

Date: 04-12-2020
Series: Easter Sunday

THE FUTURE OF THE ATHEIST VERSUS THE FUTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN

(Selected Scriptures)

In his hey-day in the 60s and 70s, the world-champion boxer Muhammad Ali was more than happy to loudly and repeatedly tell the world: **“I am the greatest!”** In fact, he did this so often that some people got tired of it. One time, he was on an airplane getting ready to take off and he was politely asked by a flight attendant to please fasten his seatbelt. But not wanting to wear his seat belt, Ali replied: **“I am Superman. Superman don’t need no seatbelt.”** In nothing flat, the flight attendant shot back: **“Mr. Ali, Superman don’t need no airplane. Please fasten your seat belt!”**

Well, Muhammad Ali’s claim to be Superman was obviously bogus. He was one of the greatest boxers who ever lived—maybe the greatest—but he wasn’t Superman. He wasn’t faster than a speeding bullet or more powerful than a locomotive. He couldn’t leap tall buildings in a single bound nor could he fly up in the air like a bird or a plane. And because of this, his over-the-top claim to be Superman was immediately debunked by a clever and quick-thinking flight attendant.

Of course, Muhammad Ali is not the only one who has falsely claimed to be super-human. From time to time on TV, you’ll see famous people who’ve been pulled over by police for driving while intoxicated. And usually, it is when the handcuffs are finally being tightened around their wrists that the famous actor or actress blurts out something like this to the arresting officer: **“Do you know who I am?”** Someone once said: “People who ask: ‘Do you know who I am?’ usually don’t have a clue themselves.”

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to confirm that history is scattered with lavish claims to greatness by human beings. On top of these lavish claims to greatness, humans are also great at making outrageous promises that, in the end, never materialize.

But there is only one human who has ever lived that has **perfectly** lived up to the claims He has made about Himself—and—has perfectly kept every promise He has made. And, of course, the One I am speaking to you about this morning is God’s Son, **the Lord Jesus Christ.** Jesus is the only person to ever walk the face of the earth that has never failed—not once—to fulfill the claims and promises He has made to every single human.

I don’t know about you, but if I have a choice between believing what atheists like **Richard Dawkins** claim will happen to humans after they die and believing the promises that **Christ** has made, I’m going with the One who died for me and rose from the dead. Dawkins says there is no life beyond death; that all we’ll be is fertilizer for the plants and grass growing on our graves. But Jesus

promised eternal life as a free gift to every person who believes in Him for it—and—that those same believers will live with Him and with their believing friends and loved ones forever in a world without evil and sin and poverty. I don't know about you, but I'm going with the God/Man who died for me and rose from the dead to prove the reliability of His promises!

During His earthly ministry, Jesus made a lot of claims and He made them publicly. One of them was this: **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”** (John 2:19). Of course, the “temple He referred to here was His body. **“Crucify Me**, He said, **“and three days later I will raise Myself from the dead.”** When Jesus **makes** a claim He **fulfills** the claim He made. Humans destroyed His earthly body through crucifixion, but three days later, He walked out of His tomb and appeared to over 500 people.

Muhammad Ali claimed: “I am Superman!” **but he wasn't.** Jesus claimed, **“I was dead, and** behold, I am alive forevermore,” **and He is!** He is alive forevermore!

In John 6:35, Jesus also claimed: **“I am the bread** of life. He who comes to Me shall **never** hunger, and he who believes in Me shall **never** thirst.” At the very moment a person believes that promise, eternal life becomes his or her secure and irrevocable possession! You will **never** hunger for it again because Jesus has satisfied that hunger FOREVER!

Another claim Jesus made was this: **“I am the door.** If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9). In the world in which we live, the message that most people hear from birth to death is this: “There are many doors that lead to God...” But Jesus claimed” “I am **the door...**” (the **only** door to God!) And later in John 14:6, Jesus claimed: **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one** comes to the Father **except through Me.**” Jesus was crystal clear in what He claimed as well as what He promised.

He said if you destroy Me, I will be alive and walking the earth three days later.

He said if you realize that **life isn't working for you** and that you are hungry and thirsty for something that is true and real and reliable, **receive Me by faith** and I will instantly give you life that will last forever—you will **never** hunger or thirst for it again. It is yours and it is yours forever!

Do you want the future that the academic elites of this world offer, or the future that Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth offers?

Here is what atheistic academic elites offer you:

No hope. No future. When you die, you cease to exist. There is nothing ahead for you. Nothing. All you are is dust in the wind. Your body will be fertilizer for

the plants and flowers and grass above your graves. You'll never see your friends, you'll never see your loved ones, and you'll never see your children or spouse ever again. No hope. No future. Nothing to look forward to. No fun. No traveling. No meals with the people you love. No hugging your grandkids! It's all over.

That is what the intellectual geniuses of our day have to offer you. Nothing!

But here is what Christ, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, offers you:

Eternal hope. Eternal joy. Perfect love! Being loved IN PERSON by God and by all of your believing family and friends. An unimaginably magnificent future! No more tears. No more crying. No more pain. No more sin. No more poverty. No more disease or physical decay. No more death. No more sorrow. No more taxes! *Hallelujah!* An absolutely certain future! You will be you but in a brand new wonderful body that will never grow old or ache. You (and everyone around you) will be perfectly loving and perfectly kind. You will never ever sin again or speak a hurtful word—and neither will anyone else! Nothing will separate you from the love of God or others. You will glorify God in perfect peace and happiness forever and ever!

Author Tim Keller put it this way:

"You know what the resurrection is? The resurrection is a giant receipt stamped across history for all people to see, that you can know your future is certain if you believe in Christ for eternal life. Jesus Christ is walking proof that you will miss nothing. It's all coming in the future. **It's going to** be unimaginably wonderful! There's no more powerful message possible. And it's based on the historical fact of the resurrection. Christians, please say to your non-Christian friends: 'Why wouldn't you want that? Even if you don't like this or that about the Bible, why wouldn't you want that? You **have** to want that. You're not being honest with yourself if you don't want that.'

So this morning, if you are a believer in Christ ... you need to **relish** the amazing future that waits for you because of the death and resurrection of Christ. All the painful suffering that life brings your way is doable when you know that your **ETERNAL** future is certain! So if you are a believer, take heart today on this Easter Sunday. Jesus is alive and He has **promised** to never abandon you, now or ever!

Now, maybe some of you who are listening to me today are **not** sure that everything between you and God is ok—you're not sure that if you died that you would be with Him forever. Well, I've got GREAT NEWS **for you!** God has an absolutely free gift for you, and it's such an amazing gift, that once you've accepted it, it's yours forever—no strings **attached! Notice Romans 6:23:**

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because all of us are sinful, all of us are growing old and are slowly dying. It is the unavoidable result of living as sinful people in a fallen world. The wages you and I earn for sinning is physical death. **BUT!** (I'm so glad God doesn't stop there!) "The free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." This gift is **free**. It is **from God**, and it is **eternal**. You'll live **FOREVER** through simple faith in Christ! Now you can't earn it by living a good life or going to church or anything like that. Eternal life is a gift. And it is through Christ Jesus our Lord. He paid for this gift on the cross. And the proof that He paid for it (the receipt) is His resurrection from the dead.

My friend, if you're not 100% sure of your eternal home, the only thing that God is asking you today is this: **"Will you believe in Christ, and in Him alone, to give you the gift of eternal life? Life that starts today and lasts forever? Will you?"**

If right this moment, you are saying, **"Yes Lord, I believe in You for the gift of eternal life,"** what Jesus has promised is yours. You now have eternal life, and it is yours forever!

(Prayer)