

# Jesus

## “Persecuted and Mistreated ...”

- ❑ The “Hall of Faith” includes those who “through faith” experienced deliverance and victory (*Hebrews 11:32-35a*). But others in the “Hall of Faith” were tortured, mocked, whipped, chained, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, and killed by the sword (*11:35b-37a*).
  - 📖 “They went around clothed in skins of sheep or goats – poor, persecuted, and mistreated” (*11:37b, TEV*).
  - 📖 “These<sup>1</sup> were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised” (*11:39, NIV*).<sup>2</sup>

## Jesus - Persecuted and Mistreated

- ❑ “What had been promised” is ultimately found in Jesus Christ. He is the Lord, and the Savior of this fallen world. However, Jesus was also persecuted and mistreated. He was tortured, mocked, whipped, imprisoned, and killed on a cross. Why?
  - 📖 *Jesus said*, “the Son of Man (Jesus) will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him, and kill him” (*Mark 10:33b-34a, NIV*).
  - 📖 *Jesus said*, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom<sup>3</sup> for many” (*Mark 10:45, NIV*).
  - 📖 “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (*1 Peter 3:18, NIV*).

## End of Story?

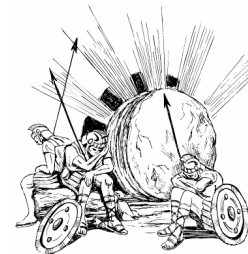
- 📖 “Jesus ... said, ‘It is finished!’ Then he bowed his head and died” (*John 19:30, TEV*).

1. If the Bible story had ended here, what message would it communicate? How would the story benefit our lives?



## Jesus - Raised from the Dead

- ❑ “What had been promised” required a resurrection (*Hebrews 11:35*), suitable for life in the “new heaven and new earth” (*Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1*) where there is “no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (*Revelation 21:4*).
- ❑ Death is the “last enemy” (*1 Corinthians 15:26*), which is defeated by resurrection, beginning with Christ’s resurrection, and completed with the resurrection of all believers in the future.
  - 📖 “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” (*1 Corinthians 15:17, NIV*) “But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise.” (*1 Corinthians 15:20, NIV*)



<sup>1</sup> “These” refers to all of the people mentioned in the “Hall of Faith” (*Hebrews 11:4-38*)

<sup>2</sup> They had realized *some* of God’s promises (*Hebrews 11:33*), but they had not received *the* Promise, which is centered in Jesus Christ. Now Christ has come! Now they, together with us, can realize *the* Promise (*11:40*).

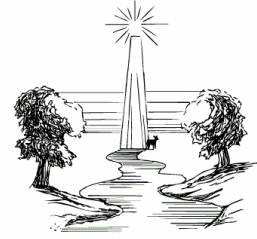
<sup>3</sup> A “ransom” is a price paid for release from captivity and/or punishment. Every one of us needs to be released (rescued, set free, forgiven, saved) because “everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (*John 8:34*), and “*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (*Romans 3:23*). Because of sin, everyone is condemned already (*John 3:17-18*).

## End of Story?

❑ “What had been promised” is ultimately found in Christ. Christ has come! He died for our sins and was raised from the dead! However, the full realization of the Promise is still future. Whether we, as Christians, are experiencing victory or trouble, the finish line is still ahead.

2. Read Hebrews 12:1-3.<sup>4</sup> How can we, as Christians, be encouraged in the faith, so that we “will not grow weary and lose heart?”

3. How does the resurrection offer hope? How can we experience peace, hope and joy, even in the midst of trouble and suffering?



📖 “In his great mercy [God] has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade – kept in heaven for you” (*1 Peter 3:b-4, NIV*). “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials” (*1:6*).

📖 “...because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence” (*2 Corinthians 4:14, NIV*). “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.<sup>5</sup> For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (*4:18*).

## “Do You Believe?”

❑ Many do not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. Even one of Jesus’ disciples would not believe unless he saw the physical evidence (*John 20:25*). When Jesus appeared to him, Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God!” (*20:28*)

📖 “Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’” (*John 20:29, NIV*).<sup>6</sup>

📖 *Jesus says to us today*, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (*John 11:25, NIV*)

## Reflection/Application

- Do you believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? What is the basis for your belief or disbelief? If you do not believe, have you thoroughly investigated the evidence with a humble and seeking attitude? (See Jay for various resources on this subject.)
- As a Christian, do you sometimes get weary and lose heart? Are there any beliefs, values, sinful attitudes and behaviors that you need to “throw off” so you can run the race marked out before you? Do you need to change your focus? Consider Hebrews 11:26; 12:1-3; Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 8:18; and 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

<sup>4</sup> The “great cloud of witnesses” refers to the examples of faith (the “Hall of Faith”) which bear testimony to the power of faith and to God’s faithfulness to His promise.

<sup>5</sup> “what is seen” includes the real but temporal conditions and circumstances of this present life; “what is unseen” includes the real, eternal, and imperishable that is fully realized only after the believer’s future resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> This statement has direct application to us today. Since we do not have the “physical evidence,” our belief must be based on other things, including the eyewitness testimony of others given in the Bible. As John wrote, “these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (*John 20:31, NIV*).