasons to believe in the resurrection in order of importance are, it makes possible our reconciliation with God and gives graces and virtues from him for Jesus rises to save us from sin. [The danger is that this depends on sensing something is helping your spirit but that is very prone to illusion and it creates a bias before we get to the other reasons.]

Next Jesus' power over death is confirmed.

Next it shows he was what he claimed to be - God's son and God's supreme and essential prophet.

Next it fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament that the saviour would rise - sadly for Christians though that reason is pure imagination. There are no prophecies of the resurrection of Jesus or anything about when it should happen.

For these reasons anyway the resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of Christianity. But not a single one is overthrown by saying Jesus will rise but has not risen yet.

So the reasons are cosmetic. Again the real problem Paul has is that those who say he rose are being called liars.

When Paul says that the Corinthian heresy that the resurrection never happened accuses the apostles of being liars it has to be the case that some if not all of his opponents were saying just that and saying it loud and clear. He arrogantly says that is unthinkable that he and the apostles he belongs to would do that!

The heretics are sure that the apostles did not make an honest mistake but were liars. To lie is to knowingly say what is not true. We must ask then if they are liars then are the heretics saying they never had visions at all? Not necessarily. The heretics could be suggesting that the apostles are deliberately perverting their experience to justify a false doctrine of a literal historical resurrection and a physical literal Jesus. Perhaps they had inspired visions or waking dreams where Jesus promised to return bodily one day.

It is interesting that Paul says that he and the apostles are lying if Jesus did not rise. Why didn't he say the apostles would be or mistaken or possessed by the deluding power of Satan if they were wrong? But he just said lying. Psychologically speaking then, he gave them away. They really were lying.

If Jesus didn't rise bodily at all and it was entirely spiritual, they could have seen a ghost claiming to be a resurrected being for all we know. Maybe that ghost told them to lie.

If there were merely apparitions then the resurrection as a real event is dubious. Apparitions don't mean much for most of us dismiss most of them no matter how sincere the witnesses are.

Many of the heretics would have said that the apostles misinterpreted the experience they had. But why are they never mentioned? If they were all resorting to accusing the apostles of lying that would be a strong indicator that they were.

If there had been an inexplicably empty tomb, the apostles could have thought Jesus rose and if they had no authentic visions but hallucinations or were too dumb to understand what was happening, they could be mistaken but not liars if they said he rose. The apostles wanted to be called liars and nothing else if the resurrection never happened. The willingness then to accept the liar appellation implies that the apostles were claiming to know they were perfectly sane and not deluded by Satan or any other ability. It implies that they said they knew spiritually their experience of the Jesus visions was from God and real. It means they put more value on their religious feelings than on the visions themselves! This is just typical of what religious people do. They pretend to themselves that because they feel their gospel is true that it is true! Why should we believe the apostles' feelings and not the feelings of those who felt in their hearts that Jesus did not come back from the dead? The fact that their assertions boil down to that is enough to expose them as liars. It could be that by accepting the tag "liars" if the resurrection of Jesus never happened that they are saying they are admitting they would be lying. In fact, this is an admission of lying for how else could they be so sure?

When a man says that what he and his friends say is not a lie when he should add that it is not a mistake either it is a dead giveaway that he and they are liars and he knows it. And it is an even bigger dead giveaway when he cannot rebut the sceptics adequately which happens all the time when sceptics uncover outrageous lies. This consideration tells us that the heretics knew what they were talking about unlike Paul and Co. It tells us to rely on them and not Paul and the apostles.

The resurrection could still have happened if Paul and the apostles were lying – it would just mean we have no reason or right to believe in it for we have no evidence. So when Paul says it could not if they lie he is saying that the other witnesses like the 500 plus who allegedly saw the risen Jesus are untrustworthy. Or maybe some forger inserted the bit where he mentions them.

Paul protests too much about the resurrection data being called lies. That shows it is exactly that. Lies.

