

WHEN THE PRESENCE OF HOPE AROSE

1 Corinthians 15:12–26



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Are there any two more devastating words than *no hope*? No hope beyond a devastating diagnosis, no hope when we lose our job, no hope when our loved one dies, and ultimately no hope when we face our own mortality?

At some point in our lives, we will all endure the kind of loss that will knock us off our feet and tempt us to abandon hope. And what if there is no resurrection? Then our lack of hope applies not just to this life but to eternity. And if that's the case, then there's nothing left in life but to eat, drink, and live it up.

But thankfully, Jesus did rise from the dead! Easter reminds us that when everything seems bleak, Jesus Christ defeated death.

Are you without hope or have you forgotten why Jesus's resurrection matters in your everyday life? Then this message is for you! It's time to discover that Christ's death and resurrection can transform your whole way of thinking and give you hope, not only in this life but in the life to come.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. What If There Is No Resurrection? (1 Corinthians 15:12–19)

In 1 Corinthians 15:12–19, Paul took the side of a skeptic, assumed that resurrection is not possible, and explored the consequences of such skepticism.

- If there is no resurrection, then Christ didn't rise from the dead.
- If Christ is still dead, then all evangelism and faith are useless.
- If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then Christians have been lied to, and we are to be pitied more than any other human beings.
- If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He didn't pay for our sins and offer us forgiveness.
- If Christ didn't pay for our sins, then all humans, alive or dead, have no hope beyond death.



Quotable

*“The only reason
your sins can
be forgiven is
if there is one who
was victorious
over sin and death.
(And there is.)”*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. Jesus *Did* Rise From the Dead! (1 Corinthians 15:20–26)

Thankfully, Jesus's body is no longer in that cold, dark tomb. And those who believe in Him will live, even if they die. When He rose from the dead, Jesus proved that we have a firm foundation for eternal hope. After venturing into skepticism, the apostle Paul explained two important truths that flow from Jesus Christ's resurrection:

1. Because Christ has been raised, we shouldn't let anyone convince us that His resurrection is not important. On the first Easter morning, Jesus broke the jaws of the grave, took the sting out of our mortality, and conquered our most-feared enemy—death.
2. Resurrection didn't end with Jesus Christ. He was the first of a great harvest of death-defeaters, including all those who put their faith in Him. So our believing loved ones who have passed away are not lost forever. They dwell in Christ's presence even now, and we will see them again. What amazing hope we have! We no longer have to fear death.



A CLOSER LOOK

What Will Heaven Be Like?

The heaven we have to look forward to does not resemble the heaven portrayed in movies—a place where we will play harps, wear flowing white robes, and sit on individual, fluffy clouds for eternity. That sounds boring to Christians and non-Christians alike! And thankfully, that's not what God promises.

Contrary to popular belief, those who go to heaven won't receive halos like the saints pictured in medieval paintings. And no matter what Aunt Tilda says, loved ones who pass away don't become angels with wings. Human beings and angels are completely different creatures, designed by God for different purposes.

So what does the Bible say about harps and halos? It usually speaks of harps as a means of playing worship music to God (Psalm 71:22). God created music. In fact, He intended much of the poetry in the Old Testament to be sung. We will worship God in the eternal state, and harps will be one of the instruments used (Revelation 15:2–4). But while we will all enjoy beautiful music, not all heaven-bound believers will be full-time harpists for eternity. And the Bible never mentions halos at all.

Modern-day beliefs about heaven may stem from a desire to leave behind the pain and injustice of earth. Selfishness, greed, and sin have marred every good thing in our lives. And what could be more benign than harps and halos or eternal inactivity and isolation? But God is bigger than the corruption that has taken over earth. His plan of redemption will touch everything in the physical world—including our broken relationships, emotional dysfunctions, and physical ailments.

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Rather than spend our time sitting on clouds, in our resurrected bodies we'll enjoy perfect physical health and all the God-honoring activities that bring us joy. And though halos won't float above our heads, we will bear the image of Christ, finally resembling His righteousness (Philippians 1:6).



LET'S LIVE IT

When sickness, loss, and death strike, most of us feel our sense of hope ebb and the tides of disillusionment take over. Though we must grieve our loss and come to terms with reality, we can also hold on to the eternal hope that Jesus Christ's resurrection has provided.

In moments of loss and pain, do you remember the hope you have in Jesus? Is your hope in this life based on the resurrected Christ or on your bank account, friends, and career? How can your hope in your future resurrection change your life today?



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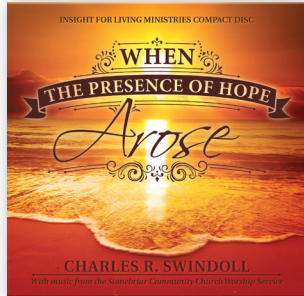
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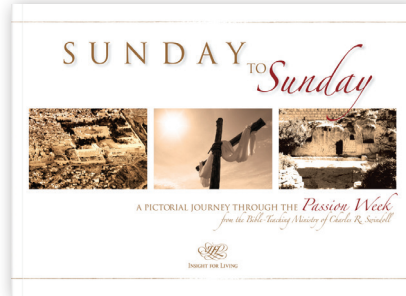
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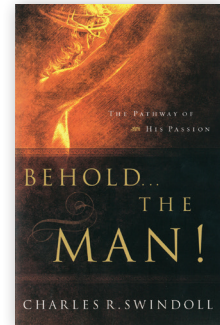
Tools for Digging Deeper



When the Presence of Hope Arose
by Charles R. Swindoll
compact disc



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by Insight for Living Ministries
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Behold . . . the Man!
The Pathway of His Passion
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