

LESSON 3:

RESURRECTION



AIM:

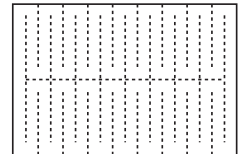
To understand the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith and the hope this brings of a personal resurrection and eternal life for Christians.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Bibles
- Actual Reality CD
- Computer
- paper and pens
- scissors
- trick sweets

ACTIVITY:

Give group members a sheet of A4 paper (and scissors if available) and tell them that they have to climb through the paper! They may cut or tear the sheet in any way they wish but they have to create an unbroken 'hole' big enough to climb through. Unless they know how to do it they will find it virtually impossible. The solution is on the right – cut or tear along the dotted lines to form a large closed loop.



INFORMATION:

At first the challenge above seems physically impossible. However, once you have seen someone do it, the mystery disappears – a way through the paper is possible. At the time of Jesus most Jews did not understand or really believe in the resurrection of the body – death seemed an impenetrable barrier. They weren't even aware that the Messiah, when he came, might rise from the dead were he to be killed. Jesus put an end to the mystery – a way through the 'death barrier' was possible.

BIBLE:

Read through the account of the raising of Lazarus in John 11:1 – 53. Notice how many times people either misunderstood what Jesus said or did, didn't really trust him or felt threatened by him (e.g. verses 8, 12, 16, 24, 39, 46, 48 and 53). Jesus often created tension, generated controversy and provoked reactions. He did this for a purpose – to cause people to look beyond their limited human experience and start engaging with the deeper issues his life and ministry were opening up. In this story the issues were, quite literally, life and death.

DISCUSS:

From the passage try to deduce answers to the following four questions:
Who was Jesus? (See verses 4, 22, 25, 27, 45)
Where did his power come from? (See verses 4, 22, 40 – 42)
What quality was he looking for in people? (See verses 15, 25, 27, 40, 42, 45, 48)
What was he promising in return? (See verses 25 – 26 and also John 3:16 and John 4:14)

INFORMATION:

Lazarus would have died at a later time – his physical resurrection was not to be permanent. However, within a short space of time after this incident, Jesus himself had reportedly risen from the dead too but his resurrection was different and permanent – he seemed able to come and go at will without the constraints of our physical world and his followers didn't always recognise him immediately (although when they did they were convinced it was Jesus) which suggests in some way his appearance was changed. But what proof is there that Jesus actually did rise from the dead – and how can we deal with the theories that say it didn't happen?

CD:

Follow these screen clicks to get to the 'Raised from the Dead' screen:



After the introductory movie click on the top three choices on the cinema screen in turn. Be prepared to amplify the information given. (Choice number 4 is used later on.)

INFORMATION:

For more 'proofs' and 'theories' see the suggested books to read and other websites to visit via the links on the *ActualReality* website at www.actualreality.org.uk/site/extra/raised/raised.html (click on 'more raised stuff' when this page has loaded). It is easy to print some of the pages from the websites and some of the material is really superb – provide some for the group to see and read through. Books such as *'Introducing the New Testament'* by John Drane (Lion Publishing, 1999) also contain authoritative evidence for the truth of the resurrection.

INFORMATION:

Make sure the group understands that there really is a very strong case for accepting the New Testament accounts of the resurrection of Christ as being entirely credible – there is sufficient evidence to be accepted as 'proof' in many courts of law.

ACTIVITY:

This activity may seem a bit cruel but it will make the point of this section unforgettable! As innocently as possible hand round some 'trick' sweets (with onion, garlic or other unpleasant tasting centres) that can be bought at joke or novelty goods shops. (Alternatively you could 'doctor' some sweets and hand them round!) At the same time start a discussion on what the group thinks is the most important belief of the Christian faith. Hopefully it won't be long before the group realises that the sweets, which looked so good on the outside, have a very disagreeable centre! Bring out the point that the resurrection of Jesus is the central belief of the Christian faith. If the resurrection didn't happen then Christianity, like the sweets, is rotten at the centre, based on a lie. (You may like to win back your respect now by handing round some proper sweets...!)

BIBLE:

The apostle Paul backs up the Gospel writers regarding the resurrection of Jesus, and adds further teaching on the matter, probably in answer to questions from Christians. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3 – 8, 12 – 20, 35 – 49.

DISCUSS:

In what way should knowledge about the resurrection promised to all Christians affect the way they live their lives on Earth?

CD:

Now click on choice 4 (He is Risen) on the cinema screen for a short movie.

ACTIVITY:

Play the song 'Who Wants to Live Forever' by Queen (from their Greatest Hits album). Afterwards play some quiet reflective music and read 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18 as a contrast to the despair in the words of the previous song.