

Trumpets And Hope

Assurance in the Resurrection

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I want you to consider a scenario. Many of you have seen one or more versions of the movie, *The Poseidon Adventure*, so you might remember this scene: (and if you are a Shelley Winter's fan, then you will know it right off).

In order to be rescued from a sinking ship, parts of which are under water—and in the case of the *Poseidon*, it was totally flipped over—in order to escape, someone has to swim with a rope from one unflooded place through a long maze of underwater obstacles to another relatively dry place in order to get out of the ship. Only one person among the group is qualified to complete this swim. And she does, but in so doing, she perishes—she gives her all. Nevertheless, her heroic act of swimming through that flooded area, and bringing the rope to the other side, makes it possible for the rest of the people to survive, and be able to get out of the ship. Everyone, now, has the hope that he or she, will be rescued.

This is similar to our Christian hope. Think about it. Only One among all of humanity had what it took to "swim against the currents of this world," to avoid the obstacles that Satan placed in His way, and to finish the course without sin.

But, in doing so—in struggling and suffering and doing that heroic act—it cost Him His life.

Nevertheless, He showed us the way; He tied that rope off, and provided us with instruction on how to follow Him to safety. We can now plunge in, following that lifeline, and emerge on the other side to inherit eternal life in God's Kingdom.

Hebrews 6:17-20 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability [or the unchangeableness] of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation [encouragement], who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Forerunner, Jesus Christ, has given us hope—a sure anchor, fixed in God's very presence. If we would just follow the rope that is tied to that anchor behind the veil, we can lay hold of what God has promised us in His Word.

That is not easy, but we have the hope that it can be done, because the Forerunner has done it! He has blazed the trail and opened the way, and left us this rope to follow all the way into the very presence of God the Father in His throne room in heaven.

This hope is not just the fact that it has been done, but it is sure and steadfast, He says. It says a double guarantee in its certainty and immovability if we would just follow the path, if we would just hand-over-hand pull ourselves along on that rope with the strength that God gives us, we can accomplish the same thing and have the reward and promise that God so graciously gives us.

So, this hope that we have is solid, definite, absolute, and eternal. We do not need to have any doubts. What is more, I already alluded to this, but our Forerunner has also become the High Priest, that is, our Mediator. And, He makes intercession for us before the Father.

He has also been charged with giving us the strength through God's Spirit so that we can make it. Everything has been supplied to us, and all we need to do it to follow up on it.

You may have noticed, in thinking about this day, and our understanding of it, that I have so far left out a huge component of this entire process. A huge component of our hope; and that is, the resurrection from the dead—both Christ's and ours. It is this element of the Feast of Trumpets that makes this a day of great hope for us. I should not say that it is the only element, but it is a major element that makes the Feast of Trumpets a day of hope.

So, how do we connect the Day of Trumpets with the resurrection from the dead? The Old Testament gives us very few pointers along this line. But, there are some. So, even though it is not readily apparent, we can find them.

Leviticus 23:24-25 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 'You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.'"

This day is called, "A Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets." And, as we have said many times this is literally not so. Literally, it is a "remembrance of shouting." But, the translators have interpreted it properly, "a memorial of blowing of trumpets," because it is supposed that the Hebrew word from which "shouting" comes from is the blowing of the shofar. It sounds a little bit like a shout. And of course, they blew the shofar on this day.

So, when the Israelites heard the shout of the shofar or the blowing of the trumpet, God expected them to remember something, or to bring something to mind. The sound was to remind them of certain things, to make them aware of something, to bring back to memory so that they could mull it over and consider it. Now, what was it they were supposed to remember?

Numbers 10, if we were to go there lists nine different reasons for Israelites to blow the trumpet. (There might be more.) That is a lot of reasons.

There is probably one reason overall that God wanted them to remember, and we can only get a few hints in the Old Testament about what this actually was. Maybe it was not something that they could actually be aware of without a great deal of instruction because it had not been fully revealed to them at that time.

But it is there for us today, and we can take a great deal of both encouragement and instruction from the things that are in the Bible about the blowing of the trumpets, and its meaning to us.

Please turn to Psalm 47. This is one of those chapters that gives us a *big* hint. It is not completely apparent, but generally it is. This psalm was perhaps written either late in the Judean monarchy, or after the Jews had come back from exile in Babylon. This is not one of David's psalms. It is often headed by something like, "from the sons of Korah."

So, it is either written after David re-instituted the Levitical system and set up the sons of Korah to do the work of praising God, or it was later than that after the Jews returned from exile.

Psalm 47:1-4 Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout [notice a link to Trumpets] to God with the voice of triumph! For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth. He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah

That is interesting that in the psalm that starts off with clapping and shouting, he tells us that He is a great King, and is going to subdue the peoples, and give us an inheritance of His choice; and then He tells us to think about that, and remember, mull it over, and consider.

He goes on:

Psalm 47:5-9 God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne. The princes of the people have gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

With our New Testament understanding I think that we can immediately discern what this psalm is all about. It does not take any great intellect with the multiple clues that are here of what he is talking about.

Commentators, not having this understanding, almost invariably speak of this as either God giving ancient Judah victory, or returning the Jews from exile in Babylon. So, they put it in a physical setting. And it may have been originally set in something like that, like Jehoshaphat's great victory where he and his army did not have to lift a finger. They went out and saw the whole enemy camp dead. All they had to do was gather all the treasure that was lying about and take it back to Jerusalem.

Or, it could have been praise for to God for bringing them back from exile. It does not quite fit that as well, because this has a lot to do with subjugating others, and military efforts, but there is a possibility there.

But to *us* it is plain as day that it foretells the beginning of God's Kingdom—the Millennium. The shout and the sound of the trumpet announce the inauguration of the reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. And especially there, in the very last sentence of the psalm, it seems to imply that the whole earth is in subjection to Him. Not just a few nations around Palestine, but the shields of the earth belong to God. We would say the battle flags of all the nations belong to God—this is the same idea here in the symbol of the shields. He has completely overwhelmed everyone on the earth, that He has been set up as king over all the earth, and that He has given the church (Israel) the

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inheritance (verse 4)—that He has chosen the inheritance and He has given it.

So to us, this is a psalm of this day. It fits very well with all the things that we read in Zechariah 14 about Christ coming back; Matthew 24; Revelation 19; Revelation 11 at the very end of it. All those prophecies of Jesus Christ coming back as King of kings, and Lord of lords, as a great Conqueror, subduing all who fight against Him, and setting Israel up again in the land.

Of course, there is in the background this idea of the saints. It is not coming out here quite as much, but we are the people of the God of Abraham, are we not?

So, like I said, there are hints in the Old Testament—pretty big hints—connecting the Day of Trumpets with Christ's return, and the resurrection from the dead. But, notice! There is no resurrection mentioned here. It is just the return of Christ, and His efforts to subdue the nations, and giving the inheritance.

But, it does not end with the Old Testament. Let us go to Matthew 24. We will see that there is a little bit added here.

Matthew 24:30-31 [Jesus Himself says,] "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn [Psalm 47], and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

So now, the elect have come into the story. It says there that there is a great sound of a trumpet when He returns, and then there is a gathering of His people—the elect from all over the globe. So, things are beginning to clear up a bit more. He links His second coming with the great sound of a trumpet.

Turn to Revelation 11. This is the seventh trumpet.

Revelation 11:15-18 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever [Psalm 47 again]! And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come

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[explaining the Person spoken to, YHWH, the God of the Old Testament], because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead [nations], that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."

Through John, He reveals that the great trumpet blast will be the seventh trumpet to sound among the others that have been sounded throughout this prophetic time period. Evidently, it is the last trumpet, as we will see. It announces the inauguration, the commencement of Christ's reign on the earth, eternally—forever, and ever! He will never be usurped from His throne.

This passage added a few more elements. No passage just simply repeats what another has said. There is almost always a few more details that come forward.

Obviously, He fights against the nations. And, this one adds that He comes not just as King, but as Judge. It makes is very clear here that He brings rewards and punishments with Him. He rewards His prophets and saints—those who fear His name, small and great—but He punishes those who destroy the earth—those who do not fear His name, and those who are still in sin, and unrepentant.

Again, there is no overt mention of the resurrection. It does not say anywhere here that the saints will rise from their graves. It just mentions rewarding His servants. We have to go someplace else for this.

Please turn to I Thessalonians 4 in the writings of the apostle Paul. He makes things very clear here. He puts it together all in one package. It is aimed at a church congregation. It is aimed at what they were interested in. It was aimed at some of their fears and doubts that they had.

I Thessalonians 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

Evidently, in Thessalonica there were people who were not all that sure about the afterlife and what was to occur.

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One of the things that I learned in college is that every chapter of the book of Thessalonians ends with an encouraging verse or mention of the return of Jesus Christ. This was very early in the apostle Paul's ministry (about 50 AD), and the book of I Thessalonians is thought to be among the first (maybe the first) of Paul's recorded epistles.

So, he was just learning how to write to the churches, and in this case in order to encourage a young congregation he wrote to them, and after each chapter he gave them a little boost by mentioning the return of Jesus Christ.

And so, with that thought in mind, obviously he was thinking about it, he thought he would add a bit of information to help them to understand about what is going to happen after they die, because, perhaps Christ would not come while they were alive. Perhaps they would die; where was their hope? And what about all those in the church who have died? Where is their hope? Are they just moldering in their graves never to live again? What good is all this then?

So, they had questions, and he thought that he would lay some of these fears to rest.

I Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Those who die—a converted man or woman—will be brought with Jesus Christ at His return.

I Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord [from the Old Testament, perhaps during that period of time when he was personally instructed by Jesus Christ], that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

There is an order here. He is telling them that the ones who have died and fulfilled their physical lives and remained faithful to God will have precedence over those who are still alive. They will rise first.

I Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

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And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

There is great encouragement in that. It is very positive the way that Paul puts it. "I have this on the authority of God's Word," he says, "that this is how it is going to be." And then he gives us some clues. He links the shout and the trumpet with the voice of an archangel. They all go together.

Now, we had seen the shout and the trumpet in Leviticus 23. We saw them again in Psalm 47. We saw the trumpet in Matthew 24. We saw the trumpet again in Revelation 11, which was blown by an angel. And then, they are all brought together in I Thessalonians 4:16—the shout, the trumpet, and the voice of the archangel.

All of these occur when the Lord descends from heaven. It is the great announcement. It is going to be a great blast that will get everyone's attention. It is going to draw every eye, because in another place it says that every eye shall see Him.

It is going to be such a huge occasion. God is going to announce it to everyone alive at that time. I expect that His entry will be, perhaps, circuitous as He goes around the world letting everyone see Him. Every eye will be drawn. Every ear will hear the trumpet peal.

But what Paul does here, when he says that the Lord descends from heaven, he tells us that the dead are raised at that time, and they meet Him in the air. This occurs while He is on His way down. And the living saints at the time, once the dead are raised and have joined Him, will then be changed and join them in the air—in the clouds, as it says there in verse 17.

In Acts 1, the disciples asked the angel how He would return, and the angel tells them that He would return the same way He went—in the clouds. And, there are other places that mention Him returning on a cloud, which is reminiscent also of the pillar of fire, and pillar of cloud in the wilderness. He uses these same symbols to put everything together.

As other scriptures show (which we will not go to today), He will continue His descent; and He will land on the Mount of Olives, which will split in two; He will fight against those who have turned their weapons on Him; and then once that is all settled, He will commence His reign.

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Now, through all this happening it says in verse 17, the saints will always be there at His side, never to leave. They are His brothers and sisters. They have fought the same fight. They have followed that 'rope' that He cast back to them. They are all in the same boat, as it were. They all have the same inheritance. They all stick together—forever.

This is why we keep this day, year after year after year. God wants us to remember, as a kind of pre-memorial, what is to occur on this day. And when we think of the blowing of a trumpet, or hear the blowing of a trumpet, especially on this day, or the shout of the shofar, He wants us to reflect and think about what it means to us, and to be encouraged and filled with an enduring, confident expectation—hope—and He will bring it all to pass just as He has promised.

The tide of history is about to change. We do not know how long it will be until that occurs, but we know that it is going to occur, because He has said so. He has given us the details.

Notice, though, how Paul begins this passage, particularly in verse 14. He begins it with a conditional statement, "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again." Our hope is conditioned on, based on, or rests on our belief or our faith that God the Father resurrected Jesus from the dead. It all hinges on that.

Our hope is based on the fact that Jesus rose. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ there can be no resurrection to glory of anyone else.

So, if anyone claims to be a Christian and yet denies the resurrection from the dead, it is absolutely oxymoronic. It cannot happen. It is self-defeating. You can even go so far as to argue, and Paul does (in a place we are going to go to), that all Christianity stands or falls on whether or Jesus Christ was resurrected or not.

Did Jesus rise from the dead nearly 2,000 years ago, or not? Did you see it happen? Obviously not, unless you are hiding your age very well! There is no one alive today that can say with certainty that he saw Jesus Christ resurrected. Or, even in His glory. I do not know anyone who has seen Jesus Christ in a vision, or has had Him appear in your bedroom as you are praying, "I am Jesus. Your prayers are answered. Follow Me."

You may have had dreams. Who knows where they may have come from. There was a minister who used to say, "It may have been the salsa."

How do you know? What is the basis for your belief—your faith—in the resurrection from the dead? The resurrection of Jesus Christ is so fundamental and pivotal to

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everything else that we believe. It has got to be there for us to have any hope of following in His footsteps, having the same change from physical to spiritual, from mortal to immortal as He did.

Turn to I Corinthians 15. This is Paul's very long doctrinal chapter on the resurrection from the dead. This is *the* resurrection chapter. Paul takes great pains to show us that we do not need to doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and therefore, we do not need to doubt our own resurrection from the dead in the future.

I Corinthians 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. . .

Notice here that he is always bringing it back to the Old Testament; that was all of the Scriptures at that time. He was saying that these things were foretold, and everything has happened according to the scriptures and the prophesies. And, it is not just the fact that these things were foretold, and that Jesus did them as they were foretold, but there is something more.

I Corinthians 15:5-8 . . .and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep [some have died]. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

I Corinthians 15:11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Paul continues with the same thought that he began with in I Thessalonians 4:14. He tells us right away that the resurrection from the dead is a key element in the gospel. That is what they preached.

They preached that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. This was not all that they preached, but it was the core. It helped them to identify who

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Jesus Christ was, and His relationship with the Father, and therefore His relationship with us, and what it means for us; and on and on and on.

Once you set down that as fact, then there are a lot of things that start spinning off of that. Then he says, "Not only did we preach this to you as fact from God's Word with proofs, we also have eyewitnesses of that fact."

Think about this: If there was no resurrection of Jesus, then our belief is vain. It is futile, and has no basis for our belief. The apostles could have preached all they wanted to about the Christ dying for our sins, and the Christ living a perfect life, and the Christ doing all kinds of miracles and casting out demons, and being a good teacher, etc. But, if He did not rise from the grave, what does all that mean?

We could say, and I am sure that it could come up that, "He was a good man. He did good things. He helped people. And it is a sad thing that He died so young." But that is about it. It means very little unless He rose from the dead. The "ace up their sleeve" in their preaching in all of this was their eyewitness testimony.

They could say, "I saw Him after He had been dead for three days. He walked right through a wall. I touched His hands where the nail went through. I saw the places on His body where He had been stripped of the flesh, where the spear went in. I ate with Him. He talked with us for hours explaining things. He walked with us for 10 miles along the road and explained to us about Himself from the Scriptures."

Notice how many he says here had these eyewitness accounts to tell. Depending on how you count them all up, there are about 515 of them. That is a lot of people—Peter; the rest of the twelve; then 500 at once; and then James; and then the other apostles (who we do not know which ones these are—maybe Jude, maybe Barnabas; there are several apostles named later in the New Testament). And then, last of all, He was seen by Paul, the one who was writing this doctrinal treatise on the resurrection for us.

And so, he is adding his own eyewitness testimony along with those 514 or so other people who had also seen Him.

It does not take much for a person to write back to James in Jerusalem, "Paul is telling us that he saw Jesus Christ after He was dead. This was during the reign of Emperor such and such, and he also said that he saw Him for three years while he was in Arabia. Is this true? Did anybody else see Jesus Christ after He died?"

And James could write back and say, "Oh yes! I saw Him. My brothers saw Him. Peter,

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and Andrew, and John, and James, and if you would like to, I have got a list of 500 others who saw Him."

What does the Bible say about proven true testimony? By the mouth of two or three witnesses.

God went way above and beyond to provide witnesses of His Son's life after death. Five hundred fourteen or so extra eyewitnesses to the fact that Jesus Christ did not remain in the grave. He *did* rise. The angel was very specific on that Sunday morning when Mary Magdalene came down there. He said, "He is not here! He is risen! Go tell the others."

So, Jesus died, and was buried, but He was raised from the dead with a new glorious spirit body; and more than that, it did not end there. He ascended back to His Father's right hand where He now sits. He does not just stand there, He sits at His right hand as our High Priest and soon coming King.

We can see this in Hebrews 1. This is just a remarkable statement of His present position.

Hebrews 1:2-4 . . .has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Beautiful prose there!

This tells us everything that we need to know. He died after doing what He came to do in purging our sins, and He rose from the grave, and He ascended to sit next to His Father on His Father's throne where He pretty much runs things. He has the power, and He upholds all things by that power. And that is the One whom we are following. That is the One whom we rely on to make it.

Continuing in I Corinthians 15, now that we have it clear that Jesus did rise from the grave after three days in power and glory—immortal—we can start logically going through this. That is what Paul does here.

I Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Evidently, there were people in Corinth who were saying that there is no resurrection. Perhaps some former Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection from the dead brought this in. Maybe it was Greeks who also did not believe in the resurrection either. It could have come from almost anywhere. Regardless, there were some who evidently did not believe in the resurrection from the dead and were perhaps spreading it about and causing confusion and dissent in the church of God.

Now Paul begins to argue with them, and give them reasons why there must be a resurrection of the dead.

I Corinthians 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

He is saying that if there is no resurrection for ordinary people, then there could be no resurrection of Jesus either. You know, what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

If we humans are denied the resurrection, then Jesus, being human too, should also have been denied the resurrection. He became one of us in order to be able to do the job He was sent to do. And so, He was put on our level.

I Corinthians 15:14-19 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! [Get a load of that, he says.] Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

So, if for any reason one should teach that there is no resurrection, then he cuts his own legs right out from under himself. Christianity without the resurrection is like playing football without a goal line. What is the use? Why play? Nobody can score any points to

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win the game, so what is the use in playing?

Or maybe it is like school without a graduation. It would be just going through the motions without any reward or advancement. Or maybe it would be like a business without taking profits. You might as well work for the government.

So, what is the use in Christianity if there is no resurrection from the dead? If there is no hope for eternal life? If there is no reward beyond the grave?

Paul tells us three things about what our life and belief would be like if there were no resurrection.

First, without the resurrection our faith is futile; it is vain; it is worthless. This includes our own belief, and the whole body of Christian doctrine. You can take the word "faith" either way here.

So, if this major teaching of the resurrection from the dead is false, then our faith and our belief is in a lie, a falsehood. And thus, our faith is useless, worthless, futile, and empty; there is nothing there.

I think a lot of people (I may be getting myself into trouble here thinking politically) believe we went into Iraq because of weapons of mass destruction. Think about this: If there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, then our belief in that idea and the whole mission is futile, vain, worthless, and unfounded. And therefore, all the actions because of that basic idea were based upon a lie.

So you see what I mean. If you begin with a lie, everything done afterward is also a lie. It is futile, it is vain, and it means nothing.

Also, not just our own personal belief, but as mentioned before, if this major teaching is false, and other major doctrines are built upon it, then those doctrines are likewise false, empty, futile, and worthless. So, the whole house of cards comes down if that one belief is untrue. But this is not the case. We have already seen that it is true.

Turn to I John 2. John is writing late in the first century here. The church of God is shrinking. The false church is growing and becoming stronger, and he is having to preach things to the people to get them back on track to square one. He writes:

I John 2:21-25 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth [they are

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incompatible]. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? [That is the whole ball of wax there; not just who, but also all that He did.] He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning [go back to the foundation and see how they fit together]. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

This sums up the whole ball of wax. There would be no eternal life without the resurrection from the dead.

John points them back to all those fundamental truths. And he also says that all the other doctrines, all the other parts of the truth are built on them, and they are true. They are not of a lie. Lies do not have any part with the truth. No lie is of the truth. We can be sure that this doctrine of the resurrection is true. Do not let anyone try to convince you otherwise.

Secondly, without the resurrection, Christ is still dead. He is still lying somewhere near Jerusalem in His grave if there is no such thing as the resurrection from the dead. If He is still dead that means that the Father judged Him as an imposter. His attempt at atonement was unsuccessful. He only died for His own sins (as it were). And our sins have not been forgiven.

What this means, then, if there is no resurrection from the dead, we are still cut off from God as corrupt and guilty sinners. We are still under condemnation without any hope of forgiveness, and certainly no hope of eternal life because we will only be able to die for our own sins as well. Cannot save anyone, much less ourselves. Is that what we want?

If somebody preaches that there is no resurrection from the dead, he is cutting off his nose to spite his face. Like I said before, he is cutting his own legs out from under himself. It is self-defeating. So much hangs on the resurrection from the dead.

Now we know, it says, that by His death comes the forgiveness of sins—the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But His resurrection sealed the victory over sin and death, and confirmed Him in His present office as our Mediator. And it is through Him and His blood that we can have a relationship with the Father.

Even if He was sinless and died for all of our sins, but did not rise from the grave, all

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that He did was worthless. There would be no follow-up for us. Why? Because He *personally* does the follow-up.

This is why Paul says that we are still sinners. He knew. He had written Romans and so he understood all the theological ins and outs of this, yet he still says we are still in our sins if Jesus did not rise from the dead. He knew that we were forgiven through His death and His sacrifice by His blood covering our sins. But he also knew that there was more to it than that.

Romans 5:8-10 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life [in us].

That is the life He now lives. It is the life of His resurrected body.

The resurrection was a necessary next step to make sure that we were completely forgiven, and that there was a reason for our complete forgiveness, that we could be sanctified, and saved, and glorified; and that can only happen through the mediation of a *living* Savior, Jesus Christ.

If there is no living Savior, then we are still in our sins. The process was not completed. Or, in our case, the process is not on-going.

So, the resurrection from the dead—the resurrection of Jesus Christ—was absolutely necessary for the continual forgiveness of our sins because things would have just stopped right there if Jesus had not risen from the grave. That would have been it. You could not have taken Christianity any further than the forgiveness of sins. What good is that?

Thirdly, without the resurrection we can hope for nothing beyond this life. No eternal life, no reward, nothing. We, and our religion then, he says, are pitiable. He means that it is pathetic. It is uninspired, hopeless, shortsighted, earthly, physical, mundane, and miserable. It might as well be any other philosophy or religion of this world. There is nothing to it.

Our aspirations would be only whatever goals we can accomplish before we die. Our rewards would be only physical things and whatever peace and happiness that we could

carve out amidst the rest of humanity. That would be it.

Talk about miserable! It would not be worth a thing. But, we know that this is not the case.

John 5:24-29 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

There is a resurrection from the dead, and we have it on the authority of Jesus Christ Himself.

Continuing in I Corinthians 15. We are going to skip this next section and go on to verse 29 where Paul continues to give reasons for the need of the resurrection.

I Corinthians 15:29-34 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? ["Why have I gone to all the trouble?," he says.] If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Remember, he is dealing with people who did not believe that there was a resurrection from the dead.

So he asks: What is the use of a person being baptized for some dead relative if that dead relative is not going to be resurrected to life again? It is stupid!

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Evidently, there were some who believe that it could be done. It is a silly practice, and totally unbiblical because each individual person has to believe, repent, and be baptized of his own volition. He has to think it through. He has to make decisions about whether he wants this. He has to start to change. He has to ask for baptism. He has to learn and grow, and do all these things. No one can save another person. No one can be justified for another person. No one's salvation can cover another person's. It is impossible.

And, if there is no afterlife, certainly baptism for the dead is utterly useless, silly, and vain. It does not accomplish anything. Somebody just gets wet.

Next, he says, "If there is no resurrection from the dead why am I putting myself into danger every day for the gospel? Why have I died a couple of times during my ministry, and have to be revived by God so that I can continue my job?"

There are certain places where it looks like that is what it was. He was left for dead one time, and he walked back into camp a little while later. He was bitten by a snake one time and it did not have any effect on him.

But then he says that there were other times that he was set upon by beasts, he floated in the deep, and all the other "perils of Paul." He says, "Why am I going through all this trouble if there is no resurrection from the dead? I would be better off going down to the local pub and drinking my life away if that is what gives me pleasure, if it will make me happy, and feel fulfilled because there is nothing beyond my last breath, if there is no resurrection from the dead."

But, there *is* more beyond our last breath.

There is eternal life in the Kingdom of God. And part of that, as told in verse 34, is that we have to live a life of righteousness. That is why Paul put himself in danger every day—because it was part of the righteous life that he was living, part of the righteous life that he had to be an example for others to follow because he was driven to preach the gospel, to bring the good news to other people. And Paul hints in verses 33 and 34, that some people in the church at Corinth were living as though there would be no judgment and no resurrection. So he said that evil company corrupts good habits. There were some out there who are carousing with the wrong people. He says, "Get back to righteousness. Get back to living righteously. Quit sinning"—because they should know better.

I Corinthians 15:50-58 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I

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tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

He has answered all the questions that he has raised throughout. There is a resurrection from the dead. It is going to occur in this manner. We are going to be changed from mortal to immortal, from the corruption of the flesh to utter incorruption of the Spirit.

And by that resurrection from the dead, we will be able to share in the victory of Jesus Christ over death. Death will be overcome by the grace and power of God. And we will be able to participate in the amazing wonderful victory of Jesus Christ.

So, Paul says here as he concludes, that because our belief in the resurrection from the dead is true and sound, we can be strong and confident and sure as we plunge into the fullness of God's way of life.

Peter adds a similar exhortation to what Paul says in I Corinthians 15.

I Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I Peter 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We can thank God, Peter says, that He has assured us of what we hope for in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can look back and see in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the testimony of others who witnessed Him alive after being dead for three days and three nights that our resurrection is just as sure if we continue in His way.

Peter says our hope, then, is living. There is no dead hope. It is not even 'normal' hope. This is a living hope—active and productive, and it leads to even more life! God is a God of the living, not of the dead. God has little or nothing to do with death. He is a God of life. And He promises to give it to us even though we have to go through death to get it.

Death will be swallowed up in a victory of life in our own resurrection when Christ appears, as we believe, on this Day of Trumpets.

So, let us go through our Christian lives from this time forward in *hope*, soberly preparing ourselves for the glory that will be given to us in the Kingdom of God.