

Evidence for the Resurrection

Josh McDowell, from the book, *More Than A Carpenter*

Professor Thomas Arnold, for fourteen years the headmaster of Rugby, author of a famous three-volume History of Rome, and appointed to the chair of modern history at Oxford, was well acquainted with the value of evidence in determining historical facts. He said,

“I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.”

Dr. Simon Greenleaf, one of the greatest legal minds ever known, was the famous Royall Professor of Law at Harvard University. While professor of law at Harvard, Greenleaf wrote a volume in which he examined the legal value of the apostles' testimony to the resurrection of Christ. He observed that it was impossible that the apostle

“could have persisted in affirming the truths they had narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact.”

Greenleaf concluded that the resurrection of Christ was one of the best supported events in history, according to the laws of legal evidence administered in courts of justice.

Another lawyer, Frank Morison, set out to refute the evidence for the resurrection. He thought that the life of Jesus was one of the most beautiful lives ever lived, but when it came to the resurrection he thought someone had come along and tacked a myth on to the story of Jesus. He planned to write an account of the last few days of Jesus. He would of course disregard the resurrection. He figured that an intelligent, rational approach to Jesus would completely discount His resurrection.

However, upon approaching the facts with his legal background and training, he had to change his mind. He eventually wrote a best-seller, *Who Moved the Stone?* The first chapter was titled, 'The Book that Refused to Be Written', and the rest of the chapters deal decisively with the evidence for Christ's resurrection.

George Eldon Ladd concludes,

“The only rational explanation for these historical facts is that God raised Jesus in bodily form.”

A believer in Jesus Christ today can have complete confidence, as did the first Christians, that his faith is based, not on myth or legend, but on the solid historical fact of the risen Christ and the empty tomb.

Most important of all, the individual believer can experience the power of the risen Christ in his life today:

- First of all, he can know that his sins are forgiven,
- Secondly, he can be assured of eternal life and his own resurrection from the grave,
- Thirdly, he can be released from a meaningless and empty life and be transformed into a new creature in Jesus Christ.

After examining the evidence from a judicial perspective, Lord Darling, former Chief Justice, concluded that

“there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true”