

# Jesus Really Did Rise From The Dead!

Long Beach Alliance Church • March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010 • Pastor Chris Lankford

*For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*

*~1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:25-26 (NASB)*

## 1) The First Fruits Of Those Who Are Asleep

- A) Knowing that what we believe (the content) is critical, the Gospel message by which all followers of Jesus Christ are saved (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:1-2) is detailed by Paul. Jesus lived, died, was buried, and was resurrected on the third day. All of this was witnessed by hundreds of people (15:4-8).
- B) Despite these facts, some Corinthians were rejecting the bodily resurrection of the dead (15:12), unwittingly destroying the Gospel message in the process (15:12-19).
- C) Reversing his argument from the previous verses, Paul dramatically (but now...) asserts the truth of the Gospel message, that Christ has been raised as "first fruits" (15:20).
- D) The "first fruits" were an offering given to God during the Jewish Passover week (commemorating the Exodus). This is the background on the observance of "first fruits:"
  - a) God inflicted great plagues on the Egyptians, culminating in the death of the firstborn son & firstborn beasts (Exodus 11:5) in all of Egypt.
  - b) On the night of this plague, every Jewish household prepared a lamb for eating, and applied the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their home (12:1ff).

- c) When God came to deliver the plague, he "passed over" the homes covered by the blood of the lamb (12:23-32).
- d) Since God spared the firstborn son & beasts of Israel, they became God's special property (13:2-16). The tribe of Levi was substituted for the firstborn sons of Israel (Numbers 3:12-16), and served God as His priesthood.
- e) Since God spared the firstborn beasts of Israel, the "first fruits" of Israel's crops were brought to God as an offering. These offerings provided part of the provision for the priestly tribe of Levi (Leviticus 2:11ff).
- f) On the Sunday after Passover, the "first fruits" of wheat were brought to the priests as a "wave offering" in front of the Lord. This was a foretaste of the full harvest which was to come in fifty days (Pentecost; 23:9-14).

E) The "first fruits" acknowledged God's sovereignty and ownership of all things. The first fruits are God's "down payment" pledge for the ultimate harvest to come.

F) Paul uses the vivid imagery of Passover's "first fruits" to show Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead as a secure down payment for the bodily resurrection of all those who are in Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20).

## 2) Jesus Isn't The First Resurrection, He Is The First Of His Kind!

- A) In the same way that Adam's sin brought death (cf. Romans 5:12-21), so also Christ's resurrection (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:21-22) brings life to all who are in Jesus Christ.
- B) Those who are "in Christ" at death, will not be held by death, but be resurrected at Christ's return (15:23).
- C) Jesus Christ is not the first person resurrected (e.g. John 11, Luke 8:49-56), but He is the "first fruits" of something brand new (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:23)! Jesus is the "first fruits" of God's renewal of ALL things, the down payment of a future harvest, a new order of ALL things under God!