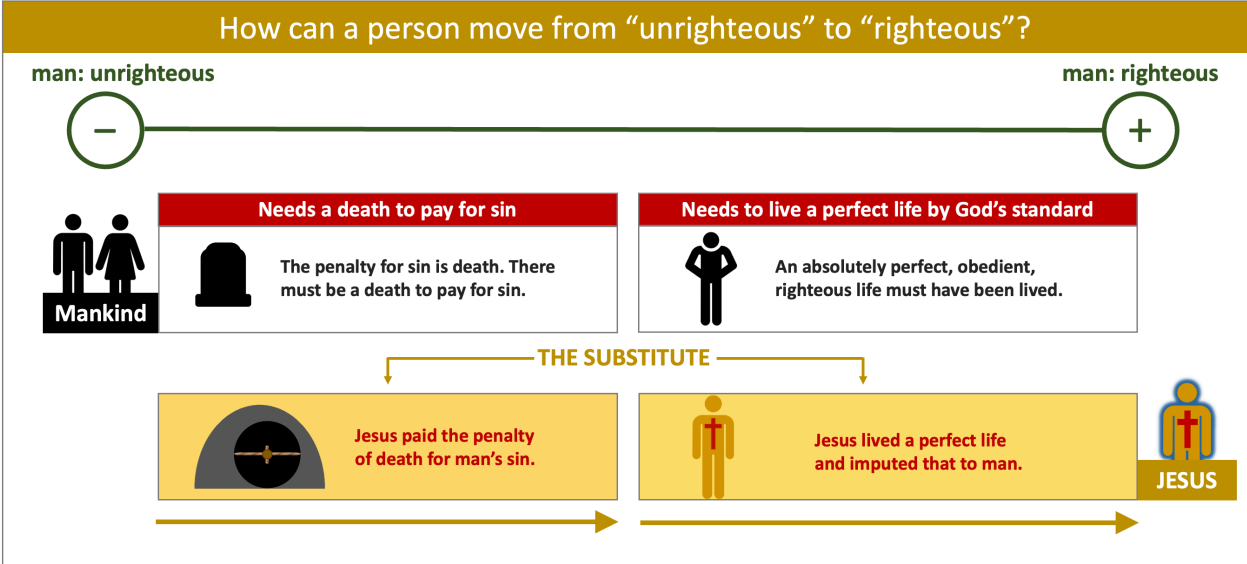


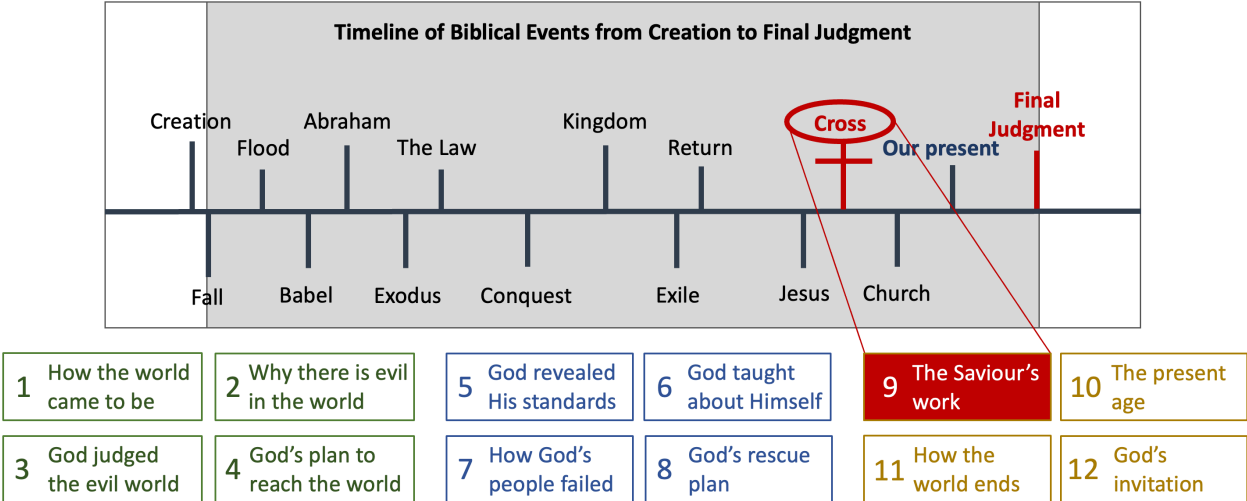
18. The Saviour's Work – Part 2

Previously...

Jesus' "job" when He came to earth was to be mankind's substitute. Mankind has a death penalty to pay, but paying it means eternal death. So Jesus came to die in place of mankind. Mankind has to live a perfectly righteous life according to Yahweh's standards, but no human can do this. So Jesus came to live this perfect life and then credit this righteous life to mankind.



But how did Jesus die and what happened next? This is what we will look at in this lesson.



DEATH OF THE SAVIOUR

How did Jesus' death occur? About the age of 30, He started His public ministry. For three years, He went about teaching and proving that He was God. But what He did made the Jewish religious leaders very angry.

Under Roman rule, the Jews had a relatively "safe" life. The Romans allowed them to practise their religion and generally left them culturally intact. But Jesus' ministry created quite a stir, especially when He claimed to be God. The Jewish leaders panicked. Jesus was a political threat. This was what happened.



John 11:47–48

⁴⁷ Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs.

⁴⁸ If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation."

The religious leaders had already decided that Jesus could not be God. They had already hardened their hearts towards Him. But that was not all. The religious leaders had also corrupted the worship of Yahweh. Instead of focusing on Yahweh and their heart attitudes towards Him, they created many additional "laws" to add to the 613 laws of the Mosaic Covenant. They forced people into legalism and changed the worship of Yahweh into a list of dos and don'ts.



When Jesus came, He confronted the leaders and challenged them on their religion and how they were living. Here was what Jesus said to them on one occasion.

Matthew 15:7–9

⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

⁸ 'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.' "

Jesus' words embarrassed them. Instead of reflecting on His words and then repenting of their ways, they plotted to get rid of Jesus instead.

The religious leaders found people who would give false testimony about Jesus and betray Him in exchange for money. Then, they held three religious trials where they falsely accused Jesus.

But because the religious leaders did not have the power to implement the death sentence, they handed Him over to the Roman authorities who had the power to impose the death penalty. Jesus had three civil trials with the governor, Pilate, as well as the ruler, Herod.

Both separately found Jesus not guilty of the charges the religious leaders brought against Him. Nevertheless, Jesus was unjustly put to death.



Let's turn to our Bibles and read Luke 23:13–49.

(The leader reads aloud. For reference, the verses are also here.)

Luke 23:13–49

¹³ Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, ¹⁴ and he announced his verdict. “You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. ¹⁵ Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. ¹⁶ So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.”

¹⁸ Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, “Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!” ¹⁹ (Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) ²⁰ Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. ²¹ But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

²² For the third time he demanded, “Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.”

²³ But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. ²⁵ As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished.

²⁶ As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. ²⁸ But Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the days are coming when they will say, ‘Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.’ ³⁰ People will beg the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and plead with the hills, ‘Bury us.’ ³¹ For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. ³³ When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

³⁵ The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. ³⁷ They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!”

⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

⁴⁴ By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. ⁴⁵ The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” And with those words he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, “Surely this man was innocent.” ⁴⁸ And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. ⁴⁹ But Jesus’ friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

The cross and crucifixion

The Romans at that time had an excruciating way of putting convicted criminals to death: they crucified them. They would nail the criminals’ hands and feet to wooden posts and then erect the posts. Oftentimes, the posts would be in the shape of a cross. The criminals would hang there till they died.



Even though the Roman government declared Jesus innocent, they nevertheless went ahead to crucify Him.

(It was the practice at that time that at the Passover celebration, the governor would release one prisoner whom the people asked for. But the people chose to have Barabbas, a real criminal, released instead of Jesus.)

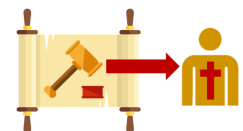
However, Yahweh wanted all people to know that Jesus was not a “victim”. Jesus knowingly and willingly went to the cross. Jesus knew that the only way to save mankind from eternal death was to be the substitute sacrifice in mankind’s place. This was what He said.

John 10:17–18

¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

(Later on, we will see what Jesus meant when He said that He has authority over His life to “take it up again”. Jesus did not die and then stay dead. He came back to life.)

Yahweh wanted all mankind to know that it was His plan all along to have God the Son be the substitute. In fact, hundreds of years earlier, the prophets in the Old Testament wrote in great detail about how Jesus would die. Their prophecies matched perfectly what actually happened.



Jesus' forgiveness, compassion and warning

Forgiveness: Even while Jesus was dying on the cross, He forgave the leaders, the soldiers and the people who were putting Him to death. He showed how infinite the love and mercy of God was, to forgive even while enduring excruciating pain and suffering.



Compassion: Jesus also promised the criminal hanging beside Him that he would be saved and be with Him in paradise. The criminal recognised that Jesus was indeed God Himself and asked Jesus to remember him. Fittingly, Jesus showed love and compassion even while He was dying. This is truly Yahweh's loving heart towards mankind.



Warning: While some in the crowd were grieving for what was happening to Jesus, Jesus told them they should be more concerned for themselves. In rejecting the Messiah, great trouble and suffering would come upon them. Jesus was warning them about the near future.



Unusual things happened when Jesus died

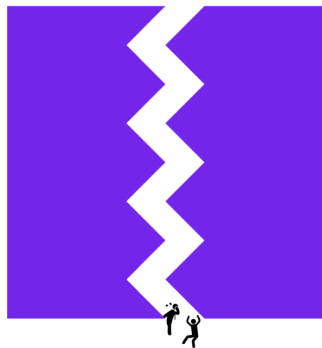
Very unusual things happened at the time Jesus died. His death was not a normal one.

- From noon to about 3 p.m., the sun went completely dark.



- The curtain in the Jewish Temple spontaneously tore from the top right down to the bottom. This was very significant.

This curtain separated a section of the Temple called the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple. This curtain signified that mankind was separated from Yahweh. But when Jesus died, this immense curtain, measuring 18 metres (60 feet) tall and 10 cm (4 inches) thick, tore from top to bottom.



This supernatural tearing of the curtain was Yahweh's way of declaring that Jesus' death on the cross had now opened the way for all mankind to have a relationship with God.

- Another witness to Jesus' death said there was a great earthquake which split open nearby tombs. And many dead people who trusted in Yahweh came walking out and showing themselves to others. (We will discuss this unusual occurrence in greater detail later.)

Matthew 27:51b–53

⁵¹ The earth shook, rocks split apart, ⁵² and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. ⁵³ They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.



All these unusual occurrences did not go unnoticed. Battle-hardened Roman soldiers and a Roman officer recognised all the supernatural things happening that day and they rightly concluded that Jesus was who He said He was: the Son of God.

Matthew 27:54

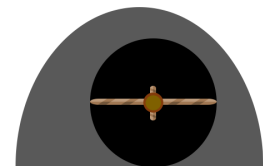
The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

Jesus is buried

Jesus died on April 3, AD 33. He was buried on the same day by a man called Joseph. Two followers of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and another Mary, observed where Joseph laid the body of Jesus.

Matthew 27:57–61

⁵⁷ As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, ⁵⁸ went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰ He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. ⁶¹ Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.



TRUE JUSTICE ACHIEVED THROUGH JESUS' DEATH

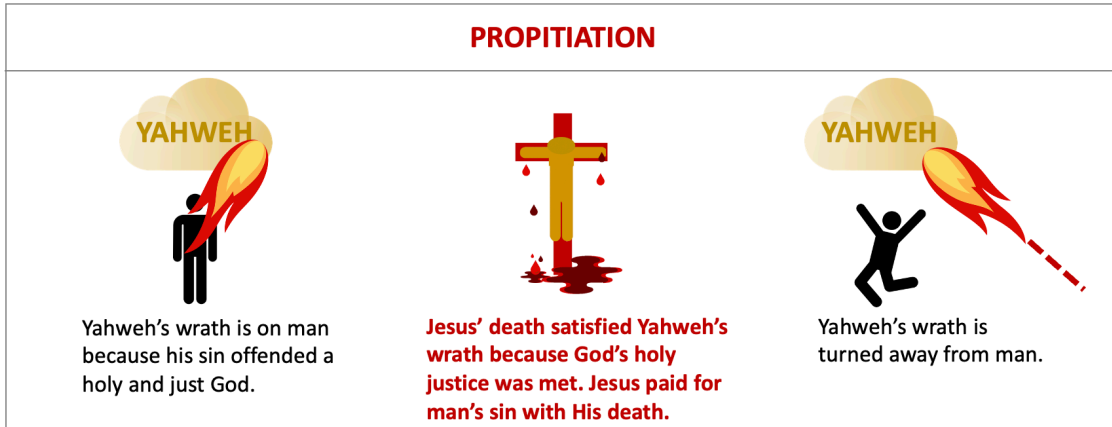
Recall that Yahweh's definition of justice is based on restitution—to put right what was made wrong.

Rebellion against the Creator-God of the universe is such a serious crime that the only fitting penalty is the forfeiting of one's life, that is, death.

To punish mankind's sin without punishing man with eternal death, Jesus came and satisfied God's justice by dying in place of sinful mankind. This means that **Jesus turned God's wrath away from mankind**. The Bible uses the word "propitiation", which means to "satisfy or appease God's wrath" to describe what Jesus did for mankind.

1 John 4:10 (ESV)

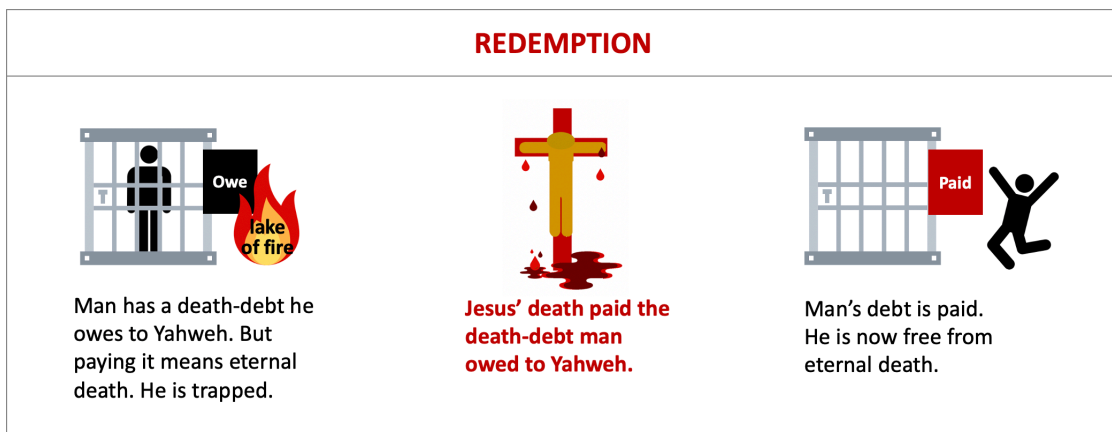
In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.



This means that mankind is freed from the death-debt. Moreover, Jesus also redeemed mankind.

Ephesians 1:7

He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.



That is why when Jesus died, He said, "It is finished!" Exactly what was finished? It was His job of dying for mankind. He knew He had appeased God's wrath and satisfied God's justice. He had redeemed all mankind so mankind was no longer indebted to God.

John 19:28–30

²⁸ Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. ³⁰ When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

With Jesus' death, true justice has been achieved.

1. The eternal death-debt of sinful mankind has been paid by Jesus' death.
2. Removing the death-debt means God can credit Jesus' righteous life to people.

So now people need not have a sin barrier blocking them from having a relationship with Yahweh. What was destroyed at the Fall has now been restored. And people can receive the righteousness they need. This is true justice. This is God's justice.

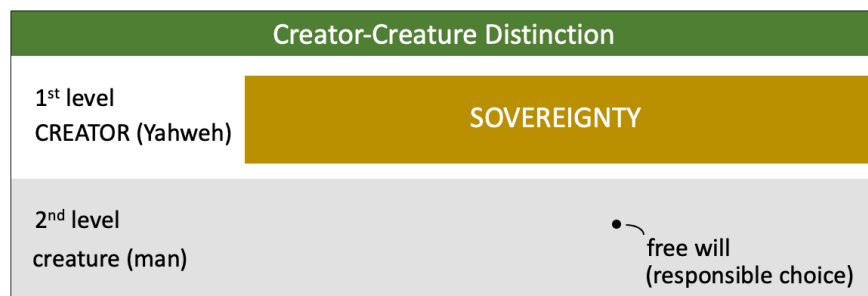
How do people benefit from what Jesus did?

a. Does Yahweh automatically apply the death and perfect life of Jesus to everyone on earth?

Does this mean that all mankind has been reconciled to Yahweh and is freed from eternal death in the lake of fire? No.

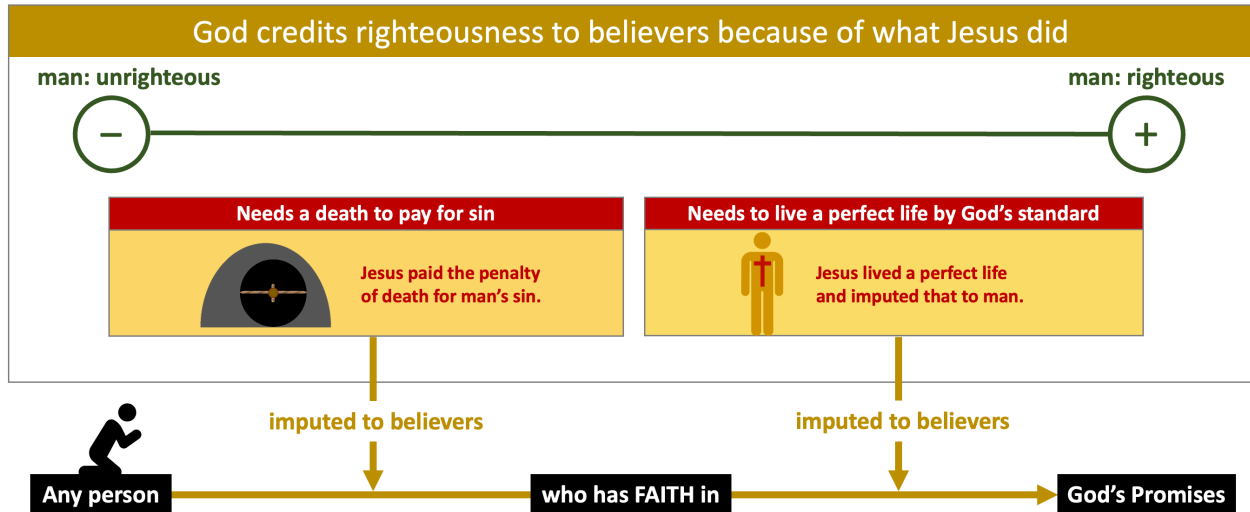
It is important to remember that Yahweh created mankind with free will, that is, the ability to make responsible choices. Yahweh is not a heavenly computer programmer who created mankind as programmed robots.

Rather, He created mankind to be able to choose if they would want to have a genuine, authentic relationship with Him or not.



Likewise, while Jesus' work of living a perfect life of obedience and dying for mankind's sin is available for all mankind, only people who want it and who choose to trust in Him will benefit from it.

When a person chooses to trust in Jesus as their Saviour, Yahweh imputes or credits Jesus' death and perfect life to that person. This means that in Yahweh's eyes, that person immediately moves from the position of "unrighteous" ("-") to "righteous" ("+").



In this way, Yahweh can declare in His heavenly courtroom that this person has fulfilled the criteria needed to be counted as righteous.



b. What does it mean to “trust in Jesus”?

Does this mean that people just need to say they “trust in Jesus” and they will be fine? No.

Faith in Jesus requires content. Faith in the Creator-God cannot rest on a foundation made of nothing. Yahweh never calls people to “blind faith”. God wants mankind to know Him and then put their trust in Him. This is what the Bible says.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.



Let's imagine that someone comes up to your friend and says, “Trust in Blick and you will be fine.” And your friend says, “Okay, I trust in Blick.” Later, you ask your friend about Blick: “Is Blick a person, vegetable, vitamin or an animal?” And you ask what he knows about Blick and it turns out he knows hardly anything at all. Would you therefore believe that your friend really trusts in Blick? Probably not. Those words, “I trust in Blick” are meaningless.

This is not what the Bible means when it says to trust in Jesus. In order to trust in someone, people need to know who the person is, what he claims about himself, what his history and track record are, what people who know him say about him and more. Based on all that information, people can then decide if this person is trustworthy. Then they can decide if they will put their trust in him or not.

Likewise, Yahweh does not ask people to blindly “trust in Jesus”. To give mankind the content necessary for faith, God revealed Himself through the Bible. After a person examines the Bible and understands who Jesus is and what He claims to have done for mankind, each person will then decide if he or she trusts that:

- Yahweh is the holy and sovereign Creator-God.
- People are helpless sinners in need of a Saviour.
- Jesus is the sufficient substitute for them.

If a person believes these things and trusts that Jesus can and will reconcile them to Yahweh and save them from eternal death, then this person can be said to genuinely “trust in Jesus”. This person will have eternal life. This is what God promised.

John 3:16

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

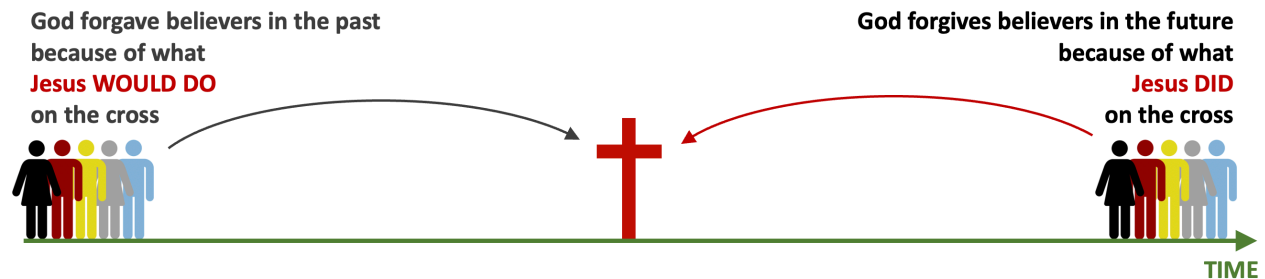
c. How would people who lived before Jesus came to earth be saved?

Some people wonder if everyone who lived before Jesus came to earth are therefore bound for eternal death, since Jesus had not yet died for mankind then. No. Yahweh is merciful and just. This is what God said through Paul.

Romans 3:25–26

²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

Yahweh explains that all mankind from all ages can benefit from what Jesus did.



But how exactly does this work?

In the past, before Jesus came to earth and died, when a person trusted Yahweh for salvation, God reached forward in time to place that person's sin onto Jesus at the cross, and at the same time, God took Jesus' righteousness and credited it to that believer.

This was exactly what happened with Abraham.

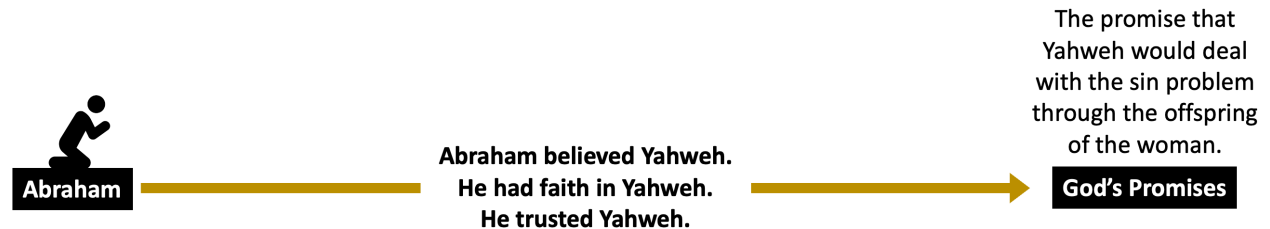
Recalled that the Bible says this about him when he was still called Abram.

Genesis 15:6

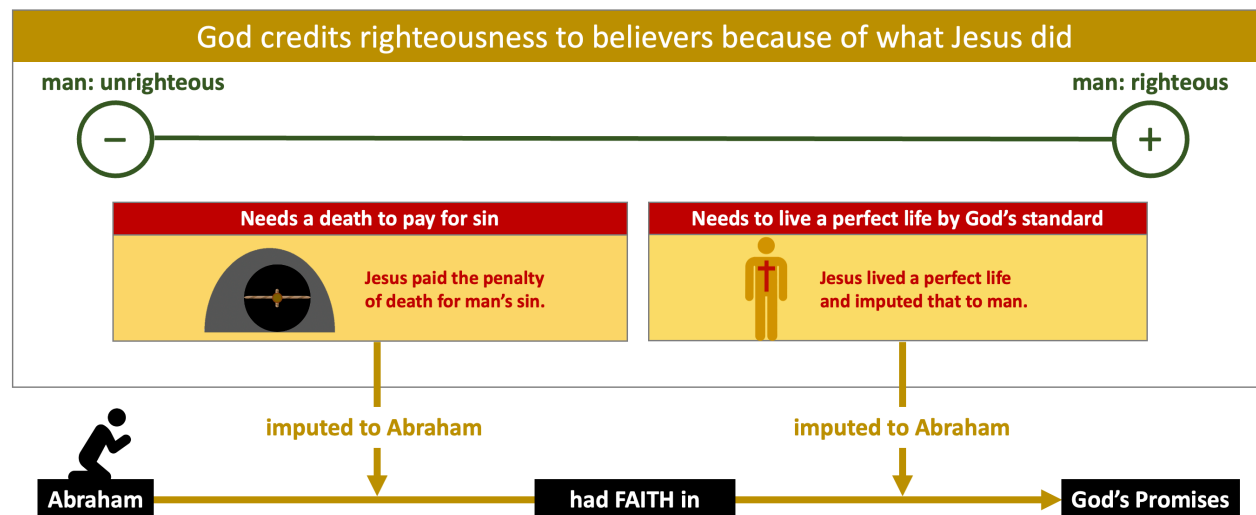
And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

At that time, the information about the offspring or seed of the woman was already known. People at that time in history could place their trust in Yahweh's promise that He would take care of a person's sin problem through the offspring of the woman.

Based on the information about Yahweh's salvation that he had, Abraham could decide if he wanted to believe Him or not. In his case, Abraham chose to believe what Yahweh said. And because of that, Yahweh counted him as righteous.



Because Abraham chose to believe, or trust, or have faith in Yahweh, Yahweh immediately credited what Jesus would do in the future to Abraham. That was why Yahweh could then "count him as righteous", even though it would be about 2000 years before Jesus would come to do His work.



Yahweh was just because he did not ignore Abraham's sin problem but took care of it through Jesus' future work. And He was merciful because He counted Abraham as righteous by crediting the future righteous life of Jesus to Abraham. This was how Yahweh showed Himself to be both merciful and just at the same time to people who lived before Jesus came.

Likewise, for those who live after Jesus died on the cross, Yahweh also applies Jesus' work to them when they trust in Jesus. Yahweh reaches backwards and credits them with what Jesus did.

How do we know this?

Actually, one reason why the Bible records the account of Abraham in such specific detail is because God wants us to know that the way He handled Abraham will be the way He handles us as well.

And He wants us to have the same assurance that when we believe in Him, we too will be counted as righteous, just as Abraham was.

Romans 4:22–24

²² And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. ²³ And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded ²⁴ for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

d. Can't I just do good works so that my good outweighs my bad then I'll be fine and can be reconciled to God?

Some people have the idea that if their good works in this life outweigh their bad works, then God will make sure they get to a good place in the afterlife.

However popular this idea might be, the Bible does not teach this at all. What Yahweh does teach is that just as Abraham was counted as righteous based entirely on his faith, likewise, we too are justified (counted as righteous) by Yahweh based only on our faith. Works are excluded. Faith is the way that God will save mankind. There is no other way.



Galatians 3:8–9

⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

All who have faith in Jesus will also share the same blessing of eternal life that Abraham received.

JESUS' RESURRECTION

Jesus' death completed one aspect of the work that He came to do. But Jesus didn't stay dead. Something happened three days after Jesus was buried. (Note that the Jews count partial days as full days, so even though Jesus died on a Friday, they consider Sunday the third day.)



Let's turn to our Bibles and read Matthew 27:62–28:15.

(The leader reads aloud. For reference, the verses are also here.)

Matthew 27:62–28:15

⁶² The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate.

⁶³ They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.'⁶⁴ So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first."

⁶⁵ Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." ⁶⁶ So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

¹ Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. ⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you."

⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. ⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

¹¹ As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. ¹² A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

Jesus told His disciples about His resurrection before He died

While Jesus was still ministering on earth, on multiple occasions, He had told His disciples that He would be killed in a terrible way, but that He would rise again in three days. Here is an example.

Matthew 16:21

From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

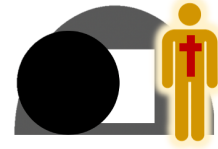


What did it mean that Jesus would rise again? Did Jesus come back in His previous body? No. To come back alive in the same earthly body would mean He was merely resuscitated, that is, he died and was brought back to life in the same body. But this wasn't what happened to Jesus.

Jesus came back in a brand-new body

Resurrection is when God provides a **brand-new, everlasting or imperishable body** for a person who has died.

So, Jesus now had a new, resurrection body. However, this body was not like the earthly body that He had before. For example, in His resurrection body, Jesus could appear and disappear. This was what happened that first Sunday evening.



John 20:19

That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!



Although the disciples had locked themselves in a room, Jesus was able to appear in the same room! He must have frightened them with His sudden appearance because He said, “Peace be with you!” This was probably to calm them. Then Jesus proved who He was by showing the disciples His crucifixion scars which He had kept as proof so they could know it truly was Him.

In fact, for 40 days, Jesus appeared in His new resurrection body and interacted with His disciples. He ate with them and spoke with them. In all, He was seen by more than 500 people.

Over a period of 40 days, Jesus appeared to:						
Mary Magdalene, Mary, Joanna, Salome						
Peter	10 disciples	2 disciples on the road to Emmaus	11 disciples	James	7 disciples	11 disciples
						500 followers

The apostle Paul wrote about these appearances.

1 Corinthians 15:3–7

³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.

⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

Why is Jesus' resurrection important?

Jesus' death on the cross is very important. It is the reason why God can forgive us and reconcile us to Himself. However, Jesus' resurrection is equally important. Without the resurrection, believers in Him have no hope in life. Why?

God promised fallen mankind that He would give believers eternal life and they would be reconciled to Him forever in a physical realm. For this promise to come true, believers would need to have actual physical bodies. Jesus' visible resurrection body provides proof that God will indeed do what He had promised. How so?

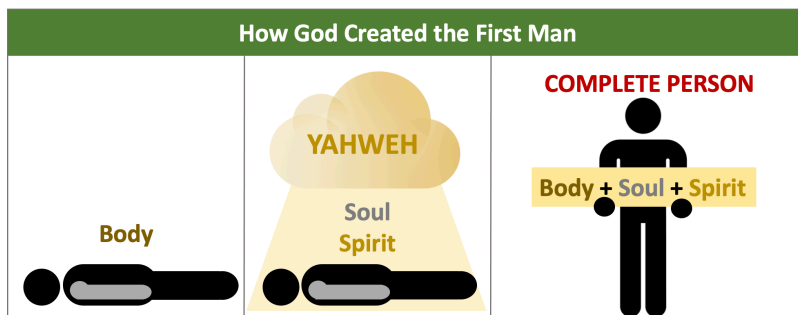
a. Jesus' resurrection body is a sample of what believing mankind's bodies will be like in the future.

At Creation, we saw that a complete human being is made up of a physical human body and an immaterial side.

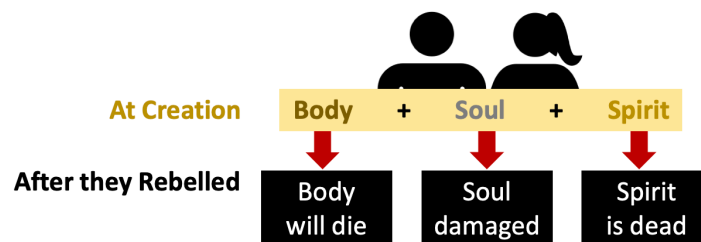
Genesis 2:7

Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

God made a body from the dust of the earth and He put into it a soul and a spirit. Together, the body, soul and spirit form a complete person.



When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, death entered the world. Their human spirits died and their physical human bodies would also die and crumble to dust.

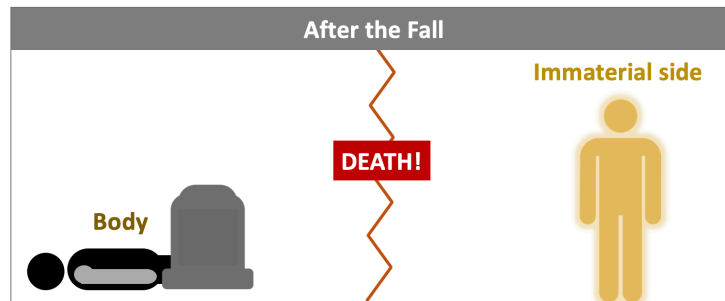


This is what God said to Adam.

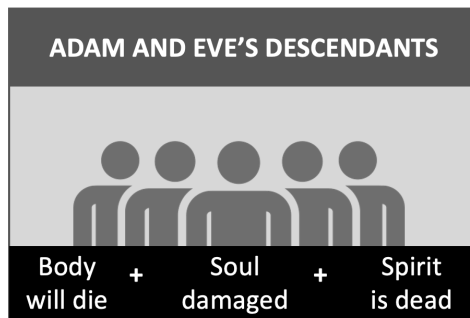
Genesis 3:19b

For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.

From that day onwards, physical death separates a person's human body from their immaterial side.



This death affected all of Adam and Eve's descendants. This means that all mankind after the Fall are born with human bodies and human souls, but no human spirit.

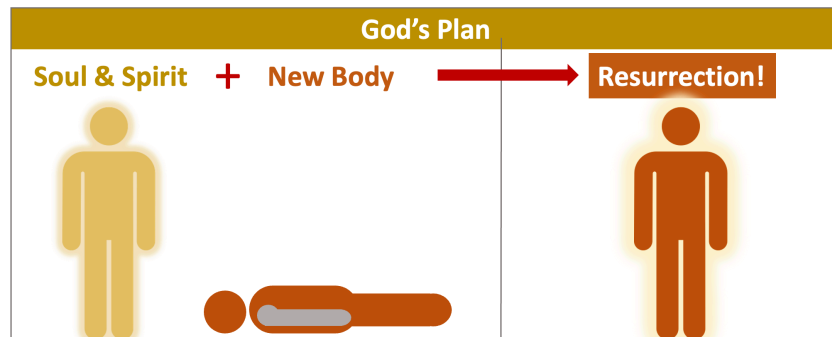


We will see in a later lesson that God will give those who put their trust in Jesus a new human spirit. They will no longer be spiritually dead.

And God does not intend to leave believers in an immaterial state (made up of just soul and spirit) because that is not how He designed mankind. Yahweh intends to have a relationship with a complete person: a human with body, soul and spirit united.

So God will provide every believer with a new body. In this way, He will make each person whole and complete again.

This is what the Bible calls the resurrection. God will give each believer a new, imperishable body that will house their soul and spirit.



Jesus' visible resurrection body was proof that Yahweh had meant what He said. Just as Jesus received a resurrection body, believers also, will receive a resurrection body like His.

This is what Paul said about believers in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:20–23

²⁰ But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. ²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. ²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

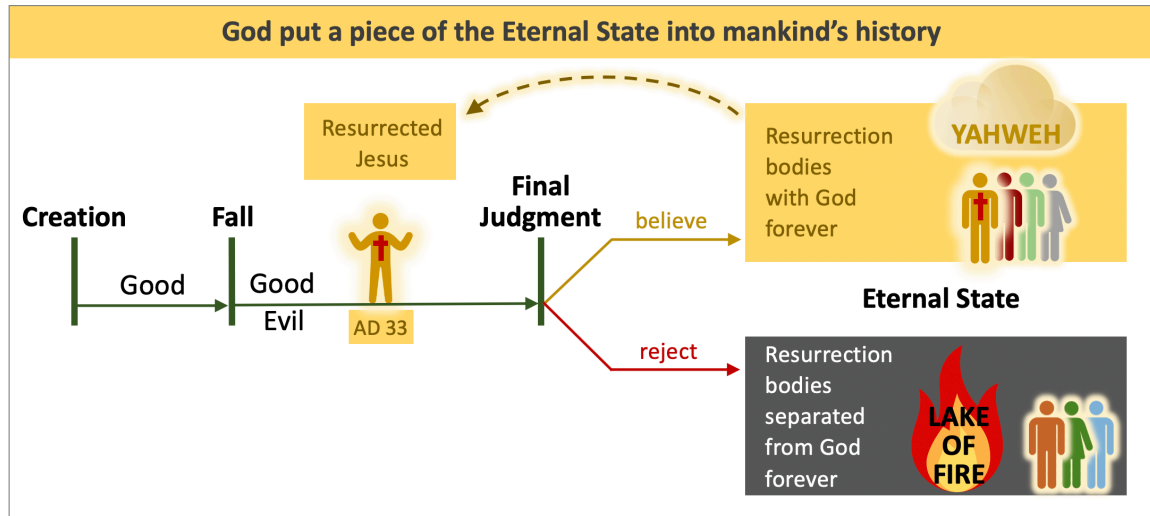
²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

(We will study more about the return of Christ in Lesson 22.)

b. Jesus' resurrection proves that there is a perfect "Eternal State" where there will be no more evil.

God the Father gave mankind proof of life beyond death for believers. How? He sent Jesus to earth in His resurrection body.

The resurrected Jesus belongs to the perfect eternity where there is no more sin and evil. But it was as if Yahweh "broke off" one "sample piece" of perfect eternity and placed it in our history so we could see what the future looks like.



Jesus' resurrection was physical proof of what God promised to do: He will permanently separate good and evil forever and will give us all bodies like Jesus'! Christ's disciples experienced for themselves a taste of what this Eternal State is like.

And here's another important point. Jesus showed proof of His resurrection body because He really wants people to believe in the coming judgment and believe in Him to be saved. His death and resurrection show that He has made it possible for man to be reconciled to God and also that He has won the battle against Satan, sin and death.

What happened next?

What did Jesus do in the 40 days that He walked on earth with His resurrection body? And what did He do after that? And where is He now? We will look at these and more in the next lesson.



Bible reading for review
John 12–21 (Full chapters)

Did the resurrection of Jesus really happen?

Some people accuse Christians of making up the story that Jesus resurrected. Ever since He rose from the dead, people have been attacking that event. Even in the Bible itself, we see the Jewish leaders trying to stop people from talking about and believing in the risen Christ. Right after the resurrected Jesus met with the women at the tomb, this was what the Jewish leaders did.

Matthew 28:11–15

¹¹ As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. ¹² A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers, “You must say, ‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.’ ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up for you so you won’t get in trouble.” ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

Over the years, some people have suggested these and other theories to say the resurrection never happened.



1. Jesus' body was stolen.

This is the same story that the Jewish leaders bribed the guards to tell others. People today still claim that the disciples stole Jesus' body and then told everyone that He had come back to life.

The problem with this is that the disciples would have had to spend the rest of their lives lying to more and more people. Why would they do that? Not one of them became rich from saying that Jesus came back from the dead. In fact, all of them (except the apostle John) were killed in horrible ways for talking about Jesus' death and resurrection. It is quite unbelievable to think that a whole group of people sacrificed their own lives for a lie they themselves made up.

2. The disciples hallucinated the resurrection.

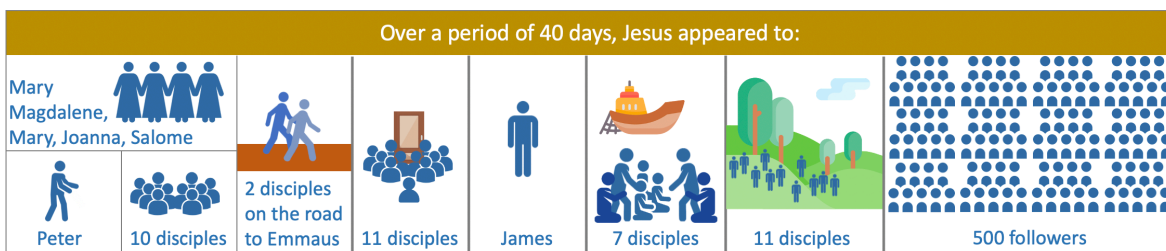
Some people claim the disciples imagined the resurrection. They say the disciples all thought they saw the resurrected Jesus, but it was actually not real. It was all in their minds.



However, in the 40 days that the resurrected Jesus was on earth, He appeared to different people at different times. For example:

- On resurrection day, Jesus appeared to at least four different women (Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–10; Luke 24:1–10; John 20:1–3), Peter (Luke 24:34), two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–31) and the other disciples except for Thomas (John 20:19–24).

- Eight days later, Jesus appeared to the disciples again. This time, Thomas was present (John 20:26–28).
- The Bible records that Jesus also appeared to his earthly brother James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
- Another time, Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1–14).
- Jesus also spoke to 11 of His disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16–20).
- On another occasion, Jesus appeared to more than 500 followers at the same time (1 Corinthians 15:6). These people could not have imagined the same thing all at the same time.

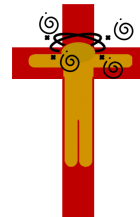


The idea that all these people imagined Jesus is not reasonable.

3. Jesus didn't die; He just fainted.

Some people claim that Jesus didn't die on the cross. They say He fainted from His injuries and later woke up in the tomb where He had been buried.

However, trained Roman soldiers who considered Jesus a criminal were the ones who made sure He was dead. Mistakes would cost them their own lives. It is not possible that they made a mistake about Jesus' death.



John 19:33–34

³³ But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. ³⁴ One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

Also, medically speaking, "blood and water" came out as proof that Jesus had already died.

Those are three common theories to deny the resurrection.

Then there are those who admit that it is possible that Jesus really resurrected. However, they say that it was a miracle that happened just once and will never happen again to anyone else. However, the Bible says that Jesus is just the very first to resurrect. Other resurrections will follow.

1 Corinthians 15:20

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

If we need to investigate more about the historical evidence for the resurrection, there are many good books that we can read to learn more.