

RESURRECTED

REJUVENATED



In 1849, police in New York City arrested a man named William Thompson. Charismatic and "a man of genteel appearance," according to a New York Herald report from the time, Thompson approached strangers, engaged them in conversation, and won their confidence, which he then used to convince them to part with their money or valuables. Prior to his arrest, authorities dubbed the prowling swindler the "Confidence Man," the first time the phrase was ever used to describe what would soon be shortened to "con man" or "con artist."¹

Con artists have existed for as long as human beings have. Heck man even Abram conned Pharaoh to spare his life, get provision and wealth! (Gen. 12:10-20)

I worked for a con artist pastor in New Hampshire who is now likely facing criminal charges for labor law violations and misappropriation of funds...²

And I'm telling you, as a result of that, I've experienced first hand what it's like to be conned by someone in the name of Christ. There aren't many things that suck like that does.

But were the early followers of Jesus con artists? Many in our culture think they were. Maybe this is one of the many reasons why Paul, in defense, wrote;

¹ <https://stacker.com/business-economy/30-biggest-scams-modern-history>

² See: <https://julieroys.com/tag/joshua-gagnon/>

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, “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, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. ¹⁵ Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone. (1 Corinthians 15:12-19)

The Corinthians were a skeptical and easily distracted bunch of folks. They were questioning the resurrection of the dead, despite claiming to believe in Christ's resurrection (1 Cor 15:1, 11). Again, like we've established, most Greeks believed that only the soul was immortal (see Acts 17:32)³

Many people in our culture, the same of whom believe that most or all Christ followers are con artists, believe in the immortality of the soul, no matter the morality and eternal trajectory of its vessel. I hear it all the time man. Weird enough, most of the funerals I've ever done have been for people that didn't follow Jesus in any certain way during their lives. People, before the funerals, would always sort of try and subversively sway me into saying the person was in heaven with God. But I would always be like, “man, I don't know! I don't know what happens minutes or seconds before someone dies! However, I do know that;

***16** God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)*

Then, inevitably, I'll just preach about the hope of resurrection and eternal life through Christ at the funeral in a way that invites everyone to consider and know that it could be true for them! But always, people will come up and share at some point in the service and say things like;

Well... I know Jerry you're up there... put in a good word with the big guy for me... You're probably smoking a big joint right now and listening to Pink Floyd take a hit for me too!

³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:12). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

And again, the Corinthians, who believed in the immortality of every person's soul, doubted and disbelieved in the bodily resurrection of the dead. However, as Paul stated, to deny a bodily resurrection in principle was to deny the resurrection of Christ. Presumably some in Corinth had done this, and Paul wanted to warn them and others of the consequential result from such disbelief.⁴

If Christ had not been raised, as Paul had so firmly attested to in the earlier part of 1 Cor. 15, and if Paul and his companions were a bunch of con artists, or just a bunch of fools, then (their) proclamation (was) in vain, and so (was the Corinthians') faith. One would have to ask what in the heck they had to gain from such a vain, false, foolish proclamation, right? A denial of the Resurrection would've torn the heart out of the gospel message and left it lifeless. If that were so, the Corinthians' faith, however vital, would've been useless (*kenē*, "empty"; cf. vv. 2, 10, 17) since its object would've been a dead man still in the tomb, a false Messiah.⁵ Again, the apostles of the church would've turned out to be crass charlatans and con artists since their message uniformly affirmed the truth of Christ's resurrection!⁶

The Corinthians' denial and doubt about the possibility of bodily resurrection would've dismantled the message of the gospel, and would've destroyed the ministry of Paul and the early Church completely!

If I set out to play guitar, and bought myself a nice Fender Stratocaster, a quarter inch instrument cable, and a guitar amp... If I plugged that puppy in and went to crank out my first riff, and then found that there were no strings on the guitar- music wouldn't happen!

The resurrection is the strings on the guitar! You don't get the gospel without it just like you don't get music without strings! And what's the point of having a guitar, cable and amp with no strings??? Would be **pointless** y'all wouldn't it?

Without the resurrection the Corinthians' faith was worthless. In other words, denying the resurrection involved denying Christ's redemptive work in individuals and creation.⁷ Furthermore, the Corinthians would've still been in their sins. The core teaching of the

⁴ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:17). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

early church presented Christ's death and resurrection as the solution to sin (v. 3). If the resurrection of Christ is denied, then a person not only has an empty faith but remains under condemnation for their sins.⁸

The Corinthians' salvation would be only a state of mind with no correspondence to reality. Their **faith** would be worthless or "**futile**" (*mataia*, "without results"; cf. *kenē*, "empty," in vv. 10, 14, *eikē*, "without cause" or "without success," v. 2). The Resurrection was God's validation that the redemption paid by Christ on the cross was accepted (Rom. 4:25). Without the Resurrection there could be no certainty of atonement and the Corinthians would remain in a state of alienation and sin.⁹

Again... no resurrection? No gospel. No hope. No eternity. No future. No salvation. No redemption. No forgiveness. No sanctification. Might as well light up a fat doobie, drink a six pack, eat a cheeseburger, get as much money, sex, pleasure and stuff you can before the cows come home!

Paul also spoke of those who had "fallen asleep in Christ", which as we've said before was a metaphor for the death of believers in Jesus (see 1 Thess 4:13).¹⁰ Without the resurrection, these folks would **have perished**, referring to a state of condemnation and judgment, still under the guilt and power of sin.¹¹

Man, if Paul and the early Church were con artists or fools, what trouble and sadness would exist! What hopelessness! Like Paul said, If he and his companions had put their hope in Christ for this life only, they would've been pitied more than anyone. We gotta remember y'all, Paul and his companions endured great suffering for the sake of spreading the gospel!¹² If they were stupid, superstitious fools, then what fools they were! Just read 2 Cor. 11:16-33 and you'll see what I mean!

If the resurrection weren't true, then those who lived for the pleasure of the moment would've been right and the sacrifices of Christ followers would've only been cruel, self-inflicted jokes!¹³ That would also mean that I was better off pre-Jesus, despite all the comparative inner turmoil, struggle and confusion that I felt... Wow- it just baffles the

⁸ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:17). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:18). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:18). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:19). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹³ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

mind to consider it all! But again- there's actually a real lack of logic in denying something that appears so illogical to the rational mind...

However, there is hope y'all! Read on!

²⁰ But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Paul was alluding to the Jewish Feast of Firstfruits (see Lev 23:10). He used this metaphor to present Christ's resurrection as an example of the greatness of the future resurrection of believers.¹⁴ Christ had been the cream of the crop, the firstfruit, the pinnacle, the ideal human, the ideal God-man, the Messiah, the anointed One, the best of the best, the first of the first, the first and the last, the last and the first!

And since Christ had paved the way from death to life, and conquered sin, death and hell, then those who had fallen asleep in Him had been ransomed and brought out of death and into life as well!!! Hallelujah!

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. ²² For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

In these verses, Adam was the representative of sinful humanity.¹⁵ Death came to all those related to Adam by natural birth because of the disobedience of one man. As the father of mankind Adam in his sin brought death to everybody.

¹⁷ And (God) said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

*The ground is cursed because of you.
You will eat from it by means of painful labor
all the days of your life.*

*¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.*

*¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow
until you return to the ground,
since you were taken from it.*

¹⁴ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:20). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:21). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

*For you are dust,
and you will return to dust.” (Ge 3:17–19)*

Jesus Christ was the representative of those who would overcome death and receive eternal life.¹⁶ Because of the obedience of humbling himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross (Php 2:8), this other **man** was the one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus! (1 Ti 2:5) Again put down this piece of reading and just praise His holy Name right now!

”In Christ all will be made alive!” While the unbelieving dead are raised to life for judgment (Rev 20:12–15), God will raise those who are “in Christ”—that is, disciples and followers of Jesus—to eternal life with Him (compare Matt 25:46; 2 Thess 1:9; Phil 3:19).¹⁷ Resurrection would come to all those related to Him by spiritual birth. Paul would later expand this grand truth in his letter to the Romans:¹⁸

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned. ¹³ In fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to a person’s account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression. He is a type of the Coming One. ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man’s trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift which comes through the grace of the one man Jesus Christ overflowed to the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the one man’s sin, because from one sin came the judgment, resulting in condemnation, but from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in justification. ¹⁷ If by the one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone. ¹⁹ For just as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. (Ro 5:12–19)

Those who are a part of the body of Christ, and who are individual members of it (1 Cor. 12:27) will one day follow the lead of our Head, who is also the head of the body, the

¹⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:21). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:22). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁸ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything. (Col 1:18)¹⁹

Jesus deserves center stage, first place, and top priority in our lives! He is worthy of it!

Listen man, there's a reason why LeBron James has the highest amount of points in NBA history! With a stepback jump shot with 10.9 seconds left in the third quarter against the Oklahoma City Thunder on Tuesday night, Feb. 7th, 2023, James pushed his career total to 38,388 points and broke the record that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar held for nearly four decades.²⁰ LeBron deserves center stage in the NBA. But man he's just a human being who was born with a lot of natural talent, strong physiology, and then put in the hard work! He will be replaced!

Jesus is the God man who was fully divine in every sense but allowed for his divinity to be limited, entering into humanity, having a body of flesh, and submitting to the Father's will to be tempted, tested, and tried in every way, and to *willingly* obey the Father for the sake of a bunch of people that would put their trust in Him that *don't* willingly obey the Father! Think of it for a moment! Jesus genuinely went through all the struggles that we face and yet fully obeyed God **every... single... time...** (Dr. Eric Mason did a great message on the humanity of Jesus see the footnote to listen.²¹)

So LeBron deserves center stage for his balling abilities. Jesus deserves center stage in the universe and in our lives because of His **perfect abiding in the Father, for US!!!!**

*²³ But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be abolished is death. ²⁷ For **God has put everything under his feet.** Now when it says "everything" is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. ²⁸ When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:23-28)*

Jesus was the firstfruit of resurrection power, and He will return, and gather all those who belong to them, raising them up to life beyond death and restoring eternal Eden to

¹⁹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁰ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/lebron-james-breaks-nba-scoring-record-set-by-abdul-jabbar>

²¹ <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1lhieEOoJd5sLgYdHPbLuR?si=C2ijMxibRuCT850RrC15cA>

earth in the New Heavens and New Earth! Then will come “**the end**”, and the present age and the completion of the Christ followers’ salvation in Christ— will be completed in union with Him (see Mark 13:7; Matt 24:6, 14).²² God will be King over the Kingdom that, though wrought with turmoil, spiritual attack, division and sin for a time, will finally culminate in beauty and perfection under the reign of His Kingship.

God will abolish “all rule and all authority and power”, finally wiping out the evil entities that are opposed to God and oppress His people (see Rom 8:38; Col 2:15; Eph 2:2).²³ Again I really want you to imagine it with me for a moment- what reality would be like without sin even existing in it. No war, no school shootings, no overdoses, no sleepless nights, no disease, no hunger, no sadness, no anxiety, no racism, no politics, no socio-economic imbalance, no injustice, no gender inequality, no division by sexual identity (Matt. 22:30), no indigestion, no gossip, no conflict, no jealousy, and more than we could imagine. Seriously... WOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. 3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. 5 Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.” 6 Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. 7 The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. (Rev. 21:1-7)

Also, in fulfillment of Psa 8:6 and 110:1, God and His Son Christ are going to put **(their) enemies under (their) feet**. Jesus and Peter affirmed the necessity of this event (Mark 12:36; Acts 2:35). Compare Heb 2:8. Paul’s language suggested that Christ was presently reigning in His kingdom, but the kingdom was also still in the future.²⁴

And again- think of it. “The last enemy to be abolished will be death”. Death will be no more. Potentially the greatest, deepest, driving fear of our entire existence will be gone. The curse will be reversed! It will be as if Adam and Eve hadn’t blown it! All because of

²² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:24). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:24). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁴ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:25). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Christ! All because of what He's done! All because of what He's accomplished on our behalf on the cross!

"Now when it says "everything" is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception." Now, all science fiction thrillers aside, it would be crazy if a robot factory existed, and made a bunch of robots, but then those robots ended up running the factory and taking. That would not be why the factory originally existed!

God won't need to put "Himself" under His authority. He is the ultimate authority and ruler of all and doesn't need to be under any authority! He's the only One who is this way unlike all the rest of us!

And then, *When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the One who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.* Christ suffered and died for humanity in loving, willing submission to the Father's will, and at the end of the present age Christ will submit all things entrusted to Him to God the Father so **that God may be all in all** and the supremacy of God and His will will reign in all things.²⁵ Yet it is so important to see that Christ's submission to the Father was a willing, loving submission. Christ maintained equality with God while willingly serving and honoring Him every step of the way. One day everything will be subjected to Christ, and Christ will be subject to God, the One who subjected and gave all things to Him.

This is the reflection of the perfect Trinitarian relationship that exists in the heavenly realms. Our flesh can't grasp it. We think of relationships in terms of hierarchies and divisions. God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit operate in a perfect reciprocity. They are all persons who serve different functions and yet exist in perfect equality, love and unity. Oh that Christ may reflect the trinity through us in racial relationships, gender relationships, marriage relationships, friendships, working relationships, socio-economic differences, community connections, politics, parent-child relationships and more! The Lord can bring unity, love, and reciprocity where we cannot!

²⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:28). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.