

CHRIST RESURRECTED ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (PART 6)

—adapted from the writings of St. Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem—

Since we have all these prophecies concerning Christ's resurrection, let us remain firmly fixed in our faith. Let them who willingly choose to stumble on account of disbelief fall. We, however, will remain standing on the solid rock of faith in Christ's resurrection. Be careful never to allow anyone to make you think otherwise or to instill you with doubt concerning Jesus Christ's resurrection.

The Apostle Paul has written the following, in order to safeguard us from disbelief: **“Remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead” (2 Tim. 2:8)**. And elsewhere he states, **“If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. And we will also be found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up” (1Cor. 15:14-15)**. And a little further down he says, **“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1Cor. 15:20)**. And after Christ rose from the dead, **“He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve” (1Cor. 15:5)**. If you do not want to believe only one witness, you have another twelve witnesses! Subsequently, **“he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once” (1Cor. 15:6)**. If someone distrusts the testimony of twelve witnesses, he can accept the testimony of five hundred witnesses! Later **“He was seen by James” (1Cor. 15:7)**, His stepbrother and first bishop of Jerusalem. Do not disbelieve this bishop who directly, personally, and truly saw Jesus Christ resurrected. One may contend that James the brother of God was biased toward Christ on account of his familial relationship, and his testimony of Christ's resurrection lacks credibility. Listen closely: **“Then last of all He appeared to me also” (1Cor. 15:9)**, to the Apostle Paul, his enemy. Who can discount such a testimony when it comes from one's own enemy? “I, who was a former persecutor of Christ, now preach and confirm the good news of Christ's Resurrection,” proclaims the Apostle Paul.

There are numerous witnesses attesting to the resurrection of the Savior. Amongst them are the following: God's angels who appeared at the tomb and testified that Christ had risen. Peter and John who raced to the tomb and found it empty. Thomas who examined and touched Christ's hands and feet after His resurrection and saw the wounds that had been left by the nails. The remainder of the Apostles who received the Holy Spirit through the life-giving breath of Christ the Savior on the evening of His resurrection. The women who embraced Christ's feet when He appeared to them. The linen cloth, which had been used to wrap Christ's body, that was found lying in the grave intact. The holy sepulcher, which is empty, and which can be seen to this very day. The sacred Church of the Resurrection that was built over Christ's empty tomb by St. Constantine the Great. Tabitha further attests to the resurrection of Christ, since she herself was resurrected from the dead by His name alone (Acts 9:40). How can someone doubt that Christ rose from the dead, since the invocation of His name was capable of resurrecting people who had died? Additionally, there is the Mount of Olives from where Christ ascended into the Heavens. Behold! You have many witnesses.