



## session 10 group study guide

# the resurrection

### message

The death of Jesus is one of the hardest stories in the Bible to read. But the good news is that the story does not end there. Our faith rests not on a weighted cross but in the empty tomb of the risen Lord.

Each of the four Gospels relates the resurrection of Jesus. As you read each of the following accounts, keep these questions in mind: (1) What is the reaction of Mary and the disciples when they discover the empty tomb? (2) What possible explanations are there for the empty tomb?

*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

*There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

*The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

*So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

*While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day (Matthew 28:1-15).*



*When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"*

*But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.*

*"Don't be alarmed," he said. "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.'"*

*Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid (Mark 16:1-8).*



*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"* Then they remembered his words.

*When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened (Luke 24:1-12).*



*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"*

*So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb.*

*He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)*

*Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.*

*They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"*

*"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.*

*"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"*

*Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."*

*Jesus said to her, "Mary."*

*She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).*

*Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

*Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her (John 20:1-18).*

## dig

In order to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, you need not commit intellectual suicide. There are actually a number of facts that are unexplainable if Jesus did not actually rise from the dead. Let's explore these facts.

### Jesus foretold His resurrection

Read Matthew 16:21 and Matthew 17:22-23. Why were the disciples distressed by the words of Jesus?

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If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the third day, these verses from Matthew would make Him out to be a liar!

**the disciples were transformed**

The testimony of eyewitnesses and the transformation of the disciples can only logically be explained by the resurrection appearances of Jesus.

1. At the crucifixion, the followers of Jesus were in despair. Their hopes for a Messiah had been crushed. Yet after three days, their lives were transformed. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. List those to whom Jesus appeared after He was raised from the dead.

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2. Peter is one example of the life-changing impact that the resurrection had on the disciples. Read Matthew 26:69-75. What had Peter done just a few days before?

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3. As recorded in Acts 2:14-37, what did Peter proclaim after the resurrection of Jesus?

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**the resurrection is the only explanation for the empty tomb**

Many people throughout history have tried to disprove the resurrection, for it is true that if the resurrection of Jesus can be disproved, the cornerstone of the Christian faith would be destroyed.

1. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19, why is the resurrection so important?

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2. What were the precautions taken, both by the friends of Jesus and by His enemies, to ensure that His body would not be stolen?

His friends (see Mark 15:6)

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His enemies (see Matthew 27:62-66)

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3. Listed below are the most common theories that skeptics have used to refute the resurrection. Using the Scriptures you have looked at in this session so far, show the fallacy of these theories.

THEORY	REFUTED BY . . .
The disciples stole and hid the body.	_____
The Roman or Jewish authorities took the body.	_____
Jesus never died. He walked out of the tomb.	_____
The women and disciples went to the wrong tomb.	_____
The disciples were hallucinating and didn't really witness Jesus' resurrection.	_____

**the resurrection is the reason for the beginning of the church**

The resurrection is the reason for the beginning of the Christian Church and its rapid growth. Within a short period of time, the Christian faith spread all over the Roman Empire and beyond. The disciples always spoke of the resurrected and living Christ.

1. What was the main subject of Peter's sermon found in Acts 2:29-32?

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2. What was the response of Peter's audience, according to Acts 2:37-42?

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**apply**

1. Jesus tried countless times throughout His life to prepare the disciples for His crucifixion and the resurrection. Why do you think the disciples just didn't get it until it was actually happening?

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2. If you were one of the first people to visit the tomb after Jesus' death, what would have been your thoughts and feelings at seeing the empty tomb?

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3. After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to several people individually or in groups. Jesus appeared to Mary in her sorrow (see John 20:10-18). What pain in your life do you need Jesus to come and soothe?

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4. Jesus appeared to the disciples in their fear (see John 20:19-23). For what fears can Jesus give you confidence?

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5. Jesus appeared to Peter after his denial (see John 21:15-19; see also John 18:15-18,25-27). In what ways have you "denied" Christ? Have you asked for Jesus' forgiveness?

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6. Jesus appeared to Thomas in his doubts (see John 20:24-29). What doubts or questions do you have that you need Christ to answer?

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### reflect

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in human history. This single miracle has transformed our world like no other. The Christian faith rests on the fact that Jesus Christ actually rose from the dead. Based on this knowledge, we can be assured of the following: (1) All that He claimed about Himself must be true, (2) all that He said about life must be true, (3) our sins are truly forgiven, and (4) Christians have eternal life and will be resurrected from the dead just as Christ was.

1. How should the fact that Jesus *said* He would rise on the third day and actually *did* impact our faith?

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2. How does the resurrection of Jesus separate Christianity from other religions?

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3. Why do some people still deny Christianity even after hearing of the resurrection?

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4. Are there parts of the resurrection that are hard for you to believe? Write your thoughts below.

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5. The resurrection means that if you believe, you are forgiven of your sins and made right with God. How can you live a life that claims and reflects this truth?

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**meditation**



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

JOHN 11:25-26