

With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back.

Throw yourselves into the work of the Master,

confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort. —1 Cor 15:58 TMB.

The Highwaymen

The Apostle Paul and “The Resurrection”

APRIL 2007

Let's Listen Now, to **the Apostle Paul** as he speaks, from his understanding of the Resurrection, to the Church: 1 Cor. 15:3 —The first thing I did was place before you what was placed so emphatically before me: that **the Messiah died for our sins**, exactly as Scripture tells it; **that he was buried**; that **he was raised from death on the third day**, again exactly as Scripture says; **that he presented himself alive to Peter**, then to his closest followers, **and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time**, most of them still around (although a few have since died); **that he then spent time with James and the rest of those he commissioned to represent him**; **and that he finally presented himself alive to me**. ⁹It was fitting that I bring up the rear. I don't deserve to be included in that inner circle, as you well know, having spent all those early years trying my best to stamp God's **church** right out of existence.

¹⁰But because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. **And I'm not about to let his grace go to waste**. Haven't I worked hard trying to do more than any of the others? Even then, my work didn't amount to all that much. It was God giving me the work to do, God giving me

the energy to do it. ¹¹So whether you heard it from me or from those others, it's all the same: **We spoke God's truth and you entrusted your lives**.

¹²Now, let me ask you something profound yet troubling. If you became believers because you trusted the proclamation that **Christ is alive, risen** from the dead, how can you let people say that there is no such thing as a resurrection? ¹³If there's no resurrection, there's no **living Christ**. ¹⁴And face it—if there's no **resurrection for Christ**, everything we've told you is smoke and mirrors, and everything you've staked your life on is smoke and mirrors. ¹⁵Not only that, but we would be guilty of telling a string of barefaced lies about God, all these affidavits we passed on to you verifying that God raised up Christ—sheer fabrications, if there's no resurrection.

¹⁶If corpses can't be raised, then Christ wasn't, because he was indeed dead. ¹⁷And if Christ wasn't raised, then all you're doing is wandering about in the dark, as lost as ever. ¹⁸It's even worse for those who died **hoping in Christ and resurrection**, because they're already in their graves. ¹⁹If all we get out of

Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot. ²⁰**But the truth is that Christ has been raised up**, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.



²¹There is a nice symmetry in this: **Death initially came by a man, and resurrection from death came by a man**. ²²Everybody dies in Adam; everybody comes **alive in Christ**. ²³But we have to wait our turn: **Christ is first, then those with him at his Coming**, ²⁴the grand consummation when, after crushing the opposition, he hands over his kingdom to God the Father. ²⁵**He won't let up until the last enemy is down—** ²⁶**and the very last enemy is death!** ²⁷As the psalmist said, “He laid them low, one and all; he walked all over them.” When Scripture says that “he walked all over them,” it's obvious that he couldn't at the same time be walked on. ²⁸**When everything and everyone is finally under God's rule, the Son will step down, taking his place with everyone else, showing that God's rule is absolutely comprehensive—a perfect ending!**

(1 Cor 15:3-28 The Message Bible).