

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 6: THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled *Who is Jesus?* This series of seven lessons introduces the person and work of Jesus from a Christian perspective, considering His identity, work, teachings and death. Because Jesus is central to the Christian faith and religion, it is vital for the disciple to know Jesus, and for those exploring Christianity to know what makes Jesus Christ unique, and worthy of our discipleship and devotion.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.



WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 6: THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson looks at the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection, and what Jesus' death means to a Christian today.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Even though Jesus had an amazing teaching ministry and performed miracles during His time on earth, some people remember Him more for dying a horrible death and for His miraculous resurrection. But just why do Christians celebrate the death of their leader? This lesson looks at the reasons why Jesus had to die, what His death and resurrection accomplished, and why it matters to us today. This is critical for understanding the Christian faith. If you have been a Christian for some time, this lesson will help you explain to others why Jesus died. If you are still exploring Christianity, this lesson is of great importance for discovering what it is all about.

GETTING STARTED

1. What are your thoughts on death? Does it frighten you or sadden you? Are you at peace with it as a part of life? Are you presently mourning the loss of someone who was close to you?

2. From your understanding, why was Jesus killed? Why did He have to die?



STUDY

❖ **JESUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION PROPHESED:** Knowing His time of ministry on earth was coming to an end, Jesus told His disciples what was about to happen. Jesus “began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priest and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). He told His disciples plainly, and yet they were confused when these events took place. They should not have been surprised or shocked because the Old Testament scriptures predicted that these things would happen. Jesus referred to the story of Jonah as a scriptural parallel to His resurrection (Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 14-18; Matthew 12:40).

➤ Read the verses below. What did Jesus say about His own death?

Luke 9:22	
Luke 16:31	
Luke 18:31-33	
Matthew 26:2	

Jesus prophesied about His death three times – He was even able to tell His disciples the date and manor of His death. He knew every detail beforehand – this wasn’t an accidental event! Jesus said that it would happen at Passover, at the time when the people of God were to sacrifice a lamb as a reminder of God’s power to save them.

❖ **JESUS THE PAASSOVER LAMB:** John the Baptist called Jesus the “Lamb who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), and later in 1 Corinthians 5:7, Jesus is referred to as our Passover Lamb. How can a lamb remove our sins? The answer is found in the history of God’s people.

➤ Read Exodus 12:1-32. When the Israelites were in Egypt, God saw that it was time to liberate them from slavery. He sent plagues on the land in order to free the people and show them His power. What were the people told to do during the last plague that would kill all first-born sons? What were they to do to the lamb? Where would they put the blood? How did the people demonstrate their faith in this situation?

In order to escape this plague, the people of God were instructed to bring a lamb into their house, kill it, eat it, and put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.



- The blood of the lamb was a necessary substitute so that their own first-born would not die.
- Their faith in God’s command was rewarded with life.
- The people of God were commanded to remember this Passover event by eating a commemorative feast each year. In so doing, they declared faith in God to provide a sacrifice for them so they could have life. This feast included lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine.
- Jesus ate the Passover feast with His disciples and declared that the bread symbolized His body and the wine, His blood. Jesus proclaimed that He was our Passover – meaning He would be the sacrifice that would give us life.

❖ **THE EVENTS OF JESUS DEATH:** During His time on earth, Jesus gained many followers but He also had enemies. These enemies were religious leaders who could find no fault in His behaviour or teachings, but felt threatened by Him because He taught that He alone could forgive sins. These are the events of Christ’s death which demonstrate that He fulfilled the prophecies about Himself.

➤ Read the following passages and write down the main point for each one.

Luke 22:1-2	
Luke 22:3-6	
Luke 22:47-54	
Luke 22:66-71	
Luke 23:18-25	
John 19:1-16	
Matthew 27:32-44	
Matthew 27:45-50	
Matthew 27:51-54	
John 19:38-42	

❖ **LIKE A LAMB:** There are many notable things about the death of Jesus. Not only had Jesus predicted the exact manner and date of His death, He knew who would betray Him and the exact manner in which it would happen. Crucifixion was a horrible, slow and painful way to die. Furthermore, Jesus was beaten with a whip which would have rendered any man deeply injured and with great suffering even before the crucifixion took place.



- Jesus healed the soldier whose ear was cut off by one of the disciples when Jesus was arrested (Luke 22:50-52).
 - Jesus did not defend Himself before any of His accusers. It was like the prophecy stated – He was “like a sheep before its shearers is silent” (Isaiah 53:7).
 - Jesus forgave those who killed Him. Even in His agony, He thought of others and asked God to forgive them (Luke 23:34).
 - Jesus could have defended Himself and avoided death. He could have rallied crowds or called upon angels to save Him, but He willingly went to His death on the cross (John 10:17-18).
- Do the events and facts of Jesus’ death demonstrate someone who willingly died with a purpose, or someone who was surprised by the events that overtook Him?

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❖ **THE REASON JESUS DIED:** Pilate could find no fault with Jesus, neither could Herod. Jesus was tried for being called ‘the King of the Jews’. He announced His Kingdom, but a Kingdom not of this world, and He did not incite people to rebel against Caesar. Why, then, did they kill Jesus?

- **The Plan of God:** Since the beginning, God had a plan to solve the problem of our sin. He told Abraham, Moses and all the prophets that a Saviour would come as a sacrifice that would take away the sin of the world. Jesus came to fulfil that plan.
- What does the following verse tell us about the plan of God?

Romans 8:32	
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- **Salvation through a Better Sacrifice:** God had given people a picture that in order for sin to be forgiven, there needed to be a sacrifice. Under the old priestly system, people could kill a sheep or a goat to pay for their sin. God pronounced that He would make the last sacrifice, and it would be through belief in that sacrifice that people would be saved. What does the book of Hebrews tell us about this better sacrifice?

Hebrews 9:13-14 Hebrews 10:4	
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- **Jesus, Our Passover Lamb:** Jesus died at exactly the time the Passover Lambs were to be killed in the Jewish feast. This is a symbol to us that by Jesus’ blood, we can be spared the punishment due us. By faith, the people of God put the blood on their door



frame. By faith, we must accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. Read the verse below – where is redemption found? What happens to the person who has faith in Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf?

Romans 3:21-26	
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❖ **THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS:** If that had been the end of Jesus, it would have been a very sad story. Jesus, who proclaimed the Gospel of eternal life and forgiveness in God, would have died in vain. If that had been so, His followers surely would have been ashamed and would have scattered. But the most important detail of the account of Jesus is that He did not remain in the grave, but rose again three days later just as He predicted! The payment had been made for the sins of all people.

- Read Matthew 28. What did the women find at Jesus tomb? Where did they see Jesus?

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- Read John 20. What did Peter and John find at the tomb? What happened when the Disciples saw Jesus? What was Thomas' reaction to Jesus?

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It was no mere rumour that Jesus had returned and was alive and well. There was no doubt He had died, and now Jesus left no doubt about His coming back to life. He had raised others from the dead, and now God's power had raised Him also. What do the following verses tell us about those who witnessed Jesus in His resurrected state?

1 Corinthians 15:3-9	
Acts 1:9-12	

❖ **WHAT JESUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION MEANS TO US:** Jesus' death was neither a shameful accident, nor a surprise to God. This had been God's plan all along – to provide one perfect substitute to pay for the sins of mankind. Jesus was our substitute, both in His death and His resurrection. Romans 6:3-11 makes this very clear, ending with these words: "So you also must



consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” It was an act of God’s mercy for us that put Jesus on the Cross. It was God’s power that raised Him from the dead. Because of these things:

- **We Are Forgiven:** Each of us is sinful – but Jesus took our sins so we could take His righteousness. He longs to have a relationship with us and demonstrate His love. When our sins are forgiven, we can return to a relationship with God (1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 1:9).
- **We Are Set Free:** There are many pictures in the Bible of what the death of Jesus accomplished – appeasing the wrath of God, satisfying the justice of God, and paying the ransom for us from sin and death. If we believe in Jesus, His death removes from us the penalty of sin and sets us free (Mark 10:45, 1 Timothy 2:5-7, Romans 6:22, Acts 13:39).
- **We Receive Life:** Jesus died and rose again to eternal life, revealing that He is more powerful than death! Though we will have a physical death, eternal life has already begun in us. We will never be separated from God in this life, and will certainly be with Him eternally (1 Peter 3:18, John 5:24, Romans 6:4).

IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Jesus told His disciples that He would die by crucifixion and would rise again to fulfill the prophecies about Him.
- ❖ Jesus fulfilled the role of the Passover Lamb for all people when He died. His blood was a substitute for ours. Jesus took the punishment we deserved.
- ❖ The events of Jesus’ death are written in the Gospels – His arrest, trial, sentence and punishment are stated clearly for us.
- ❖ Jesus’ death was unique in that He did not resist or defend Himself. Rather, He took the punishment He did not deserve, and even publically forgave those who hurt Him.
- ❖ Jesus came back to life three days after His crucifixion. His tomb was empty, and He appeared to His disciples and many followers.
- ❖ The reason Jesus died was that it was the plan of God. Jesus’ death was the ultimate blood sacrifice made in our place, covering our sin and bringing us salvation. Jesus was our Passover Lamb.
- ❖ Because of Jesus’ death we can be forgiven, set free, and receive eternal life through faith in Him.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus demonstrate that His death was God's plan from the beginning and not an accident?

2. When the Jewish people posted the blood on the doorframes at Passover and did not leave their homes, how did that demonstrate their belief in God? Why does God require us to believe in Jesus in order to be saved?

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour, and that He died and rose again for the forgiveness of your sins?