
CHRIST:

The FIRST FRUITS
of RESURRECTION



GARY HARGRAVE



MOST JEWS DURING THE TIME OF CHRIST ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT THE DEAD WERE RAISED, EITHER IN SPIRIT OR IN REANIMATION AS IN THE CASE WITH LAZARUS.

Knowing this, Paul used the argument, “For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised” (1 Corinthians 15:16). So this form of reanimated resurrection life was commonly accepted among the Jews. After the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead, he had a physical body and went back to live with his family. But at some point, Lazarus died again. This was different than Christ’s resurrection.

When Yeshua (Jesus) told Martha that her brother Lazarus would rise from the dead, she answered, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day” (John 11:24). Yeshua responded, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).

Obviously, Martha believed in a resurrection of spirit, that “on the last day” her brother would rise again. But Yeshua takes this idea to another level and challenges her with “everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” What type of resurrection was He talking about? Why was the first fruits resurrection of Christ something so completely new and different?

THE BETTER RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the dead had existed for thousands of years. So what makes the resurrection of Christ different than other resurrections the Jews had already witnessed in the Hebrew Scriptures (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-35)? The author of Hebrews tells us, “Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not

**All Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB95).*



accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35). What is this better resurrection? The resurrection of Christ was not a reanimation in a physical body, nor did He appear after the resurrection as just a spirit. Yeshua (Jesus) had flesh and bones and ate broiled fish before His disciples (Luke 24:39, 42).

He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:38-39).

In his defense to King Agrippa, Paul argued, "I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23). Here again, Christ is mentioned as the first of something new.

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Paul explains that we have been baptized into Christ's death, buried with Him through baptism into His death, and "raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Paul speaks of this newness of life in the present tense. We are to have the same life of the Father that the Son has living in us now! Paul saw that this newness of life was available to believers without having to die and go to heaven.

BUT IF THE SPIRIT OF HIM WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD DWELLS IN YOU, HE WHO RAISED CHRIST JESUS FROM THE DEAD WILL ALSO GIVE LIFE TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES THROUGH HIS SPIRIT WHO DWELLS IN YOU.

ROMANS 8:11

Christ was resurrected from the dead—spirit, soul, and body. On the morning of the resurrection, Yeshua (Jesus) suddenly stood in the midst of His disciples “and said to them, ‘Peace be to you.’ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit” (Luke 24:36-37). Christ answered, “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). His physical body was in a different form, because His resurrected spirit, soul, and body were filled with the life of the Father. This kind of resurrection had never happened before.

RAISED IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

When we celebrate the resurrection of Christ during this Passover season, let us believe that we have been raised with Him in newness of life. We are being transformed into His same image from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). If we have been baptized into His death, then we have died to the old. You cannot be executed twice. Christ paid the price. So now we are to receive the “surpassing greatness of His power” that is beamed toward us who believe, “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named” (Ephesians 1:19-21).

BUT WE ALL, WITH UNVEILED FACE,
BEHOLDING AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY
OF THE LORD, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED
INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO
GLORY...

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18



The Body of Christ is to experience this identical resurrection of the Messiah, “the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:23). If we have identified ourselves with His death and burial, then we are also to be identical with the likeness of His resurrection. We are to be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19), and preserved “blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:10-11). This fullness of life is available for us to walk in now. We do not need to die and go to heaven first.

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

The resurrection of Christ is what we are supposed to be celebrating during this time of Passover and Easter—a resurrection that had never happened before the Messiah. That is why Christ is the first fruits of resurrection from the dead. It was not just reanimation of His physical body, nor was it the resurrection of a spirit. Instead, Christ’s spirit, soul, and body were raised by the power and fullness of the Father.

FOR THOSE WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BECOME CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, SO THAT HE WOULD BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN; AND THESE WHOM HE PREDESTINED, HE ALSO CALLED; AND THESE WHOM HE CALLED, HE ALSO JUSTIFIED; AND THESE WHOM HE JUSTIFIED, HE ALSO GLORIFIED.

ROMANS 8:29-30

We are to walk in newness of life and this life of the Father is available to the Body of Christ now. We are to be raised in newness of life just as Yeshua was raised! In “what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Ephesians 1:19). What are the riches of the glory and the surpassing greatness of God’s power? It is the powerful hand of the Father that reached down into the grave and brought up His Son “from Sheol” (Psalm 30:3).

All too often Easter celebrations are devoid of the awe, wonder and worship fitting the revelation of Christ’s resurrection—without resurrection there is no Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:17). We need to focus on teaching our children about the most powerful event that has ever happened on this planet! Christ has risen from the dead and “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15). If Christ is the firstborn, then that means others are to follow in His same pattern. We are “to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). We are to have this same resurrection life in us! Guard this truth in your heart.

A dramatic sunset over a golden wheat field. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, orange glow across the sky and the field. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. A path of wheat leads from the foreground towards the horizon, creating a sense of depth. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

BUT NOW CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED
FROM THE DEAD, THE FIRST FRUITS OF
THOSE WHO ARE ASLEEP.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel and the lands of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God*, and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org

ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish roots of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes:

- **Feed the poor** and break the cycle of poverty in Israel
- **Support the orphans and widows** of fallen Israeli soldiers
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges** between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research
- Support archaeology and **preservation of the biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews** around the world return to Israel and start new lives
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and **help create "The Gospel Trail" between Nazareth and Capernaum**

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