

The First Fruit of the Resurrection

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[Note: The Feasts of Israel series on "Christ in Prophecy" is very rich in information, but because a half-hour weekly TV show has time limitations, here we will take a "deep dive" into some extra meanings and purposes. When it comes to the Feast of First Fruits, our Messianic Jewish teacher, Dr. Richard Hill, spoke about Jesus being the First Fruit of the Resurrection. Let's now dive for some deeper insight into the biblical significance of Jesus being the First Fruit!]

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."
– 1 Corinthians 15:20

The resurrection of Jesus is proclaimed in all four of the Gospels: Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, as well as the book of Acts 1:1-11. It was the post-resurrected voice of Jesus who spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6), forever changing his ministry calling. Jesus' resurrection was foretold hundreds of years beforehand by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:12), in the book of Psalms (16:10-11), and then by Jesus himself (Mark 31).

The Audience of Corinth

It is interesting that of all the cities Paul could have written to about the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, He chose Corinth as the audience to be the first to hear about the doctrine of the Resurrection. From this initial audience, this hope for the future would encourage all future generations.

Corinth was known as a wealthy city due to its traffic and commerce. In manufacturing, it was primarily known for its highly treasured bronzeware, "Corinthian bronze."

However, as a wealthy hub for trade, Corinth was also renowned for its vices, especially its sexual corruption and many religious temples and rites. The city was filled with various shrines and temples for pagan worship. The most prominent was the temple of the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, which sat atop the 1,800-foot hill called the Acrocorinth. Here, worshippers of the "goddess of love" would spend time "in worship" with the 1,000 temple prostitutes.

In many ways, the city of Corinth, as Paul knew it, is closer to a modern American city than almost any other ancient city. It was known for an upward social status confirmed by large amounts of money, significant athletic events, the problems created by a loosening of sexual limits, and the desire to be inclusive as possible with all religious beliefs and practices.

The church Paul was addressing in Corinth was mainly, though not exclusively, Gentile, as reflected in its pagan idolatry and partaking in temple feasts. The Corinthian church would have

contained people who had been sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Without Jesus' Resurrection, There Would Be No Hope

The truth of Jesus' resurrection is foundational to Christianity. His virgin birth, His deity, His substitute atonement for our sins, and His resurrection from the grave are all nonnegotiable truths for the Christian faith. Removing any one of those truths would eliminate Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:14 states, *"And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain."* Verses 17-18 confirm: *"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."*

As Richard Hill explained in the Feast of First Fruit telecast, the first fruit is offering God your best and looking forward to the future. That's what Jesus did for us. When He became the first fruit of the resurrection, He gave us the best – Himself – and hope for the future! Death has been defeated; eternal life is offered for all who believe. *"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ, all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming"* (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

In ancient Israel, the blessing of the first fruits looked forward to a beautiful harvest. Jesus' resurrection lets all who believe in Him look forward to the day when we will reap an amazing harvest, not just for a season, but for eternity. The revealing of the truth of a future resurrection of the dead, which began in a perverse, sinful city such as Corinth, spread as good fruit to the entire world because of Jesus' resurrection. With Christ being our first fruit, there is eternal hope for all who believe!

Maranatha, Lord Jesus!