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The Resurrection

Introduction

After speaking with saints through the years, a matter which had often come up is, “How can I have a deeper walk with God?” and, “How can the things of God be more real to me?” These saints have found, as I have, that Bible Study can become routine, the message of Heaven and Hell become common, and without realizing it, we have an intellectual knowledge of the facts without actual heart appreciation. It comes as an awakening when the Holy Spirit reveals to the heart the shallowness of appreciation the individual has for the person and work of the Lord. There is the knowledge that the Lord was raised from the dead, but it is more like the knowledge that Elizabeth is the Queen, that is, it does not effect my daily life! This is sad for the resurrection of the Lord from the dead is the greatest victory this world has ever seen.

His resurrection is the foundation for the liberation of untold thousands of people from the spiritual thralldom of sin and has given light and comfort at the moment of death to many of the saints of God. On the other hand, it has filled with dread to millions who are dying for they realize, only too late, there is a resurrection, man does not die like a dog, there is a hereafter, and man does not come back reincarnated, and they are unprepared to meet God.

The boastings of man that, “there is no resurrection” is not a new philosophy but one which the ancient Corinthians were told. At those moments before death an individual can shrug death off as no big deal. An individual may even have a comical inscription on the tombstone, but there is nothing comical about the fastest non-returning journey an individual will ever make as they exit this sphere of existence and into eternity. The body may die but the spirit lives on, eternally.

When dealing with the facts of history it is of major importance to have unmistakable evidence for that which is being taught. Thank God the resurrection of the Lord is a historical fact, and there is ample evidence to support its truth.

What Is Evidence

In a law court it is the witness's of circumstances or persons which established a reason for believing a statement, and which would stand up to cross questioning and examination. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is founded on the truthfulness of recorded historical events which are open to critical investigation. In Acts 1:3 the historian Luke tells us that Jesus Christ was shown to have risen from the dead and was seen alive by “many infallible proofs.” The translation of the Greek “en pollois tekmarois” is an expression which is defined in the lexicons as “decisive proof,” and indicates the strongest type of legal evidence.

What Are The Arguments For Rejecting The Resurrection?

There are two groups who detest the fact of the resurrection, Satan, his hordes, and the unsaved.

- a) Satan hates it because by it he is forced to recognize that his power is broken and it is only a matter of time before he and his government are shown to be crushed, never to rise again (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8).
- b) Unsaved man detests the truth of the resurrection because since Christ is raised and will raise every individual, it means that there is coming a day of judgment and the consequences for sin! Man does not want to face the reality of an after life and meeting God, and so like the proverbial ostrich, he puts his head in the sands of mocking its truth and denying its reality.

When the Lord rose and the soldiers told the religious hierarchy, they were told to say that they fell asleep (Matt. 28:13). They were given money and were persuaded that the religious leaders would cover them if the governor heard they had fallen asleep on their watch (Matt. 28:14-15). The question then is, “If Jesus did not rise and it was evident the body was gone, where did it go? There are three groups who could have removed it from the grave, the Romans, the Jews, or the disciples.

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- a) There would be no advantage in the Romans stealing the body and saying He had risen for this would have caused a riot in wanting the body for a burial and seen as an act of desecration. It would have resulted in major political upheavals among other things.
- b) The Jews would not have stolen the body for it was to their advantage for Him to be dead. Furthermore, why would they have gone to Pilate seeking grave security so that the disciples could not steal it if they were going to take and perpetrate the notion that He had risen? It would have gone contrary to all they desired when they cried: "Away with him" (Jn. 19:15).
- c) The disciples could not have stolen the body for with the soldiers guarding the tomb the fishermen were no match for those whose lives were at stake had it been taken. Again, since they were going to preach a message of hope and peace with God, a message of truth, how could any aspect of this be proclaimed if they knew it was all a lie and a hoax. They would have been nothing other than con men.

Throughout the years men have sought to disprove the resurrection, and they all believe in their theories despite being void of any evidence proving their hypothesis. Some believe in:

- a) **Cryogenic freezing** where the body is frozen to -196 degrees Celsius, and when science and medicine has advanced sufficiently the individual will be brought back to life. They would then be as they were without the disease which caused their death!
- b) **Reincarnation** in which the individual comes back to life in a higher or lower life form! If in a previous life the individual was good they will rise to a higher rank of humanity, but if lower, then they will stick to a lower form.
- c) Still others believe that if cremated and the ashes scattered, especially over the ocean or rivers, God will never be able to raise them from the dead and thus cheat resurrection of its power.
 - i) All this is without a shred of evidence and merely the foolish imagination of man in seeking to eradicate any possibility of consequences for sin.
- d) There are also those who teach that the body of the Lord was stolen. This was first presented by the religious bodies who denied the resurrection. When the soldiers reported to the chief priests that the stone had been rolled away, they were given "a large sum of money" to tell the story that, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep" (Matt. 28:11-15). To this the question is, "Why would the disciples steal the body and then hold up a myth as truth and be willing to suffer and die for it?" Furthermore, what value would it have been for the enemies of the Lord to steal the body? Had this been the case, all they had to do was present the corpse when the disciples began preaching that Jesus was alive.
- e) Some teach that the Lord went into a coma, a theory which originated by Paulus in 1828. According to this the Lord did not die but being crucified through weakness (2 Cor. 13:4) he slipped into a coma and was presumed dead. Later, in the cool of the tomb, he revived and leaves the tomb. Of course the spear which was plunged into His side, even had He not been dead, would have killed him. It was the only mortal wound the Lord received. Furthermore, logic makes it clear that having been crucified, buried in a tomb for three days, void of any medication, being greatly weakened yet able to slip out of the grave clothes takes a great deal of imagination. The same goes for the "drugged Jesus" theory.
- f) Another imaginative theory is that the women and the disciples went to the wrong tomb. This foolishness was presented by Kirsopp Lake (1872-1946). He suggests that the women mistook the location of the actual tomb where Jesus' body lay and a young man (who was not an angel), seeing their confusion points them in the right direction saying: "He is not here, see the place where they laid him," but the women misunderstand, mistakenly thinking the young man was announcing the resurrection. However, when one looks at the facts this is patently foolish to the extreme. However, many tombs would have had a Roman guard, or the Roman seal? Having buried my own mother ten months ago, I could bring an individual to

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the very spot. Surely the women and the disciples could not have been mistaken on where the Lord was buried three days later.

- g) The “Vision Theory” was the teaching of Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) who denied the bodily resurrection of the Lord. His teaching is that the disciples had visions of the risen Christ. The poor folk were full of hopeful imaginations and hallucinated. This is as unintelligent as the “telepathy theory” and is akin to the “spiritual metaphor theory” when the Lord communicated to his own like Saul by mental telepathy.
 - i) All these are because man does not believe in the power and Word of God.

There has been many other scientists, etc., who have sought to disprove the resurrection, and in their attempts to prove its fallacy came to the conclusion it was true. Resurrection is not a myth. These were learned men such as: Frank Morison, the English journalist who ended his research by writing, *“Who moved the stone?”* in defense of the resurrection of Christ. C.S. Lewis, a Cambridge scholar and atheist, for his book, *“Mere Christianity,”* wrote the following sentiments: *“Because the evidence was compelling there was no escaping it. I was brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting my eyes in every direction for a chance of escape.”* Then as a spiritually broken man wrote: *“The God whom I so earnestly desired not to meet became my Lord and Savior”*. To these could be added Josh McDowell, Dr. Gary Habermas, John Warwick Montgomery, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Sir William Ramsey.

The Resurrection of The Lord Is a Fact

What are the evidences for the resurrection of the Lord?

- a) One of the greatest evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes from those who were diametrically opposed to such a notion, and not only stood vehemently against it, but sought by all means to show its foolishness.
 - i) Paul in 1 Corinthians, when dealing with the evidences of the resurrection, did not gather a group of “yes men” but those who did not believe, and having seen the evidence had a decision to make. “Will I accept the evidence or reject it?” Stubborn rejection gave way to reality and untold thousands of people believed in the resurrection.
 - ii) Peter we read he “sat with the servants, to see the end” (Matt. 26:58). He never for a moment believed Jesus would rise from the dead.
 - iii) James, one of the Lord’s brethren, certainly did not believe in Him (Jn. 7:5).

The Effect Of Conscious Living In The Appreciation Of The Resurrection Of Christ

The resurrection of Christ, as a living reality, has a profound effect on the believer. Logically, since the healing of the deadly wound of the beast causes wonder and worship (Rev. 13:3-4), how much more ought there to be the wonder and worship of Christ who not only rose from the dead, but defeated the powers of darkness and destruction. By His resurrection Christ:

- a) Confirms the faith of the believer. (1 Cor. 15:2)
- b) Convicts of its reality by reasoning. (1 Cor. 15:5-9; 35-41)
- c) Creates hope in the darkest hours. (1 Cor. 15:42-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- d) Is the fulfillment of resurrection prefigured. (Lev. 23:10)
- e) Is the proof of a coming harvest. (1 Cor. 15:20)
- f) Lives in the power of an endless life. (Heb. 7:25; Rev. 1:18)

The Importance Of The Lord’s Resurrection

What if the Lord did not rise from the dead? The resurrection of the Lord is of such momentous importance that it cannot be overlooked or modified in any way. Without it:

- a) The fidelity of the claims of Christ would be disallowed. (Matt. 12:39-40)

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- b) There would be no justification for the repentant sinner. (Rom. 4:25)
- c) The authenticity of the Scriptures as being the inspired word of God would be nullified. (1 Cor. 15:3-4)
- d) The power of God would be invalidated. (Matt. 22:29)
- e) The foundation of Christianity would be destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:12-19)
- f) The purposes of God for Christ and the world would be brought to nought. (1 Cor. 15:20-28)
- g) The ultimate overthrow of Satan for eternity would be abolished. (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8)
- h) The offices of Christ would be non-existent for He could only be our Advocate and High Priest in Heaven after His ascension and operate now in Heaven. (Heb. 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1)
- i) His salvation would be an incomplete work for there would be no justification. (Rom. 4:25)
- j) The message of the gospel and forgiveness of sins would be just a myth. (1 Cor. 15:14)
- k) Your faith would be based on a fable, consequently, you would still be in your sins. (1 Cor. 15:14, 17)
- l) There would be no resurrection/redemption of the body. (Rom. 8:23)

The Concluding Arguments

It could be shown that while other religions are marked by the lack of genuine evidence for their claims of truth or the denial of the truthfulness of persons and events. They are dependent on blind faith or denial of the facts, by contrast, Christianity and the proof of Christ's resurrection is based on Biblical historical statements, Christ's fidelity, human logic, and personal witnesses.



... Rowan Jennings