

Holy Textures

Understanding the Bible in its own time and in ours

My Annual Rant About The Resurrection and Science

Argh!

Every year at this time, some well meaning preacher or pundit is quoted as saying something like:

- Science explains the "how" but religion explains the "why;" or,
- Easter happens in the hearts of Jesus' followers; or
- Resurrection happens whenever the followers of Jesus embody the love / message / passion / purpose of Jesus; or
- The resurrection story is a metaphor that explains what is "true" about life, not facts that explain what is "real;" or
- The resurrection is a story about hope triumphing over despair; life over death; etc., etc.

Argh!

Why is it that for 51 Sundays of the year, we talk about Jesus and God as though they are both actually, really real, factually existing, but suddenly on this most central of Sundays we go all soft and speak only of "meaning," "values," "purposes," etc.

Not that these are bad things to talk about. Far from it.

But science and religion have been in a 400 year long conversation (some would say fight to the death) not about the "soft" topics of meaning; but about the "hard" topic of what is really real; what is actually factual.

Easter Sunday is **NOT** the time to give up the conversation and let science be the sole arbitrator of what is really real, actually factual.

It is definitely the case that the resurrection is a singularity that current science has no explanation for.

But then again, current science has no explanation for any number of rather important things - gravity for example.

Or entanglement for another. (You'll have to Google that for an explanation of what 'entanglement' is.)

Or of the rather nagging conviction humans have that they have actual "minds" that think, plan, make choices, have intuitions, etc. (There is a huge, and as yet unresolved, debate about the relationship between the meat we call the "brain," and the seemingly really real, actually factual but non-spatially locatable phenomenon we call the "mind." You can Google that too.)

Don't get me wrong. I'm a big fan of science and what it has done to help us get a clearer picture of what is **MATERIALLY** really real, actually factual.

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But our current science is very weak at explaining **non-material** phenomena.

I believe that within the next 50 years - if the earth survives its current troubles - there will be some major breakthroughs from science's side of the conversation that will open new ways of talking together about non-material really real, actually factual phenomena.

So for God's sake, I pray that none of us preachers will give up stating that the resurrection is really real, actually factual.

The scientific explanation of how it happened is something we will have to wait for future generations to answer. But like Paul, we will state unequivocally that Jesus **IS** raised from the dead; that Jesus **IS** alive - really, factually. And then go on to explain what this means.

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