

23V06 – The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I would like to share with you an article I read by William Lane Craig “*The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*”. I to share this with you as a potential resource that at least some of you might be interested in.

Let’s pray.

Okay the book is titled “*The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*” written by William Lane Craig. The very first sentence in the preface of this book makes clear Craig’s intent for the Book. “This is a book for those who may believe in some kind of God or Supreme Being, but doubt whether He has revealed Himself to us in any decisive way.”

Dr. Craig divides his argument into six discreet historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. These are the death and resurrection, some blind alleys, the empty tomb, the appearances of Jesus, the origin of the Christian faith. Together these provide the framework for Dr. Craig’s historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

In the first section, Death and Resurrection, Crag begins with the modern predicament. The modern worldview is the modern predicament that man is a Cosmic Orphan, alone in the universe. Here he outlines how this worldview results in the inevitably bleak outlook of a meaningless life. Craig states, “Modern man is the Cosmic Orphan because he has killed God”, metaphorically of course. Without God we are nothing but a cosmic accident with no purpose. Craig then counters this bleak outlook with a discussion of the “Our Options.” Option 1 is “commit suicide.” Faced with the absurdity of a meaningless life, we must ask the question as Hamlet did, ‘to be or not to be’ that is the question.’ Another option is to “ignore the whole thing.” Craig explains how many try to escape asking the question at all. The problem with this approach is it results in an empty life and leaves us dissatisfied. A third option is “Affirm the absurdity of life and live nobly.” This option has superficial appeal, but it quickly goes disastrously wrong. This approach is inconsistent and has no basis for moral or noble behavior. Last option is to “Challenge the world view of modern man.” If there is a God, then man is not a Cosmic Orphan after all. With this worldview life has meaning. Morals are based solely on what God show us they are in the Bible. Reality modern man has no proof that God and immortality are illusions.

Chapter 2 is titled Some Blind Alleys. In this Chapter Dr. Craig discusses several alternative theories which have been proposed since Christian began proclaiming Jesus was risen from the dead. These alternative theories include the conspiracy theory. he apparent death theory, the wrong tomb theory, and the legend theory. Dr. Craig declares that all of these alternative explanations (“blind alleys”) have been unanimously rejected by contemporary scholarship. Then he goes about systematically explaining how and why these theories are rejected.

Chapter 3 is titled the Empty Tomb. In this chapter, Dr. Craig goes to great lengths to outline the historical facts that support the empty tomb. These include 1) The historical reliability of the account of Jesus' burial; 2) Paul's testimony to the fact of the empty tomb; 3) the source material used by Mark is therefore very old; 4) The expression "the first day of the week" proves that the account is extremely old; 5) the story is simple and lacks signs of legendary development; 6) the discovery of the empty tomb by women is highly probable; 7) the investigation of the empty tomb by Peter and John; 8) the proclaiming the resurrection in Jerusalem if the tomb was not empty; 9) early Jewish propaganda against the Christians presupposes the empty tomb; 10) that Jesus' tomb was not venerated as a shrine indicates that it was empty. Dr. Craig concludes this section by explaining the empty tomb. Craig again refutes the many alternative theories which were discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 is titled the Appearances of Jesus. In this chapter, Dr. Craig again provides historical arguments for the fact of the resurrection appearances. These arguments include, 1) testimony of Paul; 2) gospel accounts are fundamentally reliable historically; 3) accounts of physical, bodily appearances. Dr. Craig follows up with a working explanation for the resurrection appearances. One of these explanations addresses the purely natural alternative to the resurrection, that the disciples saw a veridical vision instead of a reembodied Jesus. He uses the follow points to disprove this alternative, 1) there is no known comparable cases to Jesus' resurrection appearances; 2) the number of occasions on which Jesus was seen over so long a time is unparalleled in the casebooks; 3) veridical visions cannot explain the physical, bodily nature of Jesus' appearances; 4) veridical visions of dead persons only occur to individuals who are unaware of the person's death.

Chapter 5 is titled the Origin of the Christian Faith. In this chapter Dr. Craig focuses on the belief in the resurrection by early Christians, and how this belief was the foundation for the origin of the Christian Faith. He briefly discusses how the resurrection turned a catastrophe into a victory. The origin of Christianity hinges on the belief early disciples had that God raised Jesus from the dead. The question Craig endeavors to answer is "What caused that belief?" He ends this chapter with a call for a conclusion. He ends this chapter with a recap of the three facts he has made in the book—the empty tomb, the appearances, the origin of the Christian faith—are independently established. Together they point to the conclusion: Jesus actually rose from the dead.

Chapter 5 is titled Finding Resurrection Life. Dr. Craig concludes with three profound consequences of the resurrection. First, the resurrection of Jesus was an act of God. Second, the resurrection of Jesus confirms what Jesus claimed about himself. Finally, the resurrection shows that Jesus holds the key to eternal life. Because of these consequences, we can know God personally through our belief and surrender to Christ as our Lord and Savior.

This book has very well laid out arguments for the resurrection. A book like this is a powerful reference for anyone being challenged about their faith and more specifically the resurrection. However, I felt the book was very repetitive. I was constantly having

feelings of déjà vu. I found myself back tracking repeatedly to make sure I had read the earlier sections correctly. I did not like the organization of the book for that reason. The content was excellent, but the overall presentation of the information was somewhat distracting. I found myself losing interest after reading the same content over and over again. The book does accomplish the primary goal that Dr. Craig outlined at the beginning of the book. If a person has an open mind and takes the time to test the various arguments presented in this book, I do believe they will be compelled to conclude the resurrection is the most plausible explanation no matter how supernatural and fantastic that conclusion sounds.

I greatly appreciated the arguments Dr. Craig presented in this book. Although most of these arguments are well known. However, his bulleted lists are very useful. As a quick reference, this book would work very well. I particularly liked the chapter on Blind Alleys which could be easily used to address these debunked alternative theories. The book also does a very good job of stressing the historical significance of the claims that Jesus had risen from the dead. Additionally, the final chapter does a very good job of outlining the steps to having a relationship with Jesus. If a nonbeliever was to read this book, it is possible they would be convinced by the logic and reason presented in this book. Even though Dr. Craig stated his target to be those not already convinced about the resurrection, I believe the book would be most effective for those who already believe but are searching for talking points to defend that belief.

Let's Pray

Okay, even though there are many resources available on this topic in literature today, I think there are some aspects of this book that stand out. I enjoyed this book for the content and arguments that Dr. Craig presented. However, I do not think I would recommend this book to a casual reader. I found the layout of the book difficult to read as a cover-to-cover book. I did not like the since of déjà vu I repeatedly felt as I read the same arguments over and over again from one chapter to the another. This repetitive approach does, however, result in a very good reference style book. If someone was looking for a good reference book with talking points they could easily put to memory, then I would highly recommend this book by Dr. Craig. Each chapter contains numbered subheadings for easy reference and makes summarizing the arguments easy. I will keep this book in my personal library for just such a purpose.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us again.

If you liked the message, please share the link with a friend. Send me comments, my email should be on the screen.

Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.