

The Resurrection: The Ultimate Testimony

For approximately a year we have been presenting evidence that attests to the reality of God and the authenticity of the Bible. There is yet one more piece of supporting testimony that we want to consider at this time, namely the resurrection. The cornerstone of Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Josh McDowell in *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* sees the resurrection and fulfillment of prophecy as the two most critical pieces of evidence for the authenticity of the Bible. He writes:

The apostles throughout the New Testament appealed to two areas of the life of Jesus of Nazareth to establish His Messiahship. One was the resurrection and the other was fulfilled messianic prophecy.

The resurrection is arguably the most important element in the Bible and, consequently, in Christian faith. This fact is not lost among the sacred writers. The reality of the resurrection is so important that the apostle Paul states that a Christian's faith would be vain without it. He writes:

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty... For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15: 13-14; 16-17)!

We are quite aware that if the resurrection is not true, then Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. He would be nothing more than a mortal man who claimed to be God. The question arises, then, whether we can trust the claim of the Bible that this Man/God, this Jesus Christ, truly did raise from the dead. This is why we have presented evidence that attests to the authenticity of the Bible. It is a factual account of the most remarkable things that have ever occurred and is believable because the evidence warrants it.

Critics who wish not to believe there is a God or, if there is a God, not to believe that Jesus Christ is His Son and the Redeemer of mankind, are compelled to call into question the reliability of the Bible. If the Bible stands, mankind must come to grips with this one called Jesus. If the Bible falls, Jesus Christ falls with it, as well as those who have faith in Him.

Critics have attempted to discredit the Bible by claiming it contains scientific error. Certain theologians have foolishly agreed with the premise and made excuses for this presumed fact. The reality is that the Bible has proven itself to be perfectly compatible with science when the two intersect. It is only where science has made unproven assertions that we find any conflict. Actually, the Bible contains many scientifically sound concepts that cannot be explained by anything less than Divine revelation.

Critics have attempted to discredit the Bible by claiming it speaks of people and places that did not exist. The truth is that archaeological

research has done nothing but confirm things contained in the Bible. No archaeological find has ever disproved a single biblical claim.

Critics of the Bible over many centuries have from time to time and place to place resorted to hostilities. History records many Christian martyrs, mass burnings of Bibles, and relentless persecutions, but Christianity and the Bible not only survive, but thrive.

Critics abound in the form of manmade philosophies, impugning the integrity of the revealed Word. Experience shows that these philosophies fade as rapidly as they arise. Attacks from men, rather than destroying the Bible, destroy themselves, much like ships that run aground on rocks. In the midst of enormous criticism the Bible remains the world's best selling book. No other book comes close to selling like the Bible. No other book comes close to being translated into as many languages.

Critics have no answer to fulfilled prophecies in the Bible except to claim the prophetic writings were actually recorded after the event. Archaeology again becomes the friend of the Bible by confirming that texts that predicted the coming of Jesus Christ did, in fact, exist prior to His birth.

Critics deny that Jesus actually was resurrected. But the Bible, which is attested to as authentic and reliable by all the foregoing, confirms unequivocally by eyewitness testimony and journalistic investigation that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. Persistent skepticism or rejection of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not because of the evidence, but in spite of it.

Beyond these astonishing facts is the marvelous character of the Bible itself. It was compiled by forty different writers over a period of approximately fifteen hundred years, yet retains an exceptional unity of message. It calls man to live by an unparalleled moral standard. It records the most marvelous events in the annals of existence, from the creation to the incarnation of the Creator, but does it in a uniquely direct and unembellished style. No book of human creation recording such marvelous events could do so in such a restrained manner. The resurrection account comes from a source of impeccable credentials. The resurrection is, indeed, a highly documented and trustworthy account.