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Jesus Christ rises from the dead

My dear Martha,

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord for I have witnessed the most incredible happening close to the sepulchre today. I need so desperately to tell you, my dear sister. I know we have not spoken for many months because of the disgrace I brought upon our family, but Jesus washed away my sins, and the seven demons were driven out of me, do you not remember? I have been devoted to Him and have remained faithful for so long, just as you wanted me to be. Can you not forgive me also, sister, as the Saviour did? I want you so much to believe what has happened after the crucifixion of our beloved King of Israel two days ago, for I am bereft, but strangely enough at the same time I feel full of hope.

The evening was drawing to a darkened close on Preparation Day when Mary, mother of James and I took an agonising walk to the entrance to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. Joseph of Arimathea met us at the place where his own tomb had been hewn out of rock. We witnessed the blood stained linens which had been wrapped around His broken body and watched with heavy hearts as Joseph rolled a huge boulder to secure the front of the tomb. Mary and I wept like babes in arms, collapsing on the hostile ground and wailing softly until we were so exhausted that we fell asleep in each other's grasp. Early on the Sabbath we woke and knew that we must go worship the Lord on the Holy Day. I did not see you at the synagogue dear sister; did you doubt the Lord's protection of you? You must not be afraid, for even in death, He will not forsake you.

Shortly after sunset I went to the merchants close to Jerusalem; the walk was long and arduous and the ground hard and unforgiving on my feet. There I purchased some sweet liquid spices so that I could honour Christ's body in a final anointment. I made my way with haste back to the sepulchre, not a moment was to be wasted, for I did not want to spend another minute apart from my divine Saviour, but I was safe in the knowledge that darkness would stop me from carrying

out the anointment sooner. Somewhere in the ebony landscape I stumbled across Mary again, this time accompanied by Salome. They too were heading in the same direction as me.

By the time we reached His burial place the sunrise was slowly approaching but the darkness still lingered as if fearful of what another day break would bring. I was anxious that three women would not be strong enough to roll away the colossal stone blocking the entrance. I checked the heavy jar under my cloak to see that my spices were still intact when all of a sudden I felt the ground begin to shake violently beneath my feet. The Sanhedrin's guards surrounding the tomb entrance were flung headlong to the ground and I was confronted by an incredible vision in white before me. I had to shield my eyes with my hands as the whole sky lit up like an intense lightning strike and the effect was blinding. My jar fell to the ground in all the confusion and I lost the spices which had cost me so dearly. But there, before us (and I was beginning to doubt my own sanity at this point) stood an apparition shrouded in a heavenly aura and I could see through the haze produced that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb entrance. Fear flowed through my veins for I thought someone had taken my Lord's body away, stolen it perhaps. What a horrifying thought! The feelings of intense grief once again gripped my very body. The vision then uttered, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'he is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" I took Mary and Salome swiftly by the hand and led them to the place where Jesus had been laid. I saw with my own eyes the very place where I last saw Jesus and now his burial place was empty save for the linens that had covered his body and the cloth covering his face. Martha, I cannot tell you how my heart raced in bewilderment and unashamed joy. Was I really going to see my Lord and Master once more? Mary and Salome fled trembling, leaving me alone.

I paused outside the tomb for a short moment, thoughts whirling around my head in confusion, tears stinging my cheeks. I knew I must find Simon Peter to tell him that Jesus had risen. I hoped he would believe Jesus' words when he proclaimed that he would rise again from the dead before three days had ended whereas all the others had doubted. Just as I was about to leave once more a bedraggled gardener from the nearby grounds approached me. At first I did not recognise those fathomless blue oceans that were now so intensely watching me his voice was fierce something that stirred instinct in

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"Rabboni", I cried out in anguish. Oh, Martha, I cannot explain fully in written words how I felt that moment. I was so completely overwhelmed with elation. Jesus told me that I should go to his brothers, the disciples and spread the word that he had risen. He told me that He may then soon sit in his rightful place at God's side and I will continue to spread the word as far and as long as my body will allow me for I am secure in the knowledge that my faith will never waiver and I will never doubt Him, my dear sister.

I immediately left to seek out the disciples who had not seen this miraculous event. Many were struck with disbelief. I kept saying to them over and over again, "But, I have seen the Lord today". Nonetheless, they all sat there stony faced, shaking their heads in distrust. How could they possibly question Him? Later that evening I went to the safe house where eleven of the disciples were sitting behind locked doors for fear of repercussions from the Sanhedrin and I told them what Jesus had said. It made me so sad to realise that they had been dubious about His word when He said He would resurrect on the third day. I couldn't stay there a moment longer amongst such disbelievers.

As I left the safe house I knew in my heart that I would never be alone again. I know what I must do to glorify His name; continue to preach the word of God amongst His people. God commands us "to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" and that is exactly what I intend to do until the day I die when I hope, beyond all hope that I may meet my Saviour again in heaven. As I walked away I remembered Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet he shall live," and in my grief I felt comforted by this thought.

I hope you will allow us to meet again Martha and for you to give me another chance, just as Jesus has done. I hope that I can prove that I am a worthy sister to you after all.

Your loving sister,

Marcy