

## “HE IS RISEN!”

Mark 16:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Many of us have seen the “Back To The Future” films once or more than once in the theatre or on television. There was also a book by H.G. Wells, The Time Machine which was made into a movie. In these stories the character travels backward or forward in time and lives briefly in another age.

Jesus Christ as the Son of God is eternal. He is not fixed on the inexorable movement of time like you and I are trapped. Much as we may want to go back to a certain time, we have to keep going forward at the same pace as the movement of earth around the sun until we arrive at the moment of our death. Neither can we run ahead and glimpse what our future may hold. Jesus Christ is present in every moment in time and in every place.

There are two times in our life when, momentarily, we are time travelers in the company of Jesus Christ. The first of these is when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. At that moment we are at the foot of the cross. Our sins are laid upon Jesus, the writ of accusations against us are nailed to His cross. His suffering and death are made a full and complete payment for all our sins.

The other time we become time travelers with Jesus is at the moment of our death. Our spirits meet Him in His Second Coming:

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV)

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-15 NKJV)

## 1.) How Would Our Lives Be Different If Jesus Was Crucified Today?

Suppose Jesus had been born during our lifetime. Suppose you had heard His messages. Perhaps He would have visited Little Rock and you had gone there to see Him and hear Him. What hopes would you have? Would you want Him to bring world peace? Would you want Him solve our economic crisis? The miracles He performed, the way He spoke so easily and confidently to God convinced you He is a Savior. If anyone could bring world peace, end catastrophic diseases, find food and homes and jobs for the billions who live in poverty, it is Him.

Perhaps like the people who lived in first century Judea, even His disciples, you would not pay as much attention to His religious and moral teachings, as to His displays of power. Like His disciples back then, you might impatiently ask, "Lord, at this time will You restore the Kingdom?" If Jesus had been born in our lifetime, there may not have been any more people who understood that He came to deliver us from sin, than there were in the first century.

Jesus was considered a threat by the Roman authorities and the religious leaders. If He were alive today, He would be feared by both governments and religions. He would probably be locked up and tortured in Guantanamo or some other secret prison. He would be waterboarded and subjected to humiliation and terror. If He was cruelly and publicly put to death by the government today, how would you react? Would you join other Christians and hide someplace for fear the government might come to your own house for you? Would you leave town like the disciples on the road to Emmaus? Would you approach the government officials to claim His body for burial?

## 2.)How Would You React If Jesus Rose From The Dead This Morning?

The world might react to the death of Christ in the same way the death of the two witnesses is described in the Revelation:

When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and -a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and -a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. (Revelation 11:7-11 NKJV)

At first the news of Jesus' resurrection was as frightening to the disciples as His crucifixion.

So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:8 NKJV)

But when Jesus appeared to them, their faith was renewed. He spent time with them showing them from the Scriptures how the Christ must die for the sins of the people and then rise from the dead.

The government would want people to believe that He is still dead. In the first century the guards were bribed to say that Jesus' followers had stolen His body and carried it away. The government persecuted Jesus' followers for testifying that He arose from the dead and is alive. That message, that Good News, is what caused Christianity to grow so rapidly. The government kept the apostles in Jerusalem and scattered the followers throughout the Empire that so Christianity would die out, Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.(Acts 8:4 NKJV)

How important is the message of Jesus' resurrection to you? Would you give up your home and all you have, be loaded onto boxcars and resettled in some barren tract of land in order to believe in Christ?

### 3.) How Would You React If You Knew For Sure Christ Is Coming Back This Evening?

William Miller, a Baptist preacher in Low Hampton, New York predicted that Christ would return on October 22, 1844. Some people sold their farms or houses, others ran up big debts certain they wouldn't be around when they came due. Some people dressed in white robes and stood on hilltops waiting to be raptured. The period following this date was called the Great Disappointment. In the aftermath two churches were formed, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

A friend of mine, Dewey Stickler, used to give recitations in church. One of his recitations was "If Jesus Came To Your House." What if you knew for sure that Jesus was coming back this evening, what would you do differently than what you have planned to do today? In Dewey's recitation they were running around the house and throwing away things they wouldn't want Jesus to see.

What about the people in your life? Is there someone you love who is not a Christian that you would make a desperate attempt to bring to faith in Christ while a few hours remained? Is there someone you are on bad terms with and yet you would feel ashamed to meet Jesus carrying that grudge in your heart. Would you swallow your pride and beg them to forgive you even though you think you are in the right?

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (Mark 13:32-33 NKJV)

