

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's 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. You may have participants from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds who have differing ideas about who Jesus is and what He taught. This series will be an excellent foundation for their future studies in discipleship.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.



WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 6: THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

PURPOSE

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

LEADER'S NOTES

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 your participants are mature Christians, this lesson will help them to explain Jesus' death to others, and perhaps see their faith in a new way. For others who are still exploring the Christian faith, you may focus on the plan of salvation that God brought about through Jesus, His son. This lesson provides an excellent opportunity to give a personal invitation to believe in Jesus. More of that will be covered in the next lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ 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?
- ❖ Why do you think Christians celebrate the death of Jesus Christ? Shouldn't they be ashamed of the death of their leader?
- ❖ From your understanding, why was Jesus killed? Why did He have to die?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Jesus Death and Resurrection Prophesied:** 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).

- **Jesus Prophecies about His Death and Resurrection:** We are told that Jesus prophesied about His own death three times (Luke 9:22, 16:31, 18:31-33). Jesus even told them the date and the manor of His death (Matthew 26:2). He knew every detail beforehand – this event wasn't an accident!
- **Jesus the Sacrifice:** One of the earliest pictures of a substitute sacrifice we have is Abraham being told to sacrifice his son, Isaac. While Abraham dutifully obeyed and offered the child he had prayed for and longed for over a period of many years, God provided a replacement sacrifice so that Isaac wouldn't have to die (Genesis 22:1-19).
 - Isaac (a picture of Jesus), was Abraham's only son. Like Jesus, Isaac carried the wood on which he would be sacrificed, and was obedient to his Father. Unlike Jesus, however, Isaac was not killed – but he was figuratively 'raised' again to be reunited with His Father (Hebrews 11:17-19).
 - Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for sin, and He was literally raised back to life (1 Peter 3:18).
- **Jesus the Passover 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.
 - When the Israelites were in Egypt, God sent plagues on the land in order to free His people from slavery. The final plague would kill all first-born sons. 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 (Exodus 12:1-32).
 - 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.



- **Jesus' Enemies:** As Jesus gained many followers, the chief priests and religious leaders wanted to stop Him from gaining any more (Luke 22:1-2).
 - **Jesus Was Betrayed:** Judas, a disciple of Jesus, turned Him over to the authorities (Luke 22:3-6, Matthew 26:14-16, 45-50).
 - **Jesus was Arrested and Tried:** Jesus was apprehended in Gethsemane (Luke 22:47-54). The charge laid against Him was that He claimed to be the Son of God and King of the Jews (Luke 22:66-71, Luke 23:1-12).
 - **Jesus was Sentenced to Death:** Pilate found no cause to kill Jesus, but the crowds persisted that He be put to death (Luke 23:18-25).
 - **Jesus was Flogged and Mocked:** (Mark 15:15, John 19:1-16).
 - **Jesus was Crucified:** (Matthew 27:32-44).
 - **Jesus Died:** (Matthew 27:45-50, John 19:28-37).
 - **The Earth Shook:** (Matthew 27:51-54).
 - **Jesus was Buried:** (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.
- In addition to the flogging and crucifixion, Jesus' side was pierced. This sword would have cut through his lungs and heart. There is no possible way to survive such an injury (John 19:34).
 - 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. Even in this, He demonstrated love and forgiveness (Matthew 26:53-54, John 10:17-18).
- ❖ **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. It was the will of God that He die (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 2:2, Romans 8:32).
- **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 (Hebrews 9:13-14, Hebrews 10:4).
- **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 (Romans 3:21-26).
- ❖ **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.
 - **The Events of Jesus' Resurrection:** Jesus had predicted His resurrection on a number of occasions, but no one understood what He was talking about and no one was prepared for it. In the case of His followers, it took time for the reality of His resurrection to sink in. For His enemies, the possibility of Him rising from the dead was their greatest fear, leading to deliberate cover-ups.
 - An angel rolled away the stone (Matthew 28:2-3).
 - Angels announced His resurrection (Luke 24:4-7).
 - Women discovered that the tomb was empty (Luke 24:2-3).
 - Peter and John entered the empty tomb (John 20:2-10).
 - The grave clothes were neatly folded (John 20:5-7).
 - **Jesus Appears:** 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.
 - Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene: (John 20:11-18).
 - Jesus appeared to the Disciples: (Luke 24:36-48).
 - Jesus remained for 40 days and appeared to many (1 Corinthians 15:3-9).
 - Jesus ascended into Heaven and many witnessed it (Acts 1:9-12).
 - The Disciples preached about His resurrection, and proclaimed that they had been with Jesus. They were willing to die for their belief.



- **The Significance of the Resurrection:** Chapter 15 of 2 Corinthians explains the reality and significance of Jesus' resurrection. It also describes the ultimate victory of life over death at the end of the age. Here is a list of consequences if Jesus had not risen:
 - Sharing the gospel would be useless (2 Corinthians 15:14).
 - Our faith would be futile and we would still be in our sins (2 Corinthians 15:17).
 - Believers who have died would not have eternal life (2 Corinthians 15:18).
 - Christians would be a people only to be pitied (2 Corinthians 15:19).
 - Death would have won, but thank God victory comes through our risen Saviour, Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 15:54-58).

- ❖ **What Jesus' Death and Resurrection mean 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).



HOMEWORK

If you are taking a group through this material, you may wish to assign the book of John for them to read before the final lesson. Have them prepare for that lesson by writing down everything Jesus commands us to do, and what Jesus asks of us.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ How did Jesus demonstrate that His death was God's plan from the beginning and not an accident?
- ❖ Why did God give us so many pictures of what Jesus' death accomplished?
- ❖ 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?
- ❖ Why is it significant that Jesus rose again, when the sacrificial requirements stated He only had to die? What does His resurrection demonstrate to us?
- ❖ 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?

PRAYER

Close with a time of prayer for your participants. Pray that they will have faith to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Pray that they will study the Word of God and understand what it says to them, and who Jesus Christ is. Pray that they would have eyes to see the truth, and that they would faithfully share this Gospel message with others.