



EASTER LESSON 1

The crucifixion of the Son of God

JOHN 18:28-19:42



Jesus died to finish His mission on earth.



“[Jesus] said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus died on a cross.
2. Jesus is the Truth.
3. Jesus is the Son of God.
4. Jesus is the King.
5. Jesus finished His mission according to God’s sovereign plan.

Objectives

1. State that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin and shame.
2. Contrast Jesus’ truthfulness with the lies and injustice of His enemies.
3. Explain that Jesus came into the world and died to make the Father known.
4. Contrast Jesus’ true kingship with the mockery of His enemies.
5. List several prophecies Jesus fulfilled in the way He died.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

Jesus' enemies thought they finally had Jesus trapped. The Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, and they used lies and threats to make Pilate do what they wanted. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but he had no commitment to the truth. So under pressure, he gave the order to crucify Jesus. But Jesus was not trapped. He was finishing His mission exactly according to plan. Even in His death He finished doing everything Scripture said about Him.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Both in His life and in His death, Jesus was true to the Father. In His life He never sinned, so He fulfilled the law for the sake of sinners. And in His death, He perfectly displayed God's righteousness and satisfied God's just wrath. Whoever trusts in Him as the way, the truth, and the life can now come to the Father through Him.

THIS WEEK



**The crucifixion of the
Son of God**
John 18:28–19:42

NEXT WEEK



**The resurrection of the
Son of God**
John 20:1–31

Lesson Commentary

Jesus died to finish His mission on earth.

What was happening? To Jesus' disciples, their hope for the kingdom was unraveling. To the Jews, their troublesome enemy was finally going to be eliminated. And to Pilate, this was just another difficult day trying to please both the Jews and Rome. But to Jesus, this was something else entirely. It was not a surprise or a defeat. It was the day when He would finish His mission. As the eternal Son of God, He made the Father known by His sinless life and His willing death.

The Son of God proved true in His trial (18:28–19:16a)

Jesus' innocence was confirmed during His trial before Pilate. The Jews confirmed it by relying on insolence, deceit, and threats instead of real evidence. They arrogantly refused to come into Pilate's headquarters (John 18:28). They considered Gentile houses unclean, and they cared more about their religious rules than they did about God's own Son. They also spoke rudely to Pilate, essentially telling him, "All you need to know is that we think He's guilty. Now do your job and execute Him" (18:29–30). The Jews' insolence confirms that they had no solid charges against Jesus.

Eventually, they brought two charges, but both were deceitful. First, they said Jesus claimed to be king (18:33; Luke 23:2), making Him a rebel against the Roman emperor Tiberius. It was true He claimed to be King (Mark 14:61–62), but since His kingdom would not come by human means (John 18:36), He was not a threat to Rome. Second, the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy (19:7), a crime worthy of death (Lev 24:16). But this accusation was also a lie, since Jesus said nothing wrong. The Jews proved their deceit by their double-standard. While accusing Jesus of rebellion, they set free a truly violent rebel (John 18:40; Mark 15:11)! While accusing Jesus of blasphemy, they blasphemed by denying their true King (John 19:15b; 1 Sam 8:7). Their deceitful charges proved that they were guilty, not Jesus.

Finally, the Jews used threats (John 19:12). Pilate had a bad track record as governor of Judea. He was stubborn and violent, and he hated the Jews.

Once before, the Jews had appealed to Tiberius Caesar, and Tiberius had decided in their favor against Pilate. If the Jews went to Tiberius again, especially with news that Pilate had set someone free who claimed to be king, then Tiberius might kill Pilate or end his political career. These threats worked, but they also showed that Jesus did not die for any wrong He had done.

Pilate also confirmed that Jesus was innocent. He said it three times (18:38; 19:4, 6). But to save himself, he rejected Jesus as the true God (18:37–38). As a result, he had no *truth*, no *absolute standard of right and wrong* (18:38). He was a pragmatist, trying to get the best results for himself. When a crowd had come to ask him to set a prisoner free (Mark 15:8), Pilate tried to use Jesus' popularity to turn the crowd against the Jewish leaders (John 18:39–40; cf. Mark 15:11). When that didn't work, he had Jesus beaten, mocked, and paraded before the crowd to try to get the people's sympathy (John 19:1–5). When that failed, he tried bullying. He mockingly reminded the Jews that he was in charge (19:6b), and he taunted them by calling Jesus "your king" (19:14). Yet in the end, Pilate wasn't willing to risk his life, even for a man he knew was innocent.

In contrast to the lies and manipulation of others, Jesus spoke the truth. He told the truth about His kingdom. Although His kingdom will one day be on earth, it will not come by human methods (19:36; Dan 2:44–45; Rev 20:6), and until that time His kingdom spreads in the hearts of believers not by war or politics but by the gospel. He also spoke the truth about Pilate's authority (John 19:11). He said that Pilate would not be Jesus' judge if God had not

THINK ABOUT IT

The Jews chose Barabbas, which means "son of a father," over Jesus, the Son of the Father.



THINK ABOUT IT

The religious leaders bullied Pilate into condemning Jesus.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



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arranged events to bring Jesus to this trial. God was sovereign over the whole process. He even used the legal details to fulfill prophecy: Jesus would be killed by being lifted up on a cross the Roman way instead of being thrown down and stoned the Jewish way (Lev 24:16; Num 21:8–9; John 3:14). So even while on trial for His life, Jesus kept fulfilling His mission. He was telling the truth by testifying about God and His kingdom.

Jesus told the truth because He is the truth (John 14:6). He is the Word, the Light, and the Son who always makes God known. And He was in the world for this one reason: to declare the **truth** (18:37). He entered His own creation, became a human, and was about to die so that people could know *ultimate reality—God Himself*. To do this, He needed a sinless life, for God is holy. And He also had to die to make God's righteousness and mercy known (Rom 3:25) and open the way for sinners to come to God (1 Pet 3:18). Jesus' truthfulness confirms that He is the innocent Lamb of God (John 1:29).

The Son of God proved true in His death (19:16b–42)

The details of Jesus' death confirm that His death was no accident. This was part of His mission, and He stayed true to His mission to the very end. The soldiers led Him away, like a lamb led to slaughter (19:16b). He was led to die outside of the city as a sin offering (Lev 16:27; Heb 13:11–12). He was put to death with criminals (John 19:18; Isa 53:12). He was lifted up on a cross (Num 21:8–9; John 3:14) to be the curse in the place of sinners (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13). His hands and feet were pierced (Ps 22:16; Isa 53:5), with a nail driven through His heels (Gen 3:15). He died as the Messiah, the King of the Jews (John 19:19–22; Dan 9:26). Even the small detail of His clothing being divided fulfills Scripture and confirms He is the King who dies to bring people to God (John 19:23–24; Ps 22:18).

Even when on the cross, Jesus made sure to fulfill Scripture. By making sure His widowed mother had a believer to care for her, He kept the 5th commandment (John 19:25–27; Exod 20:12). By loving others as He was dying, He kept the second greatest commandment (Mark 12:31). By faithfully keeping all of Scripture to the very end, He kept the greatest commandment of all (12:28–30; Deut 6:5). Even His thirst and the sour wine fulfilled Scripture (John 19:28–29; Ps 22:15; 69:21), and the hyssop branch used to hold up the sponge was the same plant used for the blood at Passover (Exod 12:22). So when Jesus cried "It is finished," it was a cry of triumph (John 19:30). He finished His life without sin (1 Pet 2:22), atoned for sin (Heb 9:12), defeated Satan (Heb 2:14), satisfied God's wrath (Rom 3:25), and willingly gave up His own life so that others could live (Isa 53:12).

THINK ABOUT IT

Because Jesus stayed true to His mission to the very end, so do His followers (2 Tim 4:7).



The events after Jesus died again confirm that He died exactly according to plan. He was the final Passover Lamb, killed on Passover without any broken bones (John 19:31–36; Exod 12:46; Ps 34:20). He was the firstborn, pierced through because of the hatred of His own people (John 19:37; Zech 12:10). And He most certainly died as water and blood flowed out, a vivid reminder that redemption and cleansing comes by His death (John 3:5; 1 John 1:7). Finally, although killed as a criminal, He was buried with honor in the new tomb of a rich man (19:38–42; Matt 27:57; Isa 53:9). All these fulfilled prophecies show that Jesus was in control even in His death (John 10:18; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 13:27). He willingly chose to accomplish His mission. He lived and died so that sinners could know God the way they were created to know Him (John 17:3).

Lesson Outline

Jesus died to finish His mission on earth.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus is the truth and tells us the truth (18:28–19:16a).
2. Jesus died for sins so that we can know God (19:16b–42).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Son of God proved true in His trial (18:28–19:16a).
 - The Jews failed to prove that Jesus was guilty (18:28–30, 33, 40; 19:7, 12, 15b).
 - Pilate declared Jesus innocent three times (18:38; 19:4, 6).
 - Jesus' truthful testimony proved His innocence (18:36–37; 19:11).
2. The Son of God proved true in His death (19:16b–42).
 - Jesus was crucified according to Scripture (19:17–22).
 - Jesus' clothes were divided according to Scripture (19:23–24).
 - Jesus made sure to fulfill Scripture completely (19:25–30).
 - Jesus was stabbed according to Scripture (19:31–37).
 - Jesus was buried according to Scripture (19:38–42).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Jesus tell Pilate He came into the world for?**
To bear witness to the truth. To tell the truth and show everyone what is true.
- 2. Was Jesus killed because He did something wrong?**
No. He was killed because people hated Him.
- 3. What did the soldiers do with His clothes?**
They divided them into four parts, casting lots (like rolling dice) to decide who got His tunic.
- 4. Did the soldiers break Jesus' bones?**
No. He was already dead.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did the Jews accuse Jesus of?**
Being a rebel king and blaspheming.
- 2. Were the Jews telling the truth?**
No. Jesus was a king, but He was not a rebel against Rome. He did claim to be the Son of God, but He did not blaspheme because He really was the Son of God.
- 3. How did the Jews get Pilate to crucify Jesus?**
They threatened to make Pilate look bad in front of the emperor.
- 4. Did Pilate think Jesus was guilty?**
No. He said Jesus was innocent three times.
- 5. Why did Pilate not stand up for Jesus in the end?**
Pilate did not believe in truth. He only did what he thought was best for him.
- 6. Why did Jesus always tell the truth?**
Because He is the truth. He came to earth as a human to show humans who God truly is.
- 7. Why did Jesus need to die?**
His mission was to make it so that people could know the Father. But to do that, He had to deal with the sin that keeps sinners from a holy God.
- 8. What are some ways that Jesus' death fulfilled prophecy?**
See the second point in the commentary.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

RACING FLAGS, PART 1

In today's lesson, Jesus dies on the cross. But this event was not a surprise or defeat. This event was planned by God and marked the completion of Jesus' mission on earth. Hold up a checkered flag and wave it back and forth. Do the children know what this flag is used for? It is used to show the winner of a car race. When Jesus died on the cross He was not defeated. In fact, the cross shows the exact opposite: the completion of Jesus' race on earth and victory over sin (wave the flag).

THE TRUTH

Do the children know who Pinocchio is? Have they ever listened to a story or watched a movie about him? He is a wooden marionette that often gets into trouble and lies to try to hide what he's done. What happens when he lies? His nose grows! In today's lesson, we're going to meet a group of people who told lies in order to kill Jesus: the religious leaders. Have the children touch their noses. Tell them to touch their nose whenever the religious leaders lie in today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

RACING FLAGS, PART 2

Do the children know what some other common racing flags mean? Bring in a green flag, a yellow flag, and a red flag. Use them throughout the lesson (along with the checkered flag from Part 1) to illustrate the completion of Jesus' ministry and His victory over sin. The green flag marks the beginning of the race (Jesus' race on earth began when He was born a baby on Christmas). The yellow flag is used to tell drivers to slow down because of an accident or debris on the racetrack (Jesus' enemies tried to hinder His ministry but couldn't). The red flag tells drivers that the race has been delayed or stopped (Jesus' enemies thought that the cross ended Jesus' race).

VISUAL AIDS

Use a variety of props to help tell the story: a chair (for a judge's seat), a crown (for a king), crown of thorns (or just some thorns), old purple robe, small cross, large nail or railroad spike.



APPLY

IT IS FINISHED!

See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Foam coffee cup, craft sheet, craft stick, crayons, glue, tape, scissors.

Directions: Make a cross with the two craft stick and let the glue dry. Color the foam coffee cup. Color the craft page and cut it. Tape it to the coffee cup. Use the scissors to make a little hole at the bottom of the coffee cup to insert the cross.



It Is Finished!
See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

U.S. SOLDIER'S CREED

Read the current U.S. Soldier's Creed (authorized in May 2003), emphasizing the following lines: "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit." This creed is learned by all U.S. Army personnel during basic training. It is the goal of every soldier to live up to this creed. However, because man is sinful, this does not always happen. But this is not the case with God. In today's lesson, we're going to see how Jesus completely fulfilled His mission through His death on the cross.

BULLIES

Do the children know what a bully is? A bully is someone who uses their strength or power to hurt another person or make them do something they don't want to do. Have the children ever been bullied at church or school? In today's lesson, we're going to meet some bullies. The Jewish religious leaders bullied Pilate (Roman governor of Judea) into killing Jesus. As you listen to the lesson, see if you can identify the different ways the religious leaders bullied Pilate.



ILLUSTRATE

TRUTH VS. LIE

Give each child a green piece of paper and a red piece of paper. Have each child write "truth" on the green paper and "lie" on the red paper. As you tell the story of the trial, have them hold up one sign or the other to show if a person is telling the truth or a lie.

NOT AN ACCIDENT

Have the children ever seen a police car, ambulance, or firetruck rushing to the scene of an accident with their lights on and sirens wailing? Policemen, EMTs, and firemen have to be ready to respond at any time because they don't know when an accident is going to happen. But Jesus' death was not an accident. It was planned by God and perfectly carried out by Jesus. His death was the completion of God's mission to rescue sinners.



APPLY

THE CROSS

Materials: Black cardstock, toothpicks, glue, yarn, scissors.

Directions: Make a cross shape on the cardstock. Put glue on it and glue the toothpicks on it. Wait till the toothpicks are dried, and then cut the cross. Use the yarn to make a lace for the bookmark.



The Cross

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

BIG STICK DIPLOMACY

With a big stick in your hand, tell the children that U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt once famously said, “Speak softly, and carry a big stick.” What does this mean? President Roosevelt used it to describe his foreign policy: he didn’t need to raise his voice when negotiating with other countries because of the threat posed by the U.S. military. In today’s lesson, the Jewish religious leaders are able to force Pilate to execute Jesus by threatening to make their case known to Tiberius Caesar.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Have the children ever been trusted with an important job? Did they complete it? Did they do it exactly the way they were supposed to? Were they tempted to cut any corners in order to make the job easier or finish it quicker? In today’s lesson, we’re going to learn about the completion of Jesus’ mission on earth: His substitutionary death on the cross. He died to pay the penalty our sins deserve, and through His death we are able to have a relationship with God. But His death also provides us with an example of how we are to work: until the job is finished and everything is done right.



ILLUSTRATE

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Have the children ever heard this phrase? It describes a problem that has two possible solutions, but neither solution is good. This is a good description of where Pilate is at in today’s lesson. Pilate did not want to execute Jesus because He knew Jesus was innocent. But if Pilate refused to execute Jesus, then the Jewish religious leaders threatened to make their case known to Caesar. No matter what Pilate did (release Jesus or execute Jesus), he was not going to be happy with the outcome.

IT IS FINISHED

Jesus’ death fulfilled numerous prophecies from Scripture. Illustrate this by writing many of the prophecies connected with Jesus’ death on the board or a poster board before class. During the lesson, place a check mark or sticker by each prophecy after you describe how Jesus fulfilled it. When every box is checked off or filled, talk about how Jesus finished His mission.



APPLY

INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

In the United States, you are treated as innocent until proven guilty. However, Jesus was not afforded the same rights as a U.S. citizen. The religious leaders claimed He was guilty of blasphemy and rebellion against Rome, even though there was no credible evidence to back up their claims. Have you ever been wrongly accused of something? How did you feel? How did you respond? How did Jesus respond in today’s lesson? It is good and right for us to demonstrate our innocence when falsely accused, but Jesus allowed the religious leaders to accuse him and Pilate to condemn Him in order to finish God’s plan. Jesus, the innocent, suffered and died so that we, the guilty, might be forgiven and accepted by God.