

If There Is No Resurrection ...

Intro:

1. The strongest desire: to **live**. Self-preservation is innate; instinctive. Yet *all* die, without exception. The realization of ultimate death clashes with our desire to live, thus producing anxiety.
2. But what lies beyond death? No **visible** evidence of life after death. Are such beliefs wild flights of fantasy - as Heaven's Gate cult whose members committed suicide in order to meet the UFO behind the Hale-Bopp comet? Where is reliable information?
3. Christianity is founded upon the belief that Jesus was raised from the dead. The first preachers claimed to be eyewitnesses of this fact. They admit that if Jesus was not raised then they are liars - 1 Cor 15:14-15.

1. Jesus Raised ...

- A. **To** rule with ultimate power: Ac 2:30-33a; Eph 1:19-21. Jesus had the *credentials* to attain the highest position; He has all authority.
- B. **To** guarantee that *all* will eventually be raised: 1 Cor 15:20-22; Ac 24:15. God doesn't just *tell* us of resurrection; He *demonstrates* it through Jesus.
- C. **To** pronounce judgment: A day appointed to judge the world in righteousness - Ac 17:31. Jesus will be the Judge (Ac 10:42); He has authority as the lawgiver: *His* words will judge in last day (Jn 12:48).

2. If There Is No Resurrection ...

- A. Then the rule of Christ does not exist; all that happens is a result of chaos, fate. There is no oversight, help, guidance from heaven. Prayers are pointless; we are wholly at the mercy of our own judgment, chance and the decisions of others. This may seem adventurous, romantic - *until things go terribly wrong*.
- B. Human existence ends at death. There is no answer to our desire to live on, no hope for a better existence, no prospect of reunion with loved ones. *Nothing*.
- C. Then there are no moral imperatives - 1 Cor 15:32.
 1. Christians are accused of disinterest in or neglect of this-world affairs. Not true. It is the reality of continued existence and judgment for actions which drives Christians to do what is right - Ac 24:15-16.
 2. How do people act when there is no accountability? When natural disasters

break down enforcement? Do we really want to live in a world where no judgment is forthcoming?

3. Theft, rape, assault, cheating, lying, fornication, murder - all these things are born of disrespect for authority. Many live by the creed: *We **must** live for today; we **should** live for ourselves; we **can** live merely for pleasure.* The fruit of such a creed is clearly evident.

3. But If There IS A Resurrection ...

- A. Death becomes a transition rather than an end. It is the portal through which all must pass in leaving the material world and entering the spiritual one. Jesus and all of His apostles looked at death this way: Ph 1:20-24; 3:7-11.
- B. Then we must **act** upon that conviction and prepare for the eventuality. **Maturity** anticipates future realities/possibilities and acts accordingly. *Dilemma:* The **fact** of the resurrection will not be known until it is too late to alter its character. But faith based on evidence makes preparation for it.
- C. Then human life is of **infinite value**. We are not merely the highest form of evolutionary life, of relatively less importance than some endangered animals. **Illus:** Carl Sagan, opposed to laboratory experimentation upon animals but himself benefited from technology arising from it. This caused him discomfort.

Conclusion:

1. Your participation in the resurrection is *unconditional*. However, the quality of your continued existence is *conditional*: Jn 5:28-29. What you do *now*, in this life, will determine where you spend eternity.
2. There is hope from which we receive comfort - 1 Th 4:13-18.
3. “*Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...*” (2 Cor 5:9-11).