

JESUS IS THE FIRSTFRUITS

"WHO IS JESUS?" FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - Week 36, April 15

JESUS IS THE FIRSTFRUITS

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the
firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20



After Jesus suffered and died, he was taken down from the cross by a man named Joseph of Arimathea. Normally the bodies of crucified criminals were left unburied and not given much care, but Joseph courageously asked for Jesus's body and placed him in Joseph's own new tomb, cut from rock. The women who had stayed with Jesus at the cross went with Joseph to lay him to rest, and then went home to prepare spices and perfumes for his body. The next day was Saturday, their Sabbath, and they rested.

they didn't want any more drama surrounding Jesus. Jesus had said he would rise, and they didn't want to take any chances with someone stealing his body and pretending he was alive. So they made the tomb extra secure by putting a seal on the stone and placing guards on duty in front of it.

On Sunday morning, the women took their spices and went to the tomb. To their surprise, the heavy stone had been rolled away and the body was missing! Suddenly glowing angels appeared. The women were scared and bowed down with their faces to the

But the angels said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (Luke 24:5–6).

The women hurried away, afraid, but full of joy, and ran to tell the disciples the amazing news! The disciples, however, did not believe them, thinking it was nonsense—impossible! But Peter and John had to know. They got up and ran to the tomb. Peter bent over the place where Jesus’s body had lain, saw the strips of linen, and wondered to himself. Then John also came in, and he saw and believed.

Jesus, their dear friend and Lord, was alive! Oh, there was so much they still didn’t understand, but he was alive! That evening the disciples were together, locked in a room because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly Jesus came and stood with them, and said, “Peace be with you!” (John 20:19). Then he showed them his pierced hands and side. It was really him!

How did Jesus get in the room if the door was locked? Did he walk through the walls like he had walked out of his grave clothes? Maybe, but the Bible doesn’t tell us. We do know that he had a physical body, because the disciples could see him and touch him, and later they ate fish with him. But clearly there was something different about him.

The difference is that Jesus no longer had a mortal body. He would never die again (Romans 6:9). But there’s more. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). It sounds important, but what does it mean?

In the Old Testament God commanded the people to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits. It was celebrated during the beginning of the harvest, and the people were commanded to bring the first part of their harvest to the Lord. Often it was barley, and the people would bring it to the priests and offer it as a wave offering before the Lord. In doing this they were saying, “God, you’ve provided this, the beginning of the harvest, and we trust that you will provide the rest of it, abundantly!”

Jesus is the Firstfruits because he was the first to rise. We can look to him and say, “Yes, Lord, we trust that we will rise too! We will have a body just like your resurrected body!”

Many Bible scholars believe that first Easter Sunday was also the Feast of Firstfruits. As the people of God were bringing their firstfruits to the temple that day, Jesus the Firstfruits was rising, giving us hope and confidence in our own resurrection. Jesus has risen, and if you believe in him, so will you!



REFLECT

1. Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important? See 1 Corinthians 15:17.
2. What hope does the resurrection give you?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–23 and try to explain the concept of firstfruits in your own words. See Leviticus 23:9–20 if you would like to read more about the Feast of Firstfruits.
4. What do you think our resurrected bodies will be like?
See Philippians 3:20–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:49.

BIBLE REFERENCE LUKE 23:50–24:12; JOHN 20:3–9, 19–20

KEY VERSE 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20