

## **“My Favorite Text of the Scripture: What and Why”**

### **Special Edition**

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Bishop John Rodgers

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**Bishop Rodgers:** My Favorite Text of the Scripture: What and Why. The book is 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. The setting of this text is the false teaching about the resurrection that was circulating in Corinth at the time that Paul wrote this letter. It’s interesting that God uses even heresy to serve and further His statement of the gospel. So who would like to read out loud, in a clear and strong voice, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11? Go ahead, Greg.

**Greg:** *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you also 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, and that He was seen by Cephas, 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, though some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*

*“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain. But I labored more zealously than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”* The word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Bishop Rodgers:** This talk has three points; it’s on your outline. First, *the crucial or central importance of the apostolic gospel for our salvation*. Second, *the content of the gospel stated in brief form*. And thirdly, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ—its fact, its form and its significance or fruitfulness*. I’m going to move more quickly through points 1 and 2. I could give a whole talk on any one of these three points. It’s a little bit more doable on point 3, the Resurrection, because it’s often more understated and quite frequently misunderstood, and of course doubted.

So my time is rather limited and I’ve got a lot of this text. So I’d like to dash through the whole talk and then do a Q. and A. at the end, if that suits you. So here we go. Put on your track shoes and we’ll get going.

First, *the centrality or the crucial significance of the gospel for our salvation*. Paul says as follows, *“I would remind you of what terms I preached to you the gospel.”* Now take note. He does not say “a gospel.” He says, “the gospel.” In Galatians 1:7 he writes, *“Not that there is another gospel, but some have perverted the gospel of Christ.”*

The four Gospels are really the gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There is only one gospel.

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He also says, “*in which you stand*”, the gospel in which you stand. All other ground for your life and for the life of any society, really, is sinking sand. You have to build and ground yourself, Jesus says, on Him and on His teaching. We need to build on Christ.

He goes on to say, “*by which you are being saved.*” Notice it’s not “by which you are saved,” but “*by which you are being saved.*” By that he means to include salvation. It includes justification, which is the abiding foundation of our salvation. It always remains the foundation.

Second, sanctification, or the progressive work of the Holy Spirit in forming us into the likeness of Christ’s character. And glorification, the complete conformity of our character to that of Jesus Christ, consummated at the Second Coming, or if you die earlier, in the presence of Christ.

Now note also that salvation is only in the gospel. All versions of Christianity that do not center in Christ, clothed in the gospel, are non-salvific. They do not save. They are contrary to Christ, to the preaching of the apostles and the teaching of the New Testament. As Paul puts it, they alienate people from the true gospel. They mislead the people and they dishonor God. And they are to be cursed. If you remember in Galatians 1, cursed be those who distort the gospel of Christ and give people falsehood rather than the truth.

So St. Paul claims the centrality of the gospel. And he finally concludes by saying this. *The gospel is of first importance.* There can only be one thing that’s of first importance. Karl Barth once illustrated this by taking his coat and buttoning his first button wrong. And you know, the whole coat looks very strange. If you get the first button wrong, you get all the other buttons wrong. If this is not where you center and start, you’re going to end up distorting every article of the Christian faith in one way or another.

So I put it to you, brothers, that there can be no doubt that the apostle Paul’s conviction, and that of the early church and all of the apostles, of the centrality and the crucial significance of the gospel for people’s salvation. I don’t know what more you can say: that it’s of first importance, that you stand in it and don’t sink, that you be saved by it, that it’s absolutely crucial and central. So much then for the first point—the crucial significance of the gospel, the apostolic gospel, for our salvation.

The second point: *the content of the apostolic gospel.* There are three essential elements of the apostolic gospel as stated in this text, first that *Jesus is the Christ, the incarnate Son of God.* He says that “*Christ died for our sins.*”

Christ; it’s important to note who died. I’ll say it again: it’s important to note who died. Jesus is not just anyone. And because of who He is, His death is not just any death. He is the Son of God, the Messiah, the promised anointed Savior, Immanuel, God with us.

After the Resurrection, led by the Spirit, bringing all things to their memory and deepening their understanding, the apostles taught the full meaning of who Christ was and is, concluding that He is the only-begotten Son of God, God the Son, and in Himself the Word of God in His very Person, the Word of God incarnate. He was, he is, as John stated it in his Gospel most precisely and most movingly in these words: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the*

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*Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.*” Now he moves to the Son. “*And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father. No one has ever seen God. The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known.*” That’s the Christ of which he speaks.

So first the gospel declares that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, God with us, God speaking to us, God fully present with us in the Man Jesus Christ, the God-Man Jesus Christ. That’s the first point. Jesus, the Christ, is the One who died.

Second, “*that Christ died for our sins.*” God the Son, in fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption for sinners, humbled Himself in His love of the Father and His love for us, and assumed our human nature to Himself to His divine Person, to do what only He could do as God and Man—first, to live a perfectly righteous life, and secondly, to die for us on the cross and in our place. He died for our sins, that is, for the sake of our sins, on account of our sins, due to our sins. He died to take care of the problem of our sins. We read in Scripture that “*God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*” 2 Corinthians 5:21. Or in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:6: “*And the LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” Or again, “He gave His life a ransom price for many to set us free.” Or again, He bore the curse. “*On the day you shall eat you shall die.*” That’s the curse into which we were all born.

Christ took that curse. He bore the curse in His own body on the tree for us and in our place. Galatians 3:13 ff.

Now note that he did not just make salvation possible, but He actually bore the sins and condemnation of all of us in Christ Jesus, and of all who come to Him and are to come to Him by the leading of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the Word, of all who are chosen from before the foundation of the world. And so we are saved by His grace alone in fulfillment of the Scriptural promise. “*He shall be called Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.*”

Now we could go on a lot about the meaning of the cross. That’s where this particular text puts its weight. And we could spend a lot of time. There are four major teachings concerning the New Testament teaching on the cross. But we’ll do that another time because I want to get to the Resurrection. The content of the gospel, that which makes it the gospel, the apostolic gospel then, includes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, God with us, and that He died on the cross for our sins in accordance with the Scripture. And thirdly, the gospel includes the resurrection of Christ, that Jesus rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. So I want to dwell a little more on this third point, if I may.

Here I want to mention that there are three key characteristics of the resurrection of Christ. I’ve called them *the fact of the resurrection of Christ*, *the form or the nature of the resurrection of Christ*, and *the fruitfulness or the significance of the resurrection of Christ*. We need to grab hold of all three of these to understand the New Testament teaching on the Resurrection.

First, *the fact of Jesus’ Resurrection*. The actual historical resurrection of Jesus Christ in 30 A.D. is a fact and not fiction. It happened. It took place.

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Historical events are events that take place in real history. Even if they are supernatural events, they leave historical evidence. And in this case, the case of Christ’s resurrection, God has been pleased to give us incontrovertible evidence that is more than sufficient, for all who will attend to it, to be utterly confident that Jesus rose the third day.

I’ve forgotten where I read it, but one British lawyer said in one of his writings that “*it*”—that is, the resurrection of Jesus Christ,—“*it is the best attested fact of ancient history.*”

Now there are three tests of historical evidence—real historical evidence, things that actually happened. There is the test of *proximity*. How close to the event is the witness or the evidence to the event itself, eyewitnesses in the course of events. So there’s the test of proximity.

Then there’s the test of *multiplicity*. Do we have multiple and mutually reinforcing evidence? And third, the test of *reliability*. Are the witnesses and is the evidence trustworthy? Is there a reason for the witnesses to lie? Are they evidenced to have been corrupted?

This text and many other texts in the New Testament give us evidence that passes all three tests with flying colors. So now we need to look at each of those tests, and we will be collecting the evidence.

First, *proximity: apostolic eyewitness*. How early is our evidence. Paul tells us that he received the gospel. “*Now I would remind you, brethren, of the gospel which I preached to you.*” That was back in 44. He’s writing somewhere around 54. When he first came he preached it to them. “*Which I also received.*”

But when did Paul receive it? Well, he heard the gospel before he received it and persecuted it. And you don’t persecute something you haven’t heard. He was angry. He believed that God had declared Jesus a heretic on the cross and had judged Him. So Paul became a persecutor of the church as a bearer of heresy and a blasphemy against God.

But shortly thereafter, just outside of Damascus, he not only heard the gospel. He saw the Lord. He heard the Lord speak. And he received the gospel. He tells us in Galatians that “*it was by a revelation*” from God. The risen Lord appeared to him out of due time after the Lord’s ascension. And Paul was converted by Christ Himself. He uses the strongest language, that he had seen the Lord. He not only saw the Lord, but he heard the Lord.

And then, of course, he was brought into the body of Christ, not only through Christ but baptized through Ananias, whom the Lord sent to him by divine instruction. Then after a few short days in Damascus he went alone to the wilderness in Arabia to renew O T 101, because he had to figure out how it was that Jesus the Christ fulfilled all of the Old Testament writings. And so he spent time doing that.

Then after one to three years he went to Jerusalem for the first time as a Christian, and there compared notes with James and Peter, the most outspoken of the apostles being Peter, and one of the chief witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord. And there he found that his Pauline understanding of the Old Testament and of the gospel was the same as theirs. And he was affirmed by Peter and James, the other apostles who were out of town at the time.

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After several weeks in Jerusalem, stirring up people again, he was sent off to Tarsus and Syria and Cilicia, where he ministered until Barnabas went and found him to bring him to Antioch to minister. See Galatians 1:11-17 and Acts 9 onward.

From then on he became the chief missionary of the gospel to the Gentiles, an apostolic pastor of the churches he planted, and a key author of the books of the New Testament through which he was pastoring those churches, including this letter to the Corinthians that we’re considering as we consider this text. So Paul received the gospel shortly after the Resurrection within one to three years.

The point I want to make is this. In this text before us, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, we have a summary statement of the gospel as revealed to Paul by Christ, and as confirmed by the apostle Peter and James, the brother of the Lord, who were both converted by resurrection appearances. Here we have Paul’s eyewitness account, and Peter and James’s eyewitness before us.

Concerning the test of proximity, that is, the nearness of the evidence to the event, we’re back to the very events of the Resurrection themselves. You cannot get any closer to the event of the Resurrection of Jesus than the apostles, because the apostles were part of that event. They were produced by the Resurrection. They were raised to spiritual life by the event of the Resurrection. That is by the risen Lord Himself. No resurrection, no apostles. No apostles, no apostolic gospel. No New Testament, no abiding church. Yes, even no Brave Men today. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bishop Rodgers:** The test of proximity, 100% right on.

*Plurality.* Do we have mutually linking witnesses? And the answer is all of the apostles. Paul declares that the apostles were preaching this gospel of the risen Lord as he wrote, which was approximately 55 A.D. When he wrote he had been preaching this gospel, and so had the apostles for 25 years.

Now my brothers, to get that many preachers to preach the same gospel for that long is a miracle in and of itself. *(Laughter)* Not to mention that Paul says that five hundred brethren saw Jesus at one time in a resurrection appearance. And what he basically is suggesting is that if they had the time and the energy they could go check it out.

But here’s the point. The entire New testament, everywhere in the New Testament, it assumes and preaches the event of the Resurrection. There is no apostolic biblical witness to Christ that is not centered on Jesus Christ as the Christ who died for our sins on the cross and who has risen from the dead according to the Scripture. There is no other witness of that period. That’s it. Any interpretation of the Bible that does not start and center there in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in accordance with the Scripture for our sins misleads us about the true history of the fact and its meaning, and misreads the Bible. We have plurality galore. Proximity: eyewitness. Multiplicity: all the apostles are preaching this.

Test 3: *reliability.* The apostles were changed by the resurrection of Jesus and His appearances to them, changed from fearful to fearless. With the exception of the apostle John they all died for their witness to Him and His resurrection. It is beyond any credible doubt that they believed absolutely for certain that they had seen the empty tomb and the

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risen Lord, and were commissioned and sent by Him. They simply could not be quiet; it burned within their hearts. And note that they chose to preach precisely where they once hid in fear, in Jerusalem, where the Lord Himself was martyred.

And finally, with the exception of John, they were all martyred in His service, as was the Lord Himself. They had no reason to do this but for their love of Christ as their Savior and their Lord, and their desire to serve Him in His love for the world. They gained absolutely no worldly benefits and had no reason to lie.

To top it all off there is another group of witnesses that are sort of indirectly hidden in this text. You read that it was on the third day that He rose in accordance with the Scripture. The third day refers to the day that the women discovered the tomb empty and met the risen Lord. That was clearly uninvented for two reasons. #1. Women were not allowed to bear witness in court in those days. So make up a witness story that nobody would pay attention to?

And secondly, the women were out ministering to the body of Jesus while the apostles were still hiding behind closed doors. That couldn't have looked very favorable after they saw the risen Lord themselves. So the women kind of shamed the men in that regard. So the women also bear witness to the resurrection of Christ.

In conclusion, the resurrection of Jesus is a fact, whether anybody likes it or not. Never let anyone say to you that it's just a matter of opinion. Not so! The evidence is so overwhelming that informed opinion becomes certainty. He is risen! He is risen indeed!

And if someone says to you, “That's just what you think,” take them and asked them if they've really considered the evidence. And take them to this text and other passages in the New Testament. As Paul states just after this passage that we're considering, *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.”*

So first the fact of the resurrection. We need not to be frightened to bear testimony to the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

Second, *the form of the resurrection of Christ*. First *the Resurrection* is objective to the apostles and to us. It happened apart from us and on our behalf, but not with our approval.

His Resurrection was *not*—here again was *not*—a vision, but an event in His human and transformed body. And that was revealed to us at His appearances. The appearances are not the Resurrection. The appearances of Christ are not the Resurrection. They reveal the Resurrection that had already taken place in the tomb.

Take a look at your text again. You'll see a pattern in the text. It goes like this. He died, He was buried. He rose, He appeared. Just as death is not the same as burial, so the Resurrection is not the same as the appearing. The appearing is His grace in including us in the knowledge of His resurrection. Whether anyone likes it or not, Jesus rose. He did not ask our permission. It was objective, not subjective.

Secondly, *it was bodily*. His resurrection was a bodily resurrection. The tomb was empty. He appeared. He ate and talked with them. He said, *Touch me. A spirit does not have flesh and bones as I have.*” God does not reject matter; He creates matter. He uses matter and He transforms matter. It is a bodily resurrection.

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Thirdly, *His resurrection was bodily and triumphant*. I’ll follow up on Jim’s seminar. It’s eschatological. Death has no more dominion over Him. He did not die and rise like Lazarus. Lazarus had a resuscitation. But Jesus rose in glory. He rose forward into glory and up to the Ascension, reigning at the right hand of God. In fact, He is the beginning of the final resurrection itself. Death is overcome in Him. Death itself is overcome in Him. And we triumph over death in Him. Sin, Satan and death are overcome in His victory. And the first-fruits of that victory, which we begin to experience even now in Him, is through the gift of the Holy Spirit at work within us.

If the nature of His resurrection is objective, bodily and triumphant, what does that mean for us? Let me just mention four things that are of great significance in the Lord’s resurrection.

First, *the Person of Jesus Christ is revealed and confirmed in the resurrection to the apostles, and through them to us*. The apostles finally get it. It is to the risen Lord that the apostles first say, *“My Lord and my God!”* The resurrection is the great eye-opening event. You see, all three of these points—the significance for salvation, the content of the gospel, including the resurrection, interact with each other. They all come together and they form a pattern and meaning that’s called the gospel.

And this resurrection as an eye-opening event still functions that way. I remember when I went to seminary. I bumped into radical New Testament criticism for the first time. One of the men they asked me to study was Boltmann, and he denied the Resurrection. He said that Jesus didn’t rise. But the language of the Resurrection was just kind of a lingering high value that the apostles placed on the memory of Jesus. So that drove me back to reading the New Testament with new urgency.

I had just come out of the Marine Corps where death is rather significant. And I wanted a resurrection, not some lingering significance for the apostles way back when.

So I studied. And I’ll never forget how powerful it was for me to discover the heritage of the evidence that Jesus actually rose from the dead, and that He is my risen Lord and Savior. And so a whole new opening up of the gospel was anchored in my life.

A theologian who recently died, Jensen, starts out his theology with this. *“Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead?”* How essential this is for the resurrection, to our understanding, to our faith, to our life in the Lord! The true meaning of who Christ is was revealed in the eye-opening event of the Resurrection. And they began to worship Him.

Also, *the true meaning of the cross was revealed*. As the Spirit led the apostles into all remembrance and deeper understanding, the meaning of the cross changes from what Paul had thought before His conversion. He had thought that he was in judgment on a false Messiah. And of course that’s reversed. And the disciples had thought it was a defeat. All of this was changed to the glory of the victorious sin-bearing atonement made by our Savior on our behalf. It’s something that’s indeed good news—His death and resurrection.

The Epistles lay this out in the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, the judicial system, the judgment of God, the day of the Lord, all of which now become good news to all who are in Christ. My brothers, we have not been purchased with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of our Savior, the Lamb of God, our Passover Lamb.

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The true meaning of the cross is suddenly led forth and is expounded throughout the whole New Testament in the light of the resurrection of Christ. Otherwise, we would have these other views and not the true view of the cross.

Third, *our future is assured*. We have in Christ a sure and certain hope of the resurrection from the dead. Our inheritance in Christ is kept in heaven. A life lived in sure and certain hope is given to us. Paul writes to the Thessalonians in the fourth chapter that we sorrow, but not as those without hope. It’s okay. We’re not masochistic. When we lose someone we love, we weep, but not without hope—hope anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the new life that He provides for us.

This leads to the fourth thing. *New life in the Spirit flows from the Resurrection*. It is as the risen Lord that our Savior pours out the Spirit on believers on Pentecost and henceforth. No one comes to the Son unless the Father draws him. It’s the work of the Spirit through the Word in our hearts. The Spirit is the down payment of the new age of eternal life which we enter into now with the fullness still to come. We live, worship, walk in the Spirit and in the Word and the power of His risen life. The fellowship of the church is given to us in sure and certain hope. What a blessing is ours in Christ!

*Conclusion*. The risen Lord, our Savior, Lord and Friend, has appeared not only to the apostles, but through the Spirit and through their witness and the apostolic gospel, the risen Lord now appears and speaks to us, to you and to me. And we live our lives in the power of the risen Lord and His indwelling Spirit, growing in grace, at times resisting, sorrily and sadly, but resting always completely in the fullness of His atoning work, and walking in the good works that He has prepared beforehand for us to walk in.

So my brothers, I just commend this text to you as a truly golden text. Someone said that if you have a red-letter edition of the Bible, this text, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, should be printed in gold. May it be a golden text to you, as it is to me. And may it encourage you as it does me, particularly at times when you’re driven back to the nitty-gritty of it all, to know that the resurrection of our Lord and the apostolic gospel is rooted in a sure and certain fact. So help us God.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Now questions. Yes?

**Participant:** You’ve got a mike, John. This one works.

**John:** A number of years ago, in the ‘80s, I was in a good, solid, Biblically based Christian group. It was a week-long family camp. And the speaker was a Baptist seminary professor from Denver, I think. And he gave an excellent exposition of the gospel of Luke. I learned a lot. But at the end of the week, when we got to the Resurrection, he said, “I don’t believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. I believe in the personal resurrection of Jesus.” How do you respond to such a thing?

**Bishop Rodgers:** A part of a person is to have a body. (*Laughter*) It’s true that there is the personal resurrection of Jesus. He’s our Lord and Savior. We talk to Him every day. We worship Him, all of which would be idolatry if He be not who He claimed to be, and who He is vindicated as being in His bodily resurrection. The evidence is pretty clear. I don’t know where he comes up with it, except to deny what’s clearly taught in Scripture.



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**Participant:** John, how did Christ come back to life? He was dead in the tomb and then the Holy Spirit brought Him back to life?

**Second Participant:** Jim, we couldn't hear you back there.

**Jim:** When Christ was dead in the tomb, how did He come back to life? I guess the Holy Spirit brought Him back to life and began the resurrection process.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Well, we have texts of two kinds. Of course nobody saw the Resurrection because it was in the tomb. Where Jesus' soul went before He was resurrected is a bit of a debate. Some texts of Scripture would indicate that He went right to the dead. Others would say no. That's simply saying that He fully encountered death. So the churches argue a little bit about that. It was hidden from our eyes, and perhaps we ought to leave it at that, except to say of course that the Holy Spirit is God. The other set of texts says that Jesus said, "I have the power to take up my life again." So Jesus was a participant in His resurrection. But also God raised Him from the dead, so that would be through the Holy Spirit.

The point that we want to make is that this took place by God's grace and power in the appearances. But that took place before the appearances. People try to say, "No, it was just a vision. He didn't rise." Wrong! He rose and then in grace He appeared. He didn't have to appear. He could have gone straight on up. We'd still be wondering where did they hide the body, you know? But that would defeat the whole purpose of the gospel, making a new life in Christ. So you've got the right answer. Of course it's by God Himself—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—that He was raised. Other questions?

**Participant:** Can you give any specifics on the number of times He appeared and how He appeared to people?

**Bishop Rodgers:** I think you can find in some study Bibles a list of all the appearances of Christ. I can't off the top of my head. But then I can barely remember my own name. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** I haven't any comment. But the second question is what happened to Him after that? Did He just go away, or—

**Bishop Rodgers:** After what?

**Participant:** After He was risen.

**Bishop Rodgers:** After He rose, He's at the right hand of God.

**Participant:** He's bodily here. When did He go? What happened?

**Bishop Rodgers:** The Ascension. We find that in Luke and at the beginning of Acts. At the end of Luke and at the beginning of Acts we have the Ascension described for us.

**Participant:** Forty days.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Yes. Jim?

**Jim:** Just related to that, it seems to me that part of the reliability is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Absolutely.

**Jim:** Prophecy after prophecy after prophecy says that He didn't just pop out of nowhere.

**Bishop Rodgers:** It's according to Scripture.

**Jim:** Yes, it's according to Scripture.

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**Bishop Rodgers:** So we can list a whole lot of Scriptures that He fulfils in the Resurrection.

**Jim:** And even the Ascension is one of them.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Yes, that’s right; of course.

**Jim:** The Son of God, the Son of Man, was sent.

**Bishop Rodgers:** To take the Kingdom. Other questions? Yes, Greg?

**Greg:** 1 Corinthians 15 is one of my favorite passages too.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Good.

**Greg:** Primarily verse 14, which says that *“if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty”*, bringing out the fact which you—

**Bishop Rodgers:** It’s not only empty. It’s deadly heresy and it’s blasphemous. I have friends that don’t preach the gospel, clergy. I shudder for their future. They’re misleading the people of God.

**Greg:** In our relativistic day, when people basically say, “You believe what you want to believe, and”—

**Bishop Rodgers:** Yes. You can’t play that game with the Resurrection or the gospel.

**Greg:** Right. And as we go out into the world in this day, how can we use this—

**Bishop Rodgers:** You just have to look them right in the eye and say that all the evidence is on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you haven’t considered it, you don’t have the right to an opinion.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bishop Rodgers:** You’ve got to look them right in the eye. But don’t say that it may be true for you and not for me. No. He either rose or He didn’t. You know, we don’t tend to do that with the law of gravity. (*Laughter*) Why should we do that with anything that’s as certain as the resurrection of Christ?

**Participant:** (*Unclear*)

**Bishop Rodgers:** Absolutely. You know, it helps that I have a scientific degree first. And there are several ways in which God reassures us. Sometimes, it’s just in our hearts. You know, we sense a burning in our spirits. But it’s partly just through dealing with facts. And I think we’ve allowed ourselves as Christians to be pushed off into this politically correct opinion. Well, I’m not interested in opinion; I want to know about the facts. Did He rise from the dead or not? And if He rose, look at the consequences of that—the entire New Testament, the church.

Why is it that we worship on Sunday and not on Saturday? Because of the Resurrection the day of the Lord is on Sunday. That’s the whole reason that we shifted over. First they worshiped two days, in the temple on the Sabbath with the early church, and then on the Day of Resurrection as well. And finally we just settled down on the one, as we do now on the Lord’s Day.

Or take the Last Supper. Why is the Last Supper not the last supper? Because it became the Lord’s Supper. What do we mean by that? It’s the risen Lord’s supper with His people. That’s all we mean. Every time we take the Lord’s Supper, we’re giving witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His coming again in glory. So none of that!

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You’ve got to look them in the eye and say, “You’re wrong. The evidence is clear and I’ll lay it out for you.”

**Participant:** Bishop Rodgers, I encountered this yesterday while I was shopping. The woman who was helping me shop expressed an off-the-cuff opinion that well, you only live once, and so you might as well enjoy yourself.

And I said, “Do you really believe that?”

And then she said, “Oh, yes.” And then she contradicted herself. “I’m going to be reincarnated someday.” *(Laughter)*

And I said, “Well, why do you believe that?”

“Well, I’m a native American. I was raised to believe that.”

And I said, “well, have you ever examined the claims of Christ?”

And she said, “I’m a Christian. I was raised Presbyterian.” *(Laughter)*

**Bishop Rodgers:** I’m surprised she wasn’t Episcopalian. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Hey, hey, hey, hey! Wait a minute! *(Laughter)*

**First Participant:** And I said, “Well, wait a minute. You believe in reincarnation. How can you say that you’re a Christian?”

“Well, I believe in what is unseen.”

And I said, “But Christianity doesn’t teach reincarnation. It teaches resurrection.” At that point there was really no point in continuing the conversation. What you said is so true. People are so confused. Even people who profess to be Christians are so confused.

**Bishop Rodgers:** You know, I concur greatly. That’s why we could have spent a lot of time on the cross, which of course is absolutely central. But I spent a little more time on the Resurrection because it’s the eye-opening of that, the thing that puts everything else into perspective. But yes, we have to just go back and say, “No, you’re wrong.” This is an event in history. God did things and He does things.

I’m reminded of a story about the lady who was offended at some of the more harsh things of the gospel, about hell and judgment. She said to her pastor, “My God would never do such a thing.”

And he said, “Madame, your God won’t do anything. He’s a figment of your imagination.” *(Laughter)* We have to say it out in the open. We have to lay it down. We’re not interested in opinions. We’re talking about what God has done. And we’re building our lives on the truth of this. Look what God gives us in Christ!

**Participant:** Bishop Rodgers?

**Bishop Rodgers:** Yes?

**Participant:** You mentioned early on about Paul going out into the desert.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Yes.

**Participant:** Do we know who taught him?

**Bishop Rodgers:** I think Paul would say the Holy Spirit. You know, he was undoubtedly a genius. He knew the Old Testament very well indeed. But he knew it from a false perspective. So he had to go back now that he knew that Jesus was the Christ. Then he had to think through how these Biblical passages and the revelation that God had given to Israel was fulfilled in the Messiah, Yeshua. So He was in the Spirit, and I take it that He was alone, by himself.

## ***“My Favorite Text of the Scripture: What and Why”***

**Participant:** I have a second question too. The word *Jesus* was not just a common name. It had meaning as well as the word *Christ*, right?

**Bishop Rodgers:** Well, it is a common name. Yeshua means “God saves; Yahweh saves.” And it’s Joshua in some sense. So it was a common name, but it did have meaning. And many of the Biblical titles or names had special meanings. And this one is “God saves,” only it’s Jesus. So it’s Jesus who saves.

**Transcriber’s Note:** The bishop leads the men in singing.

**Men:**

Jesus Christ is risen today. Alleluia!

Our triumphant holy day! Alleluia!

Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!

Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia! (*Applause*)