

THE BURIAL, RESURRECTION, AND COMMISSION OF JESUS MARK 15: 42 – 16: 20

PURPOSE OF LESSON: To show that Jesus really did die, was buried, then rose from the dead and what this means for our lives.

Theme verses: 1 Corinthians 15: 3-8, *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."*

THE BURIAL OF JESUS – Mark 15: 42-47.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA (Arimathea was a Judean town according to Luke 23: 51) Preparation day was on Friday and the Sabbath started at sundown on Friday night. Joseph wanted to take Jesus' body down before the Sabbath because no work was supposed to be done on the Sabbath and Deuteronomy 21: 22-23 says that if a man is put on a tree for his capital offense, his body must not be left there over night. Matthew 27: 57 tells us that Joseph *"had become a disciple of Jesus."* John adds, *"but secretly because he feared the Jews"* (John 19: 38). He was also a *"prominent"* member of the Sanhedrin, which Mark calls the "Council," and, according to Matthew, he was also a *"rich"* man (Matthew 27: 57). Luke adds that he had not consented to the Sanhedrin's decision to kill Jesus (Luke 23: 51). John adds that he was accompanied by a man named Nicodemus who was also a member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus is the one who came to Jesus at night to talk with him (John 3: 1-21). The Sanhedrin was a group of 71 men consisting of Pharisees and Sadducees who ruled over the Jews. They were chief priests, elders and teachers of the law. The high priest was the ruler.

The text says that Joseph was waiting for the kingdom of God and *"boldly"* went and asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Do you think that Joseph had grown in his faith and courage? Since he went boldly to Pilate, does this mean that he was no longer afraid of the Jews? One writer said, *"To ask for the body of someone executed for high treason could be looked upon as sympathizing and could earn one the same fate."*¹ He was at least taking some risk to publically involve himself with Jesus in this way even though Jesus was dead. One writer speaks of the growth of Joseph's faith in this way, *"So does trial elicit faith, and the wind, which quenches the feeble flame that plays around the outside, fan into brightness the fire that burns deep within, though for a time unseen. Joseph of Arimathea, now no longer a secret disciple, but bold in the avowal of his reverent love, would show to the Dead Body of his Master all veneration."*² We don't know for sure if Joseph became a full follower of Jesus later, but he was heading in the right direction. We need to understand that God wants us all to come out of the shadows and become bold, courageous and open followers of Jesus. He wants us to be more than secret followers. He wants us to be open followers who are willing to sacrifice and even risk persecution for him.

¹ David Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) 597.

² Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library)1265.

Joseph bought some linen cloth to wrap Jesus in. He evidently used his own money to buy this cloth. This shows another sacrifice he was willing to make for Jesus. After he wrapped Jesus, he placed him in his own rock tomb and rolled the stone against the entrance. It is interesting that none of the family of Jesus or his disciples helped with the preparation of Jesus' body and neither did they help take the body to the tomb. Since it was usually the family that took care of preparing their relative's body and then burying it, why do you think they did not help? ³ Mark does record that, "*Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James saw where he was laid*" (Mark 15: 47).

THE RESURRECTION – Mark 16: 1-14; Matthew 27: 50-53; Matthew 28: 1-10; Luke 24: 1-12.

Think about this evidence for the resurrection:

1. Our theme verses say, "*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born*" (1 Corinthians 15: 3-8).

2. Some say that the disciples stole the body of Jesus. But think about this, as one writer put it,

*The body was encased in a tomb with a 24 hour watch by Roman guards trained to kill. The punishment for breaking a Roman grave seal, or attempting to steal a body or overpowering a Roman soldier was death, so how did timid, cowardly disciples muster up (find) the courage to try this? And as stated before, for what motive? That's a big risk for absolutely no payoff. Some will say 'maybe the guard was asleep'. First, dereliction of duty brought death to a Roman soldier, so I doubt they would "fall asleep" and secondly, the stone covering the tomb weighed 2 tons and was rolled into a stone groove which would have been flush against the stone opening of the grave. Think about how loud a 2 ton stone scraping against stone would be as several disciples tried to move it... so, how could the disciples have stolen the body? Answer, they didn't. Jesus actually rose from the dead.*⁴

3. The disciples were afraid and all ran away when Jesus was arrested. But later they became bold proclaimers of the gospel that Jesus actually died and was raised from the dead. What would bring about a change like this? The change came because Jesus actually did rise from the dead.

4. The disciples were willing to be tortured and killed for the truth they proclaimed, which was that Jesus actually rose from the dead. One writer said it this way,

*You don't need a degree in human psychology to know that people do not die for a cause they know to be false. People do certainly die for false beliefs all the time, but they think they are dying for the truth. If the disciples faked the resurrection, they would know Christianity is a lie. History records they were tortured and killed for their faith, and not one of them said under torture, "Okay, we made the whole thing up"? Why is that? Answer: They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.*⁵

5. If Jesus turned out to be a fraud and did not rise from the dead, it does not seem likely that the disciples would have continued to proclaim that he was raised from the dead and follow his teachings. A

³ Maybe they felt they could not do this because usually the Romans left the bodies on the cross. Also, maybe they were too afraid to ask the authorities to make an exception in the case of Jesus. Later Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, James, and Salome took spices to the grave of Jesus to anoint his body (Mark 16: 1).

⁴ Dutko.

⁵ Bob Dutko, <[Http://www.toptenproofs.com/article_resurrection.php](http://www.toptenproofs.com/article_resurrection.php)>.

good question is, "Why would the disciples worship a dead guy who lied to them and was exposed as a fraud? Answer: They must have actually seen the risen Jesus."⁶

6. The fact that thousands of people converted to Christianity on the day of Pentecost lends great credibility to the fact that Jesus actually rose from the dead. As one writer comments on this point,

*Think about it. History records that thousands upon thousands were instantly and immediately mass converting to be followers of Jesus, as many as 3000 in a day. It is recorded that after the crucifixion, Jesus appeared alive over a span of 40 days and to "500 brethren". (Back then, only men were counted in crowd totals, so factoring in women and children, Jesus most likely appeared to safely 1500 to 2000 people over 40 days). If that many people saw Jesus alive, it would explain how so many were converting because even the most hardened skeptics would have crowds and crowds of former skeptics saying "yes, it's true, we all have seen him too", but if no one saw him alive and the crowds had only the words of the disciples to go by, why would thousands convert? Remember, the disciples were preaching to many who didn't want to believe Jesus was the Messiah, so what words could they speak to hostile crowds to convince them Jesus really did rise from the dead? "Trust us"? That might convince some of the disciple's closest friends, but not thousands upon thousands of skeptics. So why did thousands convert? Answer: Crowds must have actually seen the risen Jesus.*⁷

7. The disciples wrote bad things about themselves in the Gospels. If you were going to make this story up and you were an important person in your community, you would probably make yourself look better and not write about the mistakes you made.

8. Since Paul, also called Saul, at first persecuted Christians and then later converted to Christianity, he must have really heard the voice of Jesus on the road to Damascus as Acts 9: 5, 6 says, "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

9. John records that the cloth that was wrapped around Jesus' head when he was buried was, after the resurrection, "folded up by itself, separate from the linen" (John 20: 7). This shows that no one stole the body of Jesus because what robber would take time to fold a cloth like this?

Some verses that tell us about the death and resurrection of Jesus: Matthew 27: 50-53; Matthew 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-8; Luke 24: 1-12; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 and verses 12-19; John 11: 25, 26; Romans 1: 4-5; Romans 6: 8-11; 1 Peter 1: 3; Philippians 3: 10-12; 2 Corinthians 13: 4.

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US

(Read the accounts of the resurrection in all three gospels (Matthew 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-8; Luke 24: 1-12.)

To prove that he was truly the Son of God - Romans 1: 4, "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."

He was raised for our justification - Romans 4: 25, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."

According to 1 Corinthians 15: 14-16 the resurrection is the foundation of our faith and the core of the gospel message. Without the resurrection even the cross has no meaning and we have no hope of

⁶ Dutko.

⁷ Dutko.

forgiveness - 1 Corinthians 5: 17 says, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."

The resurrection of Jesus gives us a sure hope that we will be raised from the dead -1 Corinthians 15: 20-23, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him." See also these verses: John 11: 25-26; Romans 6: 8-10. It is called a "living hope" in 1 Peter 1: 3.

The resurrection gives followers of Jesus a reason to have courage in the face of persecution - 1 Corinthians 15: 30, "*And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour?*" If the resurrection is true, and it is, then no matter what people do to us we will win if we continue to be faithful to God and trust him.

The resurrection of Jesus and the assurance of our resurrection gives us a reason to live which is greater than just living for our careers, making lots of money, buying a lot of things, and partying. If we know we will be raised to face God in the judgment, we will be more serious about believing in Jesus and devoting our lives to him and God in this life (1 Corinthians 15: 32; Hebrews 9: 27). Romans 6: 8-10, "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."

The resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection gives us victory over the sting of death.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15: 54-57).

The resurrection helps us to know for sure that our work for Jesus and God is not in vain. "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15: 58).

The resurrection gives us power to live the Christian life. "For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him in our dealing with you" (2 Corinthians 13: 4). "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Philippians 3: 10-12).

The resurrection is the foundation of new birth in Christ. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (1 Peter 1: 3).

The resurrection can be applied to us personally if we choose to believe in Christ and be baptized.

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin" (Romans 6: 1-7).



An example of a rock tomb like the ones in the time of Jesus.

THE GREAT COMMISSION – Mark 16: 15-16; Matthew 28: 18-20; Luke 24: 45-49; John 20: 21; Acts 1: 7-8.

The great commission involves:

1. Being sent by Jesus and God – All Christians are sent.
2. Going to all nations or people groups and making disciples by:
 - Being "witnesses" of what we have seen, heard, experienced, and know from the word.
 - Teaching them to believe in Jesus and repent of their sins.
 - Baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit those who are ready to commit their lives to Jesus.
 - Continuing to teach and disciple them.
 - Trusting that Jesus will always be with us.

The Old Testament background to the great commission is Genesis 12: 1-3 which is God's commission to Abraham that he be a blessing to the nations. This is actually also a Great Commission. These verses say,

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

This commission involves:

1. Being sent by God.
2. Being blessed by God.
3. Being a blessing to others.
4. A curse from God on all those who curse Abraham.

Jesus' ministry is part of the fulfillment of this promise as Peter tells us in Acts 3: 24-26,

Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.

The Great Commission is a continuation of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Paul explains this in Galatians 3: 26-29,

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE RESURRECTION? WHAT MEANING CAN IT HAVE FOR YOUR LIFE?