

# What Is A Resurrection Bias?

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A bias is a prejudice that favors my point of view often with a refusal to consider the merits of an alternative point of view.

Of course, we're all biased. Sometimes our biases are as evident as the food we prefer. On other occasions they're subconscious. In his bestselling book, *Subliminal . . . How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior*, Leonard Mlodinow recounts an experiment in which volunteers rated a wine labeled \$90 a bottle as tasting better than another wine in the series that was marked at \$10 a bottle.

No surprise there. The surprise is that both wines came from the \$90 bottle. Furthermore, during the wine tasting the brains of the subjects were scanned by an fMRI machine. Amazingly, the price of the wine produced more activity in the area of the brain associated with pleasure.

Mlodinow concluded, "Though you are unaware of it, when you run cool wine over your tongue, you don't just taste its chemical composition; you also taste its price."<sup>[1]</sup> Because the subjects were biased to believe expensive wine tasted better than cheap wine, it did. Even though both wines came from the same bottle.

An interesting factor associated with a bias is that we collect information that supports it and ignore the rest. For instance, political liberals/progressives watch CNN and conservatives watch Fox News. Why? Because people want to hear what backs their bias, not what undermines it.

*A bias creates neural pathways on our brain . . . freeways with on-ramps--no off-ramps--which only accept supportive thoughts.*

## Why Cultivate a Resurrection Bias

My purpose in this series of blogs is to cultivate a bias that sees resurrection, rather than death, in every loss, setback, disappointment, letdown, misfortune, reversal and disaster. I've noticed when things go wrong people tend to think they'll get worse. At times it's a reflexive reaction. Rather than collecting data to support how things will improve, they obsess over how they'll go wrong. This result is anxiety, fear, despair, depression and a host of other toxic emotions. And these emotion poison the body, literally.

On the other hand, viewing life's losses through the reality of resurrection heals the body and emotions.

## The Disciples Bias

While reading through the Gospels I wondered why the disciples didn't understand it when Jesus repeatedly told them he would die and on the third day be raised to life. I counted 31 instances where Jesus made a direct *or* indirect reference to his death *and or* resurrection. Not once did the disciples ask what he meant.

For instance, “Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.’ The disciples didn’t understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about” (Luke 18:31-34 NIV).

## A Bias Radar

Unlike a radar system that only detects enemy planes while ignoring friendlies, their minds only picked up friendlies and rejected the rest as enemies. They searched for, interpreted, favored and recalled information in a way that confirmed their preexisting beliefs about the Messiah. The words of Jesus that contradicted their bias rolled off their consciousness like water from a duck’s back.

## A Faulty Biblical Bias

This reality made me wonder what created such a bias. I suspect the answer is found in Daniel 7:13-14 where we read: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Jesus called himself the Son of Man more than any other name (83 times in the NASB). Whenever he used that name the disciples thought of Daniel’s night vision in which the Son of Man’s dominion would be “everlasting” and his kingdom would “never be destroyed.” This idea is supported by Mark 13:26 where, as Jesus was teaching on the end of the age, he said, “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.” Jesus applied to himself the power and glory of Daniel’s Son of Man.

The disciples concluded if the dominion of the Son of Man was eternal, the Son of Man must be eternal. If the kingdom of the Son of Man would “never be destroyed,” then the Son of Man would never be destroyed. This belief formed a bias. That’s why when Jesus spoke of his death and resurrection we’re told, “Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.”

A biblical bias based on a sound interpretation is healthy. I’m biased in favor of the ten commandments and am closed to information intended to change that bias. But we must be careful because a faulty biblical bias can prevent us from experiencing the resurrection life of Christ. I’m convinced as we examine the character of Jesus Christ and his resurrection life, a resurrection bias will grow in our mind, transforming our thoughts, feelings and actions.

**Let me know your thoughts:** *As I mentioned a few weeks ago, I'm writing these blogs to provide content for a book. This fall I'll be teaching the material to the men of my church--Grace Chapel in Wilsonville, OR. I would value any edits or thoughts you can share with me to strengthen what I'm writing. So please leave comments. And pass it along to any friends you think would benefit.*

[i] Mlodinow Leonard, *Subliminal*, Vintage Books, a division of Random House, NY, 2012, 24