

Raised with Him

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Celebrating Resurrection is related to all the human kind. We can notice the following points when we study the Bible:

1- His Resurrection is our's:

Resurrection was for our own sake; so that we may live! For it is written:

☆ *“(God) raised us up together, and made us sit together, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6).*

“Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph 5:14).

☆ *“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2Tim 2:11).*

“Death is swallowed up in victory”. ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ (1Cor 15:54,55).

Therefore, His Resurrection is our own Resurrection!! Christ was raised, in order to raise us!!

2- Repentance: The first resurrection:

St. Paul the Apostle calls on those who are wallowing in their sin, saying: *“Awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph 5:14)*. There is no doubt that those who are wallowing in sin are doomed to death and actually live in the grave of sin.

We may recall how the Israelites craved for meat, and God gave them manna and Salwa in great quantities. Later, He became angry with them and destroyed many of them. The dead were buried in a place called **“Kibroth Hattaavah”** i.e. *“graves of lust” (Num 11:34)*.

If we shake off the lusts that cling to us like shrouds of death, we are blessed. We will rise up from the grave of our sin and leave it behind us. We will press on towards the kingdom of life. Repentance is called *“The first resurrection” (Revelation 20:6)*.

3- Christ is our life:

The Resurrection of the Lord has made Jesus Christ's **“life”** for each of us. If we are united with Him, we will live for ever... *“Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (Jn 11:26)*.

† *“I am the Resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25).*

† *“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6).*

† “*Because I live, you will live also*” (Jn 14:19).

† “*For you died*” (in baptism) “*and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory*” (Col 3:3,4).

Truly, Lord Jesus Christ is our life, **our physical life**: because by Him we move, and live, **Our spiritual life**: because by Him we come into the divine fellowship that animates our souls, **Our moral life**: because in Him we become sons and daughters of God, and **Our eternal life**: because in Him we become heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

4- The Open Paradise:

The Lord opened paradise after He accomplished the redemption on the Cross. He did not wait till the day of His Resurrection, but instead opened it on the evening of Good Friday, as He told the Repentant Thief who was crucified on His right: “*Today you will be with Me in Paradise*” (LK 23:3).

In this way, the children of the new covenant have become greater than John the Baptist. For the Baptist passed through Hades, as he was martyred before the accomplishment of redemption and the opening of paradise. As for those born under the new covenant, they go to paradise immediately, without passing through Hades.

5- How the Copts Celebrate the Easter:

On a specific Sunday, determined each year through astronomical calculations, we celebrate the Easter each year. On the Saturday before, we have the liturgical prayers, that ends after midnight. This specific liturgy includes a dialogue between the people outside the sanctuary and those inside, while the curtains are closing the doors of the sanctuary and the light in the whole church is switched off:

- Khristos Anesti.
- + Alithos Anesti.
- Christ rose.
- + Truly He rose.
- Open, O Eternal Gates and let the king of Glory get inside!!...

This dialogue is repeated 3 times, with special tones. A loud voice is performed symbolising the Earthquake.

The Curtains are opened. The light is switched on. The clergy and the deacons start passing around the altar and the church singing a very impressive song of Resurrection.

On Monday we celebrate a Notional Feast called “Sham El Nessim”, (in Coptic means “the Garden flowers”). We are used to eat fish and eggs. The fish was considered a hidden symbol of Christianity (Ekthis) this word in Greek carries the

first letters in a phrase “Eso Khristo ieo theo Soteris” which means Jesus Christ the son of God, our Saviour.

The Egg, as told in tradition, was offered by Mary Magdalene to Pilate as a symbol of resurrection, carrying life inside the shell.