

## EASTER SUNDAY INTERLUDE

### **Christ's Resurrection: An Apologetic And An Application (1 Corinthians 15:1-11)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) As we gather to worship the Lord this Easter Sunday, we live in a world that is full of stress:

(a) A recent poll found that Americans are "now reaching unprecedented levels of stress that will challenge our ability to cope" according to Arthur Evans, Jr., chief executive officer of the American Psychological Association. ("High Anxiety: Poll Finds Americans Stressed By Inflation, War," March 11, 2022; usnews.com) "The biggest concerns: rising costs of food, energy and other everyday items due to inflation (87%); supply chain issues (81%); global uncertainty (81%); Russia's invasion of Ukraine (80%); and potential Russian cyberattacks or nuclear threats (80%)." (Ibid.) In addition, "63% said their lives have been forever changed by COVID-19," Ibid.

(b) We face stress at the religious level, too: "Christianity Today magazine has presented an award of merit" to William Lane Craig's book, In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical And Scientific Exploration that tries to "reconcile a historical Adam and Eve with the evolutionary thesis of common ancestry" with apes. ("Biblical Compromise Wins Award," Answers, April-June, 2022) Of note, in the sixth chapter of Charles Darwin's book, The Descent of Man, he wrote, "The Simiadae then branched off into two great stems, the New World [western hemisphere] and Old World [eastern hemisphere] monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period, Man, the wonder and glory of the Universe proceeded." (Bolton Davidheiser, Evolution and Christian Faith, 1976, p. 26) Thus, a magazine begun by Billy Graham now honors a book that adopts Charles Darwin's view that we came from monkeys!

(2) However, we could not authoritatively address each of these needs if Jesus did not rise from the dead! If He is not risen, our Bible that claims He arose errs, making our preaching from it false, we are still in our sins, believers who have died have perished eternally and we have hope only in this life, making us to be pitied above all others! (1 Corinthians 15:14-19) To address the problems listed above, we need to be sure that Christ actually arose!

Need: *So, before handling the stressful issues listed above, we ask, "What evidence do we have that Jesus arose?!"*

**I. When the Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 to defend belief in Christ's resurrection, some of his readers at Corinth were denying belief in the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:12.**

**II. We then view Paul's defense of Christ's resurrection in light of archaeological finds for OUR apologetic:**

- A. The Old Testament prediction of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 was forecast long before Jesus' birth as verified by archaeological evidences we now possess:
1. A scroll of the Old Testament book of Isaiah was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 that paleographers date to be 150 B. C. (Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., Vol. Three, p. 321), and Isaiah 53:8-10 predicted that God's Servant, the Messiah, would be executed ("cut off") and buried ("grave") *but* that His days would nevertheless be prolonged (v. 10), what would then require that He be resurrected.
  2. Also, two fragments of the Old Testament book of Daniel were found at that same Dead Sea site that paleographers dated to be the same age as the Isaiah scroll (Ibid., Vol. Two, p. 19), and Daniel 9:24-26 predicted that 483 Hebrew years after king Artaxerxes Longimanus decreed on March 5, 444 B. C. that Jerusalem was to be restored and rebuilt, Messiah would officially arrive in Israel, what would then occur on March 30, A. D. 33. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Dan. 9:25; Harold W. Hoehner, Chron. Aspects of the Life of Christ, 1979, p. 139) Daniel 9:26 indicated that the Hebrew Messiah would then be "cut off," a term used elsewhere for the execution of a criminal. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1364)
  3. Since Luke 3:1 claims that John the Baptist who baptized Jesus at the start of His ministry began to baptize in the fifteenth year of Tiberious Caesar, i. e., in A. D. 29 (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Luke 3:1), and Jesus was crucified after that, Jesus fits the Daniel 9 timeline as the Messiah! If His triumphal entry into Jerusalem occurred March 30, A. D. 33, He died on April 3, A. D. 33 and rose on April 5, A. D. 33. (Ibid., Hoehner)
  4. Since the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled prophecies made long before His birth according to the archaeological evidence of the books of Isaiah and Daniel found at the Dead Sea in 1947, we have archaeological evidence that He fulfilled prophecy by dying and rising again from the dead!
- B. Paul's claim that 500 people at one time saw the risen Jesus is potent evidence that this event really occurred:
1. For Paul to claim in 1 Corinthians 15:6 that the majority of the 500 people who had seen the risen Christ at one time were still alive would put his own credibility at risk before his original readers who denied belief in the resurrection, for they could travel to Israel and check the testimony of the eyewitnesses themselves!

2. The simple fact that 1 Corinthians has survived the days of the Early Church to remain in the canon of inerrant Scripture is great evidence that Paul's critics could not disprove His claim about those witnesses!
  3. Furthermore, any psychologist will admit that 500 different people with differing moods and attitudes at the time would not testify to seeing the risen Lord at the same event were it a mere apparition!
- C. Paul's claim that the risen Jesus appeared to James and himself add great evidence to the truth of those events, for both men at the time of their alleged sightings of Jesus had not believed in Him, 1 Corinthians 15:7, 8-11:
1. This James was the Lord's half brother, son of Joseph and Mary (where Jesus was virgin born; Ibid., fn. to 1 Corinthians 15:7), and Jesus' half brothers did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry, John 7:5.
  2. Yet, soon after Christ's resurrection, all of Jesus' half brothers met with the disciples as believers in Acts 1:14. The only explanation for their change of view in Jesus is that they were sure He rose from the dead!
  3. Paul had greatly persecuted the Church only to be transformed into the great promoter of the Christian faith and the author of roughly half of the New Testament, and that reportedly because the risen Lord had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, 1 Corinthians 15:8-10 with Acts 9:1-31.

***Lesson:*** *The archaeologically supported fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies made long before Christ's birth on His death, burial and resurrection, the testimony of 500 believers claiming they saw the risen Lord at one time, which testimony was not disproved in the Early Church even by deniers of belief in the resurrection and the great change in belief in Jesus' half brothers and Paul show that Jesus was truly crucified and rose from the dead.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we strongly affirm that just as 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 asserts, Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and He was witnessed to have risen by 500 believers at one time and by men who up until Christ appeared to them did not believe in Him. (3) Armed with this certainty, may we assert the truths of the Biblical Christian faith!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . . )

Since Christ arose and our faith is true, we rely on the Scriptures to address the needs noted our introduction:

(1) On dealing with stress in general, Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 urged all who were "weary, tired" (*kopiontes*, present active participle of *kopia*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 41; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 237; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 444) and "had been burdened [by others' oppressive actions]" (*pephortismenoi*, perfect passive participle of *phortizo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 323; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 872-873) to come unto Him and He would give them rest, that they take His yoke of discipleship upon them and learn from Him, for He was "gentle, humble" (*praus*, Ibid., p. 705) and "lowly" (*tapeinos*, Ibid., p. 811-812) in heart, and His yoke was easy and His burden was light so that they would find rest to their "soul; seat of will, desires, affections." (*psuche*, Ibid., p. 901-902)

(2) On the issue of inflation, (a) if we believers avoid greed and are content with what we already possess (Hebrews 13:5a) (b) while focusing on fulfilling God's assignments in life for us (Philippians 4:12-18), (c) God promises to provide all we materially need to fulfill His assignments for us. (Hebrews 13:5b-6; Philippians 4:19)

(3) As for global uncertainty, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and potential Russian cyberattacks or nuclear threats, as we often note, Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 implies that a "Mini-Great Tribulation" is set to occur in our era of the Church where leaders with intrigue oppress, what God allows to drive people to Bible teaching churches for balm. Our part as believers is to heed Bible truth and be ready to share the truth with the troubled who come our way.

(4) On the way COVID-19 may have "forever changed" lives, 1 John 2:15-17 calls us believers to stop loving this world system and its lusts of the eyes, of the body and the pride of this earthly life, for this world system is in the process of passing away with its lusts, and loving this world is at odds with loving God! Besides, if we focus on God's callings for us now, our works in this life will last in stability beyond this life and into eternity! (1 John 2:17)

(4) On the Christianity Today magazine's honoring of a book that supports Charles Darwin's claim in his book The Descent of Man that man (in Darwin's words) came from "'Old World [eastern hemisphere] monkeys,'" we note that Genesis 1:27 with 2:20-24 state that God created the first man directly from the dust of the ground, and He made the first woman from that man's rib so that human beings did not evolve! Charles Darwin's view greatly errs, and professing Christians or Christian organizations who adopt his view on origins also greatly err from the Scriptures!

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we affirm the bodily resurrection of Christ as foundational to our Christian faith and thereupon assert the edifying truths of the Scriptures since they fully address man's needs today!**