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HARD TO BELIEVE - RESURRECTION ?

A recent nationwide survey shows 68% of Americans believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ was an actual historical event. Yet responses to other questions in "theStateOfTheology.com" survey reveal **considerable confusion** over how this relates to sin, salvation, and Jesus as the only way to heaven.

People find it hard to believe that God saves sinners. But majority responses on a survey do not override reality. God's TRUTH will always be TRUE. Easter is eternal. Crucifixion and resurrection are inseparable aspects of the same unparalleled event. Indeed, as you scan the landscape of time, it's the cross of Christ which centers in the crosshairs - as the climax of human history. The cross changes everything.

Easter culminates four of God's key and clarion proclamations. In **CREATION**, God says "I AM" - I am the giver of life and I keep my promises. In the **INCARNATION**, Christ coming in the flesh, God says "I AM" - I am here - in your life, as I promised. This magnificent miracle makes the next two quite believable. In the **CRUCIFIXION**, God says "I AM" - you cannot save yourselves from sin and death, but I am the perfect payment to make you right with God, just as I promised. And in the **RESURRECTION**, God says "I AM" - I am always alive - and as I promised, when you turn to Me, I give YOU new life - to be truly alive forever!

Acts 17 records a clear example of the power of God's self-revelation. The Apostle Paul is preaching in Athens, a great cultural and intellectual center. Intrigued, people invite him to Mars Hill, the Areopagus, for a public presentation on the resurrection. They are about to learn what it means - personally.

He gains their attention with an object lesson close at hand, their altar "to an unknown god." Appealing to their obvious values, in verse 22 he makes a provocative statement. "**What you worship as unknown I proclaim to you - the God who made the world and everything in it.**" Their Roman concept of Creator was inadequate. Yet they prided themselves in a pantheon of deities. But just like people today, you will not understand your destiny if you do not understand your origins. Your children are taught the opposite of reality. They are told there are no transcendent absolute truths. They are taught - be your own authorities, morality is merely opinion, "true for you but not for me." That's why people find the relentless reasonableness of God's evidence and revelation so incomprehensible. It challenges pre-conceptions.

The apostle moves through his message. God created mankind in His own image - so that we can know Him. In verse 30 he delivers another attention-getter, "**the Creator commands all people everywhere to repent.**" The people strain to listen, for they are in the Areopagus, the setting of their council on morals, education and religion. They are there to pass judgment on Paul's words. Why repent? "**Because God has fixed a day - on which He will judge the world in righteousness - by a man He has appointed**" - That's reasonable. They're listening intently - "**and of this - God has given assurance to all**" - they thought they had it all figured out. What is this they've missed? - "**by raising Him from the dead.**"

This riveting statement divides the world, into believers and unbelievers. Resurrection ramps up the stakes of belief to eternal levels. By itself, the crucifixion can seem too good to be true, that someone else pays your debts. Resurrection erases every question. Faced with the irrefutable facts of the resurrection - the Risen Christ - you must either receive Jesus, or reject Him. There is no middle ground. And with your response unravels your destiny. Eternal life pierces earthly life, and your life will never be the same.

On Good Friday, your focus is the crucifixion of Christ. On Easter Sunday, your focus is His resurrection. Romans 4:25 puts them together, "**Jesus our Lord was delivered up for our sins and raised up for our justification.**" The purpose of His perfect life, death and resurrection is to make your life right with God. You cannot fix your brokenness. Only your Creator can. And you not only receive His righteousness, you also receive His new resurrection life. Romans 6:4, "**that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life**" - all by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8). And it's all received by faith. Romans 10:9, "**if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**"

The Romans clearly understood what it means to confess Jesus as Lord - their entire being, mind and heart and will, **submitting to Him** as the Sovereign and Savior of your life. Not JUST intellectual assent, a willful decision, or heart-felt experience - but all that you are, trusting Jesus alone. Receive Christ, and then live out His resurrection life through your life - **now and forever - by His mighty power!**