

# Jesus Is Alive!

**Hebrews 7:17-22** [NIV] *“For it is declared: **“You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek.”** The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: **“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest for ever.’**” Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.”*

Jesus was appointed by God the Father to be an eternal High Priest, who is able to make with all mankind an eternal covenant.

**Hebrews 7:23-27** [NIV] *“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need, one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. **Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.**”*

Jesus as both eternal High Priest and hence an eternal sacrifice when He offered His own body as that sacrifice.

**Jesus does not have to ever die again, He now lives as our Saviour and High Priest for ever.**

## Jesus Christ is not a dead cult figure but an eternal living person.

The only way we can really experience the continual living presence of Jesus today is by following exactly what He tells us to do.

**John 14:15-18** [NIV] *“**If you love me, you will obey what I command.** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”*

What is the living Jesus is asking of us?

*“Love Him”* – how do we do this?

Obey what Jesus commands us to do, as far as loving Him is concerned.

**John 15:12-14** [NIV] *“**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.** You are my friends if you do what I command.”*

Lay down our lives even as Jesus did for us.

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

**Just as Jesus is a resurrected living sacrifice we too should follow His example.**

How do we do this?

**Romans 6:1-4** [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Baptism by total emersion to truly indicate the grave, is an **outward sign** of what has happened inwardly.

Jesus the Son of Man is alive, living a new life as our High Priest, interceding on behalf of all humanity at the throne of God the Father.

We also enter into a new life with Jesus.

**Romans 6:5-10** [NIV] *“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”*

The life Jesus the Son of Man now lives is dedicated to fulfilling the Mission of God the Father, to create and extend the Kingdom [created family] of God.

**Romans 6:11-13** [NIV] *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

All of these and many other scriptures show that Christianity is **not** religion obeying a set of rules, **but a relationship with a risen Jesus Christ.**

**This relationship is totally dependent on the resurrected life of Jesus the Son of Man.**

**1 Corinthians 15:13-20** [NIV] *“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*

**Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, Christianity has no credibility.**

**How was Paul so sure of the resurrection of Jesus?**

**Paul had met with Him, the risen Christ!** [Galatians 1:11-17]

**We too can meet with the risen Christ.**

First we need to establish the resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus of Nazareth died, He became a dead body.

Jesus died in a horrible and very public manner on a Roman cross.

Thousands witnessed this death.

But maybe Jesus was still alive when He was taken down from the cross and put into the tomb?

Such a statement cannot be true.

**John 19:31** [NIV] *“Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they **asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.**”*

The Jews were very fussy not to have their Sabbath days defiled by bodies hanging on a cross, it was politic for the Romans to take them down if they were well and truly dead.

**John 19:32-37** [NIV] *“The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But **when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.** The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,” and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”*

The poor wretches on the cross tried to gasp an extra breath or two by hoisting themselves up on the cross by their legs, for the cross put a terrible strain on their breathing.

If the legs were broken they could not do this and they very soon expired.

**The spear thrust into the heart of Jesus produced a mixture of blood and water [serum which is transparent like water].**

**One of the strongest legal and medical proofs of death is the separation of blood from serum.**

The executioner certified Jesus’ death to Pilate, the Governor. If he had got it wrong, his own life would have been on the line. If Pilate got it wrong, his job would also have been on the line.

Neither of them got it wrong; Jesus was dead.

So we can rule out any theories of Jesus reviving in the cool of the tomb.

The tomb was found empty on the third day.

The Jews could not deny it.

The Romans could not deny it.

The tomb was empty save for the grave cloths of Jesus.

There is only two possibilities for this empty tomb.

Someone stole the body!

**But who would have wanted to steal the body of Jesus?**

**His enemies?**

Hardly. They had plotted day and night to put Jesus in that tomb.

**Matthew 27:62-66** [NIV] *“The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver*

said, 'After three days I will rise again.' **So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.** Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. **"Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."** So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard."

The tomb was made very secure against removal of the body.

**If Jesus' friends had been able to move the body of Jesus to fake a resurrection, would they then have put their lives at risk preaching what they knew to be a lie?**

Besides, the disciples had **no** expectation of Jesus rising from the dead.

**John 20:1-8** [NIV] "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. **He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.** Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed."

Don't overlook the evidence of this scripture and the two men involved, followed perhaps by many other witnesses.

**The grave clothes were left as if Jesus had passed right through them.** The headpiece still rolled up in the heap, and it was at about the right distance from the wrapping that enveloped Jesus' body. No grave robber could have made off with the body of Jesus and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it.

**The empty tomb was and remains a powerful indication that Jesus was no longer dead but somehow had been raised to a new life.**

**There was a large crowd of witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.**

The Christian faith does **not** rest on an empty tomb but on much more personal evidence that Jesus is alive.

**The first disciples of Jesus saw the resurrected Jesus, talked with Him, ate with Him for a full forty days.**

**Acts 1:3** [NIV] "After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. **He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.**"

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8** [NIV] "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that **he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.**"

Jesus told Paul that at one time He had appeared after His resurrection to over 500 people all at one time.

**Galatians 1:15-18** [NIV] *“But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.”*

**This is during these three years in Arabia that Paul met the risen Christ, a similar period of time that Jesus had spent on a day-to-day basis with the other disciples.**

All the writers of the New Testament had this personal contact with Jesus after His resurrection.

**A new community began in Palestine.**

The basis of this new Christian community in a Jewish state and culture was the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Before the proven resurrection the disciples ran away and hid from the Jewish authority in fear that they would also be killed.**

**After the proven resurrection nothing could silence them as the promised Holy Spirit gave them courage and empowerment.**

This new movement had behind it:-

No proven leadership.

No financial backing.

No experience.

No formal education.

No training in evangelism.

Yet they turned an ancient culture and society upside down.

This was the start of a movement that would change the whole world.

The basis of the movement's power was the message of hope that Jesus' resurrection brings to all humanity.

The growth of this new community, Christianity, is living proof of the resurrected Jesus.

**The radical transformation of lives.**

People began to realise that Christianity was **not** just another religion based on the teaching of a human prophet and teacher but a relationship with a risen Jesus Christ, the very Son of God.

**There is nothing like this in all of the world.**

This life-changing power of Jesus still continues today.

**Jesus is alive, you and I can meet with Him.**

This is exactly what God wants to happen to every human being who has lived, is living and will experience human life.

**Genesis 1:26-27** [NIV] *“Then God said, **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

In the beginning God created human beings in His image [shadow, not real thing] but desired them to also be created in His likeness [character or child].

This second part of the creation comes only to us through an intimate relationship with the resurrected Jesus.

First we have to meet Jesus, then we can begin that creative relationship of developing the very character [likeness] of our Creator God.