



Lesson 32 / January 14, 2018

## JESUS' DEATH & RESURRECTION

Mark 14:32-16:8

### Key Verse

“And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.’”

Mark 16:6

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the Jewish religious leaders opposed Jesus (Mark 14:1-2)?
2. What are the events leading up to Jesus on the cross?
3. Is Jesus an unwitting victim, or does he intend to die? How do you know?
4. Why must Jesus die such a horrific death?
5. In what way is Jesus death *for* us? (See Romans 5:6-8)
6. Was Jesus *really* raised from the dead? How can we know this was a historical event and not just wishful thinking by his followers?
7. Why is it important that Jesus really was raised? (See 1 Corinthians 15:12-19)
8. What will our future resurrection be like? (See 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 35-57).
9. If Jesus really has died and been raised, how should we now live?

### Question 63: What is the nature of the death of Christ?

Short Answer: *Jesus died on the cross for our sins.*

Full Answer: *Having suffered under Pontius Pilate, Jesus died on the cross for our sins, as our substitute, bearing our sins and suffering our death, that we might draw near to God.*

### Question 64: What is the nature of the resurrection of Christ?

Short Answer: *Jesus was raised bodily from the dead on the third day.*

Full Answer: *Jesus was raised bodily from the dead on the third day, never to die again, having conquered death and become a firstfruit of all who will be raised from the dead.*

## Summary

Do you have any heroes in your life? We all love a good superhero story, but we also realize that the real heroes in life don't always wear capes and bright underpants. True heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things for the sake of others, often at great risk to their own lives. Some heroes even lose their life that others might live.

The greatest hero who ever lived is Jesus, and he achieved his greatest heroic victory by his death and resurrection. All four gospels in the New Testament tell the story of his death and resurrection. It is *the* essential piece of the story of Jesus' life. Thus Mark's gospel focuses more attention on Jesus' death than on any other event in his life. It took just three days for Jesus to die and to rise again, but the implications have profound and ongoing importance.

The story of Jesus' death is as tragic as it is heroic. Jesus comes to the Jewish people as their king, but they reject him. The Jewish religious authorities arrest Jesus and put him on trial before the Jewish council, where they charge him with blasphemy (= claiming to be a divine being) because Jesus claims to be the Christ, the promised Messiah (Mark 15:53-65). They determine he is worthy of death, but the death sentence must be given by their Roman overlord, a governor named Pilate. Pilate examines Jesus and condemns him to death on the basis of his claim to be the King of the Jews (15:1-15). The Roman Empire had a zero-tolerance policy for rebellion and would-be kings (15:1-15).

Indeed, the Romans had developed crucifixion as a special way to execute such rebels and to discourage others from repeating their crimes. The Romans knew nothing of modern-day human rights and humane executions. Their goal was to maximize pain and prolong suffering as a message of intimidation. Soldiers would beat, whip, scourge, and humiliate the condemned, then they would drive nails through their wrists and ankles and hang them upon a wooden cross in a public place where all could witness their torment. Death could take several days. Still today, crucifixion remains one of the most barbaric torture devices ever created by humankind.

Jesus dies upon such a cross, in great agony and shame. His death is not only tragic, but it is also heroic, because Jesus dies *for* us and *for* our sin (Rom 5:6-8; 1 Cor 15:3). This three-letter word, *for*, has immense significance. Remember that death is itself the consequence of sin (lesson 4), but Jesus was perfectly without sin and thereby did not deserve death (lesson 28). He dies with a greater purpose, as our substitute, dying the death we deserve to die that he might atone for our sins so that we can draw near to our holy God (see lesson 10 on atonement). He does not need to die, yet he chooses to die anyway, for us, as our hero.

The heroic story of Jesus continues with a startling plot twist. Three days after Jesus dies, his tomb is empty and an angel announces, "He has risen; he is not here" (Mark 16:6). Jesus then appears to his followers and demonstrates that he truly has risen from the dead, literally and bodily (Luke 24:13-49; John 20:11-21:14). Technically, Jesus was not the first to be raised from the dead (e.g. Lazarus in John 11), but Jesus is the first to rise from the dead never to die again. Thus, by his resurrection, Jesus did not merely delay his own death but he defeated death itself and he conquered the grave.

No other person in all of history has accomplished such an astounding victory. For every other person who has ever lived, life gives way to death. Every. Single. Time. But Jesus breaks the cycle. In Jesus, death gives way to life. He bursts forth from the grave victorious over death. "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54-56). And his resurrection is the firstfruit of a larger resurrection to come. In the same way the first ripened fruit on a tree creates the expectation of an upcoming harvest, so also Jesus' resurrection foreshadows a greater resurrection to come, when Jesus will return and raise from the dead all who belong to Christ (1 Cor 15:20-23).

Jesus is the most super of all heroes. He has conquered the greatest villains of all time. By his death, he defeated sin, and by his resurrection, he defeated death. And his victory is *for* you and me. When we put our faith in him, repenting of our sins, confessing Jesus to be Lord, and believing that God has raised him from the dead, then we are saved. Our sins are forgiven, we are brought near to God, and we receive new life from Jesus and the hope that we too will one day be raised from the dead never to die again, and we will live forever with him in his kingdom. Do you know Jesus as your hero?