

# Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

21 February 2016

## Topics

### A.M. Bible Class:

The Son superior to angels (Hebrews 1:1)

### A.M. Lesson:

Shining as stars! (Philippians 2:1-18)

### P.M. Lesson:

The Second Coming! (1 Thessalonians 4:13f)

### Wednesday:

Christian Evidences (in the Annex)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

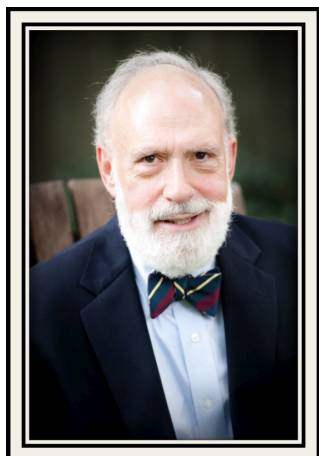
John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

***Great are the works of the Lord,  
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2  
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.***

## The resurrection

F. LaGard Smith



In his day, Paul took up the challenge of the skeptics who denied Jesus' resurrection, including, quite incredibly, even some in Corinth who were converted believers in Christ! How, possibly, could they have missed the whole point—"that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures....," and that in the days which followed he had appeared, not only to the apostles, but to more than five hundred of the brothers at the time (1 Corinthians 15:1-7)?

Using a series of "if-then" arguments, Paul proceeds to show how Christ's resurrection is the very linchpin of a Christian's faith and hope. "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.... If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

One must never underestimate the importance of

this fundamental Christian premise. If the story of Jesus' resurrection is nothing more than fanciful fiction dreamed up by his followers to justify their fanaticism, then our hope of living after death is equally fanciful. But if *in fact* Jesus was raised from the dead, never again to die, then the basis for our hope of immortality is real.

Life itself is defined by which answer we give to the question of resurrection. As Paul pointed out, "if the dead are not raised, then we might as well eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32). If life on earth is a dead-end street, then there's nothing to be gained by being righteous, and no compelling incentive for being morally upright. Take away resurrection and eternal judgment, and the conscience-seared gang member is given the green light to kill his rivals. On what basis can anyone tell him otherwise? And if there is no life beyond death, then Hitler is not to be scorned for his "Final Solution" for the Jews. Without the prospect of resurrection, death would be the final solution for everyone.

The millions of people since the time of Christ have lived and died in hope of resurrection is not, in itself, irrefutable proof of its reality. After all, for at least four millennia longer, many millions more have been offering vain sacrifices to heathen gods and man-made idols. What can be said, however, is that

—if resurrection is as much a false rumor as is pagan idolatry—then all the heroic acts of faith done in hope of resurrection are pointless.

In that regard, Paul mentions in passing the practice of some, apparently in Corinth, who (like some religious folks still today) were being baptized on behalf of unimmersed relatives and friends, in the hope that they too could be saved at the Day of Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:29). What they didn't understand, of course, is that baptism apart from faith is a meaningless ritual—that faith (and thus baptism) must be personal, not vicarious. While Paul's purpose in this text was not to address their misguided, if well-intentioned, acts, he does point out how absolutely misguided they would be if, in fact, there were no resurrection. The lesson for the rest of us is that any life lived in hope of heaven is a cruel joke if we are dead wrong about Jesus' resurrection, and—through him—our own.

With so much at stake, it is no wonder we see such great attention given in the Gospels to Jesus' resurrection. Not once, but repeatedly, Jesus explicitly predicted that he would be raised after his death. To the Jews he said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.... The temple he had spoken of was his body" (John 2:19-22). To his disciples, Jesus began early on to explain that he must go to Jerusalem, "and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matthew 16:21-22). In Galilee, he once again said virtually the same thing to them, and they were so confused by it "they were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:30-32). Finally, while they were approaching Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus tells them yet again that the Son of Man will be betrayed, killed, and then, "three days later, he will rise." Only slightly less amazing than Jesus' eventual fulfillment of all these predictions is the disciples' slowness to believe what had happened when they first learned of the empty tomb.

But, wonder of wonders, what Jesus had predicted all along is exactly what happens! When the women come rushing to the tomb expecting to anoint Jesus' body, they are amazed instead to hear the angels saying to

them: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you...?" (Luke 24:4-8). And, indeed, they did remember!

*AfterLife*. Nashville: Cotswold, 2003.

## News

*Sharron Cunningham is being treated for a thyroid condition. Her treatment includes taking a large dose of radioactive iodine which will force her to be antisocial until she no longer poses a danger of exposing others to radiation.*

## Prayer list:

*Dan Keele—mission work*

*Sam Appleton—declining health*

*Robin Richards—depression, back pain*

*John Cunningham—cancer*

*Norma Robinson—health*

*Linda Boling—health*

*H.L. Boling—general health and complications from leukemia*

*Ken Knowlton—surgery recovery*

*Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration*

*Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs*



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