

3. Jesus—On the Cross!

-  Read about it!
- Matthew 27:33-50

 Comment

This description of how Jesus met death is only one of four in the Bible. You can find the others in the gospels of Mark (15:22-29), Luke (23:32-49), and John (19:17-30).

4. Jesus—A Living Priest in Heaven!

-  Read
- Hebrews 2:14-18

Background

The Letter to the Hebrews compares the rituals of the temple in Jerusalem with a heavenly sanctuary in which Jesus is the High Priest.

Reflect


How does the experience of Jesus in facing death make Him able to help and understand ordinary human beings like you and me? What does it mean that Jesus by dying broke the power of death?

5. Jesus—Alive for Eternity!

-  Read
- Revelation 1:17-18

Background

The Book of Revelation opens with a vision of the resurrected Jesus presenting Himself to the apostle John. He tells that He is in charge of past and future history and moves on to share prophecies and promises for times to come.

Reflect


What difference does it make to your perception of the future that God promises resurrection from death?
What difference does it make to you that Jesus has already conquered death?

Summary

The New Testament authors and the early Christian Church saw the resurrection of Jesus as the key to their faith. It was the proof that Jesus was God, the foundation for their hope of future resurrection, their guarantee that the prophecies of Jesus would come true. The resurrection was God's guarantee that the natural order of events can be broken, and that a completely new world will arise. The resurrection gave them a hope that was able to withstand all life's trials.

In the present Western culture the concept of the end of the world often creates jokes or connotations of fanaticism and strange religious cults. There are some reasons for this reaction. But the truth is that several of the major world religions, such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, all teach that the history of mankind moves towards a dramatic end, and that the present human society will be replaced by a new and perfect world. What is it that makes the Christian understanding of the end of the world unique?

1. Personal Longing

-  Read
- John 14:1-3
- 1 John 3:2

Background

The disciples of Jesus did not simply teach that the world would come to end. They looked forward to the personal appearance of Jesus Christ. They had known Him and loved Him. They believed that He had risen from the grave, and they longed to see Him again and be reunited with Him. Their belief was based on a strong personal relationship with the best friend they had ever known.

Reflect


Have you ever been consumed by longing for a friend or a loved one? Imagine that your friend is one with God and has been given all power in heaven and on earth. What difference will that make to your hope and expectations?

2. A Historical Event

-  Read
- Matthew 24:30

 Comment

The early Christian Church expected the return of Jesus as a future historical event. It was perceived as real and tangible, not just as an individual, emotional or mystical spiritualistic experience.