

WHAT IF EASTER IS JUST A STORY AND NOT REALLY TRUE?

1 Corinthians 15:1-20

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: There are those who don't believe the Easter story (resurrection of Jesus) really happened and that the "resurrection" of Jesus is just a story added onto some things that really did happen. Jesus was crucified and buried, but from there on, all is just a made up story. What if those women didn't really go to the tomb and find the stone rolled away? What if an angel didn't really talk to them? What if there wasn't really an earthquake? What if the soldiers didn't really go to sleep on duty? What if Mary didn't really encounter Jesus and it was simply the caretaker of the burial area? What if Jesus didn't really appear to the disciples in a closed up room? What if Jesus didn't really ascend into the heavens? What if all that happened after Jesus was crucified was just a myth? What if those who started the "Church" did so on just a story and not real facts? What if Easter is just a story and not really true? The resurrection of Jesus is the heart of Christianity, but what if the resurrection just isn't true?

I. THERE WOULD BE NO CHRISTIAN TEACHING OR CHURCH

1. The disciples preached that Jesus was resurrected, not about moral standards or community problems.
 - The crucifixion shattered the hopes of the disciples and they all went away sad, faith gone, hopeless.
2. The disciples "came alive" when they saw Jesus again, resurrected and they went out on fire for Jesus.
 - This was the beginning of the Christian message which has gone on for over 2,000 years because the resurrection of Jesus actually happened.

II. IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RESURRECTED, THEN ALL PREACHING AND FAITH IS VAIN

1. If the resurrection of Jesus is not real, then Christianity has been a waste of time, it is an empty faith.
 - Think of what all the followers of Jesus went through.
 - What about Paul?
 - What about the Disciples?
 - What about all the jail time, the beatings, the stonings, the hardships?
 - What about all those who laid down their lives for the resurrection story?
2. People from all over the world have believed the resurrection story and have been brought out of darkness, selfishness, paganism into moral, pure, loving and compassionate lives.
 - Was it just some story that did all this?
3. If Jesus wasn't resurrected from the tomb/dead, then the Christian faith is for nothing.

III. IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RESURRECTED THEN GOD IS BEING MISREPRESENTED

1. Preachers and teachers are only liars, false witnesses if Jesus was not resurrected for that is what they are preaching and teaching.
2. Jesus is a liar if He has not been resurrected for He often spoke of His own resurrection. ***"...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again..."***
 - Jesus spoke of Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days and nights and Jesus said many times that the Old Testament prophesied of His resurrection.
3. One has to challenge the authority of Jesus Christ if the resurrection is disputed.
 - Can YOU believe what Jesus said?

IV. IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RESURRECTED THAN BELIEVERS FAITH IS EMPTY AND THEY ARE STILL IN THEIR SINS

1. If Jesus has not been raised from the dead, then there is no hope for anything else that the Gospel speaks about.
 - Sin has not been paid for and Jesus' death accomplished nothing for anybody.
2. The resurrection of Jesus is God's declaration, His announcement that what Jesus accomplished on the cross was real, genuine, the bill had been paid for the sins of mankind.
 - The cross settled the debt between God and man and the resurrection of Jesus is God's receipt that the thing stands settled forever.

V. IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RESURRECTED THEN BELIEVERS WHO HAVE DIED HAVE PERISHED

1. If the resurrection story is not true, then when a believer is buried, that is the end of him/her for there is nothing waiting the believer in Jesus Christ.
 - Death has not been conquered and is still the enemy which man will never conquer.
2. If the resurrection story is not true, then there is no occasion for rejoicing on Easter Day.
 - There is still the struggle against sin without a Savior and the grave will be entered into without any hope.

VI. IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RESURRECTED THEN BELIEVERS ARE TO BE PITIED

1. Christians are wasting their time and to be pitied for dreaming such a dumb, stupid, foolish dream.
 - Why spend time in worship and prayer? Why not be out somewhere else on Sundays?
 - Why invest so much money, time and energy in telling the Gospel story around the world?
 - Why not be like the rest of the world?
 - Why not forget all this Christian business, throw the Bible away and forget it all?
2. If Jesus has not been resurrected then Christians are nothing but fools.

VII. THE FACT IS, THE TRUTH IS THAT JESUS HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD

1. Jesus is the "first fruits" in that IF He rose, believers in Him shall also rise from the dead, not only in spirit, but also in body and soul.
 - When mankind fell from God, it was the whole human race and the entire world has been affected.
 - When Jesus came, He came to redeem the whole human race, body, soul and spirit.
2. The resurrection of Jesus is the hope of the Christian/believer and that is why Christians gather for Easter.
 - To remind themselves that there is hope beyond the grave, that they are set free from the chains of sin, that they shall live in a world someday that is free from all that afflicts in this world.

CONCLUSION:

1. Consider how the resurrection has changed countless lives, YOURS included.
2. Do YOU believe in the resurrection? Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead totally?
3. If YOU believe that Jesus has been resurrected then tell others about what you believe about Jesus.
4. Think of what things would be like today if Jesus had not been resurrected from the dead.
5. If YOU have yet to make public your belief that Jesus has been raised from the dead, NOW is a good time.

