



The Living One Among The Dead?

Explanation of the Picture

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The Seventh in a Series of Eight

“JESUS” - The letters are yellow, representing His resurrection. The Greek word translated “resurrection” is a compound word that means, “*to stand again.*” After being dead, all the New Testament writers claim the same thing - Jesus stood again. He rose from the dead. In fact,

Paul states that if Jesus *did not* physically walk out of His grave, after being stone-cold dead, then “*let us eat and drink (and be merry) - for tomorrow we die*” (1Cor 15:32). Furthermore, if this is just a myth, then “*we are of all men **most to be pitied***” (1Cor 15:19). We have denied ourselves the pleasures of sin - for a hoax! This same Paul even says we are “*false witnesses of God*” if we are declaring that Jesus rose from the dead - *if in fact He did not!* We would be part of a great group of liars who are making false claims about God (1Cor 15:15)! The truth, or falsehood, of the resurrection event *is the key* that determines if the Christian is a wise person - or an absolute fool.

So, how does one know if this really happened?

Well, I do not know if the following material will be of value to you or not, but here’s my journey in this matter.

In the fall of 1976, I made a decision to read the Bible. I wasn’t looking for anything in particular - I just decided to read it. I remember thinking it was peculiar that I had all kinds of opinions about the Bible - *but I had never actually read it!* I had sold them door-to-door for two summers (‘73 and ‘74), and it was a great joke that I sold Bibles during the summer and beer in the winter (as a bartender). But during those summers, there were a few people who I knew had a great familiarity with, and respect for, the contents of that book.

I began with The Revelation (don’t ask me why I read the last chapter first. That probably provides insight to my logic at that time) Anyway, after that, I read Job. While the Revelation did have some interesting impact, it was Job 28 that really “turned me on” to examine the contents of the Bible more thoroughly. Then a fellow I met in a park asked me if I had read the Gospels yet. I asked, “*What’s that?*” He said, “*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.*” Well, became my next destination. When I got to the end of Matthew, I read the claim that Jesus was killed, but then physically walked out of His tomb. Paul even claimed that Jesus appeared to over five hundred people at one time (1Cor 15:6)! I leafed over to the end of Mark, and found the same claim of a resurrected Jesus. I then went to the end of Luke and John and found the same assertion. I sat back and said, “*Who are the guys who wrote this? Are they reliable witnesses to something that actually occurred in the First Century, or is this some kind of fairy tale - mythology - like the Greek gods?*” Well, the search was on. For me, the bottom line became as follows: “*If Jesus **did rise from the dead**, then I will be willing to listen to what He has to say. That is **raw power** that puts Him in a place of authority and knowledge that separates Him from anyone else.*” I contend ... my logic was beginning to improve.

I wish I could tell you at what point, or what piece of evidence brought me to the conclusion that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. But I can’t. But here is what I can tell you. I continued reading the Bible, and kept finding claims that seemed interesting, reasonable and correct. For example, at that time, I was extremely concerned about pollution. In Revelation 11:19, in the midst of a bunch of judgments, it says that God was going “*to destroy those who destroy the earth.*” I thought, “*He claims that He made the earth, and He declared it was ‘good’. In fact, when He finished, He said His creation was ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31). Now, in the last chapter of this book, He states He is going to destroy those who have destroyed it!*” That made sense to me - “*He is going to search out and destroy those who ruin what He made!*” That not only seemed right, but a great burden was lifted from me at that moment. *He*

would take care of this matter! I did not have to worry about it anymore.

As I kept reading the Bible, I continued to find similar, sensible declarations. I can not relate them all here, but there came a point when I gained this basic realization. While I knew many things in the Bible were accurate claims, others were clearly unprovable. Yet, I could not say they were *false* claims - I could only say if I *believed* them or not! For example, the Bible says that death was *imposed upon man*. It is not natural and was imposed on man after the man (Adam) was fully complete – and then sinned: “... *through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so death spread to all men, because all sinned*” (Ro 5:12). And was further imposed on the entire creation (Ro 8:19-23). Death is not a natural part of this whole system as evolution maintains. For evolution, death is central to the entire theory. The entire system *depends upon death* from single cell organisms up to the current specie levels. It is built upon profitable mutations occurring in a life form, and then passing that on to the next generation for specie progression. Evolution requires at least one billion years *of death* - or the system is an impossibility! They are inseparable bedfellows. The Bible further asserts there is no one “*who continually does good and never sins*” (Eccl 7:20) - who never violates His standards. And in its consistency, the Bible says the payment everyone gets for sin is death (Ro 6:23). I remember sitting back and saying to myself, “*One thing is for sure, everybody does die, and this book says it is because people violate His standards and expectations.*” I found I *could not prove* this to be a false claim - the **most** I could say was, “*I do not believe that.*” That’s the way it is with many things in the Bible.

So, here is what gradually happened inside of me. Much of the Bible’s materials I *knew* to be correct. As that volume continued growing, I found myself beginning to think that the unprovable claims might actually be possible. Then, at some point, the weight of the material that I knew to be true tipped the scales - and I found myself saying, “*I believe this Book ... is the truth.*” A few years earlier I had knocked on doors *selling* the Bible. Now, it had sold itself to me! This persuasion process took about six months.

Concerning the resurrection. On April 17, 1977, I said to God, “*While it is impossible for man, I do believe You did raise Jesus from the dead. You have the power and ability to do such a thing - and I believe You did, and these men wrote a truthful account of that event.*” While I could not prove the resurrection did happen - I also knew the maximum I could do against it was to say, “*I don’t believe it!*” And, sure enough, the Bible says there are two groups of people in this world - believers and unbelievers - which is indeed *another accurate statement!* I did not really ever “decide” to become a believer - I just all of a sudden found myself *to be one*. He had won me. The great beauty of my journey was that no person, or religion, had talked me into anything. Therefore, no one can do anything to shake the transformation that has occurred inside of me.

By the way, 30 years later, with a Master of Divinity along the way, plus years of New Testament Greek study, along with Textural Criticism study - my conviction that the Bible is indeed from God Almighty has only strengthened.

There are several ways this resurrection material has affected my personal witness:

Effect Number 1

When people ask me what religion I am, or what group I represent, that is a perfect opening to go directly into the resurrection. I usually say,

“Well, I go to x church (I answer the question) but I am a Christian, which means I am a follower of Christ. About x years ago I decided to read the Bible for myself. I never realized that the eight or nine men who wrote the New Testament were all declaring the same thing: Jesus was stone-cold dead and three days later He physically rose from the dead. All the writers of the New Testament say He walked out of His grave alive after being dead for three days. One writer even says He appeared to over 500 people at one time! I thought, ‘I want to find out if this is true, and if it is, then I am willing to listen to what He has to say. That would be power and authority that nobody else has.’ Now that makes sense doesn’t it?”

Then I let them answer. Incidentally, there has been no one yet, after hearing me say this, who has been brave enough to assert this reasoning is foolish.

Then I usually continue, *“Actually, I don’t really care what any man has to say because they all have the same problem I have: they are going to die and they are just as helpless as I am to overcome that reality. If someone came back from death, that is who I want to hear from. That seems reasonable to me. What do you think?”* Again I let them answer and let the rest of the contact flow. If someone can argue with this logic, just walk away. That person is beyond reason. I haven’t found anyone yet willing to expose that kind of irrationality - but that doesn’t mean I won’t.

Effect Number 2

Another reason I go into the resurrection immediately, is because *that establishes me in the conversation as one who is reasonable and rational* - not just blindly “religious.” One reason we sometimes are timid in our faith is because we lose sight of the fact that we represent One who was butchered and buried - *and came back to life!* He was beaten beyond recognition, had nails driven through His wrists and feet, and after expiring, had a Roman spear thrust into His side - and probably directly through His heart - as the attending Roman soldier verified He was indeed dead. That was this mortician’s “certificate of death” to his commanding officer (Pilate). Brethren, we have nothing to be timid about! We have a foundation more sound than that of the most sophisticated philosophical system! The bedrock of our philosophic system - Jesus’ resurrection - is exponentially superior to the bedrock of any system of thought in the whole world! We build our approach to life from that bedrock. What bedrock do the philosophies of the world build upon? What bedrock do the religions of the world build upon? None of them are as powerful and compelling as ours! Stand up brethren! Jesus did - after being dead. There is no reason for us to be timid to speak forth what He says. We are actually the wise ones, the sane ones. The foolish and insane ones are those who refuse to honestly investigate the claim that our founding “philosopher” physically walked out of His own grave! Lord Jesus, please wake us up and burn these primary, basic facts in our minds and hearts so we know what we’re doing and why we’re doing it! (Note: I am working through my articles and ebooks here in 2019 with updated edits and links – and upon reading this, I prayed it for

myself ... again).

Effect Number 3

The third effect the resurrection has on my witness is this: I know that men *will not be persuaded to turn to Him even though He rose from the dead*. Jesus Himself said so. Go read Luke 16:19-31. We are all so dull - we really think it is always somebody else who is going to kick off. If anyone truly recognized his/her own mortality, and even heard a rumor of someone rising from the dead - this would fill the headlines of every newspaper every day. But because death is imposed upon us, it is foreign to our true make up. We have been made with eternity set in our heart (Eccl 3:11) - so death does not compute! The solution? Just present the gospel message (of which the resurrection is one part) and pray that God will open up the ears to hear!

While You were cold and in the grave
This old world kept on a turnin'
While You were cold and in the grave
the worldly wise kept teachin' and learnin'
While You were cold and in the grave
memories of You were quickly fadin'
But an empty tomb killed life without You
You're the subject of true serenadin'.

The Drawing as a Whole

The scene depicted in this picture **is non-Scriptural**. In 1982, when I drew this, I thought it was accurate, but I am now sure this particular scene *never occurred*. In the spring of 1984, I carefully put together a harmony of the gospels from the Upper Room through the Ascension. I call it "The Running Oration," and you can find it at [my website](#) on the Home Page. As the correct sequence of events on that phenomenal resurrection morning began to unfold, in the midst of my new discoveries, a terrifying thought hit me; "*That means my picture is wrong!*" And that meant hours of work down the drain! In fact, this picture is actually my second drawing of this scene - so that meant double loss! An immediate resistance rose up inside of me. I wanted to turn away from this - and hold to my error! Have you ever experienced this? Well, here was a testing point. Was I going to let go of my error, or in stupidity and pride, cling to my error? Was I going to grow in the knowledge of God ... or continue in ignorance? Humility admits error. Humility admits mistakes. Humility is open to correction. Humility has open ears. Humility submits to truth. Pride does none of these things - neither does stupidity.

Well, this time you can see who won. Not in what I drew - but in what I have written. After I had resolved this battle within myself, I thought of the verse, "*In all labor there is profit*" (Pr 14:23), and also that I am to know that my labor is "*not in vain in the Lord*" (1Cor. 15:58). So I was struck with an interesting idea: "*Why not use this mistaken picture to expound this principle with my readers, in hopes that they, too, might be encouraged to let go of their errors (when exposed) - even when it appears they might lose a lot by admitting the error!*" So,

that is why I show this picture still.

To lose pride and/or ignorance is gain in itself. Praise God!
Even our errors can be used by God ... if we will let him. He is a very big God.

Expand yourself!
Listen, learn, live!
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