

Introduction

Losing Hope

Jesus's disciples left their homes, careers, and families to follow Him. They lived on the road. They entered towns, not knowing where they would sleep. Everywhere Jesus was persecuted, they shared in His suffering. *Why did they sacrifice so much to follow Jesus?* They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior God had sent to save them.

Then Jesus was arrested, rushed through a trial, and crucified. *How did His disciples respond?* They stayed hidden. While Jesus was with them, they preached in the temple and spoke to crowds throughout Judea and Galilee. After His death, they mostly stayed hidden in locked rooms. Who would blame them? After all, Jesus was not the first self-proclaimed Messiah who had been crucified. Every time the Romans crucified so-called Messiah, they crucified his followers as well.

They also lost hope. One of Jesus's disciples told about the events around Jesus's death in [Luke 24:19-20](#) "... Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him." *How did Jesus's death affect their faith?* [Luke 24:21](#) "21 But we had **hoped** that he was the one to **redeem** Israel..." Their Savior was gone, they were hiding in fear, and they were losing hope.

What changed?

Many of those same disciples would later be killed for their faith in Jesus. They were not hiding behind locked doors. They were traveling around the Roman Empire, proclaiming that Jesus was God and the Savior of the whole world. They preached in the Temple and in public gatherings. They were arrested and beaten. Many of them were executed because they refused to renounce their faith in Jesus.

How did the disciples move from fear and hopelessness to boldly proclaiming Jesus even under the threat of death? [Acts 2](#) describes two events that changed the disciples and gave them confidence in Christ, even though He had been killed. First, they received the Holy Spirit. God now dwelt within them and empowered them to speak God's word. Second, they finally understood that Jesus's death was necessary and that He did not remain dead. He resurrected and then ascended to God's throne.

Main Idea

[Acts 2](#) describes events that happen less than two months after Jesus's death. Jerusalem is overflowing with visitors who have come to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Rather than

remaining hidden, the disciples began to boldly speak in public about Jesus. Most of [Acts 2](#) records Peter's speech to this crowd.

[Acts 2:22-36](#) explains that **God's eternal plan of redemption was Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension.** Jesus's death was not unexpected; it was not a mistake; it was not a failure. His death is not a reason to lose faith and lose hope. Jesus is no longer dead. He has resurrected and ascended to God's throne. His death, resurrection, and ascension was God's eternal plan of redeeming His people. **Because Jesus is alive, we have confidence in our faith and our hope of eternal life.**

Jesus's Death (22-23)

First, this passage explains that **God planned Jesus's crucifixion.** Jesus's life supported His claims that He was God and that He was the Christ. Although to many people His death seemed like evidence of His failure, His death was God's plan for our redemption.

Jesus's life

How did God confirm Jesus's claims during His life? [Acts 2:22](#) "22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—"

Jesus's miracles confirmed He was from God. Jesus's opponents accused Him of blasphemy against God and of working in the power of Satan. However, Jesus's miracles were a witness from God that He was sent by God ([John 5:36](#)).

Verse 22 says they "know" of Jesus's miracles. Even Jesus's opponents did not deny His miracles. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, they admitted that His miracles were undeniable ([John 11:47](#)). They sought to kill him nonetheless ([John 11:53](#)). **Following Jesus is ultimately a matter of faith, not reason.** This does not mean that faith is without reason; Jesus's miracles were a reason for faith in Him. However, reason alone does not bring us into a relationship with God. **Unbeliever,** The only way for you to know God is through faith in Jesus.

Jesus's death

Why did Jesus die? [Acts 2:23](#) "23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."

Jesus was crucified by men who rejected Him. In [Acts 5](#), A Pharisee on the Jewish Council named Gamaliel warned the rest of the council that opposing Jesus and His followers might be opposing God ([Acts 5:38-39](#)). This is exactly what they did when they crucified Jesus; they opposed God.

Notice that Jesus's death was "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" ([Acts 2:23](#)). When He was crucified, Jesus quoted [Psalm 22:1](#) "1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? ..." (cf. [Matt 27:46](#); [Mk 15:34](#)). He pointed people to this Psalm to show that even his crucifixion was God's plan. [Psalm 22:16-18](#) "16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have **pierced my hands and feet**— 17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; 18 they **divide my garments** among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (cf. [John 19:24](#); [Matt 27:36](#); [Lk 23:24](#)). Scripture had prophesied Jesus's death centuries earlier.

Response

Jesus died according to God's plan. *Why was Jesus's death God's plan?* If you do not yet have faith in Jesus, you are eternally separated from God because of your sin. The outcome of sin is eternal death. You cannot overcome your sin anymore than I can. We are sinners; how could we overcome the guilt of sin?

Jesus's death is God's plan for the forgiveness of sins. [Hebrews 9:22](#) "... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Jesus's death was the only means of our forgiveness. [Ephesians 1:7](#) "7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace," *Whom does God forgive?* [Ephesians 2:8](#) "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God," God forgives those who have faith in Jesus, who love Him and devote themselves to Him.

If you do not yet know God, I encourage you today to consider submitting your life to Him through faith in Jesus.

Jesus's resurrection

Second, this passage explains that **Jesus resurrected according to God's plan.** This passage points back to a prophecy in [Psalm 16:8-11](#) that foretells Jesus's resurrection, showing that Scripture had long prophesied Jesus's death **and** resurrection.

Jesus's victory over death

How could Jesus resurrect from the dead? [Acts 2:24](#) "24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."

Death could not hold Jesus. When Jesus prophesied His death and resurrection, He made the point that He died by His own will and resurrected by His own power. [John 10:17-18](#) "... I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again..." Jesus has the power to give life; death could not hold Him.

The consequence of sin is eternal death ([Rom 6:23](#)). By His death and resurrection, Jesus overcame the power of death (cf. [1 Cor 15:26, 56-57](#); [Heb 2:14-15](#)) so that we could have eternal life through faith in Him.

David's prophecy

The issue of resurrection was divisive in first-century Judaism. The two leading religious groups disagreed. The Pharisees believed in resurrection, but the Sadducees did not ([Acts 23:8](#)).

When did God prophesy Jesus's resurrection? Peter quotes [Psalm 16:8-11](#) in [Acts 2:25-28](#) “25 For David says concerning him, “ ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’”

[Psalm 16](#) was written by David, to whom God promised his descendant would be the eternal Messiah. David writes this Psalm by inspiration of the Holy Spirit regarding the basis of his hope of resurrection after death.

How does this Psalm relate to Jesus? [Acts 2:29](#) “29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.” [Acts 2](#) makes the point that [Psalm 16](#) is not a description of David's resurrection. *What is the evidence that David is speaking of someone else?* David **did** experience decay (corruption) and remained in the grave. Hades here simply refers to the grave (death). David's prophecy could not refer to him.

This Psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah. [Acts 2:30-31](#) “30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.” [Psalm 16:8-11](#) is a prophecy about Jesus's resurrection.

Witnesses of Jesus's resurrection

Why can we have confidence in Jesus's resurrection? [Acts 2:32](#) “32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.” Jesus's resurrection is not a myth without evidence.

Jesus's resurrection was confirmed by eyewitnesses.

[1 Corinthians 15:5-8](#) “... he appeared to **Cephas**, then to the **twelve**. 6 Then he appeared to more than **five hundred** brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to **James**, then to all the **apostles**. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to **me**.” Not only did these people testify that they had seen Jesus after His resurrection, they willingly died for that testimony. Peter (in [Acts 2](#)) and

Paul (in [1 Cor 15](#)) both say that there are eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection with whom you can speak face-to-face.

Response

Jesus resurrected according to God's plan. *Why is Jesus's resurrection God's plan?* Through Jesus's resurrection, we have eternal life. This is summarized well in [Romans 6:5-9](#) "5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him."

Through faith in Jesus, we are united with Him ([Rom 6:5](#)). By His death we are set free from sin ([Rom 6:7](#)). Notice how this passage connects Jesus's resurrection and our eternal life. [Romans 6:5](#) "... we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." **We will resurrect after death.** [Romans 6:9](#) "9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him." **The life we have in Christ is eternal.**

Church, this is why we celebrate Jesus's resurrection. Jesus's resurrection exalts Him and makes us alive. We have confidence about our resurrection after death because we serve a Lord who has overcome death. We may look at the early disciples as extreme examples of Christian faith. They are **ordinary** examples of Christian faith. We have the same Holy Spirit and worship the same resurrected Lord. We should have the same boldness in proclaiming Jesus.

Jesus's exaltation

Third, this passage explains that **Jesus was exalted according to God's plan.** Jesus did not remain on earth after His resurrection. After 40 days on earth, He ascended back to God's throne, where He rules and intercedes.

David's prophecy

What does Scripture prophecy about Jesus's exaltation? [Acts 2:33-35](#) "33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool." "'

In [Psalm 110:1](#), Scripture prophesies about the exaltation of the Messiah. He will sit at the right hand of God. Jesus rules over God's kingdom and all of creation.

Lord and Christ

What does Jesus's exaltation confirm about Him? [Acts 2:36](#) “36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.””

First, **Jesus is Lord**. This is more than a title of respect; this is a title of deity. [Philippians 2:9–11](#) “9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (cf., [Isa 45:23](#)). Jesus is Lord over all of creation because He is God.

Second, **Jesus is the Christ**. The title Christ (Messiah) includes ruling over God's Kingdom (cf. [Dan 7:13-14](#)), interceding for God's people ([Heb 7:24](#); [9:24](#); [Rom 8:34](#)), and saving those who have faith in Him. [John 20:31](#) “31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” Jesus's exaltation shows that He is the eternal Lord and the one whom saves us from our sin.

Response

Jesus was exalted according to God's plan. *Church, how does Jesus's exaltation shape our life?* First, because Jesus intercedes before God on our behalf, we can have confidence that God listens when we pray. [Hebrews 4:16](#) “16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Because Jesus is on God's throne, we can have an intimate, eternal relationship with God.

Second, Jesus's exaltation is the basis of the Great Commission. [Matthew 28:18–20](#) “18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”” Because Jesus has authority over everything, I **should** share the gospel and make disciples in my home, in my community, and around the world. Also, because Jesus has authority over everything, I **can** share the gospel and make disciples in my home, in my community, and around the world. My confidence in leading people to God is not based on my ability, but on the authority of the exalted Christ.

Conclusion

John Huss

John Huss was a theologian who lived in Bohemia (Modern-day Czech Republic) at the turn of the 15th century. Huss was influenced by the writings of John Wycliffe, whom the Catholic

church had previously declared a heretic, exhumed his body, burned his body, and threw his ashes into a river.

Like Wycliffe, John Huss believed in the authority of Scripture over church tradition. He also argued that biblical teaching should be available to all people, choosing to teach in Czech, rather than Latin. Huss was excommunicated from the Catholic Church and declared a heretic. He was arrested and burned at the stake on July 6, 1415. As they lit the flames, he said, "Lord Jesus Christ, I endure this cruel death for Your sake..." John Huss prayed and sang hymns as he was burned.

Response

Church, the resurrection of Jesus is more than a theological truth. **Jesus fulfilled God's eternal plan of redemption by His death, resurrection, and exaltation.** His death, resurrection, and ascension shapes how we view life and death. Because He died, we have peace with God through the forgiveness of our sins. Because He resurrected, we have confidence of eternal life beyond death. Because He is exalted to the throne of God, we have assurance of God's presence as we seek Him and make disciples.

Closing Scripture: [Romans 8:35-39](#) "35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."