

**Background Scriptures: Matthew 27:24–28:10**

**Print Passages: Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10**



# L8 Ultimate Freedom

## REFLECT



It was getting close to graduation, and Chevon and Caleb's relationship had not improved. He missed her a lot. Chevon missed Caleb, too. They both feared that the hopes and dreams they had planned for the future would not happen, which was a scary and devastating feeling for both of them. One of their plans was to attend Wake Forest University together because it is one of the top universities with the best debate team. Caleb applied and was accepted. Chevon decided not to apply to Wake Forest and, instead, applied and was accepted to Jackson State University.



Fast forward past high school graduation, and the two were now attending separate universities. They were both making new friends. They're both experiencing a new feeling of independence. Caleb and Chevon were free to do whatever they please without being committed to another person or thing. They both enjoyed their newfound freedom.

Two years of college had passed, and Caleb and Chevon were now juniors. They had shared casual conversations but had also been dating other people.

Caleb's debating history and skills were so remarkable that he was placed as the first affirmative speaker on the school's debate team. He was thrilled to have this honor. He was to participate in a rival debate in an hour and was very nervous; the first time, Caleb had been so anxious. Usually, whenever he was feeling this nervous about anything, he could count on Chevon to calm his nerves. He started to doubt himself, double-check himself, and sweat! His teammates were even beginning to be concerned. He tried calling Chevon, but she did not answer. He did not want to go into this debate and not be in control. He just felt that something was missing. So, Caleb prayed to God for help. He recalled a Scripture that his dad always quoted: "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy (Psalm 94:19)." Caleb recited this repeatedly. Then he got up to prepare to take the debate stage and froze again.



**Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Matthew 28:9)**



## INSPECT

### Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10

**39** Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads **40** and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

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**45** From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. **46** About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). **47** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” **48** Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. **49** The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” **50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split **52** and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53** They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. **54** When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

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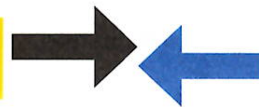
**1** After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. **2** There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4** The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. **5** The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6** He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” **8** So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

## INTERSECT

**I**T IS EASTER (RESURRECTION) SUNDAY AGAIN. THE TRUE STORY OF JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION WILL NEVER GROW OLD. We know that had He not done this marvelous thing for us, we would be lost. Many believed that He was the Son of the living God—but others doubted it. They said that He was just another prophet who could perform miracles. Some people became jealous of Jesus because many crowds followed and listened to Him. The nonbelievers felt that Jesus was not teaching the laws of Moses, so they denied Him as the Savior and brought Him before kings to be killed.

They beat Him and flogged Him. They made bets for who would get His clothing by “casting lots.” They mocked Him by saying things like, “If you are truly the Son of God, come down from the cross and save your life!” They gave Him vinegar instead of water to drink. And when the time came, Jesus cried to God, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” He died for us, and the thick curtain in the Temple separating the Holy of Holies from the other part of the Temple was torn in two, symbolically showing that what separated us from the Father was now removed. Now, we have direct access to God. Now, our slate is wiped clean of sin because Jesus took on our sins on the Cross, died, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven to sit on the right-hand side of the throne. That is something to shout about!

## Inside Out



Respond to the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Explain “Christ’s victory over death.” What does this mean to you?
2. Easter is not about Easter eggs, Easter baskets, and dressing up. What is Easter to you?
3. What does it say to you that the men mocked Jesus on the cross but thought that His clothes were worth “gambling” for?
4. Jesus first appeared to women after His resurrection. At that time, women were considered “less than.” Why do you think Jesus chose women to whom to first appear for this significant event?



## THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Let's apply what happens in this lesson passage to the "cause and effect" principle. This principle states that every action (cause) has a corresponding effect that usually occurs immediately. Let's apply this to Jesus' death on the Cross. God sent Jesus here to free us from our sins and eternal death. He "had" to die on the cross (that's the cause). Immediately after He died, the thick curtain in the Temple that symbolically separated us from God was torn top to bottom so that we could always have direct access to God, anywhere and anytime (that's the effect). That's good news! Let's not take it for granted.



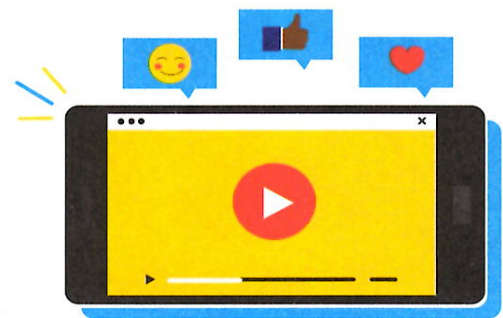
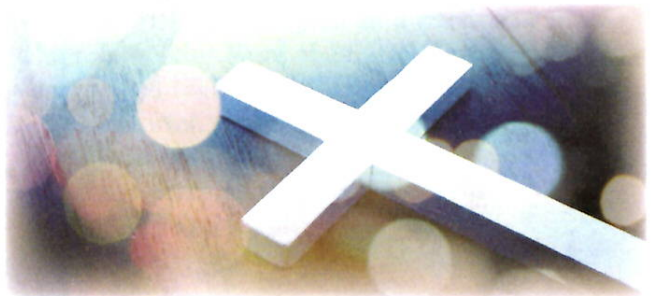
## CONNECT

Why do you think it was important for Jesus to return to the earth after His death and show Himself to people? Like us, many people would not have believed that He was the Savior. We all know the phrase "Seeing is believing"; Jesus knew it, too. Even though He asks us to walk by faith, not sight, this was significant enough for Him to "show up." Thomas, one of His disciples, doubted. Jesus' showing up after death and fellowshiping with His disciples solidified that He was indeed the Messiah and thus empowered His disciples to feel confident enough to follow Jesus' Great Commission, which is found in Matthew 28:16-20. Please read it.



## STEPPING OUT!

Note that the first people that Jesus revealed Himself to were women. These were women who were followers of Jesus when He was ministering. Some were there weeping at the foot of the cross where He hung. He trusted them to recognize Him and report to His disciples with His message. Can you think of three women in your life whom Jesus might have chosen to trust? Write down their names and say why.



## MEDIA MISSION

Listen to "Freedom," sung by Midtown Worship (featuring Semaj Miller). This song describes ultimate freedom. Listen to the words and experience the freedom Jesus brought us because He loves us. Praise Him for it. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPMa1d6vMT4>)



**“I LEARNED THAT COURAGE  
WAS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR,  
BUT THE TRIUMPH OVER IT.”**

**–Nelson Mandela**

