**20210404 The Likeness of the Man from Heaven**

**2021 Resurrection Sunday message**

(1 Corinthians 15:49)

49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

**Genesis 5:1-3**

1 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

2 He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."

3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

**Romans 3:23**

23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**John 1:14**

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 17:5**

5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

**C. S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)**

“When you come to knowing God, the initiative lies on His side. If He does not show Himself, nothing you can do will enable you to find Him. And, in fact, He shows much more of Himself to some people than to others—not because He has favorites, but because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition. Just as sunlight, though it has no favorites, cannot be reflected in a dusty mirror as clearly as in a clean one.

You can put this another way by saying that while in other sciences the instruments you use are things external to yourself (things like microscopes and telescopes), the instrument through which you see God is your whole self. And if a man’s self is not kept clean and bright, his glimpse of God will be blurred—like the Moon seen through a dirty telescope. That is why horrible nations have horrible religions: they have been looking at God through a dirty lens.”

**Matthew 12:38**

38 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

**Matthew 12:39-40**

39 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

**SOME ALTERNATIVE THEORIES TO JESUS’ RESURRECTION**

**1. The Wrong-Tomb Theory**

This theory assumes that the women who reported the body missing had mistakenly gone to the wrong tomb that morning. If so, then the disciples who went to check the women’s story must have gone to the wrong tomb as well.

We can be certain, however, that the Jewish authorities, who had asked for that Roman guard to be stationed at the tomb to prevent the body from being stolen, would not have been mistaken about the location. The Roman guards would also not have been mistaken, for they were there. If a wrong tomb were involved, the Jewish authorities would have lost no time in producing the body from the proper tomb, thus effectively quenching for all time any rumor of a resurrection.

**2. The Hallucination Theory**

Another attempted explanation claims that the appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection were either illusions or hallucinations. This theory runs counter to psychological principles governing the occurrence of hallucinations.

It is not credible to think that five hundred people could have seen the same hallucination for forty days. Also the hallucination theory does not coincide with the historical situation or the mental state of the apostles.

So, where was the actual body of Jesus, and why didn’t those who opposed him produce it?

**3. The Swoon Theory**

Nineteenth-century German rationalist Karl Venturini popularized the swoon theory several centuries ago, and it is often suggested even today. It claims that Jesus didn’t really die; he merely fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood. Everyone thought he was dead, but later he was resuscitated, and the disciples thought it to be a resurrection.

German theologian David Friedrich Strauss, himself no believer in the Resurrection, deals a deathblow to any thought that Jesus could have revived from a swoon. He said:

It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulcher, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that he was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry.

Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death, at the most could only have given it an ele**gia**[ai]c voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship.

**4. The Stolen-Body Theory**

Another theory maintains that the disciples stole the body of Jesus while the guards slept. The depression and cowardice of the disciples make a hard-hitting argument against it. Can we imagine that they suddenly became so brave and daring as to face a detachment of select soldiers at the tomb and steal the body? They were in no mood to attempt anything like that.

Commenting on the proposition that the disciples stole Christ’s body, J. N. D. Anderson says:

This would run totally contrary to all we know of them: their ethical teaching, the quality of their lives, their steadfastness in suffering and persecution. Nor would it begin to explain their dramatic transformation from dejected and dispirited escapists into witnesses whom no opposition could muzzle.

**5. The Moved-Body Theory**

Another theory says that the Roman or Jewish authorities moved Christ’s body from the tomb. If the authorities had the body in their possession or knew where it was, why didn’t they explain that they had taken it, thus putting to an effective end the disciples’ preaching of the Resurrection in Jerusalem?

If the authorities had taken the body, why didn’t they explain exactly where they had put it? Why didn’t they recover the corpse, display it on a cart, and wheel it through the center of Jerusalem? Such an action would have utterly destroyed Christianity.

**6. The Relocated-Body Theory**

This theory assumes that the body of Jesus was temporarily stored in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea on Friday night before being relocated to a criminal’s tomb.

The tomb of Jesus was empty not because he resurrected, but because the body was simply relocated. Thus, the disciples mistakenly believed he was resurrected. This hypothesis has gained a considerable following on the Internet.

The “relocation hypothesis” gains support from the fact that reburial was common in ancient Palestine. But it’s important to note that the reburial procedures of the Jews differed significantly from the theory proposed here.

The Jewish tradition was to bury a body for one year, and then after the flesh deteriorated and only bones remained, they would remove the bones and place them in an **o**ssuary.

The problem for the relocation of the body of Jesus is the complete lack of historical support, either in biblical or non-biblical sources. None of the New Testament Gospel accounts suggest that the body of Jesus was reburied.

Even if the reburial hypothesis were true, all it accounts for is the empty tomb. And interestingly, the empty tomb didn’t convince any of the disciples—possibly with the exception of apostle John—that Jesus had returned from the dead. It was the appearances of Jesus that convinced them, and the reburial theory can’t account for these.

If the body of Jesus was simply relocated, why didn’t a relative uncover the body when the disciples began proclaiming the resurrection? Why wouldn’t an authority produce the body and stop Christianity in its tracks?

**C. S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)**

“God can show Himself as He really is only to real men. And that means not simply to men who are individually good, but to men who are united together in a body, loving one another, helping one another, showing Him to one another. For that is what God meant humanity to be like; like players in one band, or organs in one body.

Consequently, the one really adequate instrument for learning about God is the whole Christian community, waiting for Him together. Christian brotherhood is, so to speak, the technical equipment for this science—the laboratory outfit.

That is why all these people who turn up every few years with some patent simplified religion of their own as a substitute for the Christian tradition are really wasting time. Like a man who has no instrument but an old pair of field glasses setting out to put all the real astronomers right.

He may be a clever chap—he may be cleverer than some of the real astronomers, but he is not giving himself a chance. And two years later everyone has forgotten all about him, but the real science is still going on.”