

Lesson

Why I Believe Jesus Is Alive!

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Art by Keith Neely

Teaching Schedule

Teaching Hour

Session One

Introduction/Verse
Interview/Lesson
Lesson Review/Practice
with witnessing tool

Second Session

Verse Review
Activities

Main Truth

Jesus is alive.

Teaching Objective

That the child will be able to confidently present the truth of Christ's resurrection to others.

Scripture Study

Matthew 27—28;
Mark 15—16; Luke 23—
24; John 19—21

Proof Verse

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; ... he was buried, and ... he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

Teacher's Reflection—The Importance of the Resurrection

The doctrine of the resurrection is foundational to our faith:

1. The resurrection established the deity of Christ beyond any doubt (Rom. 1:4).
2. The resurrection proves Christ's death was sufficient for our salvation (Rom. 4:25).
3. The resurrection gives us assurance of our own resurrection (1 Cor. 15:19-20).
4. The resurrection provides for holy living (Rom. 6:1-4).

There are four main world religions based on a real person:

Buddha—died sixth century B.C.

Mohammed—died 632 A.D.

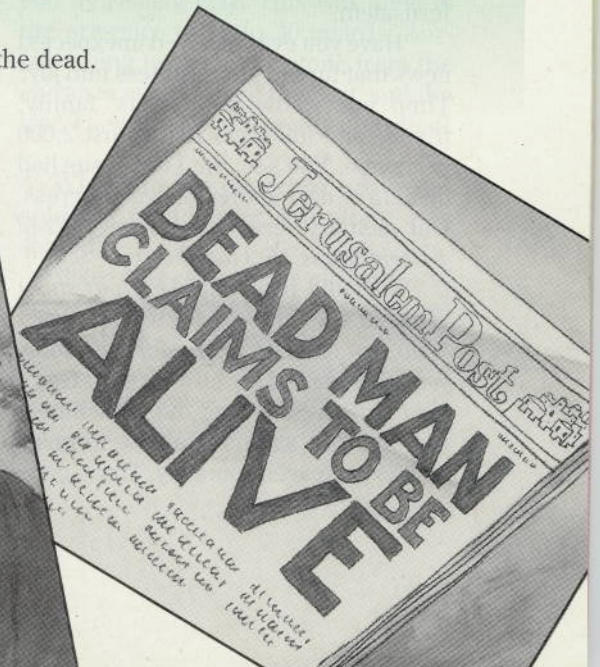
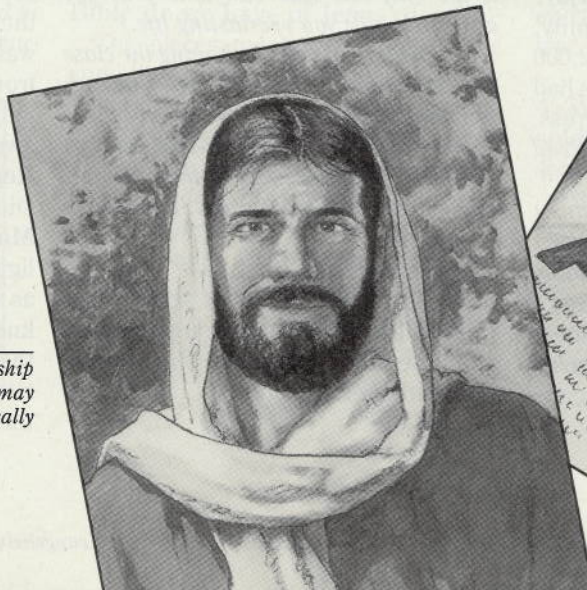
Abraham—died approximately 1900 B.C.

Jesus Christ—the only one who rose from the dead.

**Two-session
training for
Christian
children
ages 9-11**

**(See page 37 for
suggested parts
for primaries.)**

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Visual Aids and Other Teaching Helps

Supplies

- Props for interview with Mary Magdalene: Mid-eastern clothing, microphone, tape recording of "news music" or nature sounds, cardboard television monitor, etc.
- Resource books: Study Bibles, Bible dictionaries and Bible handbooks
- Timer

Preparation

1. Carefully remove flashcards from center section by lifting staples. Close staples again to keep text intact. Cut flashcards IB5-1—4 apart, arranging IB5-1—2 in order. After IB5-2 is shown, turn the cards and IB5-3—4 will be in order. IB5-5 is shown separately. Place IB5-6 in your classroom as a poster.
2. Photocopy cards, page 38—one card for each child on a team.

3. Photocopy interview, p.26.
4. Photocopy witnessing tool, page 39, for each child.
5. Photocopy 10 questions, page 37, for each child.
6. If using alternate Activity 1, page 37, recruit adult "witnesses" dressed like Bible characters.
7. For Activity 2, recruit adults one week in advance to answer questions regarding their personal testimony. Provide them with list of questions.

Session One

Introduction/Verse

Preparation: Have verse printed for all to read.

(Thoughtfully look at flashcard IB5-1, newspaper.) This is an interesting newspaper... the *Jerusalem Post*, dated 33 A.D. What an old edition! Look at the headline story, "Dead Man Claims to Be Alive!" Who could that be talking about? Yes, Jesus Christ the Lord! They did not have newspapers back then, but I'm sure it didn't take long for that news to travel. Just when all seemed hopeless, the news "He's alive! He's alive!" spread quickly through the streets of Jerusalem.

Have you ever received unexpected news that turned your sadness into joy? Then you know how Jesus' family, friends and followers felt almost 2,000 years ago. You see, the Lord Jesus had died three days earlier, nailed to a cross. Our memory verse tells us why. *(Read 1 Corinthians 15:3 together.)*

Why did Jesus die? *(For our sins.)* What is sin? *(Disobeying God's rules.)* Who has sinned? *(Everyone, including you and me.)* The Lord Jesus, God's only perfect Son, took the punishment for your sins so you could be forgiven and go to Heaven someday. That's good

news! How do we know Jesus died for our sins? It tells us so in the Bible, God's Word. God planned it. Hundreds of years before Jesus came to Earth God told us in the Old Testament Scriptures that it would happen.

What's the rest of the good news? *(Read verse 4 together.)* God raised Jesus from the dead three days later! This also happened "according to the Scriptures." The Bible tells us He is alive forevermore. He will never die again. *(See Revelation 1:18.)* Why should you believe in the Lord Jesus? *(Because He is the only one who can take your sin away and give you everlasting life.)*

(Drill proof verse by having the class say their name instead of "our" in unison, making it personal. Next, have them think of someone they know that perhaps has never believed Jesus as their Savior. Have them say those names in the verse in unison.)

We believe Christ rose from the dead because the fact is stated in 1 Corinthians 15:4 but there are many exciting details in Scripture that support this truth. Let's explore!

Interview/Lesson

(Children can be given parts to read.)

(News reporter in the garden, Easter morning.) This is Dan Lather *(or Barbara Falter)* of WKID Eyewitness News with a late-breaking report in a garden outside Jerusalem. It is reported that a man named Jesus came back to life after being killed by crucifixion on a hillside nearby. He was buried in this garden three days ago. I have with me a woman who claims she has just talked with Jesus.

(Interview with Mary Magdalene based on Matthew 28:1-10.)

(Turn and face Mary.) What is your name and tell us what happened?

Mary: *(Speaking excitedly.)* My name is Mary Magdalene. My friend and I were coming to the tomb this morning where Jesus had been buried, in that cave over there *(motions)*, when suddenly there was a great earthquake and an angel from Heaven rolled away the big stone in front of the cave's entrance. It was an awesome sight!

Reporter: What did the angel look like? Did he say anything to you?

Mary: The angel looked bright like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow! He told us not to be afraid. He knew we were looking for Jesus but that He was no longer here. Jesus had risen! Then he invited us to look inside the cave to see that it was really empty.

Reporter: What about the soldiers that were guarding the cave? What happened to them?

Mary: They fainted from fear!

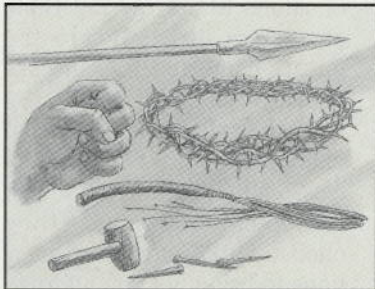
Reporter: What happened next?

Mary: My friend and I were running back to Jerusalem to tell Jesus' disciples what happened when Jesus Himself met us on the way! He told us not to be afraid and to go tell the others He would meet them in Galilee.

Reporter: What an incredible story! Thank you, Mary Magdalene. Be sure to stay tuned to WKID for an update on these historical events. Reporting live from Jerusalem, this is Dan Lather (*or Barbara Falters*).

When Mary Magdalene told the disciples what she had seen they were pretty skeptical as you can imagine. Was Mary dreaming? Had Jesus really died, or did He just faint, and then "come to" after they had buried Him? Had Jesus been safely buried, or did someone steal His body and then pretend to be Jesus? Was it Jesus who came back to life or was it His ghost? Many people in the last 2,000 years have wondered if the resurrection was fact or fiction. They want proof that Jesus had really come back to life from the dead.

Let's pretend we are in a courtroom to examine the evidence of Jesus' resurrection. (*Divide class into three "defense teams" and give each child a card with questions and verses copied from page 38. Have each group choose a "chief defense lawyer" to organize the team and present the answers. Let them take time to study the evidence to prepare their presentations, using their Bibles and any other resource books available. Allow sufficient time and guidance for them to prepare a strong defense! You can add to their reports from the following information.*)



(Flashcard IB5-2, weapons.)

DEFENSE TEAM #1: Proving Jesus Was Dead

1. What murder weapons were used to kill Jesus?

- **Whip:** Roman soldiers gave Jesus at least 40 lashes with a whip tied with pieces of sharp bone and metal. (common Roman law before a crucifixion).
- **Fists:** Jesus was so brutally beaten and tortured by the soldiers, He could not be recognized (Isaiah 52:14).
- **Crown of thorns:** After placing the crown on Jesus, the soldiers hit Him over the head with a reed, pushing the thorns in to His forehead. This caused much swelling and bleeding.
- **Three spikes:** (approximately 12 inches long) Jesus' wrists and feet were nailed on a wooden cross. Hanging in this way prevented His blood from circulating throughout His body.
- **Spear:** A spear was pushed into Jesus' left side by a Roman soldier to make sure He was truly dead. (Blood and water came out, proving He was dead.)

2. Who made sure Jesus was dead?

Pilate, the governor who ordered Jesus' crucifixion, would not let anyone bury Jesus until the Roman centurion (an officer over 100 soldiers) at the scene pronounced Him dead.

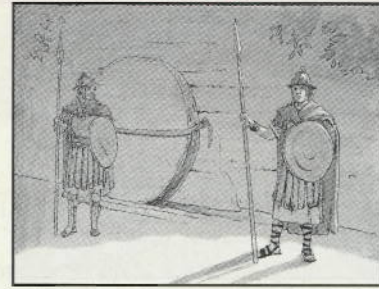
3. Were there any eyewitnesses of Jesus' death?

Enemies, friends, family members and soldiers all witnessed the death of Jesus as well as the death of two others who were crucified beside Him. It was done on a hillside for all to watch.

4. What evidence other than the Bible do we have of Jesus' death?

The places mentioned in the Bible and other historical records describing Jesus' death and resurrection can be visited today. (*Teacher: If possible provide defense team with pictures of Jerusalem, including the specific places mentioned in the death and resurrection account. Check a Bible handbook.*) Historical records also verify, or prove to be true, that Jesus Christ lived approximately 2,000 years ago for 33 years on this earth.

DEFENSE TEAM #2: Proving Jesus Was Safely Buried



(Flashcard IB5-3, closed tomb.)

1. What happened to Jesus' body after He died?

Joseph, a rich Jewish man from the city of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, also a Jew, tightly wrapped Jesus' body in long sheets of linen material from the shoulders to the feet like a mummy. The head was also wrapped. About 75 pounds of spices were used. The spices were a gummy substance that set like cement to glue the cloth wrappings into a solid covering. The grave clothes could not be easily removed!

2. What was put in front of the tomb's doorway?

Jesus' body was laid in a tomb, or cave. A huge stone, requiring several men to move it, was rolled in front of the entrance.

3. What did the soldiers do to the stone?

To prevent anyone from stealing Jesus' body, a cord or string was placed across the stone and fastened at either end by sealing clay. This was done in the presence of 10 to 30 guards. Anyone trying to move the stone from the entrance would break the seal, and the law! They would be severely punished!

4. What did the governor order the soldiers to do after the stone was sealed?

Pilate ordered four armed soldiers to guard the tomb day and night. Soldiers who fell asleep on duty, deserted their post or neglected to do what they were told (in this case, keep the tomb secure) were given the death penalty.

DEFENSE TEAM #3: Proving Jesus Rose from the Dead



(Flashcard IB5-4, inside tomb.)

1. What did the soldiers see happen three days after Jesus was buried?

The soldiers guarding the tomb reported to the chief priests that there had been an earthquake, an angel rolled the stone from the door and the tomb was empty except for the grave cloths. The enemies of Jesus could not deny it or prove that it did not happen, so instead of punishing the terrified soldiers they gave them money to lie about what they had seen.

2. What unusual scene did the disciples find inside the tomb?

The linen cloths were lying just as they were when Joseph and Nicodemus had wrapped them round the body of Jesus. The cloth used for Jesus' head was folded separately. It did not look like anyone had come to rob the grave but that Jesus just got up and left.

3. How many people saw Jesus after He came back to life? (Matthew 28:8-10; Luke 24:13-15, 34; John 20:18-20, 26; 21:1; Acts 1:1-12; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8)

On at least 15 separate occasions people saw Jesus alive after He had died. One time He was seen by 500 people.

(Flashcard IB5-5, "Appearances of Christ" chart. Show locations of appearances.)

The cowardly followers of Jesus who ran away when He was arrested, doubted the news of Jesus' resurrection until they saw Him. Many of these same people were tortured and killed by Jesus' enemies because they would not deny the truth of the resurrection.

4. What evidence do we have since Jesus returned to Heaven that He is alive?

We have the Word of God which tells us Jesus is alive. We know God's Word is true. It tells us the facts of Jesus' resurrection and ascension to Heaven. The epistles and Revelation speak of Jesus as alive (Rom. 6:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:2; Col. 3:1; Rev. 1:18). And even though we can no longer see Jesus with our eyes, we can see Him changing lives. (Teacher: Give a personal testimony of how Jesus has changed you.)

Because of the overwhelming evidence proving Jesus is alive, you can confidently share all you know about Jesus with others. Some of you have received the Lord Jesus as your Savior, believing He died to take the punishment for your sin and came back to life just as He said He would. What could you do to show your school teacher and classmates that Jesus is alive in you? (Discuss.)

If you have never believed in the Lord Jesus as your Savior from sin you can do that today. Admit to Him you have broken His laws. Thank Him for dying on the cross for you and ask Him to be your Savior. He will forgive your sins and give you everlasting life. Jesus will change you and make you a new person. Then you, too, will know for sure Jesus is alive! Romans 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Give opportunity for silent prayer to receive Christ and encourage any who made a decision or have questions to meet with you.)

Lesson Review

Have each student prepare take-home witnessing tool, "Computing the Evidence," by cutting the four shapes and stapling upper left corner. Practice sharing with each other the evidence that Christ is alive. Have them leave their booklets in the classroom for use the following week.

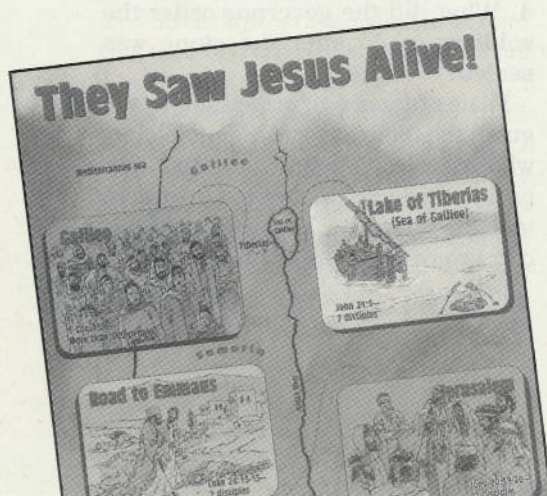
References

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- Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973, pp. 510, 529-530.
- McDowell, Josh. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972, pp. 204-207, 214-232, 241-270.
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- The Word in Life Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, pp. 194, 308, 312-313.

Material That Can Be Used for Primary-Age Children

- A. Teach the proof verse, adding simple motions.
- B. Use the four flashcards and pull appropriate information from lesson to discuss these four questions:
 1. How do we know Jesus really died?
 2. How was Jesus buried?
 3. What are some important things to know about Jesus' resurrection?
 4. Did anyone see Jesus after He rose from the dead?
- C. Adapt alternate Activity 1, "Jerusalem Court."

Eliminate the use of judge, recorder and bailiff. Invite teens or adults to portray the Bible characters listed. Before the guests come to class discuss with the children what questions they should ask. As each character appears before the class call on volunteers to ask whatever questions they choose. Supplement their questions to bring out any information not covered.
- D. "Jesus Is Alive!" poster.



Session Two

Review Proof Verse

ACTIVITY 1: Piling Up the Evidence

Divide the class into two teams—the “Daring Detectives” and the “Discerning Discoverers.” Give them the list of questions below and set a timer for ten minutes. Award 200 points for each question answered correctly, using the information from the verses.

Appearances of Jesus after Resurrection

When Jesus arose from the dead, He was not a ghost. He had a real body. These verses describe what Jesus looked like and what He was able to do in His resurrected body.

1. John 20:20—What did Jesus show His disciples?
2. Luke 24:39—How did Jesus prove He was not a ghost?
3. John 20:27—What was Thomas able to do when He saw Jesus?
4. Luke 24:31—Even though Jesus had a body of skin and bones, what was He able to do?
5. John 20:26—What could Jesus do when doors were shut and locked?
6. Matthew 28:9—Did Jesus’ friends recognize Him? How do you know?
7. John 21:6—What miracle did Jesus do for His disciples?
8. Luke 24:41-42—What did Jesus eat with His disciples?
9. John 21:9—What did Jesus do on the beach?
10. Acts 1:9—How did Jesus go back to Heaven?

ACTIVITY 1 (alternative) Jerusalem Court

Recreate a courtroom scene taking place in New Testament times. Appoint a judge, court recorder and bailiff. Various Bible characters who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ will be questioned. This activity can be done in various ways.

Assign some children to be the following witnesses to the resurrection and others to be lawyers. Both groups need to study the assigned passage and be ready to ask or answer questions according to their role. As a lawyer, the child reads the passage of Scripture and then formulates questions to ask the witness.

- Mary Magdalene—John 20:11-18
- Peter—John 21:3-11
- Traveler—Luke 24:13, 15, 30-31
- Thomas—John 20:24-29
- A disciple—Matthew 28:16-20
- Mary—Matthew 28:1-8

Guide children with “who, what, where, when, how, why” questions. Sample questions:

- Where were you when you saw Jesus?
- What was He doing?
- What did He say to you?
- Did anything else special happen at the time?
- How do you think this will change your life?

The witnesses could be adults dressed up like the Bible characters. The purpose and questions need to be given to each witness prior to his appearance “in court.”

ACTIVITY 2: Here Comes the Judge

(Prepare a week in advance.)

Subpoena three or more adults to appear “in court” to testify that Jesus is alive because of His life-changing effect on them. Give them the questions a week before. Allow children to ask questions when court is in session.

Sample questions:

- How did you first find out about Jesus?
- Did you believe right away that Jesus had risen from the dead?

- When did you become a new person in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)? (*Salvation testimony.*)
- What evidence can you give that proves Jesus is alive? (*The Bible says so in 1 Cor. 15:3-4; He gives strength and peace in hard times, etc.*)
- Why are you glad Jesus is alive?

ACTIVITY 3: “Im-proving” Your Case

Present the following real-life situations to pairs of children. They are to dramatize the situation using the knowledge they’ve gained from the lesson. They can draw information from their “Computing the Evidence” booklet.

SITUATION 1: Your best friend asks you to go to the beach on Easter Sunday and can’t understand why you would want to worship a “dead” Jesus in church instead.

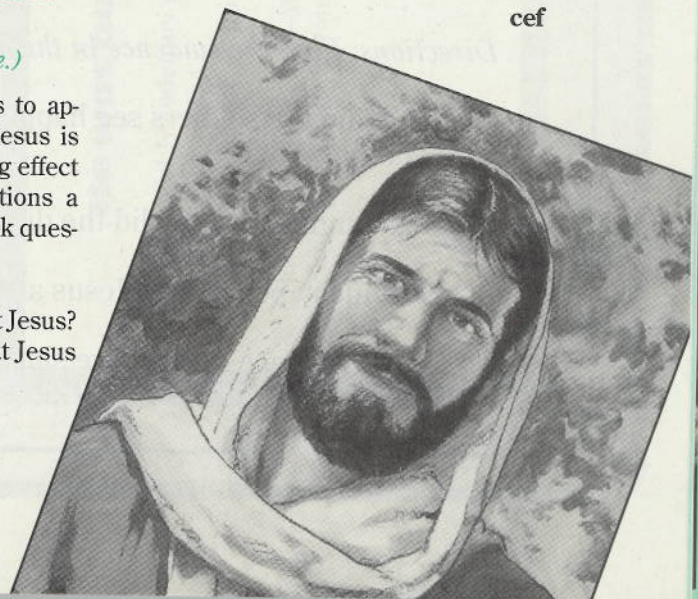
SITUATION 2: Your friend shows you a library book that says there’s proof Jesus simply fainted on the cross; He really didn’t die after all!

SITUATION 3: You’re watching a talk show on TV with a friend. A guest on the show says she “imagined” she saw Jesus’ ghost last week just like the disciples did 2,000 years ago.

SITUATION 4: Your father is reading the newspaper. The front page headline reads “Scientists Find Jesus’ Mummy in Jerusalem.”

SITUATION 5: Your teacher at school reads in the history book that Jesus was a great teacher just like Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius. Using the evidence you learned this week, what could you say to help the class understand Jesus is different?

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DEFENSE TEAM #1

Directions: Find the evidence in the following verses to prove Jesus really did die. Be ready to answer each question.

1. What murder weapons were used to kill Jesus? (John 19:1-3, 17-18, 34.)
2. Who made sure Jesus was dead? (John 19:32-33.)
3. Were there any eyewitnesses of Jesus' death? (Luke 23:35-36; John 19:25-26.)
4. What evidence other than the Bible do we have of Jesus' death? (Check "Christianity" in encyclopedia and "Jesus" in biographical section of dictionary.)

DEFENSE TEAM #2

Directions: Find the evidence in the following verses to prove Jesus was safely buried. Be ready to answer each question.

1. What happened to Jesus' body after He died? (John 19:38-42.)
2. What was put in front of the tomb's doorway? (Matthew 27:60.)
3. What did the soldiers do to the stone? (Matthew 27:65-66.)
4. What did Governor Pilate order the soldiers to do after the stone was sealed? (Matthew 27:65-66.)

DEFENSE TEAM #3

Directions: Find the evidence in the following verses to prove Jesus came back to life.

1. What did the soldiers see happen three days after Jesus was buried? (Matthew 28:2-4.)
2. What unusual scene did the disciples find inside the tomb? (John 20:5-7.)
3. How many people saw Jesus after He came back to life? (1 Corinthians 15:5-8.)
4. What evidence do we have since Jesus returned to Heaven that He is alive? (Rom. 6:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:2; Col. 3:1; Rev. 1:18.)

Computing the Evidence

**JESUS
IS
ALIVE!**

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

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Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . .

1. **The weapons used against Him**—Whip (John 19:1), Fists (John 19:3), Crown of thorns (John 19:2), Spikes (John 19:18), Spear (John 19:34).
2. **Pilate made sure He was dead**—John 19:32-33.
3. **Eyewitnesses of Jesus' death**—Enemies (Luke 23:35), Soldiers (Luke 23:36), Family (John 19:25), Friends (John 19:25-26).
4. **Other sources of facts about Jesus' life and death:** Dictionary—dates of birth and death, encyclopedia — facts of His life and death.

2

He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

1. **The seal was broken, the stone rolled away and the tomb empty**—Matthew 28:2-4.
2. **There was an unusual scene in the tomb**—John 20:5-7.
3. **Many people saw Jesus after He came back to life**—1 Corinthians 15:4-6.
4. **Give personal testimony that Jesus is alive**—2 Corinthians 5:17.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

4

He was buried . . .

1. **Joseph and Nicodemus prepared His body for burial**—John 19:38-42.
2. **A stone closed the opening to the tomb**—Matthew 27:60.
3. **The stone was sealed**—Matthew 27:66.
4. **Soldiers guarded the tomb**—Matthew 27:66.

3