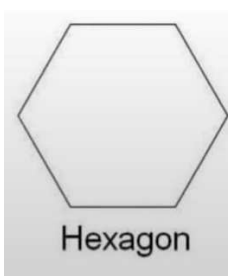
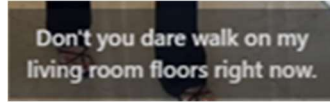


April 11, 2026
Firstfruits from the dead – evidence

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1200455575323030>
I have my wife's permission to show this.

Dawn said the wife in the video probably beat him to death with her mop.



I'm a science and math guy.
I came to faith studying the
science of the brain.
from Ben Troyer

That is the theme
today, He is gone
from the tomb,
from death,
He is Risen

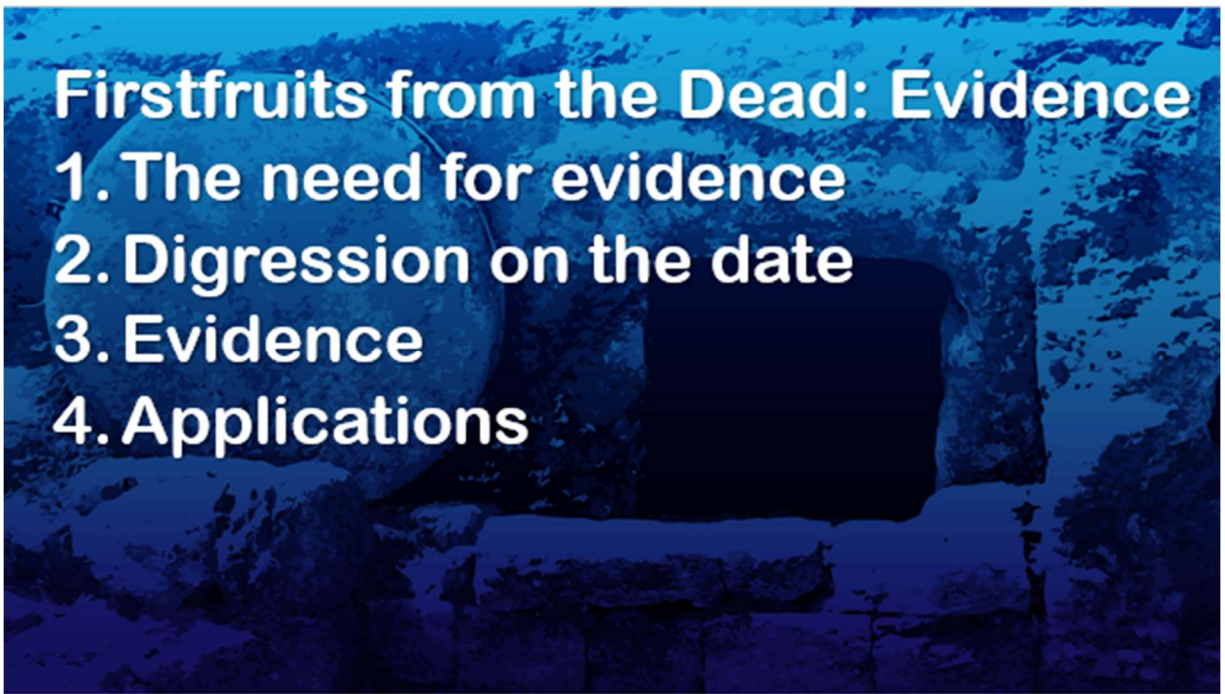
The background this time is
from a photo I (Jeremy)
took of a 1st century
Jewish burial chamber with
a rollaway stone door like
what is described in the
Besorah. They uncovered it in
2006 while doing some road
improvements.

**FIRSTFRUITS
FROM THE DEAD:
EVIDENCE**
Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld

April 11, 2026 | 24th of Nisan, 5786
כ"ד בניסן תשפ"ו

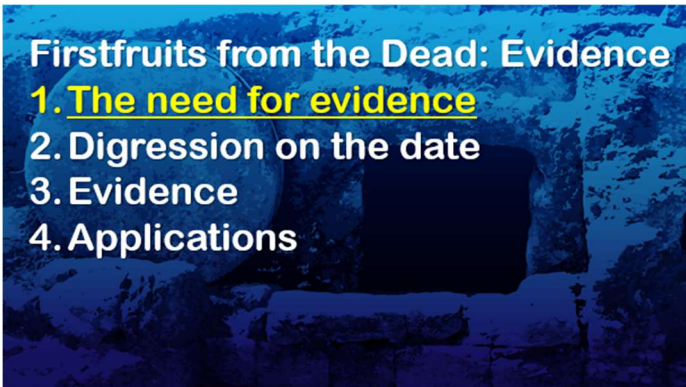
OR HAOLAM
MESSIANIC SYNAGOGUE

I'm a science guy. Neurophysics, brain science, were my precursor to faith in Yeshua.



Firstfruits from the Dead: Evidence

1. The need for evidence
2. Digression on the date
3. Evidence
4. Applications



Firstfruits from the Dead: Evidence

1. **The need for evidence**
2. Digression on the date
3. Evidence
4. Applications

On of the guys with whom I have coffee Tuesday mornings at the J knows I'm a Messianic Rabbi. Several of us went to a funeral of an ~85 year old Greek Orthodox J member. Sitting in the sanctuary, I was trying to think of how to turn the conversation to Yeshua.



So, I noticed around the sanctuary walls were stylized pictures of these gilded guys. It occurred to me to say to one of my acquaintances there, "Hey, Did you know that ALL these guys are Jewish?" He checked with a Greek Orthodox clergy. Later, added, "Messianic Jews, like me?" One day sort of out of the blue, this same guy said, "I can believe in that Jesus was a historical figure. But I can't believe in the resurrection."

I was a bit shocked, but said, there are LOTS of websites where I can present the reasons. He said no, no. Really, I blew it.

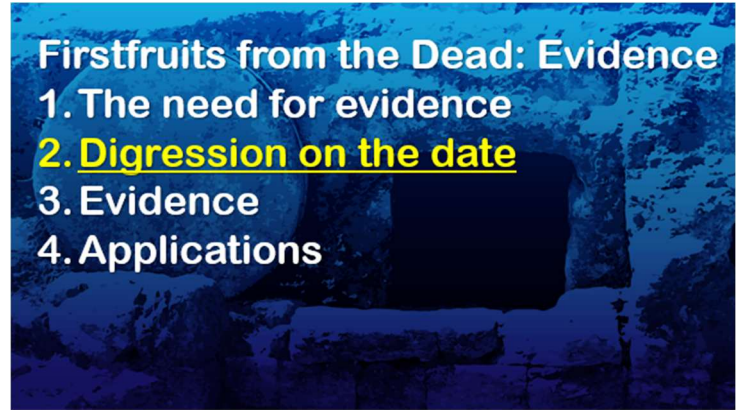
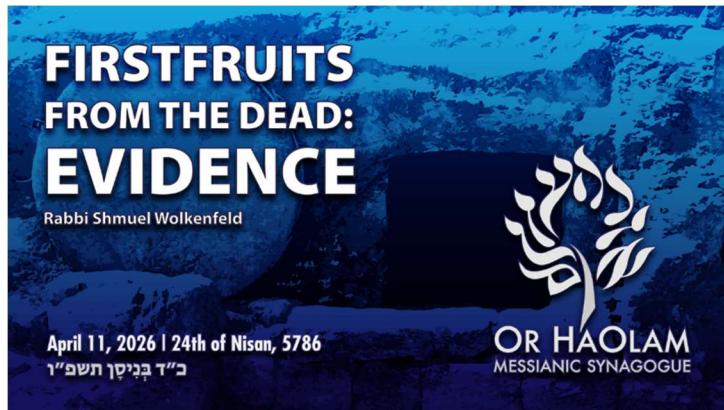
^{1 Peter 3:15} Remaining **always ready** to give a reasoned answer to anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you — yet with humility and fear.

[The resurrection is not an option. We don't present our faith to people because they will feel good to be believers, although they will, most of the time. We present our faith because it is TRUE, and the only way to avoid the just judgement of G-d that is coming on the earth!!]

1 Cor. 15 14-19 If Messiah has not been raised, then **our proclaiming is meaningless and your faith also is meaningless**. Moreover, we are found to be **false witnesses** of God, because we testified about God that He raised up Messiah—whom He did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Messiah has been raised. And if Messiah has not been raised, **your faith is futile—you are still in your sins**. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Messiah have perished. If we have hoped in Messiah in this life alone, we are to be pitied more than all people.

[Father, help us to prepare our heart and minds to present the reality of our faith in You, or better yet ... Your resurrected supernatural reality, to a lost and toxic world.]

1 Peter 3:15 Remaining **always ready** to give a reasoned answer to anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you — yet with humility and fear.



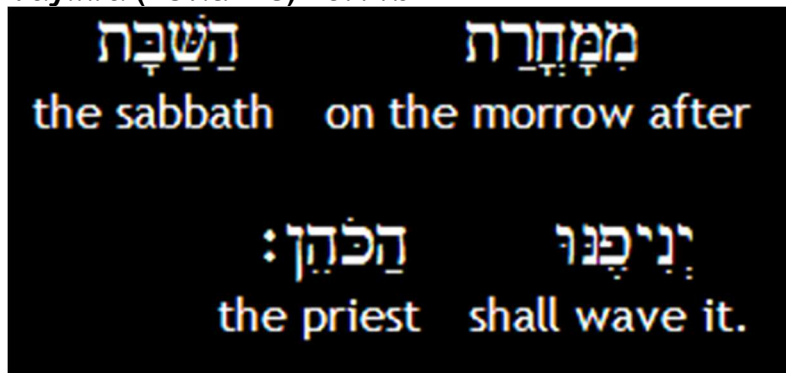
1Cor.15.20, 23 The **Messiah** has been raised from the dead, **the firstfruits of those who have died**.

1Cor.15.23 But each in his own order: **the Messiah is the firstfruits**; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming.

But when is Firstfruits?

Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:9-11 CJB Adoni said to Moshe, "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'After you enter the land I am giving you and harvest its ripe crops, you are to bring a sheaf of the **firstfruits** of your harvest to the cohen. He is to wave the sheaf before Adoni, so that you will be accepted; the cohen is to wave it on the day after the Shabbat. '"

Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:11b



What is the “morrow after the Shabbat?”

- Some say it’s the day after the Shabbat after Pesakh, so the next Sunday.
- Some say that Pesakh IS a Shabbat, so that it’s the next day.

Definitive verse, to me...

Yehoshua 5.10-12 **The people of Isra'el camped at Gilgal, and they observed Pesach on the fourteenth day of the month, there on the plains of Yericho. The day after Pesach they ate what the land produced, matzah and roasted ears of grain that day. The following day, after they had eaten food produced in the land, the man ended. From then on, the people of Isra'el no longer had man; instead, that year, they ate the produce of the land of Cana'an.**

[So, I read it as that the next day after Pesakh is the Feast of Firstfruits.]

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ראשון	שני	שלישי	רביעי	חמישי	ששי	שבת
			1 יד ניסן Nissan 14 Passover Eve ערב פסח	2 טו ניסן Nissan 15 Passover I פסח	3 טז ניסן Nissan 16 Good Friday Passover II ה'ט"ז פסח	4 יז ניסן Nissan 17 Passover III ה'ט"ח פסח
5 יח ניסן Nissan 18 Easter Sunday Passover IV ה'ט"ט פסח	6 יט ניסן Nissan 19 Easter Monday Passover V ה'י"א פסח	7 כ ניסן Nissan 20 Passover VI ה'י"ב פסח	8 כא ניסן Nissan 21 Passover VII שבועות של פסח	9 כב ניסן Nissan 22 Passover VIII Diaspora	10 כג ניסן Nissan 23 R. Chodesh Iyyar	11 כד ניסן Nissan 24 Shiva Lev. 9:3-11:47
12 ה' ניסן Nissan 25	13 ו' ניסן Nissan 26	14 ז' ניסן Nissan 27 Yom HaShoah יום הזיכרון לשואת הלבנון	15 ח' ניסן Nissan 28 Tax Day (USA)	16 ט' ניסן Nissan 29	17 י' ניסן Iyyar 1 R. Chodesh Iyyar	18 י"א אייר Iyyar 2 Tzitzit Lev. 12:1-15:33
19 י"ב אייר Iyyar 3	20 י"ג אייר Iyyar 4	21 י"ד אייר Iyyar 5 Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) יום הזיכרון	22 י"ה אייר Iyyar 6 Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day) יום העצמאות	23 י"ו אייר Iyyar 7	24 י"ז אייר Iyyar 8	25 י"ח אייר Iyyar 9 Achra Ma'kadashim Lev. 16:1-20:27
26 י"ט אייר Iyyar 10	27 י"א אייר Iyyar 11	28 י"ב אייר Iyyar 12	29 י"ג אייר Iyyar 13	30 י"ד אייר Iyyar 14		

Nisan 14/Apr 1 Pesakh Seder in the evening = Nisan 15 Continuing all Wed. Apr.2

Nisan 16/Apr 3 Firstfruits = Omer 1

The Counting of the Omer begins on the second day of Passover (the 16th of Nissan) for Rabbinic Jews (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform), April 2 in the evening or all day, April 3.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counting_of_the_Omer There are other views, but I think this is the most defensible.]

So, to my understanding, Friday April 3 Nisan 16 is the actual day of Firstfruits.

But our community Seder was Sunday, April 5. It seemed incongruous to celebrate Firstfruits BEFORE the community Passover Seder.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ראשון	שני	שלישי	רביעי	חמישי	ששי	שבת
			1 יד ניסן Nissan 14 Passover Eve ערב פסח	2 טו ניסן Nissan 15 Passover I פסח	3 טז ניסן Nissan 16 Good Friday Passover II ה'ט"ז פסח	4 יז ניסן Nissan 17 Passover III ה'ט"ח פסח
5 יח ניסן Nissan 18 Easter Sunday Passover IV ה'ט"ט פסח	6 יט ניסן Nissan 19 Easter Monday Passover V ה'י"א פסח	7 כ ניסן Nissan 20 Passover VI ה'י"ב פסח	8 כא ניסן Nissan 21 Passover VII שבועות של פסח	9 כב ניסן Nissan 22 Passover VIII Diaspora	10 כג ניסן Nissan 23 R. Chodesh Iyyar	11 כד ניסן Nissan 24 Shiva Lev. 9:3-11:47
12 ה' ניסן Nissan 25	13 ו' ניסן Nissan 26	14 ז' ניסן Nissan 27 Yom HaShoah יום הזיכרון לשואת הלבנון	15 ח' ניסן Nissan 28 Tax Day (USA)	16 ט' ניסן Nissan 29	17 י' ניסן Iyyar 1 R. Chodesh Iyyar	18 י"א אייר Iyyar 2 Tzitzit Lev. 12:1-15:33
19 י"ב אייר Iyyar 3	20 י"ג אייר Iyyar 4	21 י"ד אייר Iyyar 5 Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) יום הזיכרון	22 י"ה אייר Iyyar 6 Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day) יום העצמאות	23 י"ו אייר Iyyar 7	24 י"ז אייר Iyyar 8	25 י"ח אייר Iyyar 9 Achra Ma'kadashim Lev. 16:1-20:27
26 י"ט אייר Iyyar 10	27 י"א אייר Iyyar 11	28 י"ב אייר Iyyar 12	29 י"ג אייר Iyyar 13	30 י"ד אייר Iyyar 14		

Nisan 14/Apr 1 Pesakh Seder in the evening = Nisan 15 Continuing all Wed. Apr.2

Nisan 16/Apr 3 First fruits = Omer 1

[The Counting of the Omer begins on the second night of Passover. It continues for 49 days until Shavuot, which is the 50th day, the first after the Omer.]

https://www.exploringjudaism.org/holidays/omer/]

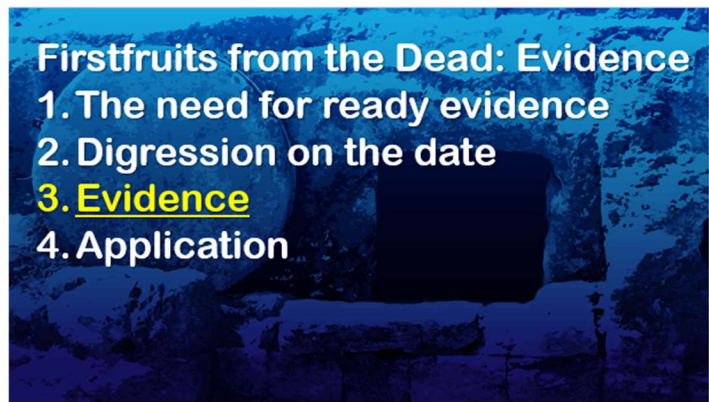
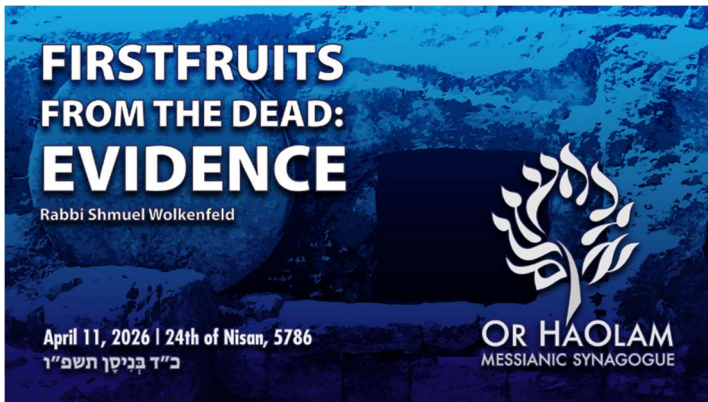
We are commemorating the Firstfruits' spiritual reality, NOT pretending to have the exact day.

1Cor.15.20, 23 **The Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died**

1Cor.15.23 **But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming.**

Traditional Jewish people ignore this holiday completely.

[So now, it's settled this is NOT the day, but the principle.]



[Most of what follows is from my dear friend and brother Jim Adler.]

4 Key Pieces of EVIDENCE to the RESURRECTION!

- Exhibit A: The empty tomb
- Exhibit B: 530 Witnesses to the resurrected Yeshua
- Exhibit C: The commitment of the disciples of Yeshua despite threat of torture and death.
- Exhibit D: Silence from the opposition

Exhibit A: The Empty Tomb

There is NO evidence that either the Jewish or Roman leaders found the corpse of Yeshua! The momentum of His following would have halted if the corpse of Yeshua was produced, or if there was evidence of foul play. Paul Althaus, a professor at the University of Göttingen: "*(The resurrection) could have not been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as an undeniable fact for all concerned,*" N. T. Wright, an eminent British New Covenant scholar concludes, "*That is why, as an historian, I cannot explain the rise of early Christianity unless Jesus rose again, leaving an empty tomb behind him.*" The Romans despised anything other than allegiance to Rome. The Jewish religious leaders believed Yeshua was blaspheming as He claimed to be the Son of God. One foolproof way to squelch His following would have been to simply produce His corpse once word of the resurrection began to spread.

The main debate in the Book of Acts was *why* the tomb was empty, not *if* it was empty.

EXHIBIT B: WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTED YESHUA

¹ *Corinthians 15:6* Rabbi Saul (Paul) writes, "*After that He (Yeshua) was seen by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep,*" Saul penned this when most of the 500 witnesses were still alive and states such.

EXHIBIT C: THE COMMITMENT OF THE DISCIPLES AMIDST HORRIFIC THREATS

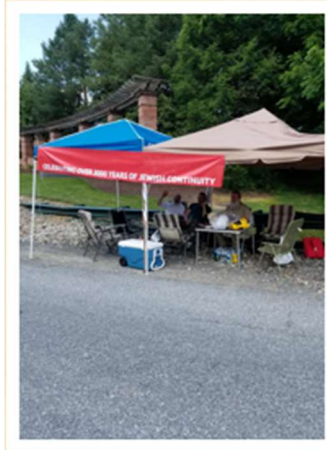
Imprisoned, tortured, and executed for their cause. 10 of the original 12 disciples were brutally murdered because of their faith in Yeshua—boiled in oil, crucified upside down, etc. *[And consider that many of them, before the resurrection, were a fearful, timid bunch.]*

Another Adverse Witness:

German New Covenant scholar Gerd Lüdemann concludes, *“It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus’ death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ,”*

EXHIBIT D: SILENCE FROM THE OPPOSITION

If the Jewish or Roman leaders were able to present *any* evidence calling into question *any* portion of the narrative circulating about Yeshua’s resurrection, the evidence would have been provided and the following of Yeshua would have never even begun.



Another source of great material

Evidence for the Resurrection that Even Traditional Jewish Historians Accept

Jonathan Mann

Messiah Conference 2019

The Sign of Yeshua’s Messianic Identity
(Matthew 12:38-40)

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.’ But he answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous

generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

[Context – after Yeshua heals a demon possessed man who was blind and mute the Jewish people who witness this say that this could be Son of David – or the Messiah

Yeshua’s sign of his messianic identity was his resurrection from the dead]

Peter’s Message – Acts 2:32, 36 “This Yeshua God raised up—we all are witnesses! ... Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him—this Yeshua whom you had crucified—both Lord and Messiah!” *[Peter’s sermon in Jerusalem on Shavuot – God revealed Yeshua’s divine and messianic identity by raising him from the dead]*



Jonathan Mann: “Here is a picture of Erik Matson and I from Tuesday, I was have actually spent time on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at the tent – about 7 hours total at the tent. ‘You are here because you care about your Jews – you believe I am wrong about Yeshua, I have left Judaism and you want to bring me into traditional Judaism. I am a Messianic Jew because Yeshua rose from the dead. It’s possible I am wrong about this, this is the conclusion I have come to after my examination of the evidence. I want to know if I am wrong, truth is what

is most important, if you could show me that Yeshua did not rise from the dead I will leave Messianic Judaism.”



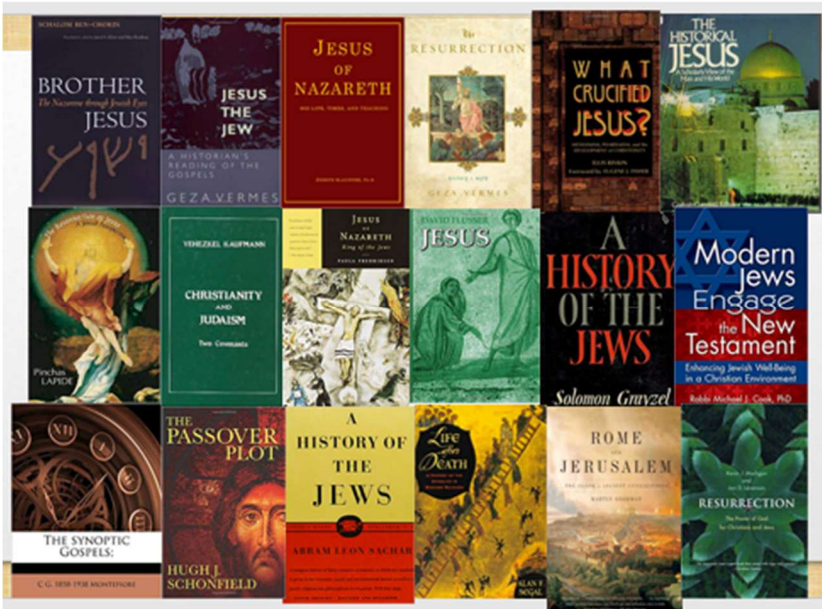
If Yeshua did not rise from the dead, Messianic Judaism is false.

In 1 Cor 15 Paul says that if Yeshua did not rise from the dead our faith is meaningless and we have no hope. He stated – there is no evidence for this event happening in history.

Why do you believe the resurrection of Yeshua was a historical event?

Because God’s Word says so – Jewish people who are not messianic do not hold the Bible with the same authority as you and I do.

Jews for Judaism – went to discuss the resurrection of Yeshua – The New Testament is not the Word of God; it’s not even historically accurate to them.



Dr. Gary Habermas and Dr. David Mishkin

Examine historical facts that the majority of traditional Jewish historians meaning (non-messianic Jewish historians) accept and building a case for the resurrection using those facts.

Don’t worry about writing down everything on these slides, if you email me I would be happy to share this Power Point with you. I will give you a handout at the end of this presentation.

- If the New Testament is not inspired – Yeshua was raised from the dead, If the New Testament is not historically accurate in every detail – Yeshua was raised from the dead

Background Historical Information

1. Yeshua died by crucifixion.
2. Yeshua was buried in a nearby tomb.

Dr. Paula Fredriksen: Visiting Professor of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University

“The single most solid fact about Jesus’ life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely crucifixion.”

- *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews*, pg. 8

Dr. David Flusser: “Joseph of Arimathea begged Pilate to let him have the body of Jesus. He took him down, wrapped him in linen, and laid him in a tomb cut out of the rock where no one had yet been laid (Lk. 23:50-56).” - *Jesus*, pgs. 147-148

[Late Orthodox Jewish historian Dr. David Flusser –he was professor at the Hebrew University where he taught Judaism in the Second Temple Period and Early Christianity]

Yeshua's tomb was found empty.

[Majority of non-messianic Jewish historians accept the fact that Yeshua's tomb was found empty]

Women Discover the Empty Tomb

- Mark 16:1-8
- Matthew 28:1-10
- Luke 24:1-9
- John 20:1-2

[Multiple Attestation and Embarrassing Testimony

used car salesman – admitting the car got into a wreck and telling someone they should buy it]

the late Dr. Geza Vermes: Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford

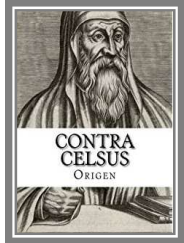
“The evidence furnished by female witnesses had no standing in a male-dominated Jewish society.”

- *The Resurrection: History and Myth*, pg. 148



b. Rosh Ha-Shanah 22a

“The following are unfit to give testimony ... a woman is unfit ... Although in certain cases a woman's testimony is accepted, e.g., to testify to the death of someone's husband, in the majority of cases her testimony is not valid.”



A Jewish response

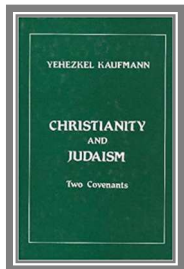
“[Jesus] showed the marks of his punishment, and how his hands were pierced with nails: who beheld this? A half-frantic woman.”

- *Contra Celsus* 2.55

Dr. Pinchas Lapide, Israeli Orthodox rabbi and historian

“In a purely fictional narrative one would have avoided making women the crown witnesses of the resurrection since they were considered in rabbinic Judaism as incapable of giving valid testimony.”

- *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, pg. 95



The late Dr. Yehezkel Kaufmann, professor of Bible at the Hebrew University

“On the third day after the crucifixion . . . the body of Jesus vanished from the grave.”

- *Christianity and Judaism: Two Covenants*, pg. 133

Dr. Jon D. Levenson

“Within a day or so of Jesus' death, several of his female followers, including those who had witnessed his death and burial, walked to his tomb. . . . To their astonishment, the dead prophet's body, the body of their lord and leader—their 'king'—was gone and his tomb empty.”

- Kevin Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews*, pg. 25

the late Dr. Geza Vermes, Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford

“the women who set out to pay their last respects to Jesus found to their consternation, not a body, but an empty tomb.”

- *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, pg. 41

The disciples had experiences they believed were appearances of the risen Yeshua.

Mark 14:51-52

“A certain young man was following Him, with nothing but a linen cloth around his body, and they grabbed him. But he ran away naked, leaving behind the linen cloth.”

[Most important text Jewish historians use to verify this fact – I'm kidding]

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received.

m. 'Avot 1.1

“Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-7 that Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:11 “Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.”

Dr. Pinchas Lapide, Orthodox Jewish historian: “[Paul] does not pass on his own thoughts but indeed ‘delivers’ what he himself has ‘received’ from the first witnesses ... [this] formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses.”

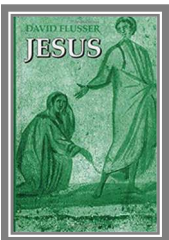
- *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* pgs. 98-99

[In his book The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective he gives 8 reasons to demonstrate that this is early Jewish tradition that Paul received

Who are the first witnesses? According to Dr. Lapide - Paul received this Jewish tradition that Yeshua appeared to Peter, James the brother of Yeshua, The twelve, all the apostles, and 500 men from the witnesses themselves – the apostles.

When did Paul meet the apostles?]

Galatians 1:18 “Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”



Dr. David Flusser, Orthodox Jewish historian: “I am convinced that there are reliable reports that the Crucified One ‘appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time ... Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.”

- *Jesus*, pg. 155

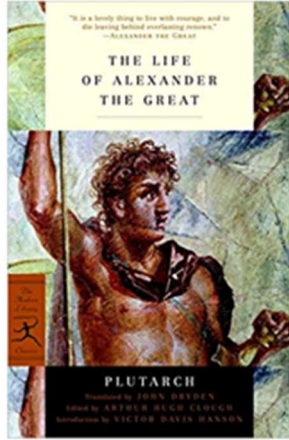
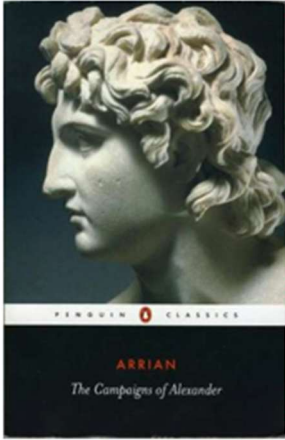
How early does this Jewish tradition date?

Dr. Jon D. Levenson, Professor of Jewish studies at Harvard University: “some twenty years or so before Paul sent his letter to the Corinthians (around 55 C.E.).”

- Kevin Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews*, pg. 25

[Dr. Levenson says that this tradition was being proclaimed by the apostles before Paul/Sha’ul became a follower of Yeshua.]

What are the best ancient sources to study Alexander the Great?



Plutarch and Arrian – over 400 years after Alexander died

Dr. Geza Vermes

“the ideas attributed to the beginning of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem and Judea, chronicled by the Acts of the Apostles, have every probability of mirroring in substance the earliest thoughts of the first Jewish-Christian communities ...”

- *The Resurrection: History and Myth*, pg. 112

[first century work of ancient historiography - the book of Acts – It’s really the history of the first generation of early Messianic Jews – our people]

Ancient Historiography

Acts 2:32: “This Yeshua God raised up—we all are witnesses!”

Acts 3:14-15: “But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”

Acts 10:39-43: “[Yeshua] was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.”

[Historiography is the study of the methods used by historians in developing history as an academic discipline.]

Were the disciples lying?

[This was brought up at the Jews for Judaism table – maybe they were lying to make their lives better]

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, currently professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University

“To proclaim the resurrection of an individual is one thing; to proclaim that the Messiah was a man crucified by Rome was something else entirely. There was, according to Rome, only one king, and that was Caesar, not some Galilean criminal with royal pretensions . . . to proclaim oneself a follower of Jesus consequently meant risk of ridicule, ostracism, and even persecution.”

- *The Misunderstood Jew: the Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, pg. 55

[Peter was executed by Nero in the mid-60s AD. He was killed for his faith in Yeshua and he believed that Yeshua was the Messiah because he believed that he rose from the dead and appeared to him. Dr. Geza Vermes discusses the first century historical sources recording Peter’s execution in his book *sources in his book “Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea”*]

James’s execution

“so [Ananus, the high priest] assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.”

- *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.200

Dr. David Flusser: “The Lord’s brother, James, came to believe as a result of a resurrection appearance. In 62 A.D. James died for his faith in his brother; he was murdered by a Sadducean high priest.” - *Jesus*, pg. 35

Dr. Paula Fredriksen, Hebrew University: “The disciples’ conviction that they had seen the Risen Christ ... [is part of] historical bedrock, facts known past doubting about the earliest community after Jesus’ death.” - *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews*, pg. 264

the late Dr. Ellis Rivkin, Professor of Jewish history at Hebrew Union College: “Yet there are empirical facts that cannot be dissolved . . . Jesus was tried, crucified, and seen by his followers as resurrected.”

- *What Crucified Jesus? Messianism, Pharisaism, and the Development of Christianity*, pg. 71

the late Dr. Abram Leon Sachar, historian and founding president of Brandeis University: “The Messianic claims of their Master seemed to die with him on the cross at Golgotha. Then came a miraculous restoration of faith, inspired, according to all gospel accounts, by the resurrection and reappearance of Jesus . . . the disciples saw their beloved leader again.” - *A History of the Jews*, pg. 134

Dr. Geza Vermes: “It is their collective conviction of having seen their dead teacher alive, combined with the initial discovery of the empty tomb, that provides the substance for faith in Jesus’ rising from the dead.” - *Jesus the Jew: A Historians Reading of the Gospels*, pg. 41

Paul had an experience he believed was an appearance of the risen Yeshua.

Paul – Persecutor of Jewish believers in Yeshua

Galatians 1:13-14 “For you have heard of my earlier behavior in Judaism—how I persecuted God’s community beyond measure and tried to destroy it. I was even advancing within Judaism beyond many my own age among my people, being a more extreme observer of my fathers’ traditions.”

Paul's eyewitness testimony

- 1 Corinthians 9:1 – “Have I not seen Yeshua our Lord?”
- 1 Corinthians 15:8 – “Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

Persecution

(2 Corinthians 11:24-27)

“Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. **Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

Dr. Claudia Setzer: “Paul receiving this punishment implies his continued inclusion in a Jewish community. There would be no reason or possibility to discipline an apostate or outsider with this particular punishment.” - *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.*, pg. 14

[39 lashes]

Pagan Sacrifice: Josephus reports that every day in the Temple, the Jews would offer sacrifices to the God of Israel on behalf of the Roman emperor

Paul evangelized to pagans telling them to stop sacrificing to the pagan gods but not to become Jews – treason

Paul as a representative of the growing sect of Judaism called the Way would hurt the Jewish community's relationship with Rome

Discipline

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine: “Forsake the gods, and the gods will forsake you. No wonder Jews in the local synagogues were upset, for the message about a Jewish messiah, proclaimed by Jews, would impact them. Having Gentiles forsake their gods and their pagan practices ... is suicidal.”

- *A Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, pg. 71

[Paul was executed by Nero in the mid-60s AD. He was killed for his faith in Yeshua and he believed that Yeshua was the Messiah because he believed that he rose from the dead and appeared to him.

Dr. Geza Vermes discusses the first century historical sources recording Paul's execution in his book *sources in his book Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea*]

Dr. David Flusser: “I am convinced that there are reliable reports that the Crucified One ... appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus.” - *Jesus*, pg. 155

Dr. Peter Zaas

“[Paul] believed that he had seen a living Jesus sometime after his death.” - Email (4-30-18)

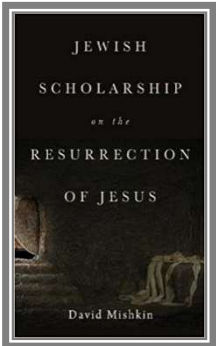
Dr. Amy-Jill Levine: “Paul had an experience both he and Acts describe as an encounter with the risen Christ. And at that moment, Paul turned from persecutor into proclaimer.”

- *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, pg. 66

Dr. Ellis Rivkin

“Paul’s journey was abruptly halted when, on the road to Damascus, he saw the risen Christ.”

- *What Crucified Jesus? Messianism, Pharisaism, and the Development of Christianity*, pg. 102



Summary

1. Yeshua died by crucifixion.
2. Yeshua was buried in a nearby tomb.
3. Yeshua’s tomb was found empty.
4. The disciples had experiences they believed were appearances of the risen Yeshua.
5. Paul had an experience he believed was an appearance of the risen Yeshua.

[What is the best explanation of the facts?]

What I am not arguing:

“Yeshua rose from the dead because most traditional Jewish historians accept these five facts.”

What I am arguing:

“The best historical explanation of these five facts that are well evidenced and accepted by most traditional Jewish historians is that Yeshua rose from the dead.”

What historical explanation do traditional Jewish historians provide?

Dr. Paula Fredriksen: “I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That’s what they say and then all the historical evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that’s what they saw. I’m not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn’t there. I don’t know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something.”

- Interview by Peter Jennings in *The Search for Jesus* (ABC), July 2000, qtd. in *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, pg. 60

Dr. Joseph Klausner

“There can be no question but that some of the ardent Galilaeans saw their lord and Messiah in a vision.” - *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*, pg. 359

Were these experiences subjective visions or physical appearances?

Dr. Naomi M. Simon’s study: 4% of grieving adults experience visual hallucinations

[MD – Harvard Medical School, Professor at NYU in the Department of Psychiatry Director, Anxiety and Complicated Grief Disorders]

Dr. Gary Sibcy, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Piedmont Psychiatric Center, Central Health Hospitals, Virginia: “I have surveyed the professional literature (peer-reviewed journal articles and books) written by psychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevant healthcare professionals during the past two decades and have yet to find a single documented case of a group hallucination, that it, an event for which more person purportedly shared in a visual or other sensory perception

where there was clearly no external referent.”- Email to Gary Habermas, March 10, 2009, qtd. in Michael Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*, pg. 484

Dr. Gary Habermas and Dr. Joseph Bergeron: “simultaneous identical collective hallucinations are not found in peer-reviewed medical literature ... the concept of collective hallucination is not part of current psychiatric understanding ...” - “The Resurrection of Jesus: A Clinical Review of Psychiatric Hypotheses for the Biblical Story of Easter,” *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 80 (2), 162

Dr. Pinchas Lapide: “Already at the beginning of the first century, the chief Pharisaic schools of Hillel and Shammai believed in the bodily resurrection.”
- *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, pg. 57

Paul’s trial before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:6-7, 9): “When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, ‘**Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead.**’ When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. . . certain scribes of the Pharisees’ group stood up and contended, ‘**We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?**’”

1 Corinthians 15:20 “**But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**”

1 Corinthians 15:11 “**Whether then it is I or they, so we proclaim, and so you believed.**”

Dr. Jon D. Levenson: “In both the Pauline and rabbinic texts at hand, the beneficiaries of the new way of being are not disembodied spirits.” - *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life*, pg. 189

Acts 13:36-37 “**For after David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he went to sleep and was laid with his fathers and saw decay. But the One whom God raised up did not see decay.**”

Dr. Yehezkel Kaufmann: “There are scholars who opine that the belief in Jesus’ resurrection derived wholly from his appearance before his disciples (that is, in a vision unconnected with bodily resurrection), which opinion is, however, in error ... The appearance ... Of the ‘spirit’ or ghost of the departed in a vision would not have been a miracle.” - *Christianity and Judaism: Two Covenants*, pg. 133

Dr. Gary Habermas and Dr. Joseph Bergeron: “the bereavement experiences actually convince those grieving that the individual is dead.” - “The Resurrection of Jesus: A Clinical Review of Psychiatric Hypotheses for the Biblical Story of Easter,” *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 80 (2), 171

Dr. Pinchas Lapide: “no vision or hallucination is sufficient to explain such a revolutionary transformation [of the disciples].” - *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, pgs. 125-26



If the disciples hallucinated, Rome or the Sanhedrin could have disproven the resurrection by pointing people to the occupied tomb, just outside Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yisroel Blumenthal: “There are many scenarios that would have the disciples believe that their leader is resurrected which are more plausible than an actual

resurrection ... [it is] possible that some of the disciples removed the body from the grave ... If this were the case it is obvious that the disciples who actually removed the body would not believe the resurrection story, but the rest of the following would have no problem believing it.”

- jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/resurrection/

It is possible that ...

- Daniel ate pork and lied that he ate only vegetables.
- Maimonides secretly believed Yeshua was the Messiah.
- Neil Armstrong landing on the moon was fake, or the Artemis II trip was fake.

DOES THE THEORY EXPLAIN
THE FACTS?

1. Yeshua died by crucifixion. ✓
2. Yeshua was buried in a nearby tomb. ✓
3. Yeshua's tomb was found empty. ✓
4. The disciples had experiences they believed that were appearances of the risen Yeshua. ✗
5. Paul had an experience he believed was an appearance of the risen Yeshua. ✗

Dr. Joseph Klausner: “Here again, it is impossible to suppose that there was any conscious deception.” - *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*, pg. 359.

Dr. Pinchas Lapide

“nowhere in the most ancient reports is it asserted that the statements of the women and the empty tomb had brought anyone to faith in the resurrection. Any kind of deception is excluded in any case, be it the theft of the body, trance, or the invention of a miracle.”

- *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, pg. 97

[*The Jews for Judaism scholar — Taught at Ben Gurion University – story – the facts*]

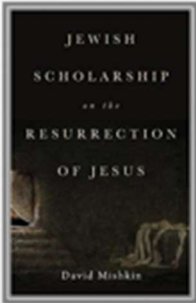
Dr. Geza Vermes

“All in all, none of [other] suggest theories stands up to stringent scrutiny.”

- *The Resurrection: History and Myth*, pg. 148

The Historical Facts

1. Yeshua died by crucifixion.
2. Yeshua was buried in a nearby tomb.
3. Yeshua's tomb was found empty.
4. The disciples had experiences they believed were appearances of the risen Yeshua.
5. Paul had an experience he believed was an appearance of the risen Yeshua.



Comparison of Historical Evidence



Rabbi Moshe Shulman: “I didn’t come to the truth because I read the book of Kings. I came to the truth because my father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father, and his father were Jewish. Back all the way; that’s why.”

Source

~Your father 2,800 years later

VS.

~The eyewitnesses

2 Corinthians 10:5 “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God”
[Not, destroy people.]



These counter missionaries brought in a scholar who use to teach at Ben Gurion University in Israel to debunk my argument for the resurrection and a younger Jewish guy to watch this happen (both guys are not in this picture ...)

Result: After their scholar pretty much had no objections to the reliability of the facts (he respected scholarship) I asked the same question – which has superior evidence. The central argument that the former head of Jews for Judaism – Akiva – when I showed him why his central argument against the resurrection – that Yeshua did not exist – he said “I have no evidence for my position.”

Yeshua rose from the dead

1. Yeshua died by crucifixion. ✓
2. Yeshua was buried in a nearby tomb. ✓
3. Yeshua's tomb was found empty. ✓
4. The disciples had experiences they believed that were appearances of the risen Yeshua. ✓
5. Paul had an experience he believed was an appearance of the risen Yeshua. ✓

This evidence that the vast majority of non-Messianic – traditional Jewish historians accept is sufficient to demonstrate that Yeshua actually rose from the dead. Alternative naturalistic explanations like the disciples hallucinated or the disciples stole the body do not explain the data. Yeshua rose from the dead! This is something that we can stake our lives on.

1 Peter 3:15 “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Dr. Pinchas Lapide: “In regard to the future resurrection of the dead, I am an remain a Pharisee. Concerning the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, I was for decades a Sadducee. I am no longer a Sadducee ... - *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, pg. 125

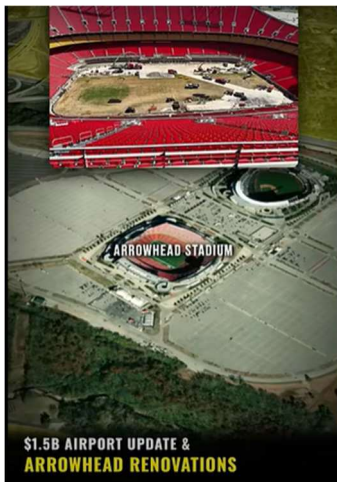
“I accept the resurrection of Jesus not as an invention of the community of disciples, but as a historical event.” - *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*, back cover

FIRSTFRUITS FROM THE DEAD: EVIDENCE
Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld
April 11, 2026 | 24th of Nisan, 5786
ב"ד בניסן תשפ"ו

OR HAOLAM
MESSIANIC SYNAGOGUE

Firstfruits from the Dead: Evidence

1. The need for evidence
2. Digression on the date
3. Evidence
4. Applications



	Jun 16 Tue, 8:00pm	GROUP J Argentina vs Algeria Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$851
	Jun 20 Sat, 7:00pm	GROUP E Ecuador vs Curacao Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$392
	Jun 25 Thu, 6:00pm	GROUP F Netherlands vs Tunisia Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$455
	Jun 27 Sat, 9:00pm	GROUP J Austria vs Algeria Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$343
	Jul 3 Fri, 8:30pm	ROUND OF 32 1K vs TBD Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$688
	Jul 11 Sat, 8:00pm	QUARTERFINALS W95 vs W96 Kansas City, MO · GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	From \$1,534

World Cup Schedule, ~700,000 visitors to KC! 10K Algerians in Olathe

Return Home to Israel
Footsteps of the Messiah - Or HaOlamTour
 with Messianic Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld
 & Or HaOlam Messianic Synagogue
 November 11 - 22, 2026



Join us to experience the working G-d in Israel. We'll see both the amazing archaeological sites that show the power and presence of G-d in the ancient past, but also visit Messianic congregations and works to see the Spirit working today!
 -Messianic Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld




800-342-1517
 revelate@travelwithus.com
 www.revelate.travel

Scan to
 Travel with Us!



**FIRSTFRUITS
 FROM THE DEAD:
 EVIDENCE**

Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld



OR HAOLAM
 MESSIANIC SYNAGOGUE

April 11, 2026 | 24th of Nisan, 5786
 כ"ד בניסן תשפ"ו

Firstfruits from the Dead: Evidence

1. The need for evidence
2. Digression on the date
3. Evidence
4. Applications