



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

KNOWING JESUS

The Crucifixion and Resurrection

Why Jesus Died, Why He Rose, and Why It Changes Everything

The short answer

Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead so that we could be forgiven, made new, and brought back to God. The cross shows the cost of our salvation. The empty tomb shows that Jesus has won.

“He is not here, for he has risen, just like he said.”

Matthew 28:6 WEB

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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE

Begin with the heart of the gospel

This Companion was not written to replace your Bible. It was written to help you understand and love it. Every section is intended to send you back into God's Word with greater confidence and a clearer picture of Jesus Christ.

How to use this guide

Read the listed passages in your Bible. Move slowly through Part One. It explains the central events and truths in plain language. Part Two is optional and explores several questions in greater depth.

What you will learn

01

Why Jesus died

See how the cross addresses sin, guilt, separation from God, and death.

02

Why Jesus rose

Understand why the bodily resurrection confirms Jesus' victory and gives believers living hope.

03

How the events belong together

Learn why Christianity rests on both the cross and the empty tomb.

04

How to respond

Consider the repentance, faith, worship, and new life to which the gospel calls us.

Beginner memory anchor

Jesus died for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is Lord.



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THE FINAL WEEK

Jesus prepared His disciples

Jesus did not stumble unknowingly toward the cross. He repeatedly told His disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and rise again. They did not yet understand, but Jesus knew what lay ahead (Mark 8:31; 9:30–32; 10:32–34).

The Last Supper

During the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and a cup and gave them new significance. His body would be given, and His blood would establish the new covenant. The meal pointed to His willing, sacrificial death (Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Jesus gave Himself

The cross was not an accident that interrupted Jesus' mission. Giving His life was central to His mission (Mark 10:45; John 10:17–18).

Gethsemane

In the garden, Jesus faced the horror of what was coming. He prayed honestly and submitted fully to the Father: "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:39–46).

What should a beginner notice?

Jesus' obedience was not casual or painless. He entered suffering willingly, trusting the Father and loving the people He came to save.



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THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus was arrested, condemned, and crucified

Jesus was betrayed, arrested, questioned by Jewish leaders, and handed to the Roman governor. Although Pilate recognized serious problems with the accusations, political pressure prevailed. Jesus was mocked, beaten, and sentenced to crucifixion (Matthew 26:47–27:31; John 18:28–19:16).

What was crucifixion?

Crucifixion was a brutal Roman execution intended to cause suffering, shame, and public warning. Jesus was nailed to a cross and died there. The Gospels do not minimize His physical death (Mark 15:22–39; John 19:28–37).

The cry from Psalm 22

Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34), quoting Psalm 22:1. His words express the real anguish of the cross and direct hearers toward the whole psalm.

Psalm 22 does not end in abandonment. It moves from intense suffering through confidence and vindication to worship and God's reign among the nations (Psalm 22:19–31). The Gospel writers also connect its mockery and divided garments with the crucifixion (Psalm 22:7–8, 18; Matthew 27:35, 39–43).

Read the whole psalm

Jesus' opening quotation carries the psalm's full movement: terrible suffering is real, but God's vindication and worldwide praise follow.



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WHY THE CROSS?

Why did Jesus have to die?

All people have sinned

Sin is more than making occasional mistakes. It is rebellion against God expressed through our desires, choices, words, and actions. Everyone has sinned and falls short of God's glory (Romans 3:10–23).

Sin brings guilt, separation, and death

God is holy and just. He does not call evil good or pretend sin does no harm. Sin alienates us from God, damages His good creation, and leads to death (Isaiah 59:1–2; Romans 6:23).

Jesus took our place

Jesus lived without sin, yet willingly bore our sins in His body on the cross. He received the judgment sinners deserved so that those who trust Him could be forgiven and made righteous before God (Isaiah 53:4–6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

Beginner truth

Jesus is not merely our example. We first need Him as our Savior.

The cross also reveals God's love. God did not wait for us to make ourselves worthy. Christ died for us while we were still sinners (John 3:16; Romans 5:6–8).



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WHAT THE CROSS ACCOMPLISHED

One saving work, many biblical pictures

01

Forgiveness

Our sins can be pardoned because Jesus bore them (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13–14).

02

Justification

God declares believers righteous through faith in Christ, not through their own merit (Romans 3:21–26).

03

Reconciliation

Enemies are brought into peace and relationship with God (Romans 5:1, 10–11; 2 Corinthians 5:18–21).

04

Redemption

Jesus paid the cost to free people from slavery to sin (Mark 10:45; Titus 2:14).

05

Victory

At the cross, Jesus disarmed hostile spiritual powers and broke sin's claim (Colossians 2:13–15; Hebrews 2:14–15).

06

New life

Those united to Christ can begin walking in freedom and obedience (Romans 6:1–14; Galatians 2:20).

God's victory has a cosmic horizon

The effects of Christ's work reach beyond individual forgiveness. Through Him, God is reconciling all things to Himself, and creation itself awaits freedom from corruption (Colossians 1:19–20; Romans 8:18–25).



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THE THIRD DAY

Jesus was bodily raised from the dead

Jesus truly died and was buried. Early on the first day of the week, women found the tomb open and empty. Angels announced that He had risen. Jesus then appeared alive to His followers (Matthew 27:57–28:10; Luke 24:1–43; John 20:1–29).

Not merely a symbol

The resurrection was not only the disciples' memory of Jesus living on. God raised the same Jesus who had been crucified, and He appeared in a transformed yet bodily life.

Why the resurrection matters

01

Jesus is who He said He is

The resurrection vindicates His identity and mission (Romans 1:3–4).

02

His saving work is effective

If Christ had not been raised, faith would be futile and sin would still condemn us (1 Corinthians 15:14–17).

03

Death has been defeated

Jesus is the firstfruits—the beginning and guarantee of resurrection for His people (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

04

New creation has begun

Believers now walk in new life while awaiting bodily resurrection and the renewal of creation (Romans 6:4; 8:18–25).

Beginner memory anchor

The empty tomb means death does not have the final word.



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THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

The cross and resurrection belong together

The cross without the resurrection would leave us with a dead teacher and no victory. The resurrection without the cross would not explain how sinners are forgiven. The gospel announces both: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

The cross and the empty tomb

At the cross, Jesus bore sin. In the resurrection, God vindicated His Son and announced the defeat of death. Together they declare that Jesus saves and reigns.

A beginner summary

- Jesus willingly went to the cross.
- He truly died and was buried.
- He died for our sins.
- God raised Him bodily from the dead.
- He appeared to many witnesses.
- Everyone who trusts Him receives forgiveness and eternal life.

Questions to carry into Scripture

01

What does this passage show about Jesus?

Notice His identity, love, obedience, suffering, victory, and authority.

02

What does it show about sin and grace?

Look honestly at human guilt and God's costly mercy.

03

How does it call me to respond?

Consider repentance, faith, worship, obedience, hope, and witness.



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PART TWO · WANT TO GO DEEPER?

The Old Testament prepared the way

Passover

At the first Passover, a lamb died and its blood marked the households spared from judgment (Exodus 12). The New Testament calls Christ “our Passover,” presenting His death as the greater saving sacrifice (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Sacrifices

Israel's sacrifices taught that sin brings death and that atonement requires God-provided sacrifice. Hebrews explains that animal sacrifices could not finally remove sin; Jesus offered Himself once for all (Leviticus 16–17; Hebrews 9:11–10:18).

The suffering Servant

Isaiah describes a Servant who is rejected, bears the sins of others, dies, and is afterward vindicated. The New Testament repeatedly applies this pattern to Jesus (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Acts 8:26–35; 1 Peter 2:22–25).

Suffering followed by glory

Jesus taught that the Messiah had to suffer and then enter His glory. The cross and resurrection fulfill this recurring scriptural movement (Luke 24:25–27, 44–47; 1 Peter 1:10–12).

Read connections in context

These passages are not isolated prediction codes. Read their original settings, then follow the connections the New Testament itself makes.



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DEEPER THEOLOGY

Scripture gives several views of the cross

Substitution

Jesus bears sin and judgment in the place of others (Isaiah 53:4–6; Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 3:18).

Sacrifice

Jesus offers Himself as the final, sufficient sacrifice for sin (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:26–28).

Redemption

His death pays the price that frees people from slavery (Galatians 3:13; Revelation 5:9–10).

Reconciliation

God restores sinners to peace and fellowship with Himself (Romans 5:10–11; Colossians 1:21–22).

Victory

Jesus defeats the powers of sin, death, and the devil (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14–15).

Example

Jesus' self-giving love becomes the pattern His followers imitate—but only after His unique saving work is recognized (Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Peter 2:21–24).

Keep the pictures together

These are complementary biblical truths, not competing theories that force us to choose only one.



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READ WITH CARE

Who was responsible for Jesus' death?

The Gospels name several human participants: Judas betrayed Jesus; some Jewish leaders plotted against Him; a crowd demanded crucifixion; Pilate authorized it; and Roman soldiers carried it out. The New Testament also teaches that all humanity is sinful and that Jesus died for sinners.

Scripture therefore does not permit Christians to blame the Jewish people collectively or to use the crucifixion to justify antisemitism. Jesus, His first followers, and the earliest church were Jewish. The cross exposes the sin of us all and displays God's grace toward all who believe.

A necessary guardrail

The cross should produce repentance and gratitude—not antisemitism, superiority, or contempt.

God's purpose and human responsibility

Acts holds both truths together: Jesus was delivered according to God's definite plan, yet those who crucified Him were responsible for their actions (Acts 2:22–24; 4:27–28). God accomplished redemption through evil actions without approving evil.

The Father and the Son acted willingly

The Father loved the world and sent the Son. The Son loved us and gave Himself. The cross is not an unwilling Son being forced by a harsh Father; it is the united saving purpose of God (John 3:16; 10:17–18; Galatians 2:20).



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HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The resurrection entered public history

Christian faith is not based only on a timeless lesson. The New Testament presents the resurrection as an event involving a known person, a real death, a burial, an empty tomb, and appearances to witnesses.

01

Death and burial

Jesus' death was confirmed, and Joseph of Arimathea placed His body in a known tomb (Mark 15:42–47; John 19:31–42).

02

The empty tomb

Women discovered the tomb empty and received the announcement that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:1–12).

03

Appearances

Jesus appeared to individuals and groups, invited touch, ate with disciples, and taught them (Luke 24:36–49; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8).

04

Transformed witnesses

Fearful disciples became public witnesses who proclaimed the risen Jesus despite suffering (Acts 2–5).

05

An early message

Paul reports a resurrection tradition he had received, showing that the claim belonged to the church's earliest proclamation (1 Corinthians 15:3–8).

Evidence and faith

Christian faith is not blind belief without reasons. Evidence can support the resurrection claim, but responding to the risen Jesus also involves repentance, trust, and worship.



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A DEEPER QUESTION

Who raised Jesus from the dead?

The New Testament speaks in several complementary ways:

- The Father raised Jesus (Acts 2:24; Romans 6:4; Galatians 1:1).
- Jesus spoke of taking up His life again (John 2:19–22; 10:17–18).
- The Spirit is connected with resurrection life (Romans 8:11; 1 Peter 3:18).

These texts do not describe competing actions. They reveal the unity of the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the work of redemption.

Distinct roles, one saving work

Christian theology sometimes calls this the economic Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, equal in divine being, while carrying out distinct but perfectly united roles in God's work of creation and redemption. Distinct roles do not mean unequal value, conflicting purposes, or three separate gods.

Why bodily resurrection matters

Jesus' resurrection body was transformed, but it was not unreal. The tomb was empty; He could be touched; He ate; and the disciples recognized Him. At times His risen life also exceeded ordinary mortal limitations (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–29).

Christian hope is therefore not merely that the soul survives. God will raise His people bodily and renew His creation (1 Corinthians 15:35–58; Philippians 3:20–21).



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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACCOUNTS

Differences do not erase the shared testimony

The four Gospels select and arrange details according to their purposes. They vary in which women, angels, words, and appearances they emphasize. They agree on the central sequence: Jesus died, was buried, the tomb was found empty, and Jesus appeared alive.

Read each Gospel carefully

A difference in selected detail is not automatically a contradiction. Ask whether two accounts truly deny one another or simply tell different parts of the same event.

What does “on the third day” mean?

The Gospels say Jesus rose on the third day and also preserve the phrase “three days and three nights.” Ancient Jewish time reckoning could count any part of a day as a day, which supports the traditional Friday-to-Sunday chronology.

The traditional Friday view

Jesus is crucified Friday afternoon, buried before sundown, rests in the tomb on the Sabbath, and is discovered risen early Sunday. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are counted inclusively. This remains the traditional and widely held view.

Thursday and Wednesday proposals

Some propose Thursday to allow more elapsed time or to address festival-Sabbath questions. Others propose Wednesday from a strict seventy-two-hour reading of “three days and three nights.” Each view attempts to coordinate the Gospel time references.

Hold the center

The precise day-of-week reconstruction is secondary. All views must preserve the central testimony: Jesus truly died, was buried, and was bodily raised on the third day.



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RESURRECTION HOPE

Jesus is the firstfruits

Firstfruits were the opening portion of a harvest and the promise that more would follow. Paul calls the risen Jesus the firstfruits of those who have died. His resurrection is not an isolated miracle; it guarantees the future resurrection of everyone who belongs to Him (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

The “already” and the “not yet”

Because Jesus has risen, believers already receive spiritual life and the Holy Spirit. Yet we still await the resurrection of our bodies, the final defeat of death, and the renewal of creation (Romans 8:10–25; 1 Corinthians 15:50–58).

How the gospel shapes life now

01	Hope in grief Believers grieve honestly, but not without resurrection hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).
02	Freedom from condemnation Those in Christ are forgiven and welcomed by God (Romans 8:1–4).
03	New obedience Union with Christ’s death and resurrection changes how we relate to sin (Romans 6:1–14).
04	Courageous witness The risen Jesus sends His people to make disciples in the Spirit’s power (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8).
05	Steadfast service Because resurrection is certain, labor in the Lord is never wasted (1 Corinthians 15:58).



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COMMON QUESTIONS

Respond with clarity and humility

Did Jesus only faint?

The Roman execution, the spear wound, the burial, and the disciples' proclamation of a victorious risen Lord do not fit a near-death survival explanation (Mark 15:42–45; John 19:31–37).

Was the body stolen?

A stolen body would not explain the repeated appearances or the disciples' conviction that Jesus had conquered death. Matthew records that this counterclaim circulated early (Matthew 28:11–15).

Were the appearances hallucinations?

Hallucination proposals struggle to account for group appearances, multiple settings, the empty tomb, and the conversions of former opponents such as Paul and James (1 Corinthians 15:5–8).

Why does God require the cross instead of simply forgiving?

God's forgiveness is free to us, but it is not careless. At the cross, God remains just while justifying sinners who trust Jesus. He confronts evil, bears the cost of mercy, and reconciles us to Himself (Romans 3:25–26; 2 Corinthians 5:18–21).

A humble approach

Christians can give reasons for their hope without pretending every mystery has been exhausted. The goal is faithful witness, not argumentative pride.



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PRACTICE PAGE

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–28

01

What message did Paul receive and pass on?

Write the central facts in verses 3–5.

02

Which witnesses are named?

Notice individuals, groups, and Paul himself in verses 5–8.

03

What would follow if Christ had not risen?

List Paul's conclusions in verses 12–19.

04

What changes because Christ has risen?

Trace the firstfruits and future-resurrection hope in verses 20–28.

05

How should you respond?

Name one reason for worship, hope, repentance, or faithful service.

One possible faithful summary

Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was bodily raised according to the Scriptures. His resurrection confirms the gospel and guarantees the resurrection of those who belong to Him.



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CONTINUE IN SCRIPTURE

Key passages for further study

Use these passages to verify the guide's main claims in context and to continue tracing the cross, resurrection, and new-creation hope through Scripture.

- Isaiah 52:13–53:12
- Psalm 22
- Matthew 26–28
- Luke 22–24
- John 18–21
- Acts 2:22–36
- Romans 3:21–26; 5:6–11; 6:1–14
- 1 Corinthians 15
- 2 Corinthians 5:14–21
- Hebrews 9–10
- 1 Peter 1:3–9; 2:21–25



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THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE TO BEGIN

Would you like to begin with Jesus?

The crucifixion and resurrection are not only truths to study. They are the heart of God's invitation. Every person has sinned and cannot repair the separation from God through good behavior, religion, or determination.

Jesus lived the sinless life we could not live, died for our sins, and rose from the dead. God offers forgiveness, new life, and eternal hope as a gift of grace to everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus (John 3:16–18; Romans 10:9–13; Ephesians 2:8–10).

How do we respond?

01

Turn toward God

Repentance means turning from sin and self-rule toward God. You do not need to become perfect before coming.

02

Believe in Jesus

Trust that Jesus is Lord and that His death and resurrection are sufficient to save you.

03

Call on Him

Confess your need, receive His grace, and ask Him to forgive and lead you.

A prayer can express your faith

Lord Jesus, I know I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Please forgive me, make me new, and teach me to follow You as Savior and Lord. Amen.

A prayer is not a magic formula. Salvation rests in Jesus Christ, not in saying perfect words. If you have trusted Him, begin reading His Word, pray honestly, tell another faithful Christian, and connect with a Bible-teaching local church.



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CARRY THIS TRUTH WITH YOU

Because Jesus lives, we have hope

Final memory anchor

The cross was not Jesus' defeat, and the empty tomb was not merely a hopeful symbol. Jesus willingly died for our sins and bodily rose from the dead. Because Jesus lives, forgiveness is available, death is defeated, new life has begun, and everyone who belongs to Him has an eternal hope.

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