

**AS LORD (“consubstantial with the Father” YHWE),
JESUS is DESIRABLE (the Ultimate End of all our longings)—
“I am the rose of Sharon, / And the lily of the valleys” (Song 2:1);
“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (Jn 12:32);
He is “the bright and morning star” (Rev 22:16)
Ps 37:4; Ps 42:1-2; Ps 63:1; Eccl 3:11**

I. TELEOLOGY’S IMPORT (FINAL CAUSE BASIC, DETERMINATIVE)

- A. Ancient Aristotelian Adage: “Nature makes nothing in vain” (*De Caelo*, II, 110). To Aquinas: “It is impossible for natural desire to be unfulfilled, since ‘nature does nothing in vain.’ Now, natural desire would be in vain if it could never be fulfilled. Therefore man’s natural desire is capable of fulfillment, but not in this life So, it must be fulfilled after this life” (SG, III, 1, 48).
- B. “Religion,” evident throughout history, endeavors to “re-tie” a broken bond with the Creator
- C. “Argument from desire” set forth by C.S. Lewis—passing but deeply impressive moments of “joy” demonstrate transcendent realm for which we’re designed; Narnian stories illustrative; in *Pilgrims Regress* he argued, syllogistically: 1) Nature makes nothing in vain; 2) Man naturally desires Joy; 3) Therefore transcendent, everlasting Joy necessarily exists
- D. “God designed physical needs to point to our deeper spiritual needs” (Mohler: *Prayer*, p. 117)

II. OT REVEALS MAN’S DEEP, INNATE DESIRE FOR GOD

- A. Observation: Ps 42:1-2—natural thirst for God: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”
- B. Injunction: “Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4)
- B. Reason: Eccl 3:11—“He has put eternity in their hearts” Don Richardson’s *Eternity in Their Hearts* documents widespread evidence of hunger for Ultimate Reality, the “One Supreme God”—the “Abraham and Melchizedek Factors”

III. PHYSICAL DESIRES SUGGESTIVE (and Christ Ultimately Fulfills)

[Remember “Jesus is Answer” evangelistic outreach endeavor?]

- A. **Hunger:** we naturally desire nourishment, food essential, pleasurable—good for us & tastes good
 - 1. OT blends physical & spiritual realities: Manna in Wilderness; Bread of Presence in Temple
 - 2. Jesus declared “I Am the Bread of Life” (Jn 6:48) & Eucharist makes available for faithful
- B. **Thirst:** we naturally need & desire liquids—utterly essential for survival, pleasant in many modes
 - 1. OT: **water** from rock in wilderness; “there is a river” (Ps 46:4); “fountain of life” (Ps 36:9); **wine** “makes glad the heart” (Ps 104:15); “Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God most High, Possessor of heaven and earth” (Gn 14:18)
 - 2. Jesus: “the **water** I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn 4:14); Cana miracle **wine** (Jn 2:3-10) & Eucharist makes available
- C. **Shelter:** unique human need for protection, shelter, housing (both utilitarian & aesthetic)
 - 1. OT: “The eternal God is your refuge” (Dt 33:27); “God is our refuge and strength” (Ps 46:1)
 - 2. Jesus: “I am the door of the sheep” (Jn 10:7); therein we “have fled for refuge . . . where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus” (Heb 6:17-20)
- D. **Hygiene/Cleanliness:** we naturally desire to wash away dirt & grime & be clean
 - 1. OT ceremonies & baptismal pools near Temple
 - 2. Jesus: cleansing from sin & baptism prescription
- E. **Rest:** we naturally desire respite from our labors
 - 1. OT reveals God rested (Gn 2:2-3) & His people commanded to rest on Sabbath (Ex 20: 8-11)
 - 2. Jesus offers “rest for your souls” (Mt 11:28-30) & eternal rest for faithful (Heb 3:17-4:9)
- F. **Sexual Union**
 - 1. OT insists “not good to be alone” (Gn 2:18) & prescribes proper conduct; sexual union symbolizes ultimate union with God in *Song of Solomon & Hosea* & mystics
 - 2. Jesus portrayed as Bridegroom & heavenly ecstasy *via* union with Him
- G. In Sum: “All pleasure have within themselves some feeling of perfection” (Leibniz, *Theodicy*)—and ultimate Perfection found only in God and His Eternal Realm

JESUS IS DESIRABLE

IV. NON-MATERIAL (but NATURAL) DESIRES

- A. **Intellectual** (rational soul) Hungers—Aristotle: “man, by nature, desires to know”
 - 1. OT: Gifts of Spirit: Wisdom; Understanding; Knowledge *etc.* mesh with deep desire to know
 - 2. Jesus: “I am the truth” (Jn 14:6); “you shall know the truth” (Jn 8:32);
- B. **Moral** imperatives: inescapably driven to discern & do **good**
 - 1. OT: the LORD is good (Ps 100:5) & does good (Gn 26:29) & commands good (i.e. lawful) behavior
 - 2. Jesus is “good master” (Mt 19:16) & praised “good fruit” (Mt 7:17); ethical precepts abound in His parables, precepts, example; Paul, proclaiming Jesus, insists knowledge of good (the law) is “written in their hearts” (Ro 2:15)
- C. **Aesthetic** sensitivities: beauty/splendor/loveliness—symmetry & harmony alluring & artistic creativity pervasive
 - 1. OT: “behold the beauty of the LORD” (Ps 27:4); “my love, you are beautiful” (Song 6:4)
 - 2. Jesus: Disciples, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, *et al.* drawn to him
- D. **Social** instincts: inescapable social/political inclinations—family; friends; utopian aspirations
 - 1. OT: God establishes family, calls forth Israel, suffers with kings
 - 2. Jesus: Kingdom of God inaugurated by Him; Church significant

V. SPIRITUAL DESIRES EVIDENT, and CHRIST FINALLY FULFILLS

- A. St. Augustine: “You elicit our delight in praising You, for You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You” (*Confessions*, I,1 [GR trans.])
- B. *In Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis said: “It was as if I were carried sleeping across the frontier, or as if I had died in the old country and could never remember how I came alive in the new. For in one sense the new country was exactly like the old But in another sense all changed. I did not yet know (and I was long in learning) the name of the new quality I do now. It was Holiness.”
- C. *C.S. Lewis and the Bright Shadow of Holiness* (by Gerard Reed) traces Lewis’s remarkable insights

C.S. Lewis re Resurrection

148 //@ In the earliest days of Christianity an “apostle” was first and foremost a man who claimed to be an eye-witness of the Resurrection. [c.f. Acts 2:32; Paul in I Cor]

148-149 //@ As this qualification suggests, to preach Christianity meant primarily to preach the Resurrection. Thus people who had heard only fragments of St. Paul’s teaching in Athens got the impression that he was talking about two new gods, Jesus and *Anastasis* (i.e. Resurrection) (Acts 17:18). The Resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the Acts. The Resurrection, [p. 149] and its consequences, were the “gospel” or good news which the Christians brought: what we call the “gospels,” the narratives of Our Lord’s life and death, were composed later for the benefit of those who had already accepted the *gospel*. They were in no sense the basis of Christianity: they were written for those already converted. The miracle of the Resurrection and the theology of that miracle, comes first: the biography comes later as a comment on it. . . . The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection.

149 // What they were claiming was that they had all, at one time or another, met Jesus during the six or seven weeks that followed His death.

150 // But there is not in Scripture the faintest suggestion that the Resurrection was new evidence for something that had *in fact* been always happening. The New Testament writers speak as if Christ’s achievement in rising from the dead was the first even of its kind in the whole history of the universe. He is the “first fruits,” the “pioneer of life.” He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so. This is the beginning of the New Creation: a new chapter in cosmic history has opened.

153 //@ The body, which lives in that new mode is like, and yet unlike, the body His friends knew before the execution. It is differently related to space and probably to time, but is by no means cut off from all relation to them. It can perform the animal act of eating. It is so related to matter, as we know it, that it can be touched, though at first it had better not be touched. It has also a history before it which is in view from the first moment of the Resurrection; it is presently going to become different or go somewhere else. That is why the story of the Ascension cannot be separated from that of the Resurrection.

154 //@ The records represent Christ as passing after death (as no man had passed before) neither into a purely, that is, negatively, “spiritual” mode of existence nor into a “natural” life such as we know, but into a life which its own, new Nature.

155 // It is the picture of a new human nature, and a new Nature in general, being brought into existence. We must, indeed, believe the risen body to be extremely different from the mortal body; but the existence, in that new state, of anything that could in any sense be described as “body” at all, involves some sort of spatial relations and, in the long run, a whole new universe. That is the picture—not of unmaking but of remaking. The old field of space, time, matter, and the senses is to be weeded, dug, and sown for a new crop. We may be tired of that old field; God is not.

156 // . . . we all live in second-hand suits and there are doubtless atoms in my chin which have served many another man, many a dog, many an eel, many a dinosaur. Nor does the unity of our bodies, even in this present life, consist in retaining the same particles. My form remains one, though the matter in it changes continually. I am, in that respect, like a curve in a waterfall.

--C.S. Lewis, “Miracles of the New Creation,” in *Miracles*

RESURRECTION EVIDENCES—HABERMAS

The key evidence for Jesus' Resurrection is (1) the disciples' eyewitness experiences, which they believed to be literal appearances of the risen Jesus; these experiences have not been explained by naturalistic theories and additional facts corroborate this eyewitness testimony.

Other positive evidences include (2) the early proclamation of the Resurrection by these eyewitnesses, (3) their transformation into bold witnesses who were willing to die for their convictions, (4) the empty tomb, and (5) the fact that the Resurrection of Jesus was the center of the apostolic message, all of which require adequate explanations. It is also found that the disciples proclaimed this message in Jerusalem itself, where it is related that in repeated confrontations with the authorities, (6) the Jewish leaders could not disprove their message even though they had both the power and the motivation to do so. Additionally, (7) the very existence of the church, founded by monotheistic, law-abiding Jews who nonetheless (8) worshiped on Sunday demand historical causes as well. Two additionally strong facts arguing for the historicity of the Resurrection are that two skeptics, (9) James and (10) Paul, became Christians after having experiences that they also believed were appear instances of the risen Jesus. It is interesting to note here that Reginald Fuller concludes that even if the appearance to James had not been recorded by Paul (i Cor. 15:7), such would still have to be postulated anyway in order to account for both James's conversion and his subsequent promotion to an authoritative position in the early church." The same is even more emphatically true concerning Paul.

--Gary Habermas & Antony Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*, p. 22

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Jesus' Disciples Sincerely Believed He Rose from the Dead and Appeared to Them

They Claimed It

Paul

Oral Tradition

Creeds (e.g. 1 Cor 15:3-7)

Sermon Summaries (e.g. Acts 2)

Written Tradition

Gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke-Acts

John

Apostolic Fathers

Clement

Polycarp

They Believed It

Willingness to Suffer

Acts

Polycarp

Tertullian

Clement of Rome

Ignatius

Origin

Dionysius of Corinth

--Gary Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*

SEVEN STANZAS AT EASTER

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was as His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules
 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 will have an angel at the tomb,
make it a real angel,
weighty with Max Plank'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.

—John Updike, "SEVEN STANZAS AT EASTER," in *Verse*