

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

(1Cor 15:1-19)

The resurrection is a matter of life and death. Three reasons:

1. The resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the gospel message (1-11)

a. Two central beliefs from an ancient creed (3-5):

- i. The crucifixion
- ii. The resurrection

b. An undermining modern question:

Q: Should we be concerned with the *literal event* of a bodily (corporeal) resurrection or simply the *spiritual meaning of the message* of the resurrection?

A: What was the concern of the apostles preaching those seven sermons in Acts?

*Illustrated by Updike, *Seven Stanzas at Easter*

Q: Doesn't faith in God vindicate the resurrection?

A: What was the concern of the apostle Paul in First Corinthians 15?

*Illustrated by the verses below

2. If you deny the resurrection of believers, then you must deny the resurrection of Christ (12-13)

In Corinth, the bodily resurrection of believers was being denied, but “*if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised...*”

3. If you deny the resurrection of Christ, then you must deny your entire faith and hope (14-19)

“*If Christ has not been raised...then...*”

Consequences of denial include:

- a. “*our preaching is useless and so is your faith*” (14)
- b. “*we are...false witnesses against God*” (15)
- c. “*your faith is futile; you are still in your sins*” (17)
- d. “*those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost*” (18)
- e. “*we are to be pitied more than all men*” (19)

QUOTES OF NOTE

SEVEN STANZAS AT EASTER

John Updike

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
It was as His body;
If the cell's dissolution did not reverse, the molecule reknit,
The amino acids rekindle,
The Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,
Each soft spring recurrent;
It was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled eyes of the
Eleven apostles;
It was as His flesh; ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes
The same valved heart
That—pierced—died, withered, paused, and then regathered
Out of enduring Might
New strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,
Analogy, sidestepping transcendence,
Making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the faded
Credulity of earlier ages:
Let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché,
Not a stone in a story,
But the vast rock of materiality that in the slow grinding of
Time will eclipse for each of us
The wide light of day.

And if we have an angel at the tomb,
Make it a real angel,
Weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair, opaque in
The dawn light, robed in real linen
Spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
For our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,
Lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are embarrassed
By the miracle,
And crushed by remonstrance.

Max Planck: German physicist and Nobel laureate for advances in quantum physics;
quanta; plural of quantum, a fundamental unit of physical magnitude; **opaque:** impenetrable
to light, not transparent; **remonstrance:** reproof

I find that Holy Week is draining; no matter how many times I have lived through his crucifixion, my anxiety about his resurrection is undiminished—I am terrified that, this year, it won't happen; that, that year, it didn't. Anyone can be sentimental about the Nativity; any fool can feel like a Christian at Christmas. But Easter is the main event; if you don't believe in the resurrection, you're not a believer.
(Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*)