

Crucified (Put to Death on the Cross) and Risen



SABBATH—JUNE 20

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 3:1–6; Luke 22:39–46; 2 Corinthians 13:8; Luke 22:53; Matthew 12:30; 1 Corinthians 15:14.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people. He must be nailed to a cross. On the third day he will rise from the dead’ ” (Luke 24:7, NlrV).

FROM CHILDHOOD, JESUS KNEW THAT HE HAD COME TO THIS EARTH TO FULFILL HIS FATHER'S WILL (Luke 2:41–50). He taught, healed, and ministered (worked for God) with steadfast (constant) faith to obey the Father. Now the time had come. After celebrating the Last Supper, He walked alone. Soon He would be betrayed and denied. He would be put on trial and crucified (put to death on the cross) and rise victorious over death.

All His life Jesus knew that He must die on the cross. Many times in the Gospels, the word *must* is used in relationship to the sufferings and death of Jesus (Luke 17:25; Luke 22:37; Luke 24:7; Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Mark 9:12; John 3:14). He *must* go to Jerusalem. He *must* suffer. He *must* be refused. He *must* be lifted up, and so on. Nothing would stop the Son of God from going to Golgotha. He refused to accept Satan's suggestion to avoid the cross (Matthew 16:22, 23). He believed that He “must go . . . suffer . . . be killed, and be raised” (verse 21, NKJV). To Jesus, the journey to the cross was not a choice. Instead, it was a “must” (Luke 24:25, 26, 46). This was a part of God's “mystery . . . kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed [made known] to the Lord's people” (Colossians 1:26, NIV).

GETHSEMANE:¹ THE FEARSOME STRUGGLE (Luke 22:39–46)

At the dawn of history, God created Adam and Eve and put them in a beautiful garden. But then Satan appeared (Genesis 3). He tempted the first couple and then involved the young earth in a great controversy (war) between good and evil, between God and Satan.

Now, in God's own time, another garden (Luke 22:39–46) became a battleground. There the war was going on between truth and lies, between righteousness (holiness) and sin, and between God's plan for human salvation and Satan's goal for human destruction.

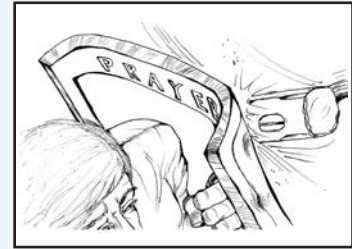
In Eden the world was thrown into the terrible result of sin. In Gethsemane the world's greatest victory was made sure. Eden saw the rebellion (warring) of self against God. Gethsemane showed self surrendering itself to God and showing the victory over sin.

Compare² what happened in Eden (Genesis 3:1–6) with what happened in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39–46). What was the big difference in what happened in both gardens?

Gethsemane stands for two important things: (1) for the fact that Satan tried to lead Jesus away from God's mission and purpose and (2) for the noblest example of praying for God's strength to do His will and fulfill His purpose. Gethsemane shows that the battle is strong and that self is very weak. But victory is certain to those who have experienced the strength of prayer.

All the armies of Satan stood against Jesus. The disciples, whom Jesus loved so much, did not understand His suffering. The betrayer's (Judas's) kiss was just a breath away. And the priests and the temple guards were almost ready to arrest Jesus. But Jesus showed us that prayer and surrender to God's will (desire) give the needed strength to the soul to stand life's great blows.

Next time you are very tempted (feel a desire to give in to sin), how can you have the kind of experience Jesus had in Gethsemane instead of the experience that Adam and Eve had in Eden? What is the very important thing that makes all the difference between these two experiences?



Prayer and surrender to God's will give us the strength needed to stand up to life's great blows.

DEFINITIONS

1. Gethsemane—the name of the garden where Jesus spent His last night in prayer before He was put to death on the cross. He prayed for strength to go through the terrible time ahead.
2. compare—to show how two or more things are the same or different.

JUDAS (Luke 22:3)

“Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve” (Luke 22:3, NIV). Satan worked very hard to get all the disciples to turn from Jesus and to betray Him. What made Satan succeed with Judas?



Judas held the evil spirit of greed for money and power until it overcame his love for Christ.

Luke tells how Jesus prayed alone all night in the mountains before He chose His disciples (Luke 6:12–16). And Jesus believed that the Twelve were God’s gift to Him (John 17:6–9). Was Judas really an answer to prayer? How are we to understand that God’s will was to be fulfilled, even with Judas’s evil act? (Read 2 Corinthians 13:8.)

What went wrong?

“He [Judas] had held the evil spirit of greed until it had become the powerful goal of his life. The love of money was stronger than his love for Christ.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 716.

Jesus had fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish (Luke 9:10–17). Judas was the first to “understand” the political value of the miracle. So, he “set on foot the project to take Christ by force and make Him king.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, page 719. But Jesus discouraged Judas’s selfish thought and caused his disappointment. “Judas’s hopes were high. His disappointment was bitter.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, page 719. Clearly, Judas believed that Jesus would use His great powers to establish a worldly kingdom. And Judas clearly had wanted a place in that kingdom. How sad! Judas’s desire for a place in an earthly kingdom that never came caused him to lose a place in an eternal kingdom that was sure to come.

Another time, a faithful follower of Jesus chose to anoint (bathe) His feet with a costly ointment. But Judas criticized her act as an economic waste (John 12:1–8). All Judas could see was money, and his love of money overcame his love of Jesus. This desire for money and power led Judas to put a price tag on the priceless gift of heaven (Matthew 26:15). From then on, “Satan entered Judas” (Luke 22:3, NKJV). And Judas became a lost soul.

There is nothing wrong with position, power, or money. The problem comes when these things overcome our faithfulness to God. Why is it always important to test ourselves so that we do not become as self-deceived (fooled) as was Judas?

FOR HIM OR AGAINST HIM? (Luke 23:39–43)

The Cross is the great divider of history. It is the divider between faith and unbelief, between betrayal and acceptance, and between eternal life and death. There is no middle ground for any human about the Cross. In the end, we are either on one side or the other.

“ ‘ Anyone who is not with me is against me. Anyone who does not gather sheep with me scatters them’ ” (Matthew 12:30, NIV). These are strong words, and they can make us a bit uncomfortable. But Jesus is just explaining what is real and what the truth is for those who are involved in the great controversy (war) between Christ and Satan. We are either with Jesus or with Satan.

How did the following people relate to Jesus? And what lessons can we learn from their examples that can help us in our own relationship with God and how we relate to the Cross?

Members of the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:53). What mistakes did these people make? Why did they make them? And how can we protect ourselves from doing the same thing they did when they judged Jesus?

Pilate (Luke 23:1–7, 13–25). What led Pilate to say, “ ‘ I find no fault in Him’ ” (John 19:4, NKJV) and at the same time sentence Him to be crucified (put to death on a cross)? What can we learn from his mistake in failing to do what he knew was right?

Herod (Luke 23:6–12). What was Herod’s big mistake? And what can we learn from it?

The two thieves (Luke 23:39–43). Two sinners look at the same cross and have two different opinions. How does this scene show the either-or part of salvation? In other words, we are either on one side of the great controversy or on the other.

HE (JESUS) IS RISEN (Acts 1:22)



An empty tomb means that the hope in a resurrection is ours.

Early Sunday morning the women went to the tomb with a single purpose. They were to complete the burial. They had spent some time with Jesus. But they had not truly understood what was to happen. They were certainly not expecting an empty tomb. They also were not expecting angels: “He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:6).

In the first few chapters of Acts alone the resurrection (return to life from the dead) of Jesus is mentioned at least eight times (Acts 1:22; Acts 2:14–36; Acts 3:14, 15; Acts 4:1, 2, 10, 12, 33; and Acts 5:30–32). Why was the resurrection of Jesus so very important in the preaching of the apostles (teachers and leaders) and in the faith of the early church? Why is it still so important for us today?

The women were real eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. They rushed to share this good news with others. But no one believed them (Luke 24:11). Instead, the apostles first thought of the greatest story in the world’s history as “idle tales” of weary and grieving women (verses 10, 11).

How soon they were to learn just how wrong they were!

The resurrection of Christ is a very important part of God’s act in saving humans and important to the Christian faith and life. The apostle Paul makes that very clear: “If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1 Corinthians 15:14, NKJV). It is empty because only in Christ’s resurrection can we find the hope that is ours. Without that hope, our lives end here, and they end for eternity. Christ’s life did not end in a tomb, and the great promise is that ours will not either!

“If Christ is not risen from the dead, the long history of God’s acts to save his people ends in a dead-end street, which is in a tomb. If the resurrection of Christ is not true, then we have no promise and hope that God is the *living* God. This, also, is because death has the last word. Faith is useless because the goal of that faith has not proven Jesus Himself as the Lord of life. Christian faith is then imprisoned in the tomb along with the final and highest example of God in Christ—if Christ is really dead.”—Adapted from George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), page 318.

“ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED” (Luke 24:13–49)

Read Luke 24:13–49, which tells us about the events right after Christ’s resurrection (return to life). In the different conversations, what does Jesus use to help these people to understand what happened to Him? And why is that important, even for us today in our witness to the world?

The resurrection of Jesus should have been enough proof to show that He was the Messiah (Chosen One). Beaten before being crucified (put to death on a cross), Jesus was then wrapped and placed in a tomb. Suppose, as some have foolishly suggested, Jesus had survived both the cross and the burial, a beaten, bloodied, and weakened Jesus, and then He had staggered from the tomb. That would not have been anyone’s idea of a victorious Messiah.

But there Jesus was, alive and well. He walked several miles with the two men on the road to Emmaus. And even before telling them who He was, Jesus pointed them to the Holy Bible. Jesus gave them a strong Bible foundation for their faith in Him.

Then Jesus appeared to the disciples, showed them His human body, and ate with them. And He did more: He pointed them to the Bible: “ ‘This is what is written. The Christ will suffer. He will rise from the dead on the third day. His followers will preach in his name. They will tell others to turn away from their sins and be forgiven. People from every nation will hear it, beginning at Jerusalem. You have seen these things with your own eyes’ ” (Luke 24:46–48, NIV).

Here Jesus pointed to the Bible (besides the proof that He was really alive and among them). He also used the Bible to help them to understand exactly what had happened to Him. Here Jesus directly connected His resurrection with the mission to preach the gospel to all nations.

So, even with all the powerful proof of who Jesus was, He always pointed His followers back to the Word of God. After all, without the Word of God among us today, how would we know of our calling and mission to preach the gospel to the world? How would we even know what the gospel was? So, the Bible is as important to us today as it was to Jesus and His disciples.

How much time do you spend with the Bible? How much influence does it have on how you live, the choices you make, and how you treat others?



The Bible is as important to us today as it was to Jesus and His disciples.

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “The importance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Sinful men could not have a home in God’s heaven without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then honor and glorify [praise and honor] the cross of Christ? The angels give honor and glory to Christ. This is because even the angels are not safe unless they look at the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the working power of the cross that the angels of heaven are protected from falling and backsliding. Without the cross the angels would not be safer against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the perfect place of blessing and happiness. All who wish for safety in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 5, page 1132.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① As Christians we have to live by faith. We have to believe in something that we cannot fully prove. This is because we do not have direct eyewitness evidence (proof). Of course, people do that all the time in a lot of things. For example, in science, one author wrote: “In summary, we have direct proof of only a few of the beliefs we hold.”—Adapted from Richard DeWitt, *Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy [Study of Truth] of Science*, second edition (Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons, 2010), page 15. But we have many very good reasons for our faith and for the things in which we believe. Think about what Jesus said to the disciples in the Great Commission (great command): “ ‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come’ ” (Matthew 24:14, NKJV). Now, think about the time that Jesus spoke these words. How large was His group of followers at the time? How many people believed in Him or even had any understanding of who He was and what He was going to do? Think about all the struggles the early church faced for many hundreds of years in the Roman Empire. Keeping these facts in mind, discuss just how wonderful Jesus’ prophecy³ was. Share with the class how it should help us to trust in God’s Word.

② Think deeply about Ellen G. White’s quote above. How does this help us to understand just how common and universal the problems of sin really are? *Even the angels are not safe without looking to Jesus.* What does this mean?

DEFINITIONS

3. prophecy—a special message given by God to His people to warn them or to tell them about what will happen in the future.

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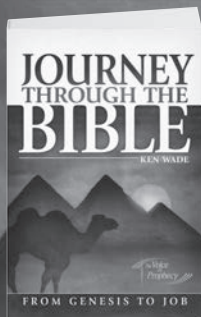
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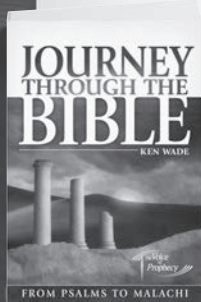
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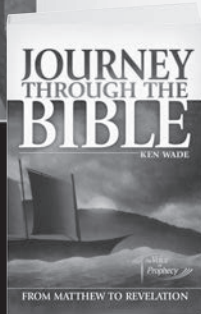
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