

Judged and Crucified



SABBATH—JUNE 11

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 14:53–65; Mark 15:1–41.

MEMORY VERSE: “At three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ This means ‘My God, my God, why have you deserted [left] me?’ ” (Mark 15:34, NlrV).

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE CROSS. We have followed the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee to Jerusalem. His footsteps lead to the Cross, His place of rejection,¹ shame, suffering, and death. But the Cross is our place of victory, hope, and eternal² life.

The Cross separates Jesus of Nazareth from all other religious teachers. Other religious teachers have left wise teachings. They did kind actions. They gathered a group of followers. And they became the center of movements that continued to grow after their death. Some of these movements are now world religions. But only Jesus was resurrected.³ Only Jesus rules as a living Savior. That difference makes all the difference in the world.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What reasons did the high priests think they had for putting Jesus to death? How did the high priests influence Pilate? What was the meaning of Jesus being crucified between two thieves? How important is Jesus' death as our Substitute?⁴ What happened to the Godhead⁵ at the Cross?

*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 18.

¹rejection—when a person is not accepted by other people.

²eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

³resurrected—returned to life after dying.

⁴substitute—someone who takes another person's place. Jesus is our Substitute because He died for our sins.

⁵the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are the Godhead.

SUNDAY—JUNE 12
BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN⁶
(Mark 14:53-65).

The trials of Jesus were not fair. They did not fairly examine proof for or against Jesus. Instead, the trials pointed to false charges that would lead to Jesus' condemnation⁷ and death. The religious leaders had reached their decision before any trial began. They wanted Jesus dead. They tried to make the trials legal. But having a trial in the middle of the night was not legal.

The stories of Jesus' trials in the four Gospels⁸ and comments by Ellen G. White give us this description: "Jesus was given two hearings, one before Annas alone and another before Annas and Caiaphas. Jesus was brought to face the Sanhedrin twice, first by night and then by day. Jesus appeared twice before Pilate, and once before Herod between the two appearances before Pilate." —Adapted from *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 528.

As you read Mark 14:53-65, put yourself in the place of the high priest. Why would he want Jesus dead? How could he have defended his own actions? Below, write the "good" reasons the high priest believed he had.

John 7:41, 42 _____

Matthew 12:2 _____

Mark 14:62-64 _____

John 10:33 _____

John 11:48 _____

Luke 4:22 _____



They blindfolded God's Son!

⁶Sanhedrin—the Jewish governing council.

⁷condemnation—to have been judged guilty.

⁸Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

John 2:19 _____

Matthew 12:24 _____

We are often shocked by the attitude⁹ the religious leaders had toward Jesus. Yet, after making a summary of their “good” reasons, you can see how easy it was for them to do what they did. What lessons can we learn from these leaders?



They tied up God's Son.

Who was more guilty, Pilate or the religious leaders? John 19:11. What good reasons do you have for your answer?

MONDAY—JUNE 13

PILATE AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (Mark 15:1-19).

Study the stories of Jesus before Pilate in Mark 15:1-15; Matthew 27:11-26; Luke 22:66–23:25; and John 18:28–19:16. How unbelievable it is that a nonreligious ruler would try to save Jesus, while the religious leaders wanted Him dead! How unbelievable it is that Jesus would be called King of the Jews by a nonreligious ruler and his soldiers, while His own people shouted, “Crucify Him!” How unbelievable it is that Pilate offered to free Jesus the Life-Giver, but the crowd wanted Barabbas, a murderer. What a frightening show of the power of Satan to deceive people who have not surrendered fully to Jesus.

Religion can be a powerful tool for good or evil. In Mark 15:1-19, we see religion being used for a very evil purpose. Sometimes, people, such as the religious leaders here, do things because they think they are doing them for God. Then what can stop them? The idea that people think they are doing something for God can lead people to do many things they should not do. But if God is leading someone, who or what should be allowed to stand in the way?

Our sins never influence just ourselves. Reread Mark 15:1-19. Who else was influenced in a very negative way because of what the religious leaders did? What is the message for us here? What other examples can you find in the Bible

⁹attitude—how you think and feel about something; the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of a person or group of people.

of how quickly the influence of sin can hurt others?

Put yourself in Pilate's place during the final judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 3:6). What arguments could he have used to defend his actions? How many times in the last month have you used the same arguments to defend your own wrong acts or words?

TUESDAY—JUNE 14

GOLGOTHA¹⁰ (Mark 15:16-37).

Of all the scenes from Jesus' life, the scene in Mark 15:21-39 requires the most earnest prayerful study. See Jesus as God's only Son hanging on the cross, bruised, bowed, and bloody. His back is cut into ribbons of flesh. His hands and feet are nailed to the rough wood. He has not slept all night. He has not had any food or drink since the meal the night before. Now He hangs helpless on the cross between two criminals.

Read Mark 15:27, 28. Jesus was crucified as a common criminal between two other criminals. What does this mean to you? How does Isaiah 53:12 as quoted in Mark 15:28 help you to answer that question? Why is it so important that Jesus was willing to die on the cross?



They killed God's Son.

At the cross, Jesus became our Sin Bearer (Sin Carrier). He became so closely connected with our sin that Paul said, "Christ [Jesus] didn't [did not] have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV). Paul did not say Jesus was a sinner. Instead, Paul came as close as he could to saying Jesus was a sinner by saying that God regarded (thought of) Jesus as a sinner. Jesus—the only One who never sinned—took the place of every sinner.

What do John 1:29; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; and 1 Peter 2:24 say that help us understand the relationship between Jesus and sin at the Cross?

¹⁰Golgotha—the name of the hill upon which Jesus was crucified. Golgotha means "the skull."

How should understanding what sin did to Jesus, the Son of God, encourage you to depend on Jesus to overcome sin?

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 15

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS (Isaiah 53).

In Mark 15:28, Mark quoted from Isaiah 53. Read Isaiah 53. Then list the sentences that suggest that Jesus died for our sins.

In what ways can you see the idea of Jesus dying as a substitute for us? Why is Jesus dying as our Substitute so important for understanding the plan of salvation?

Christians have tried to explain how God, in Jesus, has opened the way for our salvation. They have offered many different explanations. Some explanations are as follows. How do they work, or not work, for you?

A. God was not willing to save humanity.¹¹ But Jesus' love gave the answer.

B. Jesus' death was a ransom¹² paid for Satan to free humanity from Satan's trap.

C. God's honor was stained by sin. Jesus had to die to satisfy God's stained honor.

¹¹humanity—all the people of the world.

¹²ransom—the price paid for a person's freedom. Jesus' death paid a ransom for all sinners, so that they might be free from sin and guilt.

¹³mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

D. Jesus died as an example to the rest of the universe from the results of sin.

E. Jesus died to show God's love so we might be softened and won to God.

F. On the cross, God the Father was punishing God the Son.

No one explanation is enough to explain how God offers a way of salvation in Jesus. Many of the different explanations given hold parts of the truth. But the full story is much greater. The answer lies in God, who Himself offers salvation. Note the following truths from the Bible.

1. In the plan of salvation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One in love and action. We must avoid picturing the Father as cruel or without mercy¹³ and the Son as having mercy. (Read John 3:16.)

2. God was in Jesus, bringing the world back to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19, NIV).

3. Jesus' death was necessary (Romans 3:24-26; Hebrews 9:22).

4. Jesus died in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:3).

5. The Cross is the greatest proof of God's love (Romans 5:7, 8).

THURSDAY—JUNE 16

JESUS' DEATH (Mark 15:33-41).

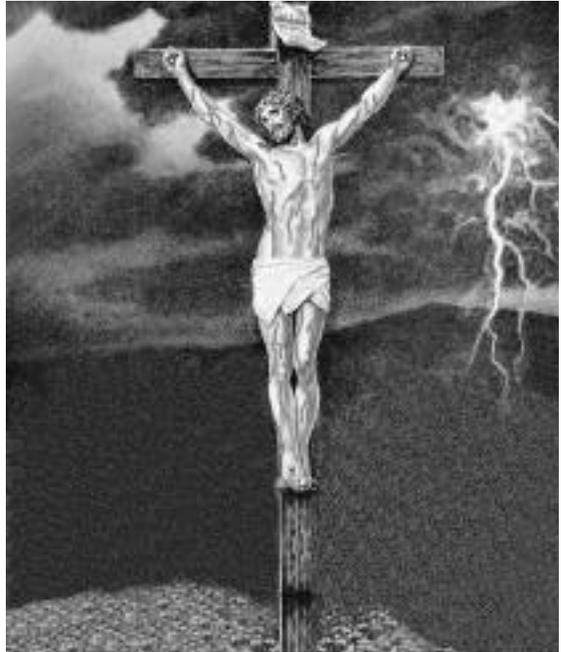
“My God, my God, why have you deserted [left] me?” (Mark 15:34, NIV).

“Satan with his strong temptations wrenched the heart of Jesus. The Savior could not see past the tomb. Hope did not show His coming forth (rising) from the grave. Hope did not tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. Jesus feared that sin was so terrible to God that He would be forever separated from God. Jesus felt the pain and suffering which the sinner will feel when there is no more mercy for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin that brought the Father’s anger upon Jesus as man’s Substitute. The sense of sin made the cup Jesus drank so bitter. The sense of sin broke the heart of the Son of God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

How does this quote help us understand what happened at the Cross? What does this quote tell us about the character of sin? About the character of God? How does this quote help us understand what our salvation cost?

Jesus reached the bottom of His despair in His sad cry, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” (NIRV). But His final words, “It is finished” (John 19:30), show faith, hope, and trust. His final words announced that He had won the last, greatest battle with Satan. The end result of the great war with evil was made sure. The war is not over yet. But we know how the war will end, because

Jesus won the victory on the cross. Surrendering Himself to the Father’s keeping, Jesus bowed His head and died.



“It is finished.”

Jesus was one with the Father from eternity¹⁴ (John 1:1, 2). He and the Father were one in unity, action, and purpose (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 3:22; John 10:30). But at the Cross, Jesus felt an overpowering sense of separation from the Father because of sin! There was a tearing apart of the Godhead itself at the Cross! Have you ever been separated from someone you love very much? How did that separation make you feel? How could that experience help you better understand what Jesus did for us? How

¹⁴eternity—life without end.

could that experience help you live in loving obedience to the God who went through all this for you?

FRIDAY—JUNE 17

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Compare¹⁵ Mark 14:53-65 and Mark 15:1-41 with Matthew 26:57-68; Matthew 27:1-56; Luke 22:66–23:49; John 18:12-14; and John 19:37. Read Ellen G. White, “Before Annas and the Court of Caiaphas,” “In Pilate’s Judgment Hall,” “Calvary,” and “‘It Is Finished’” in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 698–715, 723–740, 741–757, 758–764.

“The Captain of our salvation (Jesus) was made perfect through suffering. His soul was made an offering for sin. The awful darkness had to gather around His soul because the Father withdrew His love and favor; because Jesus was standing in the sinner’s place. This darkness every sinner must experience. The Righteous (Holy) One (Jesus) must suffer the anger and punishment of God. It was not done as revenge,¹⁶ because the heart of God was filled with the greatest sorrow when His innocent Son was suffering the penalty (punishment) of sin. This tearing apart of God’s powers will never again happen throughout eternity.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 924.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Write out a small story, putting yourself in Caiaphas’ place. Use arguments why you had to have Jesus put to death. Bring your story to class and have members read their stories. Then share whatever you can learn from this discussion.
2. Why did Jesus have to die in order to save us?
3. As a class, discuss what this sentence really means: “The whole purpose of the Cross was just to help us learn to trust God.” Why do you agree or disagree with this sentence?
4. What could you do, as a church, to focus more on the Cross? How can you be sure that when people think of your church, they first think that Jesus’ death has really changed the lives of the church members?

SUMMARY: Jesus died for our sins. At the Cross, we need to confess (believe) that Jesus died for us, in our place. When we do, the Cross reaches us with its full message and meaning. “If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of humble repentance¹⁷ at the foot of the cross.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

¹⁵compare—show how things are the same.

¹⁶revenge—doing something bad to someone who has hurt you.

¹⁷repentance—being sorry for our sins, wanting to stop sinning, and turning away from our sins.