THE RESURRECTION OF THE MESSIAH



By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

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He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
Matthew 28:6-7

INTRODUCTION

The Resurrection of the Messiah is a very important aspect of the gospel and is the third of the three points of the gospel. It will be studied in two major areas: first: the history of the resurrection and its chronological order; and secondly, the theological significances, implications and results of the resurrection.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

A. The Dawning of Resurrection Day

The dawning of Resurrection day is recorded by two of the Gospels: Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:1. Matthew 28:1 states: *Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*
When most Gentile believers read: *Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week*, they think in terms of the wee hours of Sunday morning. And from this assumption came traditional Easter sunrise services. But that is not the point of this text.

In determining the actual time of the Resurrection, we must remember the first day of the week for Jews is from sundown Saturday until sundown Sunday. The term "dawn" is used today to refer to the time of day when light begins to appear on the horizon before the sun itself begins to appear. But in the original meaning, the word dawn simply meant "towards the beginning of the new day," regardless of what time of day it was. When the text states: *late on the sabbath day*, it means going toward sunset of Saturday night.

It should be remembered that the Gospel writers were all Jews, and the timing element they used was Jewish time, not Gentile time.

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Gentile timing of a day is from midnight to midnight, but the Jewish day is from sundown to sundown. The new day begins as soon as three stars appear after sunset. Therefore, when Matthew said: *late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*, he meant late Saturday, toward evening; the sun had set, and the first of the three stars was beginning to appear. That was the dawning of the first day of the week.

Mark's statement: *And when the sabbath was past*, shows that he begins his timing element by the time three stars had already appeared on Saturday night. Thus, on Saturday evening, the women went to visit the tomb.

The Resurrection, then, actually occurred sometime between the hours of late Saturday night and the wee hours of Sunday morning. Again, it must be kept in mind that Saturday night is already the first day of the week. If this is kept in mind, these passages will be better understood.

B. The Opening of the Tomb

The second thing concerning the history of the Resurrection is the opening of the tomb, recorded in Matthew 28:2-4: *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men.*

This passage records the opening of the tomb, and it states three things.

First, an earthquake occurred. This was the second earthquake within a three-day span. At the time when Yeshua (Jesus) died, there was an earthquake; now, at the point of His Resurrection, there is another earthquake.

The second thing that happened was that an angel appeared and rolled away the stone. By so doing, he would have broken the Roman seal that had been placed on the stone.

The third thing that happened was that the Roman guards who were stationed at the tomb were so filled with fear that they could not even move; they became as dead men from their fear. They were literally "scared stiff" and could not so much as move. The reason that the Roman guard had been stationed there was to make sure that no one rolled away the stone. They were to arrest anyone who tried to do so; however, none of the Roman soldiers tried to arrest an angel!

C. The Arrival of the Women

The third thing in the history of the Resurrection is the visit of the

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women to the garden tomb, recorded in Matthew 28:5-8; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-9 and John 20:1. By the time they actually arrived at the tomb, there was some light, for the sun had already begun to slowly rise. It begins getting light in Israel as early as 4:00 in the morning. The women set out in two groups. Mary Magdalene started out alone and was first to arrive in the area of the garden tomb. She saw the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, but left quickly before she saw any angels. Another group of several women arrived, and they saw that the stone was rolled away and the angel was standing there.

As they were coming to the tomb, Mark 16:3-4 records their conversation: *And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great.*
It is obvious that although Yeshua had predicted and talked about His Resurrection, these women did not believe that He would be resurrected. They were heading for the tomb for the purpose of embalming the body, not to witness a resurrection. They were very much concerned about someone's being able to roll away the stone for them so that they could enter the tomb and embalm His body. But by now, the stone had already been rolled away; the Roman guard had recovered from being scared stiff and were able to run away from the area.

Mark then tells what happened next in verse 5: *And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed.*

They saw one angel, though Luke 24:4-5 points out that there were actually two angels: *And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them ...*
Some have seen a contradiction here, but there really is no contradiction. Luke states how many angels were actually present: there were two. But when the women looked inside, they saw only one of them, and only one was actually speaking to the women. Mark emphasized, as did Matthew 28:5, the one angel who was actually doing the speaking.

What the angels told these women to do is given in Matthew 28:6-7: *He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.*

Luke 24:5-7 adds: *...and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

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The message of the angel was twofold. First, they should not seek the body of Yeshua, because the Messiah is risen, even as He Himself had said He would. Secondly, they are to tell His disciples, and Peter in particular, that He is risen from the dead. It is important to tell Peter because earlier he had denied the Messiah three times and now needed to be comforted. The disciples were to move on to Galilee where He would meet them.

Jesus had told the disciples during the last Passover that when He was arrested, they were not to remain in Jerusalem but to go to Galilee, and He would meet them there after His Resurrection. Because the disciples did not really believe in the Resurrection, they never followed the Messiah's commandment to go on to Galilee. So now the order is given the second time, from these angels, through the women, that the disciples are to proceed to Galilee.

The women responded in three ways: first, they remembered Yeshua's prophecy that He would be raised from the dead; secondly, they told no one outside the apostolic group; thirdly, they ran to make the report known to the apostles as they were commanded to do by the angels.

D. The Reports of the Women

The fourth thing that happened is the report to the apostles by the women, recorded in Luke 24:9-12 and John 20:2-10. Remember, Mary Magdalene arrived before the other women, and saw the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. She saw no angels and assumed that the body had been removed to another place. She then ran to tell Peter and John what she had seen. That is the point of John 20:2-3. The other women, who saw the angels, reported what they had seen and heard from the angels to the other nine disciples. The nine disciples who heard the women's report of the Resurrection disbelieved the report, and did not follow the order to proceed to Galilee. As for Peter and John, after they heard from Mary Magdalene that the tomb was empty, they ran to the tomb to investigate. John

20:3-8 states: *Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he sees the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore also comes, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholds the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.*

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John outran Peter and arrived first. John did not go in, but simply looked inside and saw that the linen cloths, which had been wrapped around Jesus, were lying in one part of the tomb, and the napkin, which had been wrapped around the face, was in another part of the tomb. The term linen cloths is plural,

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because there was not one, singular shroud, but strips of cloths in which He was wrapped. The head-piece was totally separate from the strips of cloth, which had surrounded the body. This is one of several reasons why the Shroud of Turin cannot possibly be the shroud of the Messiah.

While John merely looked inside, Peter, who was much more impetuous than John, ran all the way inside and saw the tomb empty. Then John went inside, too. Peter left the tomb in perplexity, not really sure what to think; John left the tomb believing in the Resurrection. Apparently, one of the reasons for John's belief is that when he saw the linen cloths, they were still rolled up. They were not unrolled or scattered, which is what one would expect to see if someone had removed them from the body. For example, when Lazarus was resurrected, Yeshua told the audience to unwind the strips of cloth in which Lazarus had been wrapped. In the case of Yeshua, the strips of cloth were never unwound, which means that the Resurrection occurred through the linen cloth!

E. The First Appearance: Mary Magdalene

The fifth event in the history of the Resurrection is the first appearance of the resurrected Messiah. This first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, and is recorded in Mark 16:9-11 and John 20:11-18. After Peter and John had left the tomb area, Mary returned to it. She was still in a state of unbelief and merely assumed that the gardener, or someone else, had removed the body.

John 20:11-12 states: *But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholds two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* Finally, Mary, who had not seen the angels earlier, saw two angels this time. But she did not recognize them to be angels, because they appeared simply as young men.

So, in verse 13, when they asked her the question: *Woman, why weep you*? She answered: *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*. She complained that the body had been removed, and she had no way of knowing where the body had been laid. She did not yet believe that a resurrection had occurred.

Finally, Yeshua appeared. The fact that Mary Magdalene was the first person to see the resurrected Messiah is taught in Mark 16:9: *Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.*

The fact that a woman was the first person to see the resurrected Messiah is significant. Under Jewish law, the testimony of a woman was not acceptable as valid testimony in any Jewish court. If the Gospel accounts were a fabrication written by Jews, they would not have done it this way. If it were a fabrication, they would have chosen the first eyewitnesses of the Resurrection to be men, because that

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would have been far more acceptable in the Jewish community. The fact that the first appearance of Yeshua was to a woman validates the Gospel accounts. The reason they had to write it this way is because this is the way it happened.

The first one to see the resurrected Jesus, then, was Mary Magdalene, but she did not recognize Him immediately. After speaking to the two angels, suddenly He appeared to her and asked her the same question the angels had asked her. This is recorded in John 20:15: *Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weep you? whom seek you?*

She erroneously concluded that the One speaking to her was the gardener, and she wanted to know where he may have placed the body so that she could go to that particular place. Only when Yeshua said to her: Mary, and said it in a way that was familiar to the ears of Mary, did she recognize Him to be the Messiah (Jn. 20:16). She said to Him in Hebrew: *Rabboni*, which literally means "my teacher," or "my rabbi."

What is obvious about the resurrected body of Yeshua is that there were enough changes in the resurrected body so that He was not recognized immediately. On the other hand, there were enough similarities that eventually people did recognize that this was the same One who had previously died. This is very similar to a situation, which many people have experienced. For example, two friends lose touch with each other for a number of years. Years later, they see each other again, but enough changes have taken place over the years that recognition is not immediate. Yet there are enough similarities that, after awhile, it is clear that this is the same person who was a friend years earlier. This is the nature of a resurrected body. There are enough differences so that recognition is not immediate, but there are enough similarities to show that the person who was resurrected is the same one who died. It is the same body resurrected from the dead, but changed in various facets.

When Mary Magdalene finally recognized who Yeshua was, she moved toward Him as John 20:17 states: *Jesus said to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father ...*
A major question asked concerning this "touching" is: "Why did Jesus forbid Mary Magdalene to touch Him, but later He permitted the Apostle Thomas to touch Him?" There are two possible answers. One answer is to point out that two different Greek words are used. The Greek word which describes the case of Thomas' touching Him means merely "laying a hand onto someone else's skin." All He asked Thomas to do was touch the areas where His wounds were inflicted at the Crucifixion. In the case of Mary, however, the Greek word translated, touch means "to cling" or "to take hold." The picture is that Mary was so happy to see Him alive that she wanted to cling to Him so He would never depart again. But it was necessary for Him to

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leave this earth now that His earthly ministry for His First Coming was completed; she was not to cling to Him because He had to leave.

There is a second explanation that I prefer, based upon the next phrase: *for I am not yet ascended unto the Father*. According to Hebrews 9:11-12, 24; and 10:12, it was necessary for the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed with blood. It should be remembered that the Tabernacle, which Moses made on earth, was a copy of a Tabernacle already in existence in Heaven. Just as the earthly Tabernacle needed the cleansing of blood, even so, the heavenly Tabernacle also needed the cleansing of blood.

But why did the heavenly Tabernacle need the cleansing of blood? The main reason is given in Ezekiel 28:11-16. In this passage, it is learned that when Satan was created and before his fall, he had various positions in heaven: first, he was the canopy that covered the throne of God; secondly, he was the guardian of God's throne; thirdly, he was the choir director in Heaven; and fourthly, he also served as the high priest in the heavenly Tabernacle. When Satan sinned, he defiled the heavenly Tabernacle, thereby requiring that it be cleansed. Just as the earthly Tabernacle needed cleansing by blood, the heavenly Tabernacle also needed cleansing by blood. The earthly Tabernacle was cleansed by animal blood; however, the heavenly Tabernacle required "better" blood, the Messiah's blood (Heb. 9:23-24).

At this point in resurrection history, Yeshua needed to take His blood, ascend into Heaven, and sprinkle the heavenly sanctuary, thereby cleansing it. Just as the earthly priest could not be touched until his Day of Atonement sacrifice was completed, even so, Yeshua could not be touched until the heavenly sanctuary was cleansed. This meeting between Yeshua and Mary Magdalene occurred just before He ascended into Heaven to cleanse the heavenly Tabernacle. For this reason, Mary was forbidden to touch Him at this point, because He had not yet ascended unto the Father.

Apparently, sometime between this event and the time He talked with Thomas, a whole week later, Jesus had ascended into Heaven, cleansed the heavenly Tabernacle and then returned to earth for the purpose of spending forty days instructing His disciples.

The fact that Yeshua would ascend into Heaven before His disciples would see Him is implied in the next sentence. In John 20:17, He told Mary: *... go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.*
He instructed Mary Magdalene to tell the disciples concerning the truth of the Resurrection and that He was about to ascend to the Father. Also, note that the disciples are now called brethren. They are no longer referred to as only disciples or servants, though He still used

those terms. They are also now His brethren, because there is now a new relationship between Yeshua and all believers as the result of the Resurrection. Therefore, they are now His brethren. In keeping with Yeshua's instructions, Mary Magdalene reported of the Resurrection to the disciples.

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According to Mark 16:11, the first eyewitness of the Resurrection was disbelieved: *And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.*
They would not believe Mary's testimony, in keeping with the Jewish view of that day; that a woman's testimony was not acceptable.

F. The Second Appearance: The Women

The sixth event in the history of the Resurrection is the second appearance of Jesus. This is His appearance to the other women. After Mary had gone, the other women came into the garden again.
According to Matthew 28:9-10: *And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*
It should be noted that the second appearance of the resurrected Messiah was also to women. This again militates against the concept that these Gospel accounts are just fabrications. All four Gospels were written by Jews, and Jews would not fabricate an account, which recorded that both the first and second appearances were to women, knowing that such a testimony would not be acceptable in the Jewish world of that day. If this were a fabrication, then they would have clearly stated that it was men who first witnessed the Resurrection. Because it did not happen that way, they had to report it as it did happen: that both the first and second appearances were to women.

Having seen the resurrected Messiah: they *took hold of his feet, and worshipped him*. The fact that He readily accepted their worship shows that He recognized and accepted their claims and belief that He is, indeed, God. He instructed the women not to be afraid. He was not merely an apparition or ghost. He was the resurrected Messiah.

They, like Mary, were then told to go and tell the disciples what they had seen. For the second time, Jesus called the disciples "my brethren." This is their new relationship in light of the Resurrection. They were to tell these disciples again that they were not to stay in Jerusalem but to go to Galilee, and He would meet them there. This is the third time that these disciples received specific instructions to proceed to Galilee, and He would meet them there. As with the instructions given by Mary Magdalene, those given by these other women were also disbelieved. The result was that the disciples did not proceed into Galilee; they simply did not believe that a resurrection had occurred.

G. The Report of the Guard

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The seventh historical event is the report of the guard as recorded in Matthew 28:11-15: *Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continues until this day.*
The guard spoken of in this particular passage was the Roman guard who was assigned to make sure that no one rolled away the stone, but they could not do anything to stop the angel from rolling the stone away. They were fearful about reporting directly to Pontius Pilate, because their failure could mean the death sentence. Instead, they went to the chief priests and reported all the events that occurred.

Once again, a conspiracy took place. The chief priests, who were Sadducees, assembled together with the elders, who were Pharisees. They collected a large sum of money and paid the soldiers to go around telling everybody that while they were sleeping, the body was stolen by the disciples of Yeshua. However, if they fell asleep on the job, they could have been executed under Roman law, so the conspirators told these soldiers to spread the story in Jewish circles only. If, for some reason, this got back to Pontius Pilate who by now was back in Caesarea, the conspirators would intervene in such a way that nothing evil would befall them.

Thus, they began spreading the most common and oldest theory about the Resurrection: the stolen body theory. Matthew states that this theory was popular and "continues until this day," meaning Matthew's day. But it is true also today. To this day, there are people teaching that the disciples stole the body of Jesus. But the way the soldiers told the story proved it not to be so. The story was that while they were sleeping, His disciples stole His body. The obvious contradiction is that if they were sleeping, how would they possibly know who stole the body? There is no way they could know who stole the body, if they were asleep.

If the body of Yeshua had been stolen, as many still believe, only one of two groups would have been willing to take the risks involved in stealing the body: His friends or His enemies. People who were noncommittal or neutral would hardly risk their lives to steal His body.

One group, which would be interested in stealing His body, was His friends, the eleven disciples. However, if the disciples had stolen the body, then their later conduct seems to be contradictory. Of the eleven disciples, ten died martyr's deaths. Some of them died horribly by crucifixion, by being boiled in oil, and by being flayed or skinned alive. Even the one who was not martyred, John, died as an exile on the Isle

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of Patmos. A number of these disciples were given the opportunity to recant before being executed. If they had recanted and renounced Jesus, they would have been set free or, at least, died a more merciful death. It is impossible to believe that ten disciples would be willing to die as martyrs for something they knew was a lie, or that John would be willing to be exiled on the Isle of Patmos for what he knew was a lie. It is impossible to believe that these disciples would be willing to suffer as much as they did if they knew the Resurrection story was a lie. The only way to adequately explain the way they gave their lives, is that they truly believed that the Resurrection occurred.

The second group who would be interested in stealing the body of Yeshua would be His enemies, yet their actions later showed that they did not have any knowledge of His stolen body. In the Book of Acts, the disciples began preaching the Resurrection. The opposition came from the same leadership who conspired to kill Him, the same leadership that paid off the soldiers. If His enemies had stolen the body, they could have proven that the apostles' preaching of the Resurrection was wrong, simply by producing His body. Yet, as much as the leadership tried to keep these Jewish apostles from preaching the Resurrection, they never were able to shut the apostles' mouths permanently by producing His body. So, it is obvious that His enemies did not have His body either.

H. The Third Appearance: The Two Disciples on the Emmaus Road

The eighth event in the history of the Resurrection is the third appearance of the resurrected Messiah. This is His appearance to the two disciples on the Emmaus Road, which is recorded by two Gospels: Mark 16:12-13 and Luke 24:13-32. These two disciples were not part of the apostolic group, for all the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. Luke 24:18 states that one of these disciples was named Cleopas, who was not one of the inner Twelve. As they were walking from Jerusalem toward Emmaus, discussing the events of the preceding days concerning the death of Jesus and the reported Resurrection, a third figure joined them whom they did not recognize.

In their discussion with Yeshua, they revealed things they believed and things they disbelieved. There were four facts they believed: first, they believed Him to be a prophet of God (v. 19); secondly, they believed that He authenticated His prophetic office by His words and His works, for His miracles authenticated His claims (v. 19); thirdly, they believed that He was the Redeemer of Israel (v. 21); and fourthly, which seemed to disqualify the first three, they believed that He was crucified by their leaders. The fact which they did not believe was the report by certain women who having been early at the tomb, claimed to have seen the resurrected Messiah (v. 22).

At this point, Jesus scolded them for their unbelief and began to

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expound to them the messianic prophecy, that is, all prophecies concerning the First Coming. As He expounded upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, "their heart began burning within them while He opened to them the scriptures and helped them understand" (v. 32).

When they arrived at Emmaus, He was invited into their house for supper. Just as He broke the bread, every Jewish meal begins with a blessing and the breaking of bread, at that moment, they finally realized that this was the resurrected Messiah. Just as that recognition came, He suddenly disappeared.

They immediately went back to Jerusalem to report to the eleven apostles, but Mark 16:13 points out that they did not believe these two disciples, either.

I. The Fourth Appearance: Peter

The ninth event in the history of the Resurrection is the fourth appearance. This appearance was to the Apostle Peter and is recorded in Luke 24:33-35. Verse 34 states: *... The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.*

A second passage recording this is I Corinthians 15:5, which states that He appeared to Cephas. Cephas is the Aramaic name for the Hebrew Simon and the Greek Peter. Peter was the first of the apostolic group to see the resurrected Yeshua, because the two disciples on the Emmaus Road were outside the apostolic group. He made a private appearance to the Apostle Peter before He appeared to any other apostle. In all likelihood, this was necessary to comfort Peter in light of his threefold denial during the religious trial.

The purpose of this appearance was to establish Peter. During the last Passover, He predicted that Peter would deny Him three times, but eventually Peter would be established. Now, with this private appearance to Peter, He did indeed establish Peter, and later Peter could establish the other brethren.

J. The Fifth Appearance: The Ten

The tenth event in the resurrection history is the fifth appearance of the resurrected Messiah. This appearance was to ten apostles, as recorded in three Gospels: Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-25.

On three earlier occasions, they had been instructed to leave Jerusalem and head for Galilee. Yeshua first told them to do so during the last Passover, but they did not do it. Twice, after the Resurrection, women were sent to the apostles to instruct them to go to Galilee, and He would meet them there. But because they did not believe the reports of the women or Mary Magdalene, nor the report of the two disciples on the Emmaus Road, they were still in Jerusalem. And

because of their lack of faith in the reports of the Resurrection, Yeshua now had to appear to them in Jerusalem.

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In John 20:19, he states: *When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week ...*
This meant that it was Sunday before sundown, before three stars appeared. They were inside and the doors were locked tightly because they feared the leadership of Israel. Suddenly, Yeshua appeared to them. According to Luke 24:36, He said to them: Peace be unto you. He was speaking Hebrew, of course, with His disciples, and He gave a very common Jewish greeting, which is Shalom aleichem, meaning, "Peace be unto you." But their reaction proved their unbelief.

Luke 24:37 points out: *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.*
They were afraid and feared that what they were seeing was not the resurrected Messiah, but a ghost.

Yeshua's response is recorded in Mark 16:14: *... and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.*
He scolded them for their unbelief. Their unbelief was evident in three ways. First, they did not believe the reports of the Resurrection, which had come to them at least three, possibly four times, if Peter had told them by then. Secondly, they failed to leave for Galilee as they had been told to do, and the fact that they were still in Jerusalem showed that they were still in a state of unbelief. Thirdly, their unbelief was evident in that when they finally did see the resurrected Messiah, they were fearful that they were seeing a ghost.

To convince them that He was not a ghost but the resurrected Messiah, He allowed them to examine Him. John 20:20 states: *And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side.*

Luke gives more detail in verses 24:39-40: *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*

They were allowed to handle Him; to touch Him; and to see the wounds in his side, his hands and his feet. This shows that, by this time, Yeshua had ascended into Heaven, sprinkled His blood and cleansed the heavenly sanctuary; He was now touchable.

Luke 24:41-43 states: *And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them.*
While they were beginning to believe, there was still some doubt, so Yeshua asked them for something to eat. Because pure spirits and ghost-type beings do not eat, He showed them that He was the real,

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resurrected One by virtue of being able to eat. Finally, at long last, ten of the eleven apostles were convinced that the Resurrection had occurred.

1. The First Final Commission

At that point, He gave them the first of three final commissions, recorded in John 20:21-25, which contained three points.

a. The Giving of an Authoritative Ministry

First, they were given an authoritative ministry, being sent by the Son, as verse 21 states: *... Peace be unto you: as the Father has sent me, even so send I you.*

God the Father sent His Son with His authority, and now the Son sent the disciples with His authority. They were given an authoritative ministry, because they were sent by the Son.

b. The Receiving of the Holy Spirit

The second point of this first commission is that they were to receive the Holy Spirit, according to John 20:22: *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit ...*

This was not the reception of the Holy Spirit, which would be given in Acts 2. In Acts 2, they received the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's ministry of baptism. What they are receiving here was the Holy Spirit's Old Testament ministry of illumination. Throughout Jesus' ministry, He had tried to teach them many things about the truths concerning His death and Resurrection, but they never could understand what He was trying to teach them. When His death occurred, it took them by surprise, and they were very slow in believing that the Resurrection had occurred. Now they received an Old Testament ministry of the Holy Spirit, a ministry of comprehension, a ministry of illumination, so that they could and would comprehend what He was going to teach them during the next forty days of His post-resurrection ministry.

c. The Extension of Apostolic Authority

The third point of this first final commission is in John 20:23: *... whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

In this commission, there is an extension of apostolic authority to retain sins or to forgive sins. The forgiving and retaining of sins here is not in the sense of salvation; only God can forgive sins in the salvation sense. This forgiving and retaining of sins is in the sense of church discipline and church order. This is the area in which the apostles had authority.

One example of this is in Acts 5, the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Because Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter retained their sins, and they were stricken dead right on the spot. The apostles were not given authority to forgive sins for salvation, but they did have

the authority to forgive sins in the sense of punishment or lack of punishment. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Peter retained their sin and executed punishment, even judgment. This was something that came with apostolic authority and was not passed on to anyone else through any form of apostolic succession.

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2. Thomas' Affirmation of the Messiah's Resurrection

During the fifth appearance of the Messiah, which was to the ten apostles, Thomas was not present. According to John 20:24-25, when these ten disciples reported to Thomas that they had seen the resurrected Messiah, Thomas refused to believe. According to verse 25, Thomas said: *... Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

For that reason, they still did not go to Galilee, but remained in Jerusalem.

K. The Sixth Appearance: The Eleven

The eleventh event in the history of the Resurrection was the sixth appearance of the resurrected Messiah. This appearance was to the eleven disciples, recorded in John 20:26-31 and I Corinthians 15:5.

John 20:26 states: *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them.*

A whole week had passed between the fifth and sixth appearances of the resurrected Messiah. Because Thomas refused to believe, they were still in Jerusalem a week later; they still had not migrated to Galilee as they had been commanded to do on three occasions.

Suddenly, Yeshua appeared and spoke directly to Thomas. John 20:27 records: *... Reach hither your finger, and see my hands; and reach hither your hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

Finally, Thomas had seen the resurrected Messiah. Did he believe? Yes, indeed!

In John 20:28, Thomas responded by saying: *... My Lord and my God.*

He recognized Jesus to be not only his Lord and Messiah, but also his God. Thomas clearly recognized that the Messiah was to be both God and man. He became a firm believer because he had seen the resurrected Messiah. Often people believe that the disciples had a far greater blessing because they were able to actually see what had occurred. But that is simply not true.

Yeshua Himself said, in John 20:29: *... Because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

By far, the greater blessing is to believe on the basis of the written Word of God rather than to believe on the basis of personal experience. Those who have not seen the resurrected Messiah but believe anyway have the greater blessing.

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Thomas' statement to Jesus, *My Lord and my God*, reaches the high point in John's Gospel. John's theme throughout his Gospel was: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. He emphasized the deity of the Messiah. Thomas' affirmation, *My Lord and my God*, fits right into John's theme, and that is how the high point is reached.

So John draws his conclusion in John 20:30-31: *Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.*
John's conclusion had been reached with the confession of Thomas. Thomas' statement illustrates the purpose of John's Gospel: to show that Yeshua is, indeed, the Son of God.

John did write one more chapter in his book, chapter 21, but this is like an appendix. John drew his conclusion in chapter 20, verses 30-31; he wrote this Gospel so the reader would conclude the same thing that Thomas concluded: that Jesus is indeed his Lord and his God.

John also points out that Yeshua did many other signs, and the whole world could not possibly contain all the books that would be necessary to record it all. In fact, throughout his Gospel, John recorded only seven signs. When he said other signs, he meant other than the Resurrection. He mentioned only seven other signs out of myriads of others that could have been recorded.

L. The Seventh Appearance: The Seven

The twelfth event, found in John 21:1-25 was the seventh appearance of the resurrected Messiah. This appearance was to the seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee. At long last, now that all the disciples had become believers in the Resurrection, they finally did make it to Galilee. According to John 21:1: *After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; ...*

1. The Apostles' Return to Fishing

They were at the sea of Tiberias, which is the Sea of Galilee. Of these eleven disciples, seven were fishermen and five are named in verse 2: *Simon Peter and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee*, James and John.

They made a decision which John 21:3 records: *Simon Peter said unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with you.*
After being away from the fishing business for three years, they returned to it as an occupation. They did not as yet understand their new commission. They did not understand what they had to do in light of the Resurrection of the Messiah; they assumed that because Yeshua had already told them He would be departing from them, they must go back to making a living through the fishing industry. They fished, but caught nothing. At that point, Jesus appeared again while

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they were still out on the water.

2. The Re-calling of the Apostles

Yeshua was on the shore and began a conversation with them. This is recorded in John 21:5-6: *Jesus therefore said unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

Suddenly, Jesus appeared and asked them the question, "Have you caught anything?" Their answer was, "No." At that point, they did not quite recognize Who was speaking to them. So He told them to take their net from the left side of the boat and lower it to the right side. This they did, and suddenly they caught a "multitude of fishes." The parallel of this experience was about three years earlier, when Jesus had called some of these men to discipleship in this same way. They had toiled all day and caught nothing. At His command, they put down their nets and immediately caught a multitude of fishes. In this way, He showed His authority over nature. Now, He used the same method to re-call them by showing His power over nature and His ability to provide.

According to verse 7, the Apostle John recognized from this repeated experience that the One speaking to them was none other that the resurrected Messiah. He told Peter: *It is the Lord*. Peter jumped into the water and waded back to the shore. What he found is recorded in verse 9: *So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

Although they had caught a multitude of fishes, they did not need to eat a single one of them, because Yeshua had already broiled fish for them, and there was bread already available. The point was that they did not need to go back to their business of fishing. They had a commission to fulfill, and the Messiah would provide for them as they fulfilled it.

Verse 11 tells us that all together, they caught 153 fish. There has been a lot of speculation as to what this figure means. One view, which circulated for years, is that it represents the 153 countries of the United Nations. However, that is reading too much into the text. The reason it states 153 is because that is how many fish they caught! It means no more than that. The point is that, in spite of the multitude of fishes, the net did not break. Verse 14 states: *This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples ...*

This is the third time He appeared to the disciples and His seventh appearance since the Resurrection.

3. The Commissioning of Peter

John 21:15-23 records a private conversation between Yeshua and Peter. Peter's previous threefold denial is now rectified by his threefold

affirmation of love.

There are two different Greek words used for love in this conversation. The first is agapei or agapao, which is the "love of the will." It is the kind of love that God has for us, the kind of love that we ought to have for others. It is the kind of love one would be willing to die for. The second word is phileo, which is a "love of friendship." It is the "love of the emotions in response to attraction." It is the kind of love between two close friends. It is a love that develops naturally, over which there is no control. For that reason, believers are not commanded to phileo everyone, because it is impossible to have this kind of love for everyone. However, agapei love is a superior love, a love of the will, not the emotions. This is the kind of love that a believer should have for all.

The first part of the conversation begins in John 21:15: *So when they had broken their fast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, love you me more than these?*
The word that Jesus used is agapei. What He asked Peter was, "Peter, do you really agapei Me more than these; that is, more than these other disciples?" This is a significant question because, during the last Passover, Peter claimed to have this kind of love. He claimed to have agapei love for Jesus that was superior to that of the other disciples. Peter said that although all the others may forsake Jesus, he would never forsake Him. He would even give his life for Jesus. But, of course, his claims proved false, because he later denied the Messiah three times. So the question was, "Simon Peter, do you really agapei more that the others?"

Peter answered: ... *Yea, Lord; you know that I love you.*
But the word that Peter used was phileo. What Peter said was, "No, I cannot really say I agapei You more than the others. The best I can affirm at this point, is that I phileo You. I cannot say that I apagei You more than the others."

At this point, Peter received his first commission from Yeshua: ... *Feed my lambs.*
Lambs refer to baby believers; Peter is commissioned to feed them. Baby believers are fed with the "milk" of the Word of God. This is what Peter did in the First Epistle of Peter.

The second part of the conversation is in verse 16: *He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, love you me?*
The same word for "love" that Jesus used earlier, He uses again, "Simon Peter, do you agapei Me?" But the form of the question was slightly different. The first time Jesus asked him, "Do you agapei me more than the others?" Peter had to say "no." The second question was, "Peter, do you agapei Me at all? While you cannot say that you agapei Me more than the others, do you agapei Me in any sense of agapei love?"

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Peter answered: *... Yea, Lord; you know that I love you.*
Again, Peter used the word phileo. Again, Peter said, "No, the best I can affirm at this point, is that I only phileo You. I cannot say that I agapei You more than the others do, nor can I say that I agapei You at all. I can only say, at this point, that I phileo You."

Here, Peter received a second commission: *... Tend my sheep.*
To tend means "to be a shepherd," "to exercise rule" over the other believers. Peter is commissioned to exercise this authority, and this is what made him the chief apostle. Peter fulfilled this second commission throughout the Book of Acts as he exercised rule and authority over other believers.

In verse 17, Yeshua continued with a third question: *He said unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, love you me?*
This time Yeshua does not use the word agapei as He did in the first and second questions. Instead, He used the word which Peter had been using, "Do you phileo Me?" The point is this: "Peter, you cannot affirm that you agapei Me more than the others, nor can you affirm that you agapei Me at all. But can you really affirm that you at least phileo Me?"

Peter's response was: *Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Love* phileo *you me? And he said unto him, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.*
Here, Peter also used the word phileo. The point of Peter's third response is, "This much I can indeed affirm; I can certainly affirm that I, at least, phileo You."

At this point, Peter received this third commission: *... Feed my sheep.*
Sheep are the older believers that must be fed with the "meat" of the Word of God, and this Peter did in his Second Epistle.

After these three questions and responses, Yeshua went on to show that a time would come when Peter would prove that he had agapei love for Him. John 21:18-19 states: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, When you were young, you girded yourself, and walked whither you would: but when you shall be old, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another shall gird you, and carry you whither you would not. Now this he spoke, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, Follow me.*
At this point Yeshua gave a cryptic prophecy, which was understood to signify how Peter would die: He would die a martyr's death; he would die by means of crucifixion. Yeshua said that a time would come in Peter's life when he would prove that he had agapei love for Yeshua, because Peter would give his life for Him, not by a quick death, but by the agony of a crucifixion.

In spite of the fact that Peter was destined to die a martyr's death, Jesus

said to Peter: *Follow me*. From here on, that is exactly what Peter did. By following Jesus, he showed that he really did have agapei love for Him.

Having been told that he would die a martyr's death, Peter then pointed to John and asked, in verse 21: *... Lord, and what shall this man do?* Peter basically asks, "I'm going to have to die for the faith, but what about John?"

Yeshua's answer is in verse 22: *... If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? follow you me.*
The answer was that God's will for another believer was irrelevant to Peter. It is not to be Peter's concern what God's will is for John. Peter's only concern is to fulfill his own commission and calling and let John worry about his.

John then finished his Gospel with verse 25 by pointing out that if the many other things that Jesus did were written, the world could not contain the books. Indeed, although He lived approximately thirty-six to thirty-eight years, if the four Gospels are put together, only about seventy-five to eighty days of His life are recorded.

M. The Eighth Appearance: The Five Hundred

The thirteenth event in the resurrection history is the eighth appearance, which was to five hundred people at once, as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18 and I Corinthians 15:6.

1. The Appearance to the Five Hundred

The I Corinthians passage points out that He appeared *to above five hundred brethren at once*. The majority of these people were still living at the time that Paul wrote the letter. The Mark and Matthew accounts, however, emphasize the statements, which the Messiah made specifically to the eleven Apostles.

2. The Second Final Commission

While His appearance was to above five hundred believers at once, His speaking was primarily directed to the eleven, giving them the second of the three final commissions, containing five major points.

a. The Delegation of Authority

First, all authority has been given to the resurrected Messiah (Mat. 28:18). As a result of the Resurrection, God the Father has given all authority to the Son. Since Yeshua has such authority, He can, therefore, delegate this authority to the apostles, which He did in the second final commission.

b. The Commission Itself

The second point is the commission itself, given in Matthew 28:19-20: *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all*

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things whatsoever I commanded you ...

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Mark 16:15 states: *... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.*

This is referred to as the "Great Commission," but it has often been misunderstood to mean merely to evangelize. The way the English reads, it appears that the command is: *Go ye*. In many missionary conferences, they emphasize that the Bible says, "Go to all the nations."

This is not what the Greek text is saying whatsoever. Matthew 28:19 in the Greek text has only one imperative: *make disciple*s. The Great Commission is not to evangelize, as such, but to make disciples. The imperative to make disciples is then followed by three participial phrases, which explain what making disciples means.

(1) Preaching

The first participle is "going." Mark 16:15 explains that "going," means to *preach the gospel to the whole creation*. Evangelism is very much a part of the Great Commission, but it not the Great Commission. The Great Commission is to *make disciples*. The first step in making disciples is to evangelize; however, if someone is only preaching the gospel and doing nothing more than that, he is only evangelizing, but he is not making disciples. Therefore, he is not fulfilling the Great Commission.

(2) Baptizing

The second participle is "baptizing," *baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*. They are now to administer a new type of baptism. Baptism did not originate here; it was a Jewish practice long before it ever was practiced by believers. When He said: *baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, this is believers' baptism in distinction from the other types of baptism, such as proselyte baptism into Judaism, and John's baptism. In order to distinguish this baptism from any of the others, which were prevalent during that day, it is to be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God. So, baptizing is the second aspect of making disciples. But if someone is preaching the gospel and baptizing only, he is not yet fulfilling the Great Commission.

(3) Teaching

The third participle is "teaching," *teaching them to observe all things I commanded you*. These newly baptized believers must be taught to observe that which the Messiah has commanded, because obedience is the test of discipleship.

If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled, it requires the making of disciples. This involves three things: preaching the gospel; baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; and teaching New Testament truth as an addition to Old Testament truth.

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c. Those Who Believe Will be Saved

The third point in the second of three final commissions is that those who will follow through will be saved, but those who do not believe the gospel will be lost. Mark 16:16 states: *He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieves shall be condemned.*

This verse is frequently used by those who teach baptismal regeneration: that one must be baptized in order to be saved. A couple things should be pointed out as we look at this verse.

First, the oldest and best manuscripts of the Greek New Testament do not contain this verse. In all likelihood, this was not originally a part of Mark's Gospel, but a much later addition. It is dangerous to base such a doctrine upon a verse, which is missing in the oldest and best manuscripts, which we have on record.

Secondly, in more than two hundred different places in the New Testament, which speak of the conditions for salvation, faith is the only condition mentioned. If baptism were necessary for salvation, it should have been mentioned in all two hundred passages where the prerequisite to salvation is mentioned. The fact that only faith is mentioned shows that faith is the only prerequisite to salvation; therefore, this one verse cannot be used to counteract two hundred other passages.

But let us assume that verse 16 really was part of the original Gospel of Mark. What is really being said here is that baptism is subordinate to believing. Baptism is not the condition to salvation, rather, it is an outward sign of the inner faith that saves. Baptism, according to this verse, is subordinate to believing. Also, notice that when he states the opposite, he does not mention baptism. He does not say, "He who disbelieves and is not baptized shall be condemned." All he says is that: *he that disbelieves shall be condemned*, without mentioning baptism. So even if this verse is the authentic writing of Mark, it does not teach that baptism is necessary for salvation; it does not say that the lack of water baptism causes condemnation. Only the failure to believe can cause condemnation.

d. There Will be Signs Within the Body of Believers

The fourth point in this second final commission is recorded in Mark 16:17-18: *And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

The fourth point is that within the body of believers, certain signs will be evident: first, demons will be cast out; secondly, tongues will be spoken as a sign of a new element, the Church; and thirdly, there will be healings from serpent bites, poisons and diseases. What is not taught here is that every individual will do all of these things; it only teaches that within the

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body of believers, all these things will be present. Again, like verse 16, verses 17-18 are not found in the oldest and best Greek manuscripts. They are probably a later addition, as it seems odd that these gifts, such as tongues, are mentioned at this point when they are not mentioned in Matthew, Luke, or John. It seems that tongues only becomes a new thing with the Book of Acts. But even assuming that these verses are authentic, Yeshua is not saying that every individual will practice these things. He is only saying that all these things will be present within the body of believers. If this passage teaches that every believer should speak in tongues, it must also teach that every believer should drink poison and be bitten by serpents, but most people do not want to go that far.

e. The Messiah's Presence to the End of the Age

The fifth thing in this second final commission is that Yeshua will be present until the end of the Age (Mat. 28:20).

N. The Ninth Appearance: James

The fourteenth event in the history of the Resurrection is His ninth appearance, this time to James, recorded briefly in I Corinthians 15:7: *... then he appeared to James ...*

The James mentioned in this passage is not James the Apostle, but James, the half-brother of Jesus. Jesus had four half-brothers who were the sons of Mary and Joseph. Throughout His ministry, His four half-brothers were unbelievers. But now Jesus appeared to His half-brother, James, and no doubt, this resulted in James' conversion; James became a believer in the Messiahship of Jesus. Because of this, James was later able to become the first head of the Jerusalem church. This is the James who wrote the Epistle of James. Apparently, through his influence, the other three half-brothers became believers, too. One of them was Jude, who wrote the Epistle of Jude. The other two half-brothers did not write Scripture.

O. The Tenth Appearance: The Eleven Apostles

This brings us to the fifteenth and final historical event, Yeshua's tenth appearance, which is to the eleven apostles. This is the appearance just preceding His Ascension and is recorded in Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:3-8. Luke wrote both accounts. These passages reveal the content of the Messiah's teaching to the disciples during the forty days of post-Resurrection ministry.

Luke 24:44-46 states: *And he said unto them, These are my words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day ...*

Acts 1:3-4 states:
...to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them ...

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During the forty days of post-Resurrection ministry, Yeshua taught them two major areas of the Old Testament studies.

1. The Teaching About Messianic Prophecy

First, He taught them messianic prophecy: how the truths of His death and Resurrection were taught in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Writings.

When Jesus used the Old Testament, He used it in the order and division as the Jewish people have it, not as modern Christian Bibles have it rearranged. The number of Old Testament books in the Jewish and Christian Bibles is the same, but the order is different. The Jewish order of the Old Testament is divided into three main divisions, which are mentioned in Luke 44:24. The first division is the Law of Moses, which contains the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The second division contains the Prophets, which includes the major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and also the twelve minor prophets. Daniel is not included in the prophetic section in the Jewish order. The prophetic section also contains certain historical books, such as Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings. All the other books of the Old Testament are in the third section, called the Writings. Sometimes this third division is simply referred to as the Psalms, because the Book of Psalms is the first book of this division, but it includes all of the other books which are not part of the Law or the Prophets.

Jesus showed them messianic prophecy and messianic truth from the Law of Moses, the first division; from the Prophets, the second division; and from the Psalms or Writings, the third division. From all three segments of the Jewish order of the Old Testament, He taught them messianic prophecy.

2. The Teaching About the Kingdom Program

The second area of Old Testament truth which He taught them was concerning God's Kingdom Program so that they could understand why the Kingdom would not be set up at this time, but would be set up at a later time.

In Acts 1:6, the disciples asked Jesus: *Lord, do you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* The answer He gave them was: *It is not for you to know times or seasons*. Notice that He did not say that the Kingdom will not be restored to Israel, as some have taught. In fact, He taught the opposite: "Yes, there will be a restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, but it is not for you to know when it will come."

It is because of these truths that Yeshua needed to teach them that the apostles needed the Spirit's special Old Testament ministry of illumination, which He had breathed on them earlier in His post-resurrection ministry.

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3. The Third Final Commission

On the last day that He was with them, the fortieth day, He gave them the third of His three final commissions, containing two main points.

a. To Wait for Coming of the Holy Spirit

First, they were to remain in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit. Receiving the Holy Spirit would mean three things. First, the promise of the Father would be fulfilled. Earlier in the Gospels, the Father promised through the Messiah that He would send them the Holy Spirit after Yeshua had departed. Once the Holy Spirit had come to them, He would be with them forever. When they received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, it fulfilled the promise of the Father.

Secondly, that experience which they would undergo would be the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 1:5: *... for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.*
The not many days hence, was ten days later. In Acts, the Spirit began a new ministry, that of Spirit baptism. The baptizing of the Spirit is something that every believer experiences and the result of Spirit baptism is membership in the Body of the Messiah.

Thirdly, it meant that they would receive *power from on high* (Lk. 24:49), because the indwelling Spirit would give them the power for righteous living and power to fulfill the commissions they were given.

b. To Preach the Gospel

The second part of this third and final commission is that, after they received the Spirit, they were to preach the gospel in four stages: first, *in Jerusalem*; secondly, *in all Judaea*; thirdly, *in Samaria*; and fourthly, *to the ends of the earth.* This provides the outline for the Book of Acts, for there we see that the disciples first preached in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, RESULTS, AND SIGNIFICANCES OF THE RESURRECTION

A. The Old Testament Foreview

That the Resurrection of the Messiah was part of the Old Testament prediction is clear in two ways.

1. In Typology

The first way is in typology. There were three "types" in the Old Testament, which taught the concept of messianic resurrection. The first type is Melchizedek. The history of Melchizedek is in Genesis 14:18-20. Melchizedek suddenly appeared in history and, just as suddenly, disappeared. There is no record of his genealogy, birth, or early life, and no record of his death. As far as recorded history is

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concerned, he lives forever. The typology is brought out in Hebrews 7:15-25. Now, Jesus lives forever because of the Resurrection.

The second type is that of the two birds of Leviticus 14:4-7. One was killed, and one was let go, free and alive. This pictures death and resurrection.

The third type is the Feast of the Firstfruits of Leviticus 23:9-14. According to Paul, in I Corinthians 15:20-24, the Feast of Firstfruits was fulfilled by the Resurrection of the Messiah.

2. In Prophecy

The second way is by clear-cut predictions concerning the Resurrection, found in four passages.The first one is Psalm 16:9-10: *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: My flesh also shall dwell in safety. For you will not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.*

Twice in the New Testament, Psalm 16:9-10 is declared as having been fulfilled by the Resurrection of the Messiah: Acts 2:24-30 and 13:32-37.

The second prophecy of the Resurrection is in Psalm 22:22-31. Psalm 22:1-21 is a prophecy of the death of the Messiah, but in verses 22-31, the same One who died in verses 1-21 is very much alive. Hence, this, too, prophesies the Resurrection.

A third passage is Psalm 118:22, which is taken as a prophecy of the Resurrection by Acts 4:10-11.

The fourth prophecy is Isaiah 53:10-12. Isaiah 53:1-9 prophesied the death of the Messiah, but in verses 10-12, He is very much alive again, because he shall see his seed and his days are prolonged. This was also fulfilled by the Resurrection.

In dealing with the theological implications, the Old Testament clearly predicted a resurrection and, no doubt, these are the passages Yeshua used during His forty days of post-Resurrection ministry as He taught the apostles that His death and Resurrection were essential to the reaffirmation of His Messiahship.

B. The Fact of the Resurrection

That the Bible clearly teaches a physical resurrection from the dead can be seen in three ways. First, the Messiah predicted His Resurrection several times: Matthew 16:21; Mark 9:31; Luke 18:33 and John 10:17-18.

Secondly, the fact of the Resurrection is emphasized in that none of the Gospels ends with the death of the Messiah; all of them proceed with the Resurrection: Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-18; Luke 24:1-49

and John 20:1-21:3.

A third way of showing the fact of the Resurrection is that the Resurrection is a major emphasis in the historical Book of Acts and in the Epistles. For example, in the Book of Acts in 2:24 and 32; 3:15 and 26; 4:2 and 10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30-37, and 17:3. In the Epistles, the Resurrection is emphasized in Romans 4:24-25; 6:4 and 9; 7:4 and 8:11; I Corinthians 6:14; II Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 2:12; I Thessalonians 1:10; II Timothy 2:8; and I Peter 1:12.

C. The Theories of the Resurrection

There are various theories, which try to explain away the Resurrection. Because people choose not to believe in the Resurrection, they must somehow explain the empty tomb. Unbelievers have come up with seven different explanations.

1. The Conspiracy to Lie Theory

The first common explanation is that the whole thing is a fabrication; that the apostles conspired to lie; that it was a conspiracy to deceive the public. But there are two things that militate against this theory. First, why did the Jewish writers give prominence to women who witnessed the Resurrection, knowing very well that this would not be acceptable to the Jewish community? The testimony of women was not acceptable in a Jewish court of law. If this were a fabrication, they would not have had women be the first ones to see the resurrected Messiah. Secondly, why would they be willing to die terrible martyrs' deaths if they knew it was all a lie?

2. The Stolen Body Theory

A second false theory is "The Fraud Theory" or "The Stolen Body Theory." This is the oldest theory, and it was discussed earlier in the historical section. As was pointed out earlier, only two groups would have been interested in stealing the body. First, the disciples, but why would each be willing to die a terrible martyr's death for what they knew to be a lie? And secondly, His enemies, yet they could not produce the body in order to disprove the apostolic preaching of the Resurrection. Furthermore, the presence of the Roman guard would have made stealing the body impossible.

3. The Swoon Theory

A third false theory is "The Swoon Theory," stating that Jesus fainted on the cross and appeared to be dead, but was revived in the coldness of the tomb. But the Gospels make it quite clear that He was dead, and His death was clearly evident by the pouring out of the blood and water from His pierced side (Jn. 19:33-34). Furthermore, to faint on the cross would automatically mean death, because an unconscious person would not be able to raise himself up in order to breathe. When a person was crucified, he eventually died by suffocation because, in the course of time, he no longer had the strength to raise himself up.

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This theory requires a lot of faith, because people are asked to believe that after three days without food or water, without medical attention, and after being scourged and crucified, He was able to free Himself from the tightly wrapped burial cloths, roll away the stone, terrify the Roman guards, and proceed to escape on His nail-scarred feet. It takes a lot more faith to believe this than to believe the simple fact of the Resurrection.

4. The Wrong Tomb Theory

The fourth false theory is that they went to the "wrong tomb." However, the Gospels make it clear that the women took careful note of where He was laid. The right tomb was marked by both the Roman guard and a Roman seal, and there was an angel present. So there was no way to mistake the tomb. Furthermore, Yeshua was not buried in a public cemetery where there were many other tombs; He was buried in a privately-owned garden.

5. The Spirit Theory

The fifth false theory is "The Spirit Theory," stating that only the spirit returned, not the body. However, all four Gospels teach that it was a bodily resurrection.

6. The Hallucination Theory

The sixth false theory is "The Vision Theory" or "The Hallucination Theory," claiming that the disciples hallucinated. But hallucinations happen to individuals, not to groups, and hallucinations are not contagious. They usually concern events, which are expected, but the disciples did not expect a resurrection. Furthermore, there are too many diversities in His many appearances for all of it to be one big hallucination.

7. The Wild Animal Theory

The seventh false theory is that some "wild animal" devoured the body. But even a wild animal would have left some remains, such as the bones. A wild animal could not have rolled away the stone. A wild animal would have greatly disturbed the grave cloths, yet the grave cloths of Yeshua remained undisturbed. Furthermore, the presence of the Roman guard would have kept a wild animal away.

D. The Proof of the Resurrection

There are six evidences that the Resurrection of the Messiah really occurred.

1. The Empty Tomb

The first evidence is the empty tomb, which must be explained in some way. Unbelievers have developed seven different theories to try to explain away the empty tomb. Most of the theories take a lot more faith than it takes to believe in the simple truth: He was resurrected from the dead. The very emptiness of the tomb is evidence of the Resurrection.

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2. The Varied Eyewitness Accounts

A second major evidence of the Resurrection is that there are eyewitness accounts, which are quite varied and distinct. For example, there is the eyewitness account of Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9-11; Jn. 20:11-18). Secondly, there is the eyewitness account of a group of other women (Mat. 28:9-10). Thirdly, were the two disciples on the Emmaus Road (Mk. 16:12-13; Lk. 24:13-32). Fourthly, there was the special eyewitness resurrection experience by Peter (Lk. 24:34; I Cor. 15:5). Fifth, there was the appearance to the ten apostles (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-25). Sixth, there were eyewitness accounts of the appearance to the eleven apostles a week later while they were still in Jerusalem (Jn. 20:26-31; I Cor. 15:5). Seventh, there was an eyewitness appearance to seven of the eleven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-23). Eighth, there was the eyewitness appearance to the eleven apostles while they were in Galilee (Mat. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18). Ninth, there was the appearance to five hundred believers at once, many of whom were still living at the time Paul mentioned it (I Cor. 15:6). Tenth, there was the appearance to James (I Cor. 15:7). Lastly, there was the eyewitness appearance to the eleven on the Mount of Olives on the day of the Ascension (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8). These eyewitness accounts of His Resurrection between the Resurrection and the Ascension, a period of forty days, are all evidences of the Resurrection.

3. The Post-Resurrection Appearances

A third evidence of the Resurrection is that there were subsequent appearances of the resurrected Messiah after the Ascension. He appeared to at least three people. First, He appeared to Stephen on the day of his martyrdom (Acts 7:55-56).

The second person to whom He appeared was Paul, at least four times. The first time was the day that Paul became a believer on the Damascus Road, something which is recorded three times in the Book of Acts (Acts 9:3-6, 22:6-11 and 26:13-18). Paul himself reaffirmed this (I Cor. 15:8). Jesus also appeared to Paul while he was in Arabia; Paul refers to this in Galatians 1:12, 17. He appeared to Paul a third time when he was in the Temple Compound area (Acts 22:17-21). Fourthly, He appeared to Paul at least one more time in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11).

The third person to whom He appeared after the Ascension was the Apostle John; the details of this appearance are given in Revelation 1:9-3:22.

4. The Transformation of People Who Knew Him

The fourth evidence of the Resurrection is the sudden transformation of the people who knew Him both before and after His Resurrection. One example is the disciples. Before His Resurrection, they were characterized as being fearful, paranoid men who had to lock

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themselves in their homes because they feared the leadership of Israel. Suddenly, after the Resurrection, in the Book of Acts, they became bold proclaimers of the Resurrection. They were no longer intimidated by the threats of the leadership of Israel, and their boldness even led to martyrdom. They faced death in full faith.

A second example of the transformation of the people who knew Him is His own half-brothers. Even until His death, His four half-brothers were unbelievers in His Messianic claims. Suddenly, after His Resurrection, at least one of His half-brothers, James, saw the resurrected Messiah. He became a believer and the first head of the Jerusalem church. We know that another half-brother, Jude, who wrote the Epistle of Jude, became a believer. So the fourth evidence of the Resurrection is the transformation of the very people who actually knew and saw Him before and after His Resurrection.

5. The New Testament

A fifth evidence of the Resurrection is the existence of the New Testament. It was the Resurrection, which caused the disciples to write the Gospels. The New Testament has survived in spite of many, many attempts to suppress it. Even today, there are attempts to suppress it in various parts of the world, and yet the very existence of the New Testament is evidence that it is the Word of God and that the testimony of the Resurrection is true.

6. The Existence of the Church

The sixth evidence of the Resurrection is the existence of the Church. The fact that this entity came into existence because of the Resurrection of the Messiah, and has continued to exist in spite of countless attempts to annihilate it or pervert it, is also evidence of the Resurrection.

E. The Agent of the Resurrection

All three members of the Trinity played a role in the Resurrection of Yeshua.

God the Father played a role in the Resurrection of the Messiah, and this is evidenced by a number of Scriptures: Acts 2:24, 32; 3:26; 5:30; 13:30; Romans 6:4; I Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; and I Peter 1:3. God the Father, no doubt, had the major role in the Resurrection of the Messiah.

The Son also had a role in the Resurrection, for He had the power to bring His life up again as He Himself proclaimed in John 2:19 and 10:17-18.

The Holy Spirit also played a role in the Resurrection of the Messiah, which is mentioned in Romans 8:11.

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So all three members of the Trinity had specific roles, which they played in the Resurrection of the Messiah.

F. The Reasons for the Resurrection

There are four reasons why the Resurrection was necessary. The first reason is because of who Jesus is (Jn. 1:4; 5:26). Because He is the Son of God, the God-Man, the Messiah of Israel, God the Father could not leave Him dead. So, because of who He is, He was resurrected.

The second reason Yeshua was resurrected is to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant mentioned four eternal things: an eternal house, an eternal throne, an eternal kingdom, and an eternal descendant. If He had died and never been resurrected, the fourth eternal element would have remained unfulfilled. But because the Davidic Covenant promised an eternal Person, it was necessary for Yeshua to be resurrected so that He could indeed be the fulfillment of that fourth eternal promise. Prophetically, this is given in I Chronicles 17:14, and reaffirmed by Psalm 89:29 and 36-37. In Isaiah 9:6-7, the Prophet expounded on this aspect. The New Testament reaffirms the truth (Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 2:24-31). Thus, the second reason for the Resurrection is to fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

The third reason for the Resurrection is so that He could become the source of resurrection life. In order to be the source of resurrection life, He needed to be resurrected Himself (Jn. 10:10; 11:25-26; Col. 3:1-4; I Jn. 5:11-12). The reason why we will someday also have resurrection life is because He was resurrected.

The fourth reason for the Resurrection is so that Jesus could become the source of resurrection power. Because He is the source of resurrection power by virtue of His own Resurrection, believers can fulfill their commission (Mat. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-20). Believers now have the power to fulfill that Great Commission, because He is the source of resurrection power.

G. The Nature of the Resurrection Body

Concerning the nature of the resurrection body, which Yeshua had, there are nine specific things to consider. First, as noted earlier in the study of the historical segment, He was not always recognized immediately. Enough changes had occurred in His Resurrection body that recognition was not immediate, yet there were enough similarities that eventually those who knew Him recognized Him to be exactly the One they knew before (Lk. 24:16, 31; Jn. 20:15; 21:7). There were many changes and yet many similarities.

Secondly, Jesus had the ability to appear and disappear (Lk. 24:31-36; Jn. 20:19).

Thirdly, His new body had no problem with physical barriers. He was

able to pass right through walls and closed doors (Jn. 20:19).

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The fourth thing about the nature of His resurrection body is that it was a material body. Although He had the ability to appear and disappear and was not subject to any physical barriers, it was a material body of *flesh and bones*, as Yeshua Himself described (Lk. 24:39-40). Normally, one would expect the reading to be "flesh and blood," but the resurrection body does not contain blood. It is not a blood-sustained body, but a spirit-sustained body. So, in place of "flesh and blood," it is *flesh and bones.*

Fifth, the Resurrection body of Jesus still had the nail prints and spear-wound (Jn. 20:24-27). The marks of the crucifixion were still very much in evidence on His body.

The sixth thing about the nature of His resurrection body is that it was not merely spirit. Yeshua ate fish and bread to show He was not merely spirit, an apparition, or a ghost (Lk. 24:41-43).

Seventh, His resurrection body could be felt. Although He had the ability to appear and disappear and go through walls, there was enough flesh and bone material that His body could be felt (Mat. 28:9; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 20:17).

Eighth, the resurrection body of Jesus was visible. It was a body that could be seen in day-to-day affairs. It was not merely a vision or a dream, but it was a normal, everyday sight (Jn. 20:20).

The ninth thing about the nature of the resurrection body of the Messiah is that it could and did breathe (Jn. 20:22).

In light of these nine things, three conclusions can be drawn. First, it was the same body that died. This was not a newly created body, but the very same body, which had been placed into the tomb. Secondly, that same body underwent a change, not an absolute, total change, but a major change in many areas. There were enough changes so that He was not recognized immediately; nevertheless, enough elements remained so that He was recognized to be the same Yeshua. Thirdly, the Messiah's resurrection body was glorified, yet that glory was still veiled during the forty days of post-Resurrection ministry. When He appeared, He looked just like a normal man, as was the case with the women in the garden and with the two disciples on the Emmaus Road. Throughout the forty days of the post-Resurrection ministry, the glory was veiled, but after His Ascension, it was no longer veiled (Phil. 3:21; Rev. 1:12-18).

These are the facts concerning the nature of the resurrected body of Yeshua. It is not always clear, whether some things are true because it was a resurrected body or because He is God. Some things will be true

of our resurrected bodies, but some things will certainly not be true for us. For instance, our resurrected body is said to be perfect, without any evidences of aging or marring, yet the body of Yeshua still had the nail-prints. So, what was true of His resurrection body will not necessarily be true of ours, though there will be many similarities.

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H. The Importance of the Resurrection

Why is the preaching of the Resurrection of the Messiah important? It is important for two reasons. First, it is very much a part of the gospel (I Cor. 15:4; II Tim. 2:8). The gospel contains three points: first, the Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures; secondly, He was buried; and thirdly, He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures. These are the three points of the gospel, and there is no more to the gospel than this; this is the full gospel. Any additions beyond these three points make it a false gospel. Because the Resurrection is part of the gospel, it is something that needs to be believed, proclaimed and preached.

The second reason that the Resurrection of the Messiah is important is because it is the basis of the believer's future resurrection, according to I Corinthians 15:12-19. Paul makes several points. First, if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then our preaching is in vain (v. 14). If the Messiah remained dead, then salvation will go no further than the grave itself. So if He had not risen from the grave, our preaching would be vain and empty and leave us without hope. Secondly, if He was not raised from the dead, our faith is vain (vv. 14, 17). That is, it would be an empty faith, a faith that produces no eternal results. It would produce temporary results in this life, but with death, it all would end. Therefore, faith is vain if the Messiah did not rise from the dead. Thirdly, the apostles witnessed not only His death, but also His Resurrection (v. 15). If their testimony is not true, then they are false witnesses. Fourthly, if He did not rise from the dead, believers are still in their sins (v. 17). While, by means of His death, Jesus provided the atonement for sin, by means of His Resurrection, He provided the power over sin. We would still be in our sins if He had not risen from the dead. To receive forgiveness for our sins, we need to believe the gospel, and the Resurrection is part of the gospel. Fifth, if He had not risen from the dead, there would be no hope for those who have already died (v. 18). If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then neither will the saints who have already died rise from the dead. Sixth, we are all miserable men for having conformed our lives to that which is unreal (v. 19). Indeed, we would be living a false lifestyle by conforming our lives in accordance with the resurrected Messiah, if the Resurrection had not really occurred.

I. The Significance of the Resurrection

The significance of the Resurrection lies in four specific areas.

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1. The Significance to Christ

The first area of the significance is in relation to the Messiah in four ways: first, the Resurrection proved Him to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4); secondly, it confirmed the truth of all that He said (Mat. 28:6); thirdly, His Resurrection means that He is the firstfruits of the first resurrection (I Cor. 15:20-23); fourthly, the Resurrection of Yeshua was a declaration of the Father that the Messiah met all the requirements of the Law of Moses (Phil. 2:9).

2. The Significance to All Men

The second significance of the Resurrection was to all men in general, especially the unbelieving world, in two ways: first, the Resurrection of Yeshua makes certain the resurrection of all men, both believers and unbelievers (I Cor. 15:20-22); secondly, His Resurrection guarantees the judgment of all unbelievers. This is the One who will judge the unbeliever, which He would not be able to do had He not been raised. Thus, His Resurrection guarantees the judgment of all men (Acts 10:40-42; 17:30-31).

3. The Significance to Old Testament Saints

The third significance of the Resurrection of Jesus was to the Old Testament saints in that it included the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise concerning their salvation: the removal of their sin and the guarantee of their future resurrection (Acts 13:32-33). So, the Resurrection of the Messiah even had significance to saints who died before His own death.

4. The Significance to Believers

The fourth significance of the Resurrection of the Messiah was to believers for, seven reasons. First, the Resurrection of Yeshua proves our justification (Rom. 4:24-25). The Greek participle that Paul used in this passage is dia, which means "on account of." The basis of justification is the death of the Messiah. It says that He was raised "because of" or "on account of" our justification having been accomplished. Because our justification has been accomplished by His death, on the basis of that accomplishment, He was raised from the dead to prove that we have been justified by our faith.

Secondly, His Resurrection guarantees power for Christian service (Eph. 1:17-20). Believers can partake of resurrection power to fulfill their calling.

Third, His Resurrection guarantees the believer's individual resurrection (Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 6:14; II Cor 4:14).

Fourthly, the Resurrection of Jesus means the forgiveness of the believer's sins (I Cor. 15:7).

Fifth, the Resurrection of Yeshua designates the Messiah as the head

of the Church (Eph. 1:20-22).

Sixth, His Resurrection means that the Messiah now has the keys of death as far as believers are concerned (Heb. 2:9-18). Satan no longer has the authority to put a believer to death. The Messiah has the keys of death because He entered Satan's domain, the realm of death, took the keys away from him, and passed "through" that death by means of His Resurrection; and He still has the keys of death (Rev. 1:18).

Seventh, the Resurrection of Jesus means that there is a sympathetic High Priest in Heaven. He is in Heaven as a High Priest because He was raised from the dead (Heb. 4:14-16).✡

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