



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD. AMEN.
FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION 2018

Chris is Risen. Truly, He is Risen!

My beloved Brethren, Priests, Deacons, Servants and Congregation,

I would like to congratulate you on the Glorious Feast of Resurrection of our Lord, our God, and our Savior Jesus Christ. May He restore to you all the blessings, grace and victory of His Glorious Resurrection.

Today, I would like to pose a question concerning the Resurrection of our Lord.

WAS IT NECESSARY FOR CHRIST TO RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Indeed, it was necessary for Christ to rise from the dead, defeat it, and crush its authority for several reasons:

FIRST, BECAUSE IN HIM WAS LIFE

As St. John said in his Gospel, “in Him was life” (John 1:4). If in Him was life, then He could never stay dead, He who said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (John 11:25).

He also said to John in his vision, “I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen” (Revelations 1:18).

Hence, we know and believe that He is life and alive forever, it is impossible for him to remain dead.

SECOND, HE WHO RAISED OTHERS FROM DEATH MUST RAISE HIMSELF UP.

In the old days, we heard that Elijah the Prophet raised the dead with seven prayers. Also, his disciple, Elisha raised a dead man through many prayers. But our Lord Jesus raised the dead by just a word of mouth.

Christ is the giver of life and has authority over the living and the dead: He raised the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. As St. Mark said concerning the daughter of Jairus, “He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” Immediately the girl arose and walked” (Mark 5:41-42).

When He raised the son of the widow of Nain the bearers stood still when He had touched the coffin and said, “young man, I say to you, arise. So, he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother” (Luke 7:14-15).

Therefore, Christ only commands spirits and they return once again to their bodies. It is His divine authority as He is the creator of all things.

He has the authority to raise the dead even if they rot in the tomb for four days like Lazarus. He who gives power to His servants like Elijah and Elisha, can't He rise Himself as He is the source of life?

**THIRDLY, IT WAS NECESSARY TO RISE TO STRENGTHEN AND CONDOLE HIS DISCIPLES.**

The disciples, including Peter who denied Him and Thomas who doubted, were in a state of fear and despair! The Bible mentions how they escaped to the upper room terrified from the oppression of the Jews. The Resurrection of Christ was their comfort and support to their weaknesses, fears, and suspicions. Without resurrecting, the word of God would have not spread, and the disciples would have not preached to all the universe. The Resurrection of Christ, without fearing death nor torment. The Resurrection of Christ was a restoration to their destroyed souls in order to preach the good news.

From here, beloved ones, we must rejoice and cherish this victory that our Lord of Glory has granted for all mankind, for if Christ's death continued on the cross or if He remained buried in the grave, we will not be rejoicing today His victory over death.

As one of the church fathers said in his meditations, **"If it wasn't for the resurrection, Christianity would have remained hanging on the cross and vanished with its Christ."**

But through Christ's Resurrection, we understood the true meaning of eternal life. By His resurrection, we earned our status as sons of Christ, and in His Resurrection, we have gained authority over death, body, and sin.

THE PASSOVER OF CHRIST MADE US NEW PEOPLE.

- We were born sons of man, but today, we are born sons of God.
- In the past, death prevailed as a result of sin, but today, justice reigns as a gift of life.
- In the past, one man opened for us the door to death, and today, Christ restores back life.
- In the beginning, disobedience drove us out of paradise, and today, we are restored back in paradise through our faith in Christ's Resurrection.

MY BELOVED, IN THIS JOYOUS FEAST, I ASK THE LORD, KING OF PEACE, THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION TO GRANT US THE POWER TO STAND FIRM IN OUR FAITH TO REACH OUR ETERNAL LIFE AND REJOICE HIS RESURRECTION.

BISHOP PETER

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of North & South Carolina and Kentucky.