

Lesson 9: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

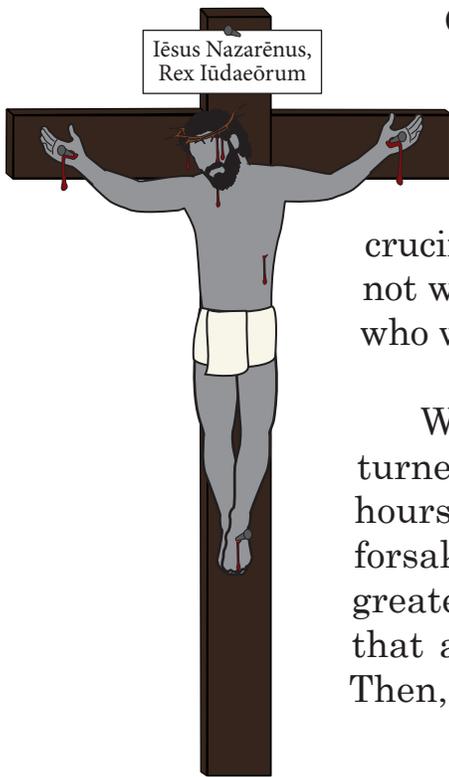
Introduction: The Crucifixion

When Jesus arrived on the hill of Golgotha, the soldiers laid His body on the wooden cross and drove nails through His hands and His feet. Then they raised the cross upright for all to see. Beside Jesus were two more crosses. On these the soldiers crucified two common criminals. The physical pain from the nails was magnified by the position of the body on the cross. One could not breathe well with their arms stretched out. The agony of slow suffocation was an additional cruelty of the cross.¹



A King on a Cross

They placed a sign above His head in three languages so that everyone could read it. The sign said, “This is Jesus, king of the Jews.” Some stood nearby and mocked Jesus. Others shouted for Him to perform a miracle and come down from the cross. Even the two thieves who had been crucified near him mocked Jesus. (Although one would repent shortly thereafter.²) The soldiers gambled for His clothes to see who could keep them.



Only one of Jesus' disciples came to the cross. The rest were hiding and afraid. Some of the women who had followed Jesus were there. Jesus' mother was also there. How terrible it must have been for her to see her Child hanging on the cross! After He was crucified, He called out, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”³ Even as He was dying, Jesus loved those who were killing Him.

When Jesus became the sacrifice for sin, God the Father turned away. There was darkness over the land for three hours. Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me!”⁴ The pain of separation from the Father was greater than we may ever know. Finally, when Jesus knew that all things had been fulfilled, He said, “It is finished.”⁵ Then, He died.

¹ Accounts of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are found in Matthew 27-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, and John 19-21

² See *Christian Basics: The Thief on the Cross*

³ Luke 23:34

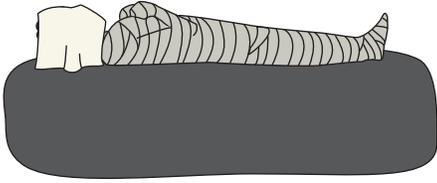
⁴ Matthew 27:46

⁵ John 19:30

Discussion Questions:

- *Could you forgive the people who nailed you to a cross to die?*
- *Why do you think the separation of God the Father and Jesus was so great?*

An Empty Tomb

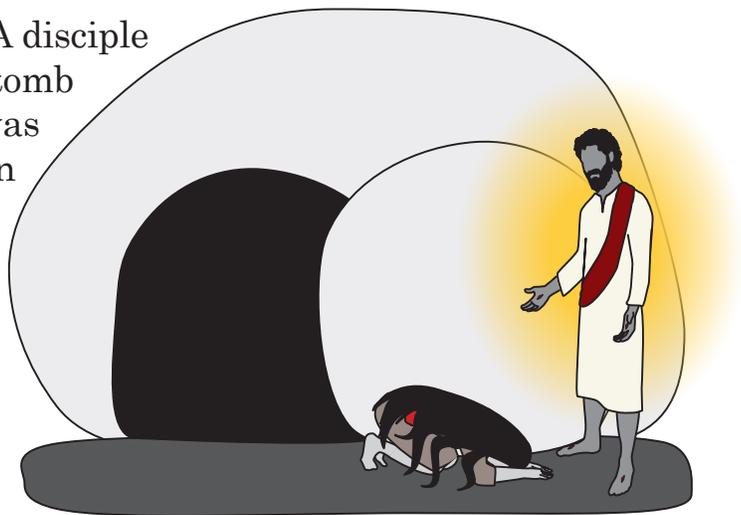


One of Jesus' followers named Joseph and some of the women present took the body down from the cross. They wrapped His body in linen and laid it inside a cave-like tomb. They rolled a large stone in front to seal the tomb. For three days, it seemed that Jesus was gone and His mission failed.

Early on Sunday morning, as the day began to dawn, some of the women took some spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus and show respect. When they arrived, they found the stone had been rolled away! They ran back to tell the disciples. When two of them (Peter and John) heard, they ran to the tomb. The only thing they found was the burial clothes lying there with the head cloth folded up and lying by itself!

The two men went away confused. A disciple named Mary stayed at the empty tomb crying. Suddenly, Jesus appeared. He was alive again! Prompted by Jesus, she ran to the disciples and told them what she had seen. While they were together that evening, Jesus appeared to them. He said, "Peace be with you."¹²

One of the disciples (Thomas) had not been with the others. The disciples found him and shared the good news that Jesus had risen! Thomas would not believe them. He stated that unless he could see and touch the Lord he would not believe. After eight days, all the disciples were together (including Thomas). Jesus appeared among them again! Jesus told Thomas to come and see His nail-pierced hands. Thomas was in shock. He could only answer with a confession of who Jesus was: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus' response to Thomas is meant as a blessing for all Christians.



*"Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."*¹³

¹² John 19:23

¹³ John 20:29

Discussion Questions:

- How would you feel if someone you loved and had passed away suddenly came back from the dead?
- Why does Jesus say that people who have not seen yet believe are blessed?

Why Jesus' Resurrection Matters

With such amazement at the events surrounding Jesus' miraculous return from the dead, a perceptive question is: Why does the resurrection of Jesus matter?

1 *The Resurrection proves the Deity of Jesus.*¹⁴ He claimed to come from heaven, and His miraculous return from the dead proved it.

2 *The Resurrection validates the Bible's message.*¹⁵ With so many books written across so many years foretelling that a Messiah and Redeemer would come, the entire message of the Bible is validated when He returned as risen Savior!

3 *The Resurrection demonstrates God's power over death.*¹⁶ By returning from the grave, Jesus showed that God's power could overcome death and offer man the salvation of a resurrection to eternal life.



4 *The Resurrection offers man the hope to have eternal life.*¹⁷ If Jesus died as a sacrifice only to be conquered in death, there could be no true victory for Christians. It wouldn't matter that we were saved, if our only fate was to die. There would be no need for salvation; everyone would just stay dead. The Bible says:

*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*¹⁸

In Review: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Jesus was crucified, killed, and buried. For three days there seemed to be no hope. But God had a plan. Early that Sunday morning, God raised Jesus back to life. God's plan had worked! Man can escape sin and death and return to a harmonious fellowship with God! Truly, the words are sweeter now than ever before:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

¹⁴ Romans 1:4

¹⁵ Psalm 16:8-10

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

¹⁷ Romans 5:10

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 (NASB)