The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

The idea of a bodily resurrection is a longstanding belief in Judaism, and there are multiple accounts in the Old and New Testaments. Elijah raised the son of Zarephath and the son of the Shunammite woman. Later, a man rose from the dead when his body touched Elisha's bones. Desus raised the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus from the dead. And in the Book of Acts, we read that Paul raised Eutychus from the dead. Even in recent history, we have heard stories of people who died and came back to life.

Through the Spirit, King David prophesied that his body would be raised, and Jesus foretold about His bodily resurrection. But the resurrection of Jesus is uniquely different as all others rose and then died again. We read: "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27, NKJV). Jesus alone has immortality, as we read, "Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power" (1 Timothy 6:16). And He alone died for our sins, was buried, rose again on the third day, and is alive forever. Thus, being raised from the dead is different from the resurrection. The body raised from Joseph's tomb was the same form Jesus lived and ministered in, but it was different; it was a spiritual body not bound by the same physical limitations.

The resurrection of Jesus is one of two primary doctrines of the Gospel, the death of Christ and His resurrection, and they are equally important. ^{ix} If Christ gave His life on the cross and remained in the grave, His death would be nothing more than martyrdom for the Christian faith. Yet, without the vicarious sacrifice of Christ on the cross, His resurrection would have demonstrated no redemptive power. His death reveals Christ as the son of man and His resurrection as the Son of God. Paul said that our preaching is in vain if Christ has not risen, our faith is without hope, and the apostles were all false witnesses. But worse than all these, without the death and resurrection of Jesus, we remain in bondage to sin with no possibility of forgiveness. And those who die forever perish without any hope of resurrection.

Jesus's resurrection is the foundation of the church, Him being the chief cornerstone, reflecting the entire work of the Triune Godhead.^{xii} The power of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all demonstrated. We read, "Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly" (Acts 10:40).^{xiii} Jesus declared: "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay

it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (John 10:18). And Paul said: "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11). **

Jesus's death is real, witnessed by the soldiers and the Centurion; He physically died.^{xvi} But there is no mention in scripture of His spirit dying. Blood and water flowed from His side. Joseph of Arimathaea believed He was dead, as did the women who stood at the cross. And later, Jesus declared that He died and rose again, saying, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18). Thus, His resurrection was also literal and physical. After the resurrection, Jesus told His disciples, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:39).

Jesus was not a ghost or bodiless spirit. Jesus's soul and spirit were reunited in a resurrected physical body that His disciples could touch and feel, and He even ate with them. *vii Jesus's disciples and followers recognized Him after the resurrection, but strangely, their eyes were concealed at other times. *xviii

Jesus' resurrected body was spiritual, not bound by physical limitations. And He would appear and then disappear before them as if somehow translating between the natural and spiritual realms. **i* He never walked through walls or doors; He merely appeared to them when these were shut, emphasizing His supernatural ability to appear before them in physical form. ** These appearances were not illusions or figments of their imagination. Jesus was real, and there is tangible evidence of Jesus's bodily resurrection. The empty tomb and large entrance stone rolled away. The burial linens left in place, the napkin about His head neatly wrapped together in a place by itself, and the multiple eyewitness accounts. **xi

We often think of the resurrected body as a new one, and it is. But Jesus bore the scars of His crucifixion on his hands, feet, and side of His crucifixion, likely as an eternal remembrance of what He has done for us. The Apostle John saw in heaven: "Behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6).

The Passover ordinance was given to Israel as an everlasting statute to commemorate our deliverance and exodus from Egypt. XXXIII It also symbolically pointed to the Lamb of God, His death, burial, and resurrection, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. Paul said: "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). And so, we now remember both in our Passover Seder and the Communion of the saints: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Our newly resurrected bodies, while physical in every way as present, will also be uniquely different and better. And unlike Jesus, who carries our scars, our new bodies will be perfect without blemish. We read: "That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians

5:27). And our new bodies will be imperishable and incorruptible, without sin or any propensity for it. We read: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Jesus compared His resurrection to the sign of the prophet Jonah, saying: "No sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matthew 12:39). This statement has led to scholarly debate for those trying to align the ordinance of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread with the last supper, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Passover (*Pesach*) today is one weeklong celebration correlating scripturally with the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. XXIV However, when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the celebration was observed as three separate but overlapping convocations; the Sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb (*Korban Pesach*, also called the day of preparation), the festival of Unleavened Bread (*Hag Ha'matzot*), and the Feast of First Fruits (*Reisheet Katzir*).

On the day of the Passover sacrifice, which falls on the fourteenth day of the first month in the Hebrew calendar, the priests would inspect and prepare the lambs for slaughter in the morning. Then starting in the afternoon, they would offer them as Passover sacrifices on the bronze altar in the Temple. The sacrifices would continue throughout the night, ceasing before dawn as commanded by the Lord into the fifteenth day. This continuity of the sacrifices effectively intertwined the day of the Passover sacrifice and the Festival of Unleavened Bread into one continuous convocation and celebration.

The first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were ordained as days of rest—minor Sabbaths. **xvi* The Feast of First Fruits always fell on the day after this minor Sabbath (not to be confused with a Saturday Sabbath). And fifty days from this second day began the counting of weeks, which established the date for the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*, also known as the Day of Pentecost). **xviii*

On the first night of the Passover, the Hebrew calendar days beginning at sunset, Jesus sent His disciples to prepare a celebration meal in Jerusalem. Here, Christ officiated the New Covenant in what is known as "the last supper," breaking bread and blessing the cup of wine, symbolizing His broken body and the bled He would shed for our sins on the cross. That same night, about midnight, Jesus was arrested by the Temple guards and stood before a mock trial in the early morning, accusing Him of blasphemy. He was then handed over to Pontius Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to be scourged and crucified later that same day. Jesus's body was taken down from the cross late in the afternoon, prepared for burial, and placed in Joseph's tomb before sunset and on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

Christ fulfilled the Passover at His first advent. He was scourged and crucified on the day of the Passover sacrifice and buried before the Sabbath (the first day). He lay in the tomb on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a *Sabbath* rest (the second day). And He rose from the grave early in the morning, the first day of the week, and the Feast of First Fruits (the third day

and what we call resurrection Sunday).xxix Everything was perfectly fulfilled precisely according to God's Holy calendar.

While the feasts of the Lord written in the Old Testament serve as prognostic markers for the Advents of Christ, the New Testament is uniquely the book documenting the death, burial, and, most importantly, Jesus's resurrection. Had it not been for the resurrection and if Jesus had remained in the grave, the Gospel accounts would likely have never been written. In the words of William Evans, "The resurrection of Jesus does not grow out of the beautiful story of His life, but the beautiful story of His life grew out of the fact of His resurrection." xxx

The Gospels provide written eyewitness accounts of the empty tomb and the resurrection. But the apostles propagated and preached the resurrection immediately after it occurred, and the fruit of their message caused the church to flourish decades before the Gospels were written. Even the angel bore witness that the tomb was empty, saying: "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6). Mary Magdalene and the other women found the empty tomb and testified as such.**

disciples had stolen His body. The chief priests and Pharisees remembered Jesus saying He would rise again after three days. Thus, a massive stone was rolled over the door to the sepulcher, secured with the official Roman seal. And guards were placed there to watch; their lives were in jeopardy if they failed to secure the tomb.**

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes. XXXXIII It was customary for the Jews to wind long strips of cloth around a body from the neck to the feet. These strips were impregnated with spices used for embalming, forming a cocoon. But of Jesus, we read: "Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself" (John 20:6-7). Jesus's body had slipped out of the graveclothes, leaving them undisturbed. Only the handkerchief placed over His face was neatly folded and set by itself. Several days into its decomposition process, anyone stealing a body would not bother to remove its linen strips, and the stench alone would be enough to repulse most people.

The resurrection of Jesus was an unchallenged fact for at least the first century. The early disciples, and the church, to this day, continues to celebrate the Lord's Day on Sunday, the first day of the week.**xxiv* Distinctively different from the Sabbath, the Lord's Day marks a "new beginning" and our promise to enter an "eternal Sabbath" in God's Kingdom. Jesus said: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Both days are commemorative and prophetic, and one does not supplant the other. And both are important to solidify our faith and trust in the Lord. Only God can raise the dead, and we trust that He will raise us also in Christ.** Hence, the resurrection is further proof and a declaration that Jesus is the very Son of God, and only His Kingdom will stand forever and ever.

And we trust that Jesus will invite us into His Kingdom when we hear Him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21).

On at least two occasions, the Jews asked Jesus to show them a sign so they might believe. And twice the Lord gave them a sign that pointed to His resurrection: the sign of Jonah, and the other, the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple of His body. Christ's resurrection assures us of God's forgiveness of sin and His satisfaction with the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. The resurrection gives us an understanding that we have a merciful and faithful high priest who ever lives to make intercession for us. The resurrection affirms that we have a new birth and have become a new creation in Christ, assuring us of the same resurrection power and immortality. The resurrection assures the believer of all needed power for life and service to the Lord. And the resurrection guarantees the certainty of God's Day of Judgment and that we are not appointed to God's wrath.

Death is the greatest enemy of God and the last to be destroyed. And still, death reigns and rules. XIIII Yet the Lord declared: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes" (Hosea 13:14). It will be the death of death, as we read, "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). XIII It is the resurrection of Jesus that not only conquers the power of death; it destroys it. XIV Hence, we read:

"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING? O HADES, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

After Jesus's resurrection, He appeared to His disciples for forty days, and on the fortieth day, He ascended to the right hand of the Father. Jesus told His disciples: "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Fifty days after resurrection Sunday began the counting of weeks, which established the date for the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot, also known as the Day of Pentecost). xlvi

The seven weeks between the second day of Passover and the Feast of Weeks is the period of counting the *Omer*. When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the Jewish people would bring a sheaf of barley (called an *omer*) on the second day of Passover. After the destruction of the Temple, this seven-week period became a time of semi-mourning. On the thirtieth day of counting the *omer* is the Jewish celebration of *Lag B'omer*, the only day during the seven weeks when weddings are allowed. According to tradition, a terrible plague struck the students of Rabbi Akiva during the *Omer* period, but on the thirty-third day, the plague miraculously ended.

The period of counting the *omer* concludes with the Feast of Weeks, also called an offering of the First Fruits (*Bechorim*), which traditionally consisted of a wheat offering in ancient times.

While Passover celebrates the miraculous Exodus from slavery in Egypt, the Feast of Weeks celebrates the giving of the *Torah* (Law) at Mount Sinai (*Matan Torah*). However, there is a greater Messianic fulfillment of these biblical festivals. During this *Omer* period, Jesus was thirty-three years old when He ascended to heaven. And on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell in Jerusalem, and the church was born in the Power of the Spirit to go forth and preach the gospel.xivii

Mark and Luke are the only New Testament writers to speak of Christ's ascension. Jesus departed from this physical realm and was physically taken into the spiritual realm in His resurrected body. Jesus predicted His ascension, saying: "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?" (John 6:62). And Paul spoke of His ascension, saying: "Now this, 'HE ASCENDED'—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Ephesians 4:9-10).

Wherein it says that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth and ascended far above all the heavens suggests both a physical and spiritual descending and ascension; that Jesus spiritually and physically visited Gehenna (Hell), and physically and spiritually passed through the physical heavens into the spiritual ones. Paul says he knew a man caught up to the third heaven. From this verse, scholars surmise that a lower spiritual realm (second heaven) coincides with the earth's physical heaven and the demonic realm and a third higher spiritual realm that transcends the physical universe.

Paul calls Satan "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2), suggesting he is the one who occupies and temporarily rules from this second heaven. Paul also tells us: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). Again, the implication is there is a lower second heaven where demonic principalities temporarily rule the earth in darkness, and their chief prince is called "the prince of the power of the air."

However, regarding the third heaven, it is believed this is where God's throne is established; the dominion of God Himself, His angelic hosts, the heavenly court, and the redeemed of the Lamb. We read, "Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back" (Revelation 4:6). "And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God" (Revelation 15:2).

Jesus has not only passed through and ascended far above all the heavens, but He has also become higher than all of them. We read, "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). The implication here is that Christ, who was made a little lower than the angels, having

overcome the things of this world and in obedience willingly gave His life as a ransom for us on the cross, has now ascended beyond the earth's physical and spiritual lower heavens, is crowned with glory and honor and seated at the right hand of the Father in the highest spiritual realm that transcends this world.^{III}

The exaltation of Christ, Him being crowned with glory and honor and seated at the right hand of the Father, is the Father giving the Son the place of honor and power at His right hand. As it says: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippian 2:9-11).

Jesus is now our high priest who forever makes intercession for us. liii He has poured out the Holy Spirit and dwells within us, assuring our continual access to God. Iiv Jesus is the head of His church and has given us the fruit and gifts of the Spirit. He is preparing a place for us in His Kingdom and promised to return and bring us into it. Ivi

And when He returns, we read: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Jesus will leave the right have of the Father, descend into the second heaven to destroy all the powers of darkness, gather us to be with Him (the resurrection and rapture), and then return with His church to Jerusalem to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

Until this Second Advent, we live in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In the words of Myer Pearlman, he says, "The ascension becomes the dividing line of two periods of Christ's life: From birth to the resurrection, He is the Christ of human history, the One who lived a perfect human life under the earthly conditions. Since the ascension, He is the Christ of spiritual experience, who lives in heaven and touches men through the Holy Spirit." Viii

Jesus told His disciples: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:21-22). There is a reward for those He deems worthy to share His power and authority. As it says: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12).

The resurrection and ascension of Christ are for our encouragement that we not only persevere and overcome the trials of this world but should be motivated to live a life of holiness and dedication to Jesus. We should retain a conception of His church and a recognition that it is a supernatural assembly of believers from every tongue and tribe receiving our divine life from our resurrected and ascended King.

Our citizenship is not of this world; thus, we should always retain a positive attitude towards it and a deep sense of responsibility to those whom God has entrusted to us, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Iix And we should always be joyous in the hope of Jesus's soon return and our resurrection in Him. Jesus said, "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them" (Luke 12:37).

Amen!

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 17:17-24. 2 Kings 4:17-35.
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ii 2 Kings 13:20-21.

iii Mark 5:22-43. Luke 7:11-17, 8:41-55. John 11:1-44.

iv Acts 9:36-43.

^v Psalm 16:10. John 2:19, 21-22.

vi All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

vii Revelation 1:18.

viii 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

^{ix} Duffield, Guy P. and Van Cleave, Nathaniel M. Foundations of Pentecostal Theology. Foursquare Media. 1910.

^{*} Luke 4:41, 5:24. Romans 1:3-4.

xi Philippians 2:8.

xii 1 Corinthians 15:13-19.

xiii Ephesians 1:19-20. Acts 2:24, 13:30. Romans 6:4, 10:9. Colossians 2:12.

xiv John 2:19.

xv 1 Peter 3:18.

xvi John 19:33. Mark 15:44-45.

xvii Matthew 28:9. John 20:27. Luke 24:41-43.

xviii Luke 24:13-16, 31. Mark 16:12-13. John 20:14-15, 20:16-18, 20:20, 21:4-7.

xix Mark 16:9-14. John 20:19, 26.

xx John 20:19, 26.

xxi Matthew 28:12-15. Luke 24:3. John 20:5-7, 11:44, 19:39-40.

xxii Luke 24:40. John 20:20. Zechariah 12:10, 13:6. Revelation 1:7.

xxiii Exodus 12:14.

xxiiv Shurpin, Yehuda. Why Is Passover on Nissan 15, Not Nissan 14? Passover 2023 (Pesach). Chabad.org.

xxv Exodus 12:10.

xxvi Exodus 12:16.

xxvii Leviticus 23:11-16.

xxviii Matthew 26-27.

xxix Matthew 28:1.

xxx Evans, William. 91.

xxxi Luke 24:3. John 20:2.

xxxii Matthew 28:12-15.

xxxiii John 11:44.

xxxiv Acts 20:7. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

xxxv 1 Peter 1:21.

xxxvi Romans 1:4.

xxxvii Matthew 12:38-40. John 2:18-21.

xxxviii 1 Peter 1·3

xxxix Hebrews 2:17, 7:25. Romans 8:34.

- xl 1 Thessalonians 4:14. 2 Corinthians 4:14. John 5:28-29, 6:40. Romans 5:14, 8:11. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
- xli Philippians 3:10. Ephesians 1:19-20.
- xlii Acts 10:42, 17:31. John 5:22, 25-29.
- xliii Romans 5:14.
- xliv Hebrews 2:14.
- xlv Revelation 1:18.
- xlvi Leviticus 23:11-16.
- xlvii Acts 2:1-4.
- xlviii Mark 16:19. Luke 24:50-51.
- xlix Acts 1:9.
- ¹ John 20:17, 13:1, 16:10, 16, 28. Hebrews 4:14. 1 Timothy 3:16.
- li Hebrews 4:14, 7:26.
- Fig. Psalm 8:5. John 16:33. Matthew 20:28, 22:44, 26:64. Acts 2:33, 5:31, 7:56. Ephesians 1:20. Hebrews 1:3, 13, 2:7-9. 10:12. 1 Peter 3:22. Romans 8:34. Colossians 3:1.
- liii Hebrews 4:14, 9:24. Romans 8:26-27, 34.
- liv John 14:16, 16:7. Hebrews 4:14-16. 1 Timothy 2:5. Acts 2:33.
- [№] Ephesians 1:22, 4:8-13, 5:9. Colossians 1:18. Galatians 5:22. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Hebrews 2:4.
- lvi John 14:2-3.
- lvii Pearlman, Myer. 176.
- lviii Colossians 3:1-4.
- lix Philippians 3:20.