

DISCUSSION GUIDE

JOSEPH FIENNES
RISEN



RISEN

CREW OVERVIEW

Kevin Reynolds (Director; Writer: screenplay)

Paul Aiello (Writer: screenplay, story)

CAST OVERVIEW

Joseph Fiennes (Clavius)

Tom Felton (Lucius)

Peter Firth (Pilate)

Cliff Curtis (Yeshua)

Maria Botto (Mary Magdalene)

Luis Callejo (Joses)

Antonio Gil (Joseph of Arimathea)

Richard Atwill (Polybius)

Stewart Scudamore (Peter)

Andy Gathergood (Quintus)

Stephen Hagan (Bartholomew)

Stephen Greif (Caiaphas)

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USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Intended for use after viewing the film, this study guide provides catalysts for biblically based discussion of various themes found in *Risen*. The guide features three themes from the movie and is structured in such a way that groups can choose to discuss the entire guide at once or can focus on one or two themes at a time. The guide is also an excellent resource for individual or personal study and reflection.



FILM OVERVIEW/NOTE TO GROUP

Set against the backdrop of Judaea during the reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius Caesar and under the local authority of Pontius Pilate (played by Peter Firth), *Risen* follows the journey of Clavius (Joseph Fiennes), a Roman military tribune who is charged with the task of locating the missing body of Yeshua (Cliff Curtis) in the days and weeks following the crucifixion. What begins as an official investigation on behalf of the Roman Empire becomes one skeptical man's personal quest for the truth, and for explanations to his astounding experiences along the way.

The film opens to the barren landscape of the Judean Desert in A.D. 33. A single figure winds his way closer and closer – it is a dusty Clavius, who eventually stumbles upon an inn and seeks shelter. When the inn keeper asks, "Have you come far?" the film shifts to a flashback several weeks prior when Clavius' life-changing journey first began. The hardened, capable tribune is doing his job well – keeping "order in a city that is steeped in unrest" by battling Jewish Zealots and suppressing their attempts at uprisings and rebellion against the Roman government.

No sooner does Clavius return from the gruesome battlefield than Pilate summons him with urgency. During Passover, the Sanhedrin sent an angry mob that demanded the death of a Nazarene who was "making waves." Pilate crucified the man and defends himself by saying that the region must be in order during the emperor's pending visit. Pilate then commands Clavius to take control of the situation as well as offer the Nazarene a small mercy by breaking his legs in order to speed up death by asphyxiation. Before Clavius leaves, Pilate gives him a new aide – young, ambitious Lucius (Tom Felton).

The earth trembles and the skies grow dark. Three men hang on crosses. The people in the crowd scream, wail, jeer. The centurion in charge of the turbulent scene is shaken; with his final breath, the Nazarene said, "It is finished." Clavius orders the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified men, but halts the command for the Nazarene, opting instead to have him speared in the side. After all of the hanged men are confirmed dead, Joseph of Arimathea (Antonio Gil) rushes to Clavius with an official claim on the Nazarene's body. Clavius acquiesces and concludes a day steeped in bloodshed and death at the baths, wearily discussing with Pilate his desire for peace.

THEME ONE: POWER

Guiding Scripture: Daniel 2:20–21 (NIV): “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.”

Due to pressure from Caiaphas (Stephen Greif) and the other members of the Sanhedrin, Pilate orders Clavius to seal the tomb of the Nazarene, who was called Yeshua. To ensure that Yeshua’s fervent followers don’t steal the body, Clavius places two guards – Polybius (Richard Atwill) and Quintus (Andy Gathergood) – at the entrance. By the morning of the third day, chaos erupts when the tomb is found empty (ropes burst, not cut; the impossibly heavy stone moved away) and Yeshua’s body is missing. Pilate, with renewed pressure from the Sanhedrin, charges Clavius with the task of finding the missing corpse to dispel rumors of a resurrected Messiah.

Clavius meets with false reports and futile interrogations until Joses (Luis Callejo) points to Mary Magdalene (Maria Botto) and Bartholomew (Stephen Hagan), one of Yeshua’s disciples. Clavius then tracks down a drunken Polybius and hears his firsthand account of the events at the tomb on the morning in question. Confounded by Polybius’ story, Clavius is heartened when Lucius reports news of the disciples’ location. Storming the city, Clavius chases Mary Magdalene to an upper room and throws open the door to find the disciples and – though irreconcilable with what he has seen and knows to be true – a risen Yeshua.

Clavius sends Lucius away and returns to the room, but Yeshua soon vanishes. The disciples, along with Clavius, depart for Galilee. During the trek, Clavius thwarts a determined Lucius and slowly befriends an abrasive Peter (Stewart Scudamore). In Galilee, the hungry disciples attempt to fish and recognize Yeshua on the shore when their nets are overflowing. Reunited for a short time, Yeshua pours into his disciples, works miracles and meets Clavius’ torment and doubt with compassion. When Yeshua ascends, Clavius parts ways with the disciples and eventually wanders into the Judean Desert. After the inn keeper hears the whole story, he asks, “Tribune, do you truly believe all this?” Clavius replies, “I believe I can never be the same.”



SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 33:10 (NLT): The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes.
- Proverbs 19:21 (NLT): You can make many plans, but the LORD’s purpose will prevail.
- Isaiah 26:4 (NLT): Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD God is the eternal Rock.
- Jeremiah 10:12 (NLT): But the LORD made the earth by his power, and he preserves it by his wisdom. With his own understanding he stretched out the heavens.
- Daniel 2:20–21 (NIV): “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.”
- Matthew 19:26 (NLT): Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”
- John 3:16–17 (NIV): For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
- Romans 1:20 (NIV): For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.
- Romans 5:18–19 (NLT): Yes, Adam’s one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ’s one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.
- Romans 13:1 (NIV): Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.
- 1 Corinthians 4:20 (NIV): For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV): But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.
- Ephesians 3:20 (NIV): Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Opening Battle (00:03:30–00:06:37, Chapter 1)
- Claims to Be the Messiah (00:07:10–00:09:48, Chapter 2)
- It Is Finished (00:09:49–00:16:15, Chapter 2)
- The Body Is Gone (00:25:45–00:27:54, Chapter 6)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you begin this theme discussion, take some time to think about the definition of power and to consider Daniel 2:20–21, the Guiding Scripture for this theme: “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning” (NIV). What does Daniel say about power in these verses? Do his words influence your thoughts on power?

In *Risen*, power, order and control are vital to the image and success of the Roman Empire in Jerusalem and throughout Judaea, especially in light of Tiberius Caesar’s pending visit. Yet, even with the “help” of the Sanhedrin (a strained relationship at best), the Romans face sustained opposition to their authority. Clavius, the lens through which we view the film, retains and exercises a modicum of power, but he is subject to the whims of his petulant prefect, Pilate.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Opening Battle (00:03:30–00:06:37, Chapter 1)

Claims to Be the Messiah (00:07:10–00:09:48, Chapter 2)

- What do you learn about the historical context of the film in the *Opening Battle* scene? How does the scene demonstrate the struggle for power in Judaea during that time?
- How does the *Claims to Be the Messiah* scene establish the character of Pilate and further establish Clavius? How would you describe these men and their personalities?

- What does Pilate tell Clavius about the Nazarene that he crucified? Why is the Nazarene a threat to Pilate? How does Clavius respond/react to Pilate as the prefect tells his story?
- How does the theme of power permeate these two scenes? What types of power do you see? Are there any power struggles among Pilate, Clavius and Lucius? If yes, how so?

Read Proverbs 19:21; Jeremiah 10:12; and Romans 13:1 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How do Proverbs 19:21 and Romans 13:1 serve as reminders that God holds ultimate authority and power? What do these verses tell us about God’s purpose and power?
- Notice that Jeremiah 10:12 mentions God’s wisdom and understanding. What does this suggest about the importance of these two characteristics in relation to His power?

Pilate dispatches his tribune to “take control out there and finish things.” When Clavius arrives at the site of the crucifixion, he doesn’t fully realize the significance of the scene he’s been tasked to oversee. Though he is perhaps the highest-ranking Roman official present, his earthly, manufactured title is utterly meaningless compared to God’s supreme power and sovereignty, as demonstrated through the broken, humbled body of an innocent Nazarene.

SCENE TO REVIEW

It Is Finished (00:09:49–00:16:15, Chapter 2)

- Thinking back through the scene, what events and circumstances occur that indicate something extremely unusual is happening? Name as many as you can recall.
- What do you notice about the centurion? What is he saying and how is he behaving? How does his distress serve as an acknowledgment of a power greater than himself?
- Describe the scene from Clavius’ point of view. How does he interact with the centurion, the mob and the Nazarene?





How do these interactions influence his role as leader?

- Even though there is an earthly power infrastructure in this scene (Clavius, the centurion, guards), who has ultimate authority and how is the crucifixion part of the grand design?

Take a moment to read John 3:16–17 and Romans 5:18–19 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What does John 3:16–17 tell us about God’s power and authority, and what is the driving force behind His desire for our salvation?
- How does Romans 5:18–19 explain the difference between Adam’s condemnation and Christ’s righteousness? How is God’s power displayed through this ultimate redemption?

When the Nazarene’s body goes missing on the morning of the third day, Pilate and the Sanhedrin quickly dispatch Clavius to launch an investigation, to find the body and to dispel rumors of a risen Messiah. Psalm 33:10 says, “The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes” (NLT). In light of God’s true power and authority, Pilate, Clavius and the members of the Sanhedrin are left with an empty illusion of power, as God will make a way.

SCENE TO REVIEW

The Body Is Gone (00:25:45–00:27:54, Chapter 6)

- What is at stake for each person in this scene if the body of Yeshua is not found? How is the hierarchy of power in Jerusalem and Judaea impacted by the missing body?
- Pilate says, “Tiberius cannot arrive to unrest. We must find a body.” What does this statement reveal about Pilate’s priorities and the long arm of the Roman Empire?
- How would you describe the relationship between Pilate and Caiaphas based on this scene and the film as a whole? Explain the power struggle that exists between them.
- What aspects of this scene reveal Clavius’ distinct lack

of power under Pilate’s cantankerous authority? In what ways is Clavius at the mercy of his own role as tribune?

- Have you ever scrambled to retain power only to have things spiral further out of control? What happens when we try to work apart from God’s authority in our lives?

Read 1 Corinthians 4:20 and 2 Corinthians 12:9 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Explain the message of 1 Corinthians 4:20 in your own words. What is the difference between talk and power and why do you think Paul makes this distinction?
- In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Lord tells Paul, “...my power is made perfect in weakness.” How does the Lord’s statement take the worldly view of power and turn it on its head?

As you conclude this discussion on the theme of power, make sure to read Isaiah 26:4; Matthew 19:26; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 3:20; and revisit the Guiding Scripture of Daniel 2:20–21 (see Scriptures Referenced). Spend some time exploring and examining what Scripture says about power using these and any additional verses that come to mind. Compare and contrast the biblical definition of power with that of your own definition and then discuss how *Risen* presents a multifaceted view of concepts such as power, authority and control. If you’d like, you can conclude with a prayer asking the Lord to help you trust in His perfect power and authority.

THEME TWO: SKEPTICISM

Guiding Scripture: James 1:6 (NLT): But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- 1 Kings 18:21 (NIV): Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.
- Proverbs 14:15 (NIV): The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps.
- Proverbs 19:2 (NIV): Desire without knowledge is not good – how much more will hasty feet miss the way!
- Psalm 119:18 (NIV): Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
- Isaiah 45:20 (NIV): Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save.
- Acts 17:11 (NIV): Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.
- Romans 12:2 (NIV): Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.
- 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV): The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 14:20 (NIV): Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

- Colossians 4:6 (NIV): Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22 (NLT): But test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.
- Hebrews 11:1 (NIV): Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
- James 1:6 (NLT): But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Polybius' Firsthand Account (00:54:30–01:01:04, Chapter 11)
- The Risen Yeshua (01:01:08–01:08:12, Chapter 13)
- "We follow to find out." (01:13:33–01:14:45, Chapter 15)
- "What made you follow?" (01:25:04–01:28:17, Chapter 18)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

One of the most engaging and unique aspects of *Risen* is that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ are presented from the perspective of a nonbeliever – Clavius, a Roman military tribune. Because Clavius prays to Mars, the Roman god of war, and is not a follower or disciple of Yeshua, he journeys through the film with turbulent skepticism and doubt as his calculated, Roman ideals encounter the inexplicable and irreconcilable truth about Yeshua.

After Lucius informs Clavius that the tomb guards have been sighted, the tribune tracks down Polybius, who is seeking comfort in drink. Clavius obtains what turns out to be the most forthcoming eyewitness experience of the resurrection that he has heard thus far. Prior to finding Polybius, Clavius has interrogated several people (Joses, Mary Magdalene and Bartholomew to name a few), but it is Polybius' anguished account that unquestionably impacts Clavius. Perhaps Clavius recognizes in Polybius what he is experiencing himself: the turmoil of skepticism.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Polybius' Firsthand Account (00:54:30–01:01:04, Chapter 11)

- Walk through Polybius' varied emotions in this scene as he tells Clavius both the fabricated and real versions of his experience.
- Why does Clavius explain away Polybius' experiences? Why does Polybius in turn offer more theories about what could have happened *except* for what actually happened?
- What specific examples or details from this scene indicate that Clavius' skepticism might be weakening – even slightly – regarding the mystery surrounding Yeshua's body?



- Whether you are a believer or a nonbeliever, can you relate to experiencing doubt and frustration regarding faith? What was (or is) your experience? What was the outcome?
- Even though Clavius is a nonbeliever, how does his methodical and thorough approach to the investigation actually guide him toward a greater understanding of faith?

Read Proverbs 14:15; 1 Corinthians 2:14; and 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What does 1 Corinthians 2:14 say about spiritual discernment and the ability to “accept the things that come from the Spirit of God”?
- How does the instruction in the verses from Proverbs and 1 Thessalonians offer encouragement and guidance regarding standing firm in faith?

Soon after Clavius’ meeting with Polybius, Lucius delivers the news that they have discovered the whereabouts of Yeshua’s closest disciples. Clavius leads a band of Roman soldiers into the city, where Joses further clarifies that the disciples favor an upper room. When Clavius spots Mary Magdalene, he follows her to an entry, throws open the door and finds exactly what he’s been looking for during the investigation: the disciples and Yeshua Himself – but alive, not dead!

SCENE TO REVIEW

The Risen Yeshua (01:01:08–01:08:12, Chapter 13)

- What is your reaction to this scene? What do you think as Clavius witnesses the risen Yeshua for the first time (the first time we see the risen Yeshua as well)?
- How do the filmmaking choices (direction, cinematography, soundtrack, etc.) enhance the tension of the search as well as Clavius’ discovery and ensuing astonishment?
- In what ways does Clavius’ encounter with Yeshua challenge the very core of his skepticism and doubt?

Speculate as to what you think Clavius is experiencing.

- Have you met the risen Christ?
 - If yes, what happened and how did the experience change you?
 - If no, how might Clavius’ pursuit of the truth inspire you to seek Him?

Read Psalm 119:18; Romans 12:2; and 1 Corinthians 14:20 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Psalm 119:18 speaks to the importance of spiritual discernment and offers encouragement for the skeptic. Why is it important to ask the Lord to open our eyes?
- What do Romans 12:2 and 1 Corinthians 14:20 say about our minds and thoughts? What does it mean to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2)?
- How do these verses relate to the theme discussion of skepticism? What do these verses demonstrate about the importance of transformation and renewal in Jesus Christ?

Shortly after Clavius locates the disciples, Yeshua vanishes. The men, joined by the intrigued tribune, travel to Galilee in hopes of seeing their Lord one more time. On the way, Clavius speaks with Peter and learns more about Yeshua’s closest followers and friends, but he still has questions regarding the irreconcilable events he has seen and heard during his journey.

SCENES TO REVIEW

“We follow to find out.” (01:13:33–01:14:45, Chapter 15)

“What made you follow?” (01:25:04–01:28:17, Chapter 18)

In the first of these two Scenes to Review (“We follow to find out.”), Clavius questions Peter’s belief about Yeshua until Peter tells him, “[Yeshua] has a body. The same vessel Yahweh gives all men. It is how he has reached out to us. I haven’t every answer. We’re astounded, too.”



THEME THREE: PEACE

Guiding Scripture: Isaiah 26:3 (NLT): You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 29:11 (NIV): The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.
- Psalm 34:14 (NIV): Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
- Isaiah 9:6 (NIV): For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- Isaiah 26:3 (NLT): You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!
- Isaiah 55:12 (NIV): You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
- John 8:36 (NLT): "So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free."
- John 14:27 (NIV): "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."
- John 16:33 (NIV): "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- Romans 14:19 (NIV): Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.
- Romans 15:13 (NIV): May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV): Now the LORD is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is freedom.
- Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV): Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- 1 John 4:18 (NLT): Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Clavius Defines Peace (00:16:25–00:19:15, Chapter 4)
- "I'm already free." (00:42:14–00:44:08, Chapter 9)
- Bartholomew (00:48:01–00:52:17, Chapter 10)
- "Know Him." (01:30:15–01:33:35, Chapter 19)

- Compare and contrast these two men. How is Peter's honest admission different than Clavius' skeptical attitude? Why is it okay to admit we don't have all the answers?
- Give a few reasons why Peter's abrasive, no-nonsense personality is a well-suited counterpart to Clavius' serious, brooding demeanor.
- In the second scene ("What made you follow?"), Bartholomew admits that the disciples doubted Yeshua's resurrection claims. What role does doubt play in our faith journey?
- Prior to this scene, Yeshua had provided a miraculous catch of fish. Here, he heals a leper. How is the reality of Yeshua's presence shaping and changing Clavius?
- What do you notice about the disciples? Why is it important to have a community of believers and friends who rejoice with you in the good times and buoy you in difficulties?

Read 1 Kings 18:21; Isaiah 45:20; and Colossians 4:6 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What advice and instruction does Colossians 4:6 give regarding our preparedness to speak with those who are struggling under the weight of skepticism and doubt?
- 1 Kings 18:21 and Isaiah 45:20 admonish against wavering between opinions and worshiping false gods. How do these verses relate to Clavius' skeptical attitude?

In concluding this theme discussion, take note of the following verses: Proverbs 19:2; Acts 17:11; Hebrews 11:1; and James 1:6 (see Scriptures Referenced). How does each of these verses touch on the theme of skepticism and corresponding themes of faith, doubt and belief? Think back through *Risen* and trace Clavius' journey. Where does he stumble? Where does he grow? The movie ends with Clavius using his tribune ring to pay his bill and the inn keeper asking, "Tribune, do you truly believe all this?" to which Clavius replies, "I believe I can never be the same." Another life forever changed by an encounter with the Messiah. What about you? Where will your journey lead? If you wrestle with skepticism, will you trust Him to show you the way?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

At the beginning of this theme discussion on peace, take a moment to read the Guiding Scripture for this section: “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” (Isaiah 26:3 NLT). What a beautiful expression of the perfect peace that God has for those who keep their thoughts and hearts fixed on Him. The world pulls at our attention with distractions of every kind, but we have the promise of peace when we turn our gaze to Him.

Toward the beginning of the film, Clavius has endured a day filled with bloodshed and death – battles, crucifixions, open graves. As he relaxes in the baths that night, Pilate engages his exhausted tribune in conversation, discovering that the one thing Clavius desires above all else is “an end to travail, a day without death.” Peace. Ultimately, Clavius desires peace.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Clavius Defines Peace (00:16:25–00:19:15, Chapter 4)

- What does this scene suggest about the Roman culture’s (as represented by Pilate) reliance on worldly, carnal pleasure for relaxation and rest?
- Based on brief snippets of Pilate and Clavius’ conversation, what do you learn about the career path for an official or soldier in the Roman Empire?

Clavius hopes his ambition will lead to Rome, position and power, wealth, a good family, a place in the country, an end to travail, a day without death and, finally, peace. Pilate responds, “All that for peace? Is there no other way?”

- How would you answer Pilate’s question? Is there another avenue for obtaining peace? What is the irony of Pilate’s comment in light of the storyline of *Risen*?
- Do you long for peace? Do you view peace as an end result, as Clavius does, or do you seek and find peace in the day-to-day as you live your life? Give examples if possible.

Take a moment to read Philippians 4:6–7 and 1 John 4:18 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What does Philippians 4:6–7 instruct us to do when we are anxious? Point to specific examples of how this passage describes peace and what that peace accomplishes in us.
- 1 John 4:18 tells us that “perfect love expels all fear.” Based on this verse as well as any other verses that come to mind, what is the relationship between love and peace?

As the investigation into Yeshua’s missing body intensifies, a significant break in the case leads to the interrogations of Mary Magdalene and Bartholomew, two of Yeshua’s closest followers. Clavius notices that both Mary Magdalene and Bartholomew are transformed from within, their faces etched with such peace and freedom that the tribune’s usually intimidating interrogation tactics seem to fall on deaf ears. He cannot disturb or rob their profound peace.

SCENES TO REVIEW

“I’m already free.” (00:42:14–00:44:08, Chapter 9)

Bartholomew (00:48:01–00:52:17, Chapter 10)

- When Clavius asks Mary Magdalene about the tomb, she says, “If you knew what happened there, all cares would cease.” Why does the resurrection represent peace?
- Clavius says, “Give me the others and I’ll grant your freedom,” to which Mary Magdalene replies, “I’m already free.” What does she mean?
- How does Clavius’ concept of freedom differ from Mary Magdalene’s and Bartholomew’s personal understanding of and experience with true freedom?
- How would you describe Bartholomew’s conduct? How does his giddiness support his claims that eternal life changes everything and that love is the disciples’ greatest weapon?

Read Isaiah 55:12; John 8:36; and Romans 15:13 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How does Bartholomew exemplify the tone of Isaiah 55:12 and Romans 15:13? What does it mean to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13)?
- In John 8:36, Jesus says, “So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.” What is true freedom? What is true peace? Have you experienced the Lord’s freedom and peace?

In Galilee, Clavius has the opportunity to speak with Yeshua one night while the disciples are sleeping. He hardly knows what to say to the man whose death he oversaw. Though their words are few, their exchange is significant and meaningful, and Clavius experiences firsthand how Yeshua speaks to each person’s heart with compassion, love, forgiveness and peace.



SCENE TO REVIEW

“Know Him.” (01:30:15–01:33:35, Chapter 19)

- If you view this scene as a metaphor for prayer, what do you notice about Yeshua’s and Clavius’ communication? List any examples you recall. Be specific when possible.
- How does this scene demonstrate the way Yeshua knows Clavius’ heart, desires and troubles? What specific phrase does Clavius use earlier in the film that Yeshua repeats?
- List everything that Clavius has been looking for (knowingly or otherwise) during his journey. How does Yeshua represent the culmination of Clavius’ search?
- Yeshua tells Clavius, “Know Him.” Do you know Him? Have you experienced the genuine peace that passes understanding that stems from being in relationship with Him?

Read John 14:27; John 16:33; and 2 Corinthians 3:17 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What does Jesus say regarding peace in John 14:27 and John 16:33? How does He encourage us and strengthen our faith with assurances of peace?
- According to 2 Corinthians 3:17, what will we find where the Spirit of the Lord is? How does this promise encourage you to seek the Spirit and pursue peace?

Conclude your discussion about the theme of peace by reading the following verses: Psalm 29:11; Psalm 34:14; Isaiah 9:6; and Romans 14:19 (see Scriptures Referenced). How does each of these verses correspond to the concept of peace? What do you learn about peace from examining these passages? One of the names for Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 is Prince of Peace. Spend some time thinking about what it means that our Lord and Savior is also known as the Prince of Peace, and allow this truth to enrich your faith and settle your spirit. Consider asking Him to infuse your life with His peace and the freedom that accompanies it.

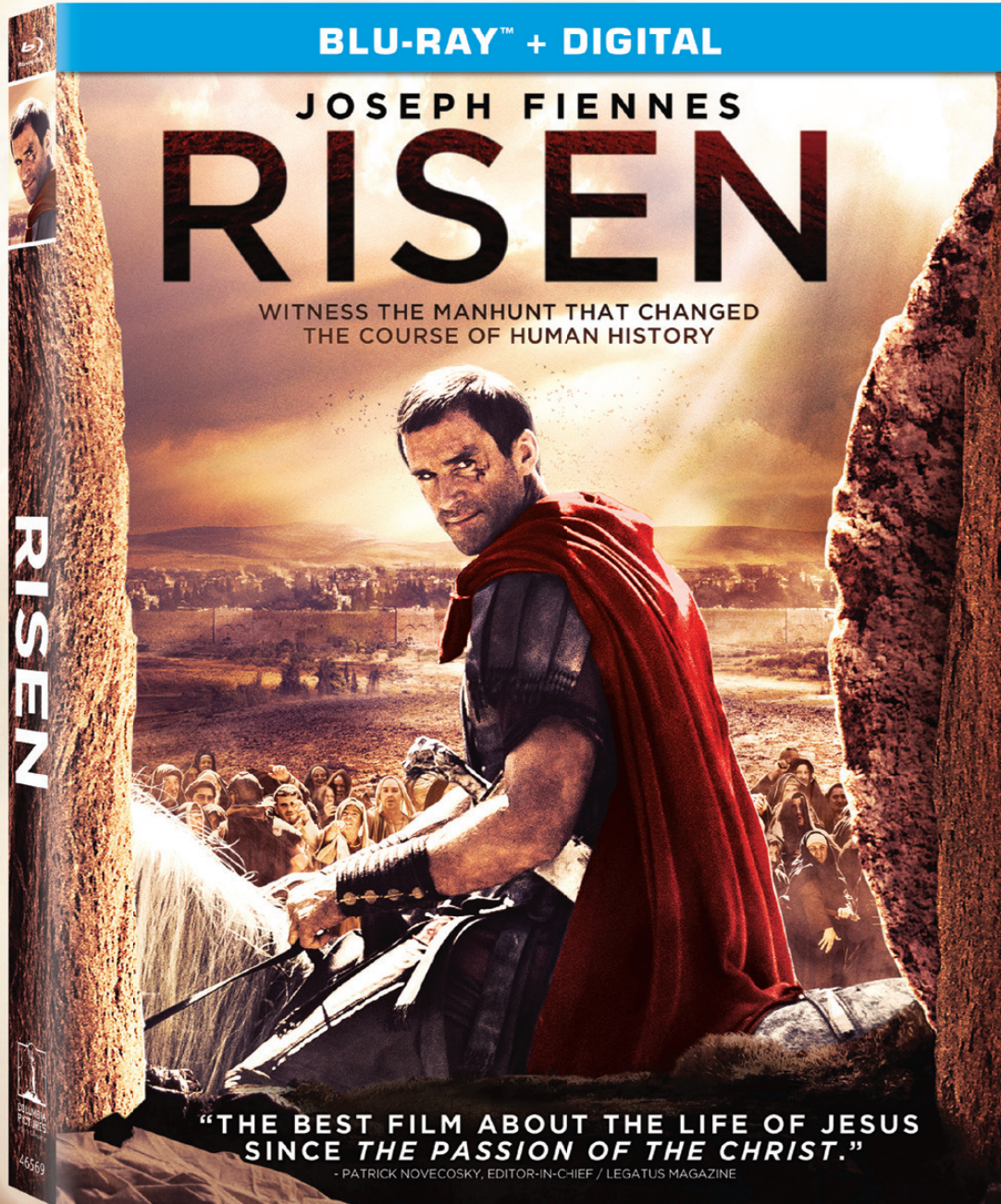
FINAL THOUGHTS

- How does the film bring to life the Roman Empire’s rule in Jerusalem and Judaea?
- What are your thoughts on the character of Lucius? Think back on his character arc and consider the ways that he evolves – whether positively or negatively.
- How does the film’s soundtrack enhance your experience? Do you recall certain scenes because of the music that accompanied them? Give examples if possible.
- What additional themes do you see in *Risen*? How are those themes examined through specific scenes or dialogue?
- Which character do you most identify with and why? Which character do you least identify with and why?



“The Best Film About the Life of Jesus Since *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*.”

- Patrick Novecosky, Editor-In-Chief / *Legatus Magazine*



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