

NO MORNING WAS EVER BRIGHTER

1 Corinthians 15:1–22, 54–58



LET'S BEGIN HERE

On the first Easter morning, when the stone was rolled away from Christ's tomb, hope dawned and grace shone brighter than it ever had. For us, though, the monotony and troubles of daily life seem far removed from the miraculous impact of that glorious morning two thousand years ago. Sometimes even Christians get so caught up in the concerns of life that we think, *What's the big deal about Easter anyway?*

Sometimes even well-meaning believers forget that Christ's resurrection should be the theme song of our lives—the joyous melody to which the instruments of our thoughts and actions should be tuned. Dissonant chords of suffering and hardship can only make sense when, in light of eternity and our future resurrection, they become the harmony that turns the life of faith into a symphony.

Has the reality of the resurrection transformed not only your eternity but your days *now*? Does the melody of Christ's resurrection fill your days with heaven-bound hope? In this message, Chuck Swindoll will help us sing praise to God no matter what triumphs or sorrows fill our days.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. What's the Big Deal about the Resurrection?

The apostle Paul set his life to the tune of resurrection hope. Paul thought that the resurrection of Christ was such a transforming truth that he, inspired by the Spirit, wrote extensively about it in his letter to the Corinthians. The apostle's trust in Christ's resurrection had infused his life with joy even in the midst of harsh persecution. Paul understood that embracing the reality of the resurrection and the world to come radically alters our perspective on everything that happens in our lives and our world.

Fast forward about two millennia and, year after year, Christians around the globe *still* celebrate Christ's resurrection each Easter. But if the resurrection didn't happen, if Jesus' bones still lay buried in the sands of time, or if He didn't die in the first place, our devotion is in vain. The apostle Paul explored the question, *What if Christ didn't rise from the dead?* And the consequences Paul listed give us all reasons to come to terms with the resurrection.



Quotable

*We are living
in the land of
the dying,
headed for the
land of
the living.*

—Charles R. Swindoll



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If there is no resurrection from the dead:

- All Christian preaching is in vain and faith in Christ is useless. (1 Corinthians 15:14)
- All the apostles were liars. (15:15)
- Those who trust in Christ are still guilty of their sins. (15:17)
- All those who have died as believers in Christ are lost. (15:18)
- Christians, who believe in a dead God, should be pitied most of all. (15:19)

2. Implications of Christ's Resurrection

But Jesus *did* rise from the dead, and one day all believers will follow Him in triumph over death. Because of Christ, we can wholeheartedly sing the words of Charles Wesley:

Lives again our glorious King. Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Dying once, He all doth save. Alleluia!
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!¹

In our day, when facts and proofs rule the day, many people dispute the Christian claim that Jesus did *in fact* rise from the dead. So, how do we know for sure that Jesus rose *bodily* and walked out of that garden tomb? The overwhelming evidence for Christ's resurrection should cause us all to ponder its reality and its implications for our lives each day.

- The tomb is empty. Though many have searched, no one has ever found Jesus' body.
- Jesus appeared to the apostles and at least 500 other people (1 Corinthians 15:5–8).
- After seeing the risen Lord, Christ's twelve closest disciples were transformed, almost overnight, from a group of hiding cowards to an unstoppable, courageous, evangelistic force that changed the entire world.



A CLOSER LOOK

What will resurrection life be like in the new heaven and the new earth?

The Bible's final book offers answers about what resurrection life will be like. While the language of Revelation often seems mysterious and far-removed from our experience, when placed in the context of all Scripture, the fog clears and certain elements appear more distinctly. Through the light of Genesis 1–2, we can see Revelation 21–22 as a bookend to biblical revelation. The new heaven and new earth pictured in the Bible's last chapters correspond in many ways with the original creation described in the first two. Heaven is much more than just another place. We believe heaven to be a coming paradise, similar to the one portrayed in Genesis.

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Continued from previous page

In both places, God dwells with His people in some kind of bodily, or at least in the case of Eden, visible form. God walked in Eden (Genesis 3:8). Jesus will rule from the throne in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:3). In both the past and future paradises, we find the Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9; Revelation 22:2) as well as life-giving water (Genesis 2:10; Revelation 22:1). Finally, Eden marks the first place of one human connecting with another, while the heavenly paradise of Revelation will be an extended community of all who have believed (Genesis 2:18, 22; Revelation 21:27).

Revelation also tells about the kind of life the new heaven and earth will usher in. Because Jesus will have defeated His enemies and will dwell bodily with His people, death, mourning, crying, and pain will pass away forever (Revelation 21:4). The negative effects of sin will have finally been eliminated, leaving the world as God intended it.

In the new heaven and the new earth, following our resurrection, we will live with immortal bodies—unbound by physical restraints (John 20:19–20) and immune to disease and death (1 Corinthians 15:53–55). Our hope for physical resurrection should affect our lives today. Christ-followers should live holy lives, honor God with their bodies, and view other human beings as valuable in God's eyes.



LET'S LIVE IT

Each Easter, Christians proclaim: *Jesus did indeed rise from the dead!* Has this declaration transformed the tune of your everyday life? Or are you living a one-world existence where your pursuit of temporary happiness has led only to disappointment and despair? If you like that life of bondage, then nobody can force you to change. But if you would like to have true freedom and hope that will help you face whatever tomorrow may bring, then embrace the transforming reality of the resurrection this Easter!

What is the theme song of your life? Do your thoughts and decisions follow the tune of instant gratification, always seeking happiness in this life? Or does the melody of Christ's resurrection fill your days with heaven-bound hope and motivate you to serve others and worship God in all circumstances?

ENDNOTE

1. Charles Wesley, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," in *The Celebration Hymnal: Songs and Hymns for Worship* (Nashville: Word Music/Integrity Music, 1997), hymn 367.



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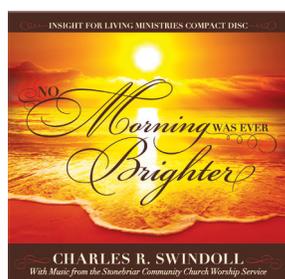
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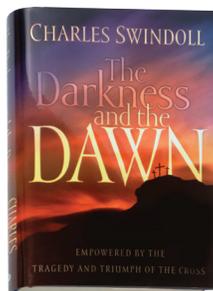
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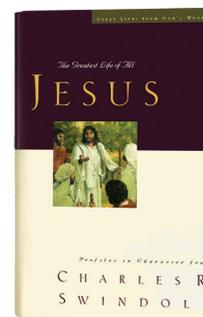
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