

REFLECTIONS AND REALITY

(Thoughts about the resurrection)

It isn't necessary to "see" something in order to "believe" it. Consider this. God chose Solomon to succeed David as king (1 Chron. 28:5). Adonijah, however, attempted to usurp the throne. (1 Ki. 1:5 - 10). When Nathan, the prophet, recognized this treason he told David and Solomon was hastily crowned king. Both coronation ceremonies were going on at the same time. As Adonijah and his friends were finishing their feast they heard so much rejoicing that the ground shook (1 Ki. 1:40). Soon, a messenger arrived to explain what was going on. They were told that by order of King David, Solomon had become the new king. Solomon had been given the King's mule to ride, thousands of people were rejoicing, and the royal officials had already come to congratulate him. In fact, they were told that Solomon had already taken his seat on the royal throne (vs. 46).

Even though Adonijah did not actually "see" Solomon on the throne, he knew it was true. The evidence was overwhelming. What he heard with his own ears was confirmed by the testimony of Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest. Based on what he knew to be true Adonijah fled to the altar of God and pleaded for mercy.

Now let us apply the same principle to the resurrection of Jesus. The Scriptures teach that Jesus has been raised from the dead, but none of us have ever seen Him in person. This, however, does not keep us from a rational faith. It isn't necessary for Jesus to appear to everyone. God specifically arranged for Jesus to appear only to certain witnesses (Act 10:41). These witnesses provided all the evidence that was needed. When they began to rejoice it was obvious that something wonderful had happened. Pilate and Herod did not need to see the resurrected Christ anymore than Adonijah needed to see King Solomon. They only needed to believe the evidence. What they saw and heard was more than enough. The witness of the apostles was magnified by the way they died. The word "martyr" as you know, is the Greek word for "witness".

As you ponder this principle please remember the obvious association between reflection and reality. The two go together. You cannot have the one without the other. You cannot have the reflection of a mountain unless there is a mountain to be reflected. If you can see the reflection, you don't need to see the mountain. There can be no shadow without substance, and there can be no reflection without reality.

God has used this principle from the very beginning. No man has seen God at any time (Jn. 1:18), but His reality is reflected in what He has created. His invisible qualities are clearly seen through what He has made (Rom. 1:20). A human application of this principle is seen in the life of Moses. For some reason our Sovereign God only allowed Moses to ascend Mt. Sinai and speak with Him face to face. Even though the people did not see this encounter, they knew it had happened because they could see the reflection of God in the face of Moses (Ex. 34:29 - 35). This was enough. This story, as you know, is used by Paul to illustrate how we also are to reflect the glory of God. In Christ we are permitted to approach God, as Moses did, with an unveiled face. Just as the presence and power of God reflected on the face of Moses, the presence and power of God will also be seen in us. Note carefully these inspired words: **"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."** (2 Cor 3:18)

The transformation experienced by the Christian is perhaps the strongest evidence in the world today for the reality of the resurrection. If not the strongest, it is certainly the most numerous and accessible witness. Before His resurrection and ascension, Jesus could only be one place at a time. This was why it was expedient for Him to go away. Once He had ascended to the Father, He could send the Holy Spirit to be with every believer simultaneously. His reflection in our lives is proof of His reality. **"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."** (2 Cor 4:6).