

ATTITUDES TOWARD RESURRECTION

1 CORINTHIANS 15

A. SKEPTICISM

B. HOSTILITY

C. BELIEF

A. SKEPTICISM

1. Skepticism is “An intellectual position of doubt about the nature of reality or of particular phenomena,” in this case of the bodily resurrection of mankind in general or Jesus in particular.
2. If we encounter a skeptic on this topic, we should *not* soon conclude that the case is final and hopeless or that nothing can be done persuade the skeptic. We should use Paul’s approach and endeavor to persuade the individual from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ because by definition, the Christ is raised from the dead (Ac. 17:1-3).

3. We should retain Paul's attitude in evangelism as well (Col. 4:2-6). This could help prevent the skeptical attitude of an audience deteriorating into hostility, but not always, as in the case of certain ones in the aforementioned case of Thessalonica (Ac. 17:5-8).
4. Of course, even in Jesus' day, there were many skeptics, including the disciples, e.g., Peter in Mt. 16:21-22, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord!

4. (cont.) This shall never happen to You.” Perhaps Peter did not hear the expression, “and be raised up on the third day.” Later in Mt. 26:33-35, we read, “But Peter said to Him, ‘Even though **all** may fall away because of You, **I will never fall away.**’ Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Peter said to Him, ‘**Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.**’ **All the disciples said the same thing too**” (Bold added for emphasis.). Be careful about bold assertions in times of crisis. They had just been forewarned in vv. 31-32: “Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away

4. (cont.) because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.’ **But after I have been raised**, I will go ahead of you to Galilee (Bold added).”
5. Then there is the embarrassing case of Thomas, who fled that night as did the rest of the disciples, but worse, after having received a firsthand eyewitness report that the other ten had seen the resurrected Christ, he said, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe (Jn. 20:25).” The expression “**will not** (οὐ μὴ – ou mē)” “is the strongest

5. (cont.) way to negate something in Greek.” So, Thomas is in effect saying, “You think I’m going to believe you? I’ve got news for you – *it isn’t going to happen.*” On the contrary, eight days later in Jn. 20:26b-28 Jesus “stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” Jesus added for Thomas, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed (Jn. 20:29).” That would be all of us!

A. HOSTILITY

1. (Ac 17:16-17) After being driven out of Berea, Paul was in Athens evangelizing (by reasoning) daily with the Jews in the synagogue and the God-fearing *Gentiles* “and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”
2. (Ac. 17:18) “And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.” – A perfectly fine message for the public.

3. (Ac. 17:19-21) “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?’” “The Areopagus or Hill of Ares (Ares, the Gk. god of war = Rom. Mars, hence the older ‘Mars’ Hill), northwest of the Acropolis in Athens Ac 17:19, 22. But the A. is to be understood here less as a place (where speakers were permitted to hold forth freely, and listeners were always at hand) than as the council, which met on the hill.” This was close to being a formal inquiry. In any case, Paul did not change his message, which was brilliantly conceived and flawlessly presented,

3. (cont.) notwithstanding what some people think, which is that Paul was using secular methods to persuade people of the Christian message. I profoundly disagree with that perspective.
4. Paul found a point of connection in their palpable religion with their altar, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (vv. 22-23). But the Creator God “does not dwell in temples made with hands” (vs. 24); not needing human assistance, “He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things” (vs. 25). As Creator, in respect to humanity, He has “determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation” (vs. 26b). His

4. (cont.) purpose for doing this was “that they would seek God” (vs. 27a), His desire being to be found by them (vv. 27b-28). Idolatry is inconsistent with the Divine nature and is a lie (vs. 29). God will no longer tolerate idolatry and “is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent” (vs. 30). And time is limited “because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having **furnished proof** to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Bold added).
5. There was a definite shift “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead.” There was hostility as “some

4. (cont.) began to sneer,” that is, “to engage in mockery.” Others has a more generous response saying, “We shall hear you again concerning this” (vs. 32).
5. (vv. 33-34) “So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.” That the response was meager causes some to dispute with Paul’s method here. I’ve made it plain that I am not one of them.
6. We must not skip those who were routinely hostile to the message of resurrection, the secular **Sadducees**. Paul pitted them against the religious Pharisees, his

6. (cont.) former colleagues, bringing about a near riot in Ac. 23:1-11, which see. This hostility to supernatural things was an old problem for the Sadducees. And assuming that they themselves were right, they tried trap Jesus into an error by making up a silly story based on the levirate marriage. Jesus simply said, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Mt. 22:29b). The resurrection is real!

A. BELIEF

1. It would be amazing if we could say that anytime the resurrection is accurately preached, it is universally believed, but not so.
2. But there have been many responses of faith to the preaching of the gospel (Ac. 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 35, 42; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12).

Conc.

Is there reason to hope that countless more could be saved before the rapture of the church? I think so. The message of Ac. 16:30-31a stills holds true. The jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” I can attest via several testimonies that the message of the gospel still gets results & people are saved! So, Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rm. 1:16). **Let’s proclaim it!**