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Topic	Why The Resurrection of the Body?
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WHY THE RESURRECTION

The main issue is actually from verse 12

1 Corinthians 15:12 (ESV) Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Corinthians is an occasional letter, a letter that brings up issues and so Paul deals with each issue as it comes out. Now the slogan is, people are saying there is no resurrection of the dead, which means no resurrection of people, they say Jesus Christ resurrected but the other people are not resurrected. To understand that, you actually have to go back into Greek idea of man anthropology.

Greek Concept:

So the Greek idea and concept of man is that a person is made of an immaterial part which is a soul or spirit and then you got the body and most of us have this concept in your mind. So you have got the idea that there is an ultimate reality. The ultimate reality is actually your soul and spirit. This is where you get ideas, truth, beauty, justice, goodness, things which are not tangible but they actually survive through all eternity. These are the things. Then you have got your body, is not real because this body is with you only for a little while and one day you will discard this body and then you go off into the sky and be with God or be united with him that is an immaterial part. So therefore, because of that transient issue, the body is therefore immaterial and the body is full of imperfections, falsehood, ugliness, evil, injustice, imperfection, everything is in the body. Therefore, I am sure many of you first have this idea that one day Jesus will come when you die, your spirit will go off to be with God and your body will be left behind here etc. So there is a separation and we all have this idea that and this is basically a Greek idea. Because it is a Greek idea, so you got this issue of taming in the flesh where your soul is the ultimate reality, you have ideas of goodness, truth, beauty and injustice but your body is evil and every day we fight against that.

There is a struggle. Christians in early days became monks, because they were fighting with the old evil desire, you run away from all your desires. If you separate yourself from desire you focus on your soul that is the idea and its very Greek.

Hebrew Concept:

The Hebrew concept of man is a little bit different. It is that the whole person is animated by the breath of God. If we read Genesis God made Adam out of the earth and then he breathes into him. The Hebrew word is Napesh which is your breath. So he became alive. So if you God breathed into you, you are alive and if God takes his breath away you are dead. Now for example

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (ESV) and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

So the Hebrew idea is that when you die your body goes off and the breath goes away. If your body is alive because of the breath of God, when you die the breath of God is removed then you are dead. So your breath of God is not your immaterial soul part of your body, the Hebrews don't have that kind of idea.

There are two particular distinctives about Hebrew language.

1. You can have a part represents the whole person. For example, your strong arm can represent a strong person. David can represent the Israelite monarchy.
2. Then you got parallelism where two different images are put on top of one another for emphasis. For example, you should love your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your might. Now if we were beginning in preaching you would probably start to do a sermon with three points. How do I love God with my heart, with my soul and with my might? But that is Greek thinking, you try to divide soul, spirit and body. Hebrew thinking is basically parallelism, you actually have this and that and they all mean the same thing. It means that you love God with your whole person. So when he uses heart, soul and might, it means your whole with all the intensity that you could muster in your life.

1 Thessalonians (5:23): "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

If you are Greek thinking, although this is written in Greek but ideas come from Hebrew, so you would think, Oh God is going to keep my soul blameless and my spirit blameless and my body. What happens if my spirit is blameless but my soul is not? There is a separation, what if my soul fights against my body. So here the whole idea is that there is emphasis on the whole person, not three parts, because you have got this Hebrew idea of parallelism using different words to emphasize the same thing.

For the Corinthians they have got two problems:

- 1- They don't really have an established doctrine of resurrection, Jesus was resurrected that's Jesus then one day God will come and then they die the spirit will join God as it were.
- 2- The other one is that they got this idea that they devalued the body, it already arrived, very spiritual, they focus on the gifts and they believe that they have eternal life now and basically they have all the powers of God, they are really one with God right now. So the state that we will be in the last days as is already arrived. So they are over spiritual.

To address this problem Paul talks about to them about the gospel because the gospel is all about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (ESV) 1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain

So basically, the gospel is like a jewel right in the middle of the Christian life. You preach it, you receive it, you are being saved by it, you stand in it, you holdfast in it and you believed in it. You have believed and you continue to believe and you continue to hold on. So the gospel isn't something like ABC, and then you move on towards more spiritual things. No, the gospel is the beginning, the middle and the end. That's the difference. So if you have any variations from it you got a problem. So you actually have the gospel which is preached, received, believed and yet for your growth you stand, you holdfast and you are being saved. So therefore you have a moment in time when you accepted the gospel in your life and then the rest of your life continues, you need to hold on for the gospel.

The Earliest Creed

1 Corinthians 15:3 (ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:

This is also received is the same kind of word which he used in 1-Cor 11:23

1 Corinthians 11:23 (ESV) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,

It is a creed. It is formed in a sense of a creed. We know this because Paul's language doesn't talk about Cephas usually. So it is something that has been passed down.

1 Corinthians 15:3b-5: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

This is the early creed, early gospel. Christ died for our sins, Isaiah 53,

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

This is talking about sin; it is not talking about healing. He died for our sins and this is basically a substitution atonement idea and then he was buried.

Why it is important to talk about buried?

Human beings get buried, so it is actually die, it is physical death and then he was raised. So the reality was death, so resurrection is not a spiritual resurrection and then he was raised on the third day. There are actually no Bible verses that talk about him being raised on the third day according to scripture except John 2:19. So, this raising is actually based on according to scripture. He was raised on the third day. According to scripture means he was raised. There is no Old Testament scripture that says Messiah will die and then he will be raised on the third day. There isn't any. The more closest you can get is Jonah.

People today downplay the resurrection. An Episcopalian Bishop Jack Spong says, "Paul, for example, writing between the years 50 and 64 or some 20 to 34 years after the earthly life of Jesus came to an end, never describes the resurrection of Jesus as a physical body resuscitated after death."

Paul died, according to our best estimates, around the year 64 C.E. The first Gospel was not written until the early 70's. Paul never had a chance to read the Easter story in any Gospel.

Paul died in AD 64, he wrote Corinthians in AD 55, the gospels are only written around in the 70s. So how would Paul know about Easter, about bodily resurrection. This is coming from an Episcopalian bishop, huge massive mistake there.

It is estimated that Paul became a Christian two years after the death of Christ. So that will be AD 35. Then after three years after becoming a Christian, so it will be AD 38.

Galatians 1:18 (ESV) Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

This translation to visit is a very poor translation. The actual Greek word is actually **Historeo**. **Historeo** is exactly like CNN, you sit down there and you interrogate the guy to get information. It is investigative journalism. It cannot be translated as I visited him. Paul never walked with Jesus, Peter walked with Jesus for three years, so therefore when you go there he was obviously talking about Jesus. Paul writes that

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

He must have received this after the three years when he became a Christian, he went to Jerusalem, he must have received this. So which is a huge-huge historical point because you actually have the early creed being written barely three to four years after the death of Christ, you actually have historical record of the actual creed which the Christians believe. So here we have Paul visiting Jerusalem and the oral traditions were passed down to him. Then we have got eye witnesses

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

It is very hard to lie about the resurrection when 500 people saw you, it is very-very hard for you to do that. So today we have Unitarian Church, they say that Jesus was not physically resurrected. Marcus J Borg, a very prominent New Testament American scholar who was president of the society of biblical literature (SBL). He writes

But the risen Jesus is not in this sense a physical/bodily reality. The resurrection stories in the New Testament make that clear. The risen Jesus appears in a locked room (John 20). He journeys with two of his followers for a couple of hours and is not recognized – and when he is recognized, he vanishes (Luke 24). He appears in both Jerusalem (Luke and John) and Galilee (Matthew and John). He appears to Stephen in his dying moments (Acts 7). He appears to Paul in or near Damascus as a brilliant light (Acts 9). He appears to the author of Revelation on an island off the coast of Turkey in the late 90s of the first century (Rev. 1). Moreover, what would it mean to say that the risen Jesus is a

physical/bodily reality? That he continues to be a molecular, protoplasmic, corpuscular being existing somewhere? Does that make any sense? How can the risen and living Jesus be all around us and with us, present everywhere, if he is bodily and physical?

He is saying that Jesus was not bodily raised because of all these issues. He is showing half of the evidence here; the other half he is hiding. He removed the poking of finger part, he removed Jesus eating fish. So you understand when theologians write, you have an idea and you slant the entire narrative the way you like it to be written, you are not open-minded because your presuppositions in your mind. Your presupposition is it is impossible to be raised from dead. Now you will start with that presupposition then you make everything fit and this is what happens if you don't look at the evidence properly.

The other issue is that, it doesn't mean that the risen Jesus is a physical bodily reality that he continues to be a molecular protoplasmic, corpuscular being, which means he has got blood vessels, he has got veins and all that and I agree with him. He cannot be like you and me. Suppose if you are born again one day as a resurrected being with same old tummy, so ugly still, of course we will get a better version. We may not even have blood vessels, we may have special flesh which is bulletproof, can go through walls. So obviously it does not mean that.

Richard Carrier is a very famous atheist and he says spiritual resurrection based on this verse

Ephesians 2:4-6 (ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

This is spiritual resurrection that is his proof. But it is not physical. In Ephesians chapter 1 it tells you that you are blessed with every spiritual blessing under heaven. It is your status. So when you are dead in our trespasses we are not literally bodily dead. Made us alive, we are spiritually alive. So therefore this talks about salvation. He is talking about salvation, not talking about resurrection. So that's why he has misinterpreted scripture.

One of the more latest arguments for the resurrection is basically the Minimal Facts Approach to the resurrection by Gary Habermas which is quite useful to learn. He says,

If non-Christians ask you it is quite reasonable for you to be able to know, you base your whole eternal life on the resurrection. People ask you how do you know if Jesus rose from the dead. At least you must have some facts. What Habermas came out with his Ph.D. thesis some years ago was that if I give you five facts which is basically accepted by three quarters of most scholars whether Christian or non-Christian or historians and then you actually look at that and then you decide what is the most plausible explanation that will tie all the five facts together.

1. Jesus was crucified.
2. The disciples became witnesses and believed. Their lives were transformed.
3. Paul was converted.
4. James was converted
5. The empty tomb.

1. Crucifixion of Jesus:

If we look at people who are not Christians. Josephus writes

"About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he ... wrought surprising feats.... He was the Christ. When Pilate ...condemned him to be crucified, those who had . . . come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared ... restored to life.... And the tribe of Christians ... has ... not disappeared"

This is a non-Christian writing about this strange phenomenon. Then you have got Lucian

"The Christians ... worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.... [It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."

Socrates lived 300 years before Christ. He left no writing. People who basically wrote about him are others. He lived in 470 BC and the people who wrote about him was Xenophone was 800 AD, Plato 900 AD and Aristophanes 1000 AD. We see that 1300, 1400 and 1500 years later on they write about him. It could be inaccurate because the timespan is huge. If we look about Jesus, Jesus died AD 33 and the people who wrote about him are Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus, Lucian and they all write at AD 90 to 160 which is Lucian, within a 100 years or less than 60 years they start to write about Jesus and these guys are not Christians. So the time gap is very-very little. The actual gospels start coming out after AD 100, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Now if we look at Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar was written more than about 900 years later on, but the time difference between Jesus death, resurrection and the people writing about him is hardly a few years. So therefore the record that Jesus is crucified is very-very strong.

2. Disciples Witness and Beliefs

The only way we are going to find about disciples' witness and belief is to read the writings. So you read the writings, you have got the writings of disciples and Paul, you got oral tradition and you got early church fathers. The oral tradition is 1-Corinthians 15, earliest creed passed down, barely three years later on is passed down. We have got the writings of Paul in 15, gospels, acts, they all talk about Jesus Christ resurrection and the early church fathers. When the apostles died the next set of leaders are called the early church fathers. They wrote extensively, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius and Tertullian. So all these show you that the disciples believe in the resurrection and they are willing to give their lives and their lives are transformed for the resurrection.

3. Paul's Conversion

Why is Paul's conversion very important fact? Paul was the person who was killing everybody else and he was a well-known historical figure. So it is Paul who says

1 Corinthians 15:8-11 (ESV) Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary,

I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. **11**
Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

So it is Paul's testimony. So a man like him could not be changed just by argument. There must have been something special.

4. James's Conversion

James's conversion was also an important fact. He was Jesus's brother. Scripture says,

"3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. 4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.""
– Mark 6:3 – 4 (NASB)

This means they don't like Jesus and they don't believe in him.

"5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him" – John 7:5 (NASB)

But suddenly we see James later on.

1 Corinthians 15:6-7 (ESV) Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

So James was numbered among the apostles.

Galatians 2:9 (ESV) and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

So therefore you have got someone who actually was against Jesus and he became a disciple and in fact James was also martyred for Christ later on.

5. Empty Tomb

75% of New Testament scholars believe at least on these facts.

1. Jerusalem factor – To stamp out new religion authorities could have exhumed the body...
none ever did.
2. Enemy attestation – Matt 28:12-13 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'"

So here the enemies of Jesus Christ already said to people that you can take the body and take it away, which means that tomb is empty. So for their idea is that the disciples stole it, but the point remains still that the tomb is empty.

3. Women's witness – Embarrassing fact which most would have suppressed if only it was not true

All of these points point to the fact that the tomb must be empty and to this day no one has produced it.

Was Jesus was stolen?

If Jesus body was stolen do you think that Paul be converted, do you think the disciples' life would be changed. If the disciples stole his body and they then die for someone who they know they hid somewhere. They wouldn't do that logically. It falls apart.

If Jesus was crucified and then he lost some blood then he went to the cave, the cold air resuscitated him, he came alive and he kicked down the stone and then with all these wounds and he limped for three and half miles to see the disciples and then they started worshiping him. Is that plausible? How can you worship a half dead guy?

If we take all these five points together, if you are a fair person, the most plausible explanation is that Jesus rose from the dead.

10. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

So this is Paul's testimony of his life. He says, I didn't deserve to be chosen because I got sin, one untimely born, not only that persecuted the church, and then he became the apostle and became the most hardworking apostle, the most effective apostle. So therefore everything is due to grace. So grace means I don't deserve to be chosen, I don't deserve to take credit, but grace made me the most hardworking and the most effective. So I work harder than any of them because the greater the grace the greater the reciprocal effort. He was a persecutor of the church, he killed Christians, his sin is far worse and then he became apostle which is right on the other side. So the difference between these two sides allows you great effort, grace empowers effort. So if you think that your sins are very little and you could be a leader and you are pretty good fellow, so therefore you don't really have much grace involved that is the problem. The secret to Christian growth and effort is basically grace.

A lifeway Research poll done recently, published in Christianity today. They asked a group of a few thousand American Christians, evangelicals and these are the result.

- 71% people thought the people first seek God then he responds to grace.
- 56% of them said, people must contribute personal effort to their salvation.
- 18% said God loves me because of the good I have done.

These are evangelical Christians, Baptist and most of them have a problem with grace. There is no understanding of grace. Even there is an understanding of grace the way we actually workout the grace in our life it is very workspace.

So the more you read the word and understand and the more we understand who he is and what he has given us the graces increases. The more grace you have, the harder I worked than anyone else. So you actually have one thing. Grace that powers your effort.

What the resurrection from the dead means to all of us?

Implications:

1. 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised
2. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.
3. 1 Corinthians 15:15-16 (ESV) We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.
4. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
5. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Why resurrection is central to our faith?

1. Christ resurrection is the guarantee of ours

1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV) But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Christ's resurrection guarantees ours. The idea of first fruits is twofold. When you actually have a harvest, the first fruits that come out, the best that come out, we offer it to God. The other one is that when you actually are a farmer, when you see the first crop of grapes coming out and if they are fantastic it means that the others following it will also be wonderful.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV) But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Thessalonians were the first converts, so they represent the strawberry, one day everybody else will be saved. So this is the idea. So resurrection is the reverse of the process begun in Adam and is equally inevitable.

2. Resurrection is the reverse of the process begun in Adam, is equally inevitable

1 Corinthians 15:21-23 (ESV) For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

So he is telling you about the process, but the same process whereby people die is a same process where people are saved or live again. If you got Adam and Eve, they sinned and because we share the humanity toll therefore we share in the sinfulness of Adam and so therefore we are all

condemned to die. Sin percolates through our veins. It is in our DNA; we are all programmed to die. Now the same process if it is with Christ, if you believe in Jesus Christ you share in this union with the second man, which is Christ and in the same way the same process is as inevitable as this is. This will also be inevitable because you share now, instead of being Adam you share in the righteousness of Christ. So when Christ comes he lives a perfect life and when you are joined with him his perfection becomes yours, it is as inevitable it will turn back the effects of sin. So Paul is saying, if you believe in sin and the process where sin came in you must believe in resurrection and eternal life because it is the reverse of the same process.

23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ..

3. Resurrection is evidence of God's decisive victory over of all opposing powers

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (ESV) **24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death

So what he is saying is that there is a process, resurrection is just not for you or me, that is too small of a view. You have to understand that you are a part of a bigger picture. In a bigger picture there is a cosmic struggle in the world between good and evil, between God and forces of rebellion. Your resurrection is actually the D-Day, the beginning of the end for the evil powers. So that is very-very important.

4. Resurrection is part of the ultimate plan of re-establishing God's total supremacy

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 (ESV) For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. **28** When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

That is the overall picture of history, that is the focus of our lives. The trouble is many of us do not have this focus. Many of us are worried about our own problems and because of that we are actually sidetracked. If we are going to be the part of this vision, then the way you live is going to be completely different. It is absolutely different. It is like a domino effect. When Christ resurrected evil defeated, our resurrection came, all things subject to Christ, Christ is subject to God. The domino effects are falling; you cannot stop this domino effect. So therefore when we live we should live based on Christ guarantee of resurrection. There is a process of reversal happening right now. We have victory over evil and God will reign supreme.

How does resurrection affect how we live?

1 Corinthians 15:29 (ESV) Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

There are 30 different interpretations for this, but the closest one is actually a translation of the Greek word **uper**, which can be translated as for the sake of. So if we translate this. Many people are being baptized for the sake of dead, which means people ask for and receive baptism as a result

and desire to be united with their believing relatives who have died. This is the most likely interpretation, although nobody in the world knows what actually this means it is a strange one.

1 Corinthians 15:30-32 (ESV) Why are we in danger every hour? **31** I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! **32** What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Paul’s life is characterized by intentional suffering. He would intentionally go to places where he will be at risk from disease, persecution, wild animals. Many Christians today are eating and drinking as if tomorrow you die. We need to be Christians who are also willing to put our lives and our comfort and our money on the line, because if we are not then we actually have no hope. We are part of a greater cause. Gordon Fee says

We should be living in this world as those whose confidence in the final vindication of Christ through our own resurrection determines the present.

The world view of how we see suffering and pain in the world, you see all the pain is happening in the world but we are realistic, we don’t ignore it but we understand it, it is part of the growing pains in this world as they are moving from death to life. So we are realistic. We have eternal security, we have hope beyond death, so you are willing to suffer and sacrifice, why, because we are confident no matter what happens to us we will never die permanently, we will be resurrected. So you talk to a guy who believes in resurrection and a guy who doesn’t. The way the both of them will live will be completely different.

Are we living as if we are indestructible or are we drawing borders to protect ourselves and never afraid to go outside. The resurrection gives us eternal security.

If you are called to glorify in life with just being married, have children, they go to university, have grandkids, it can’t be that. You are part of a bigger story. If you are part of a bigger story young people, old people you must understand you are part of a kingdom that is in transition and one day Jesus will put everything under his feet and you all now have an opportunity to make a difference in society today wherever you are, to share the gospel, to live a life that is reflected in the gospel, so that the world can see. Your part hastens the coming of the kingdom.