

THE GOSPEL in WHICH WE STAND

I Cor 15:1-26

I. STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH—“hold fast that word” (v. 2)

- A. Einstein: “a man should look for what is, and not what he thinks should be.”
- B. Aristotle’s *Analytics & Topics* detail equally solid, if different, ways of knowing
- C. Reason involves:
 - 1. Deduction: math (Pythagorean triangle); logic (laws of thought; syllogisms)
 - 2. Induction: natural sciences (physics; chemistry; biology)
 - 3. Abduction: forensics; archeology; history—N.B. J. Werner Wallace’s *Cold Case Christianity*

II. CONFIDENT in the RESURRECTION OF JESUS

- A. Trustworthy witnesses—“He was seen” (v. 5)
 - 1. Eyewitnesses important—take seriously accounts of those who actually saw events (thus note the integrity of New Testament)
 - 2. Testimonies clear—central claims of early witnesses coherent
 - 3. Martyrdom affirms
- B. Circumstantial evidence also important
 - 1. Empty tomb powerful datum—Frank Morison’s *Who Moved the Stone* details journalist’s efforts to disprove the Resurrection, ending with him embracing the Faith
 - 2. Shroud of Turin uniquely persuasive
 - a. Gilbert Lavoie, *The Shroud of Jesus: And the Sign John Ingeniously Concealed*
 - b. *Verdict on the Shroud*—Kenneth Stevenson & Gary Habermas reflect on evidence
 - 1. Imprint shows 5’11” bearded male, muscular
 - 2. “Standard face” in scores of art works from 5th century on
 - 3. Came from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 A.D., when in France by 1357
 - 4. 1898 photographs & “negative” likeness
 - 5. Blood, not paint & looks scorched (radiation?)
 - 6. Coins on eyes minted in Pilate’s day
 - 7. Wounds from *flagrum* (Roman whip), crown of thorns
 - 8. Organic materials located only in Palestine
- C. J. Werner Wallace: *Alive: A Cold Case Approach to the Resurrection and Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates*
 - 1. “Learn how to infer”—adductive reasoning, moving to the best explanation of evidence
 - 2. “Think circumstantially”—cumulative evidence, taking everything into account, matters
 - 3. “Test your witnesses”—look for credibility (both character of person and coherence of words)
 - 4. “Hang on every word”—clues often found in casual comments, asides
 - 5. “Respect the chain of custody”—how was evidence treated, who preserved it
 - 6. “Know when ‘enough is enough’”—best conclusion, not necessarily indubitable

III. ASSURED WE TOO SHALL ENJOY EVERLASTING LIFE

- A. Jesus promised! “whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life . . . whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:15, 16).
- B. Reasons favoring immortality, from Socrates *et al*, persuasive
 - 1. Natural human longing—and natural longings have ends, satisfactions
 - 2. Mystery of human consciousness, suggesting very real spirit at the core of human nature
 - 3. Mind transcends matter, discerning such things as justice, numbers, laws
 - 4. Moral sense & expectation/fear of final judgment
- C. Near Death Experiences suggest immortality
 - 1. George Ritchie: *Return from Tomorrow*
 - 2. Don Piper: *90 Minutes in Heaven*
 - 3. Howard Storm: *My Descent into Death*
 - 4. Jeffrey Long: *Evidence of the Afterlife*
 - 5. Jim Garlow: *Encountering Heaven and the Afterlife*
 - 6. Evan Alexander: *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife*
 - 7. Colton Burpo: *Heaven in for Real*.