

QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS ASK

CHRIST IS RAISED, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12–57



The Heart of the Matter

Epitaphs are strange things! Some of them are profound. Most of them are brief. We've all read tragic epitaphs . . . and even a few that make us chuckle! In his immortal work on the martyrs, written in the sixteenth century, John Fox listed some of the epitaphs that appeared in the catacombs beneath Rome. He found a few of them etched into the stones of Christians' graves. Fox found other epitaphs on non-Christian graves. The difference is remarkable!

One Christian's gravestone reads: "Here lies Marcia, put to rest in a dream of peace." Another records, "Victorious in peace and in Christ."

Some non-Christian epitaphs, more grim and depressing, read: "Live for the present hour, since we are sure of nothing else." And another: "Traveler, curse me not as you pass, for I am in darkness and cannot answer."¹

So what accounts for the difference in these inscriptions? One word—*resurrection!*



Discovering the Way

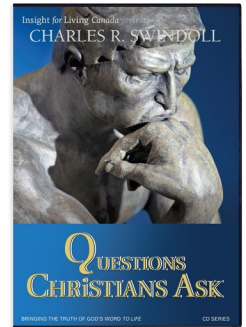
1. Background on the Resurrection

Christians don't have to dread death. Death is not the end. We can look forward to life after death—physical life in new bodies fitted for eternity. But some believers either doubt this truth or it doesn't affect their everyday lives. In the Old Testament, Job wondered whether he would really rise again after death—doubt crept in when he considered his own resurrection (Job 14:14), but Job didn't question whether his Redeemer would rise again (19:25).

And in the New Testament, Martha believed in the resurrection, but she felt overwhelmed with grief over her brother's untimely death and Jesus's apparent lack of concern (John 11:21–22). But Jesus reminded Martha that the resurrection of all human beings depends on *His* resurrection.



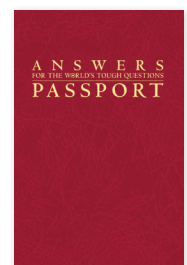
Tools for Digging Deeper



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2. Christ Has Been Raised (1 Corinthians 15:12–57)

Some Christians in the Corinthian church voiced their doubt about Christ's resurrection. So the apostle Paul responded by reminding them that if Jesus didn't rise from the grave then the Corinthian believers wouldn't rise either. And if Christ didn't rise from the dead and defeat sin and death, then Christians still bear the weight of their sin and have no hope for the future. Like Paul and the Corinthian believers, we all should thank God that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, conquering sin and death.



DIGGING DEEPER

What Will Resurrection Life Be Like?

At the end of time, God will liberate every created thing from the curse of sin. He will raise Christians to eternal life and establish the new heaven and the new earth—the place we call *heaven*. The heaven we look forward to does not resemble the heaven portrayed in movies—a place where people play harps, wear flowing white robes, and sit on fluffy clouds for eternity. That sounds boring to Christians and non-Christians alike! And thankfully, that's not what God promises.

Rather than spend our time sitting on clouds, in our resurrected bodies we'll enjoy perfect physical health and all the God-honoring activities that bring us joy. And though halos won't float above our heads, we will bear the image of Christ, finally resembling His righteousness (Philippians 1:6). In the

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eternal state, following our resurrections, 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). Believers should indeed look forward to physical resurrection!

Our hope for 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. Christians—as good stewards—should also respect and care for the planet God created (Genesis 1:26–28).²



Starting Your Journey

Like Martha after her brother’s death, most of us have felt our hope ebb and the tides of disillusionment and loneliness take over. Is it possible that we have never really stopped to consider our Christian basis for hope and how it should affect our lives?

In moments of loneliness and pain, do you remember the hope you have in Jesus? Is your hope in this life based on the resurrected Christ or on your bank account, friends, and career? How can your hope in your future resurrection change your life today?

ENDNOTES

1. *Fox’s Book of Martyrs: A History of the Lives, Sufferings and Triumphant Deaths of the Early Christian and the Protestant Martyrs*, ed. William Byron Forbush (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 11–12.
2. Adapted from Insight for Living, “Will We Have Wings, Harps, and Halos in Heaven?” in *Understanding Heaven Passport* (Plano, Tex.: IFL Publishing House, 2013).